

The Ages 271

Chapter 271- Fried Locusts

As Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi were trying to break past Yuwen Zhenxing, Tianming's chance arrived. However, the moment he moved, a red-haired youth barred his way. By his side was a massive locust.

The locust was different from the Bloodhell Broodmother Tianming had once fought. The broodmother was just a giant worm, but this locust was covered in armor and had sharp legs and mandibles.

A dense swarm of Sky-Blazing Locusts flew up, congregating above Tianming.

"I heard you ambushed my brother. Let's see what you're made of," Gongsun Chi sneered. He had a violent personality and had slain many people as he followed Yuwen Zhenxing. It was a sharp contrast from the aloof Chen Xiaoji.

"Ambushed?" Tianming was surprised. That fellow really did know how to save face. Hadn't Chen Xiaoji been the one to attack from the side with his lifebound beast?

Li Tianming exchanged a look with his lifebound beasts. "So this enemy looks like a tough nut to crack. What's the plan?"

"Are you really asking a chicken how to handle an insect?" Ying Huo sniggered.

"Big Brother Chicken, didn't you say you hated being treated like a chicken?" Meow Meow asked.

"You nugget, what do you know? Grandpappy here is the chicken when it's time to eat insects!"

Imperial Flame Locust? Sky-Blazing Locusts?

Ying Huo's eyes shone. "Meow Meow, let me show you which is faster: its birth rate or my peck rate!"

A flaming chicken soared into the skies. However, the Sky-Blazing Locusts didn't spare it much attention, as there was too little meat on it. They were used to surrounding other lifebound beasts and stripping them of all flesh!

Ying Huo exhaled a stream of Infernal Blaze, quickly scorching many Sky-Blazing Locusts to death, and the Infernal Armor appeared on Tianming.

"Tianming, my little brother, now that you have my spit, to battle! Meow Meow! Follow your big brother into dinner!" Ying Huo commanded.

Meow Meow had already transformed into a giant lightning beast. It extended its blood-red claws and locked its eyes on the Imperial Flame Locust, which was as large as the transformed Meow Meow.

Black lightning wound around Meow Meow's body.

Gongsun Chi was rather flashy. His weapon was a giant sickle called the Firefiend Sickle. When he rested it on his shoulder, he really did have the presence of a grim reaper.

By his side, the bloodstained Chen Xiaoji still had a portion of his strength left as he lifted up his star pike. As for his lifebound beast, it was probably in his lifebound space, considering its happiness for the rest of its life.

“I don’t need you. I can handle this myself.” Gongsun Chi’s lips curled.

“Honestly, if it weren’t for Zhenxing’s treasure, I’d be ignoring you for talking to a brother like that,” Chen Xiaoji said.

“Fine, don’t drag me down!” The two immediately charged.

The two battles happened almost simultaneously.

Yuwen Zhenxing was fighting two people by himself, and so was Tianming!

In the sky, the little chick swept through the swarm, its Infernal Armor burning all of the locusts in its path to a crisp. These children were completely incapable of breaking the chick’s armor. It continued releasing gouts of Infernal Blaze and showers of Skyscorch Featherblasts, beginning a massacre.

Clearly, the Imperial Flame Locust wasn’t able to spawn its children faster than the little chick could kill them.

“Mhm, fried locusts really do smell good!”

The Imperial Flame Locust was furious. These were all its children! It stopped spawning, and instead rushed at Ying Huo. However, before it could reach the annoying bird, a black figure pounced onto its body.

The Imperial Flame Locust was immediately engulfed in lightning. Furious, the locust used its sharp legs and forced Meow Meow away. However, Meow Meow still successfully created several blackened holes in its body with multiple Chaos Voltballs.

The two lifebound beasts entered a melee. Surprisingly, the broodmother wasn’t too shabby in a melee, especially with its sharp legs.

However, it wasn’t its forte in the end. It was still lacking, compared to Meow Meow, and it couldn’t stand up to the cat’s claws and fangs, nor its two Saintbeast War-Soul abilities.

The broodmother’s attempts to use its spiritsource abilities, Sky-Blazing Hell and Undying Swarm, were all stopped by Ying Huo. That was because this type of beast’s abilities were related to their brood. However, all of its children had been slaughtered by Ying Huo.

Job done, Ying Huo landed and began pecking at the locusts. “Blergh. Overcooked. Meow Meow! Let it off. I need more locusts for practice!”

The Imperial Flame Locust fell into despair. It couldn’t fight one against two, and it looked at its beastmaster for help. However, its beastmaster was currently—

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Gongsun Chi and Chen Xiaoji leapt forward at the same time, and Tianming had no choice but to respond, even though the bell was his goal.

"Insect!" Gongsun Chi used his sickle to attack with a supreme unity-ranked battle art, Soul Cleaver. He aimed directly at Tianming's head.

Tianming's sword flicked out, and he had both hands on the hilt. The moment he touched the eye on the sword, Onyx Dragon gave off a roar, as if it were a real dragon. Then, he slashed down as well!

Voidgod Sword Intent, Countercurrent!

While Tianming hadn't gone all out yet, this attack was still backed by his tens of thousands of practice swings.

The two weapons collided with a clear ring.

Gongsun Chi was sent flying, then tumbled several times on the ground. When his head smashed against the ground, he felt like he could hear his brain shaking.

"Ughh..." Blood flowed from his head. Even more frighteningly, his sickle had almost taken off his head as well when it landed!

Gongsun Chi subconsciously recalled his big words in front of Tianming. Now, he had truly seen which one of them was ordinary, and which one was the genius.

However, just as he was thinking this, the white-haired youth had already arrived in front of him!

Chapter 272 - The Treasure On The Second Floor

"You annoying bug!"

Bursting in goosebumps, Gongsun Chi jumped like a carp leaping out of water, cold sweat dripping down his forehead. At the exact moment Gongsun Chi made his move, Tianming punched him squarely in the face.

Gongsun Chi screamed miserably, his cheekbones almost deformed by Tianming's fist. As soon as his head was upright once more, Gongsun Chi flew out spinning and hit the ground once more. The dizziness made him stagger as he climbed back to his feet.

When he opened his blurry eyes, he watched Tianming dash toward the copper bell while Chen Xiaoji quickly approached from behind. Starlight burst forth, his pike lunging toward the junior sect master.

However, it was like Tianming had eyes on the back of his head. Without even turning around, the chain in his hand lashed out like a poisonous snake. Archfiend, with its many blood-red eyes, had Gongsun Chi's hair standing on end.

He believed Chen Xiaoji felt it even more so. What kind of whip was that?

A whoosh sounded as a blood-red phantom whizzed through the air, piercing Chen Xiaoji's thigh and nailing him to the ground. He let out an ear-splitting scream.

The Life-Death Whip Art appeared so simple, but the spectators couldn't figure out its technique. However, Soul Hook and Death Requisition were moves that could instantly separate life from death. With this, Chen Xiaoji rolled on the ground, screaming repeatedly and losing all ability to resist.

Gongsun Chi turned ashen at the sight of this. Right now, all he felt was fear. His arrogance and contempt for Tianming had completely disappeared. Aside from Chen Xiaoji, even his own lifebound beast, the Imperial Flame Locust, was on its knees, begging for mercy from Tianming's lifebound beasts.

As soon as Tianming finished dealing with Chen Xiaoji, his eyes locked on Gongsun Chi once more. The latter shivered in fear, crawling three steps backward before coming to his feet and running away.

"Know your place!" mocked Tianming.

He could certainly catch up to Gongsun Chi and deal the finishing blow, but it wasn't necessary. Right now, the most important thing was the treasure on the second floor, the copper bell. After defeating Gongsun Chi and Chen Xiaoji, Tianming bolted for the copper bell, glancing at Yuwen Zhenxing's battle with the couple along the way.

Yuwen Zhenxing and his Bloodfiend Taotie coordinated perfectly, one against two. Despite being besieged, they were able to resist, even posing a fatal threat to Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi. As long as Yuwen Zhenxing had enough time, defeating the two lovebirds would be no problem!

"Amazing." Tianming narrowed his eyes. It was clear Yuwen Zhenxing was far superior to the others.

But so what? Tianming had dealt with his opponents, but Yuwen Zhenxing hadn't.

At the sight of Tianming rushing toward the copper bell, Yuwen Zhenxing lost his composure.

"Stop!" Yuwen Zhenxing roared, quickly leaving his opponents behind and chasing after Tianming. Both Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi were hot on his heels. Their battle immediately took a different turn.

However, Tianming was in the lead, moving as fast as a whirlwind. Yuwen Zhenxing had no way of overtaking him, and the distance grew between them.

In the blink of an eye, Tianming was standing before the copper bell! Regardless of what it was, Tianming pounded his fist into the bell. It vibrated, but remained in place.

Tianming noticed there was something under the copper bell—the treasure of the second floor. Once again, with his dark arm, he condensed all of his strength into one punch. A loud boom reverberated through the floor—the bell had been overturned. It was evident this required the force of an eighth-level Unity cultivator.

"Get lost!" Yuwen Zhenxing finally caught up.

Tianming sped up, weaving Archfiend around the treasure. With a tug, it fell right into his hands. Upon closer look, it was still a black manna sphere. Because it was completely sealed, Tianming couldn't determine its contents. Since that wasn't important for the time being, Tianming tossed it into his ring. This heralded his success! The treasure on the second floor was definitely more precious than the one on the first floor.

Yuwen Zhenxing and the others began attacking Tianming.

"Hand it over!" Yuwen Zhenxing's eyes turned red.

The treasure specifically prepared for him was now in Tianming's possession. There was no time to swear at Chen Xiaoji and Gongsun Chi for being trash who couldn't even stop one Li Tianming.

Losing his most important treasure made him murderous. His blood boiled, and the Bloodsea Field enveloped Tianming.

Aside from Yuwen Zhenxing, there were others here to steal the treasure. Even Gongsun Chi had joined in the battle, as well as other disciples who had finally advanced from the first floor. Sure enough, seizing the treasure was difficult, but keeping it was a bigger challenge.

At this point, a passage opened on the ceiling. The entrance of the third floor was open!

"Forget it, I'll see you on the third floor!"

Tianming was well aware that the spectators outside couldn't observe what was happening once he reached the third floor. It was a terribly dangerous place! However, he wasn't just here for the second floor's treasure. The first floor's treasure in Yuwen Zhenxing's hand was his other goal.

Yuwen Zhenxing couldn't wait for Tianming to enter the third floor. In the first two floors, slaughtering the junior sect master would cause him no end of inconveniences.

However, once they got to the third floor, it was his world.

"Defeating Gongsun Chi and Chen Xiaoji made his ego swell. Very good."

Without Yuwen Zhenxing's opposition, Tianming became the first disciple to set foot in the third floor of the Prime Tower. Yuwen Zhenxing followed closely behind.

"Let's go!" Gongsun Chi shouted to Chen Xiaoji.

"I'm afraid I can't get up," Chen Xiaoji clutched his thigh, his expression an ugly grimace. Biting the bullet, Gongsun Chi eventually chose to follow Yuwen Zhenxing, since his injuries weren't as severe.

Meanwhile, Huangfu Feifei and Shangguan Jiayi had already advanced to the third floor. As soon as the five of them stepped into the third floor, the passage suddenly closed, leaving the other disciples forlorn.

"The entrance to the third floor is closed, so we can't get in."

"The treasures of the first and second floors are in there. We're out of the running."

They were helpless. Although this was the Prime Struggle, many of them had failed to do anything. It was over as soon as they made it to the second floor. Thus, they were forced to leave the Prime Tower. Within three hours, there would be results from the third floor.

Whether anyone could clear all three levels, who lived and who died, and who obtained all three treasures would be revealed when the time comes.

The disciples and all thirty-three elders could only wait for results. After all, no one knew what would happen on the third floor of the Prime Tower.

"Despite joining forces, Chen Xiaoji and Gongsun Chi were crushed by the junior sect master," Zhao Xingyi turned to the other disciples.

"Is the junior sect master so powerful?"

"You'll know when you see Chen Xiaoji's face."

"Did he throw the battle so the junior sect master could advance to the third floor?"

"If that's the case, why didn't Chen Xiaoji go up as well? Just look at his tragic situation. Does it look like he threw the battle?"

"If the junior sect master leaves the third floor alive, he'll only grow stronger in the future!"

More and more disciples voiced their admiration.

As a defeated man, Chen Xiaoji kept his head down, too embarrassed to face others. There was a shred of anxiety and fear in his heart. Would Yuwen Zhenxing really be able to kill Li Tianming on the third floor? he wondered.

Chapter 273 - Celestial Manna, Venomfiend Bloodclaw

While Chen Xiaoji felt horrible, his grandfather Chen Nantian was even worse off. He had seen his most beloved grandson horribly humiliated twice by Tianming through the projection. Now, his face was so sunken it looked like it had been smashed in by a brick.

It was the same with Gongsun Sheng. His son's performance wasn't any bit better, especially with how haggard he looked when he had rolled and crawled away at the end. The two of them looked at each other in shame.

"Chen Xiaoji really performed embarrassingly," Chen Nantian said with his head lowered.

"It's the same with Chi'er. He's too weak," said Gongsun Sheng.

"Don't take it to heart, you two. All an old man like me can say is this pentabane son of Li Wudi really broadened our horizons," Su Yunchi said with a furrowed brow.

"From Li Xuanchen to Su Yiran, and now Chen Xiaoji and Gongsun Chi, Li Tianming's rate of improvement is too fearsome!" Yuwen Kaitai spat. He had always thought of Tianming as a fly he could crush at any time, only to realize how truly disgusting this fly was.

"Kaitai, we're now counting on your son Zhenxing. He managed to hold his ground even when fighting against two foes. It looks like he's much stronger than the junior sect master," Gongsun Sheng said.

"That's right. Even we can't see what's going on in the third floor of Prime Tower. If this disgusting fly dies, it'll no longer annoy us so," Chen Nantian said.

"Well, killing is my son's forte, after all. Not to mention, Gongsun Chi is there with him," Yuwen Kaitai said.

While they felt horrible and embarrassed and weren't able to act as smugly as they did before, they didn't think the fly could do anything more than he had already done.

"It's fine. Even if Zhenxing doesn't kill him today, he's just a brat. We can kill him any time we want, once we get the Grand-Orient Sword," said Third Elder Yuwen Fengtian. Everyone chuckled at the sound of that.

"He does have rather decent talent. If anything, he was just born in the wrong place. With his current status as a mere direct disciple, it's no big deal if we kill him. As long as those old fogeys Huangfu and Shangguan don't interfere in our matters, we'll be fine," Yuwen Fengtian said.

"That's right. It's all manageable as long as he doesn't become a prime disciple. We already have the Ye Clan cornered, anyway," Yuwen Kaitai added. The thought of Ye Yuxi caused his gaze to darken further.

"Big Brother, what're your thoughts on this?" Yuwen Fengtian asked.

Yuwen Taiji had been quiet the whole time. When everyone turned to him, he waved and said, "Just watch. There's nothing much we can say about it."

Everyone knew he was more concerned with getting Yuwen Shendu to participate in the Realm Wars. Much more counted on that than the Prime Struggle.

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To the left of Fengtian Mountain's hall was the largest hall, which belonged to Fengyun Immortal Mountain. Huangfu Fengyun and Shangguan Jingshu were paying attention to the First Grand-Orient Battlefield when their gazes crossed with a hint of distraught.

On the battlefield, many had cheered for Tianming when he defeated Chen Xiaoji and Gongsun Chi, both of whom were bullies that usually threw their weight around. Their defeat was a guilty pleasure for many. Instantly, Tianming's reputation soared. Even after he stepped into the third floor, none of the audience members left; everyone was waiting in suspense.

"His improvement rate is a little scary," Huangfu Fengyu said with a bitter smile.

"That's right. Ye Shaoqing really has a good eye," Shangguan Jingshu agreed.

"It now depends on whether he'll emerge at the top of Prime Tower or be carried out as a corpse. If he survives, he'll have a chance to rest and recuperate when the Yuwen Clan goes to fight in the Realm Wars."

"That's right. As long as he has time, he'll definitely grow at breakneck speeds. As for us, we'll just have to wait for the results of the Realm Wars," Shangguan Jingshu said.

"What if he becomes a prime disciple today?" Huangfu Fengyu asked.

"Then we'll have to stand out to protect him until the end of the Realm Wars."

"Wanna bet he does?"

"Sure. His rate of improvement is ridiculous." Shangguan Jingshu nodded.

"That's right. If he can become a figure like the founding ancestor, not even ten thousand Yuwen Taijis or Yuwen Shendu will be able to match up to him."

The two of them now had a reason to place their bets on Tianming.

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"Huh?" The moment Tianming arrived in the third floor and looked up, he saw that his surroundings were still covered in the snowy mist. Even with his third eye, he couldn't see far. There was nothing in his field of vision, but he had a feeling that the third floor was worlds different from the second. The mist didn't scatter at all even after he went up. Not to mention, there wasn't anyone around him. It was as if the world was empty, and there was nobody there with him.

However, he was all too aware Yuwen Zhenxing and the others would catch up.

"Ling'er, help me check what kind of treasure this is," he said as he took the manna ball out of his spatial ring. All of a sudden, a bloody aura could be felt as a red miasma spread all around. Tianming gave it a whiff and felt a little uncomfortable. The miasma was actually extremely toxic, and a mere whiff was enough to cause the capillaries in his nose to rot.

"Dang! As expected of something prepared for Yuwen Zhenxing."

Yuwen Zhenxing's lifebound beast was a Bloodfiend Taotie, and the treasure let out a toxic bloody miasma the moment it was taken out. The miasma actually formed a beast and glared fearsomely at Tianming. Tianming figured that the effect would be even more pronounced if it weren't for the fog around him.

He looked through the bloody mist and soon saw the claw-like object inside the manna ball. It was a blood-colored claw, sharp and curved. The sinister aura it let out made his skin tingle. He immediately knew that it was a manna. The best quality manna he had seen was a top-grade profound manna. But this claw was a whole league different from the Imperial Wing and Electric Fang. Indeed, this manna was truly divine.

"It's a celestial manna, Venomfiend Bloodclaw. Among low-grade celestial manna, this is the best kind. If the assimilation works, the lifebound beast's star count will grow to forty-seven, close to the level of a fifth-order saint beast," Feiling said, recognizing it instantly. Her knowledge was immeasurable, having done months of reading.

"Celestial manna?" Tianming had never expected the second treasure of the Prime Struggle would be so precious and tailor made for Yuwen Zhenxing. It was no wonder the treasures weren't announced beforehand. Anyone would know that it was specially prepared for Yuwen Zhenxing.

"This is definitely the best reward ever to be given in a Prime Struggle in the past thousand years." Those shameless old fogeys were disgusting. It was a shame their antics only benefited Tianming. That way, either Ying Huo or Meow Meow could evolve into a fourth-order saint beast, a mountain-toppling change indeed.

"Some people were guessing that the second treasure would be a celestial manna, however, they didn't think it could be the case. After all, Yuwen Shendu had just made a breakthrough using a celestial manna. How could they give something like that to the non-direct descendant, Yuwen Zhenxing?"

It seemed that the Yuwen Clan wasn't even bothering to hide how they dominated the Grand-Orient Sect.

"The Venomfiend Bloodclaw contains bloodfiend venom. The moment it enters the bloodstream, it'll start corrupting the blood. The more wounds there are, the more bloodfiend venom is injected. If the afflicted doesn't get treatment quickly and continues fighting, the venom will turn more of their blood into toxic blood, which will rot their bones and innards, ultimately causing death. Only spirit herbs with saintly heavenly patterns can cure the toxin, but they're really rare. Not to mention, after its evolution, the Venomfiend Bloodclaw itself will become harder than bestial weapons with more than fifty saintly heavenly patterns," Feiling explained from her store of encyclopedic knowledge. Even she was astounded by the sheer horrid nature of the claw.

It was a treasure that made others shudder in fear, mainly from its poisonous effect, not to mention its toughness and hardness.

"They never would've imagined this would fall into my hands," Tianming said. He kept it away to prevent the miasma from attracting his foes. It wasn't a good time for his lifebound beasts to evolve, so he would decide who to give the treasure to after the Prime Struggle was over.

"That Yuwen Zhenxing probably knew the second treasure was meant for him. He'll definitely chase you down to take it back," Feiling said.

"Just what I wanted. I want to see what the terrestrial manna he has is as well."

Even if he couldn't find Tianming, Tianming would seek him out. He wanted both of the treasures from the tower.

Chapter 274 - Black-haired Li Tianming

Even though the terrestrial manna was definitely inferior to the Venomfiend Bloodclaw, it could still allow him to make one of his lifebound beasts a third-order saint beast with thirty stars.

"Perhaps Ying Huo and Meow Meow will be able to undo more of their bloodline bindings with these manna and reach the level of saint beasts. Let's see who's going to hunt who!"

It wasn't the right time to evolve now. He proceeded through the fog as he cautiously eyed his surroundings. Ying Huo and Meow Meow both sat on his shoulders, on guard as well. Even though this was a place the founding ancestor had made, it was still the greatest challenge in the Prime Tower.

"Is this not the end yet?" Tianming recalled he had traveled through the mist for at least a quarter of an hour. The third floor of the tower shouldn't be that wide, yet he felt like he hadn't moved from where he was at all. An hour had already passed. If he hadn't made any progress after six hours, he would be eliminated.

"Let's not rush. I have to be wary of Yuwen Zhenxing and the rest." They were definitely frantically looking for him. After he calmed down, he felt much better.

Another fifteen minutes passed and he finally found something on the ground ahead of him. Approaching it, he found that it was a white object of some twenty centimeters in height.

"Isn't this the Prime Tower?" Tianming was shocked to find a miniature tower in front of him. He slowly approached the odd object. There was definitely something about it being placed on the third floor of the tower.

"Ying Huo?" All of a sudden, he noticed that Ying Huo and Meow Meow were gone. They weren't in his lifebound space, either. In fact, their telepathic connection to him was cut off, as if they had completely vanished from the world. What was worse was the eight other primordial chaos beast eggs in his lifebound space were gone, too.

"Ling'er?" Unsurprisingly, she was unreachable either. It was the first time he had felt truly alone, but that was something that definitely couldn't happen. He looked at his surroundings and didn't see them anywhere.

"The oddity of the third floor finally showed up." What kind of trick could cut him off from the beasts and Feiling? The mysteries of heavenly patterns were truly endless. Tianming couldn't bother analyzing what was going on, for something even weirder was happening before him.

The miniature tower in front of him actually morphed into a person with black hair, wielding Onyx Dragon and looking at Tianming with a snide smile. Tianming was shocked to see what he looked like; he was completely identical to him, aside from having black hair. That person resembled what he looked like when Ying Huo hatched. Even the left arm and the eye on his left palm was exactly the same. Most shockingly, he wielded Onyx Dragon.

"Do you want to die by your own hands?" the black-haired Tianming asked as he approached, pointing Onyx Dragon at him.

It felt really weird, as if he were confronting a mirror image. The words of the figure even felt like they had come out of his own mouth, despite him never having actually spoken. In the next instant, the black-haired Tianming charged at him with a downward slash, using Onyx Viledragon sword ki containing the power of his two beast kis as well, infused into the Countercurrent technique.

It was the first time Tianming had been on the receiving end of his own attack. Having no other choice, he struggled to fight back.

"What are you?!" His foe attacked in the exact same way he would. Their similar Voidgod Sword Intent strikes clashed. The equal measure of force caused neither of them to be better off than the other.

"I am you. You're too weak, so I want to replace you." The alternate Tianming jumped up right after he bounced back from the first clash and executed the seven strikes of Demise of Man-Earth-Heaven in succession. His attacks were furious and overwhelming, like Tianming's own.

Tianming felt like he was being pushed into a corner.

So I guess I'll pass the test once I defeat you!

With that thought in mind, Tianming no longer cared who, or what, he was fighting. However, he would soon find out how tough it was to fight himself. The alternate Tianming knew him as well as he knew himself. All his techniques, including Starfall and Life-Death Whip Art's Soul Hook—even the Bewildering Eye—could be used by his counterpart with equal power. There were no secret moves. Tianming felt his mind was about to explode. The two were fighting a battle to the death.

"Have I ever been so strong?" It was the first time he found himself to be troublesome to deal with.

"You're not strong. I am," said the copy. His Archfiend almost pierced through Tianming.

In this battle alone, Tianming had skirted close to the line between life and death more than he ever had. Even when his sword struck his copy, he would also take a bloody wound. After fifteen minutes, both of them were bloodied and panting. However, the copy still smiled sinisterly.

"You're going to lose. Once you do, I'll be the one to enjoy all the benefits you enjoy. Li Tianming, you don't deserve what you have. From now on, I'll be the one to own the ten Primordial Chaos Beasts, Jiang Feiling, and Lifesbane." While he seemed evil, he didn't fear death at all. In a way, he was even more fearsome than Tianming. Not to mention, Tianming had to consider how to deal with Yuwen Zhenxing and the others. Yet this battle alone could see him dead. The more he thought about it, the more chaotic his mind became.

"What have you done to deserve all this? Let me tell you this: without your luck, you're nothing but the lowest peasant. You have no right to change your destiny. Without Primordial Chaos Beasts, you're useless." The words didn't fail to weigh down on Tianming. He was constantly doubted for his abilities. Sometimes, even he wondered what he would amount to without Ying Huo and the rest.

"I, however, am different from you. I'm destined to be stronger than you. With me owning all that you have, I'll spread your name all throughout the Flameyellow Continent. You can't protect Ling'er, but I can. Come to think of it, if a three-year-old enjoyed the benefits you have, he might do much better than you," the copy said with a smirk.

His strikes using Onyx Dragon and Archfiend were growing ever more savage. He was an existence that didn't fear death, which allowed him to suppress Tianming. Each of his strikes put him at risk for getting hurt from retaliatory strikes, but Tianming didn't fare too well either. He even got stabbed through his abdomen, the pain of which sent cold sweat trickling down his face. All he saw now was death. Death was like a grey sky that descended on him the more blood he lost.

"What am I without the Primordial Chaos Beasts?" This sentiment kept ringing through his head. The trial on the third floor was formidable indeed. In an instant, he thought about lots of things, including his death, as well as the challenges his copy levied against him.

"That's not an issue! It is a fact I have the Primordial Chaos Beasts! I only need to consider what I need to do to strive to be even better using what I have! How can I help the others around me? I don't know what others would amount to if they enjoyed what I have, but I can say for sure I'll do my best to stand tall and proud for my family and friends!"

The copy said that even a three-year-old would be better off than Tianming, but it was meaningless sophistry. He hadn't been perfect on his way here, but he slowly grew alongside Ying Huo and Meow Meow without doing anything wrong.

Even now, they were brothers to the death. Since he had no shame about his own behavior, there was no way he could be criticized! While others might not see what he had done, he knew he could stun the world. He contemplated his death and Lifesbane. Soon, he stood up from the pool of blood.

"You are no doubt me, but merely me from one point in time. I've long known that the only way to defeat myself is to grow stronger!" His eyes began burning with passion. How could he grow stronger without lifebound beasts and cultivation? There were only two choices: Life-Death Whip Art's

Transcendence, or Voidgod Sword Intent's Cosmic Break. He put down Onyx Dragon and picked Archfiend up.

"I need to thank you for bringing me so close to death!" How could one transcend life and death without being on the knife's edge?

"You talk too much. Trying to hide your incompetence?" The copy smirked and continued his assault. He used Onyx Dragon and Archfiend in tandem, but Tianming used only the Life-Death Whip Art to counter. His black-haired self was the ideal training partner.

Chapter 275 - Aeonian Grandbane

Tianming had already seen past life and death. He no longer feared the edge of his foe's sword.

"Gaaaah!" He sent Archfiend whipping out like a snake with bloodshot eyes, blocking his alter-ego's flurry of blows.

"That's not it. Again!" He had witnessed Transcendence once at the tomb of the Grim Reaper. The will it took to claim lives like a god of death wasn't something he could easily replicate, so he tried again.

"Once more!" He no longer argued with his foe. Instead, he sought to prove who he was using his actions. While the blessings he had were external, he'd rightfully inherited them. He was the rightful leader of the Primordial Chaos Beasts on their path back to power. Nobody could ever understate his contributions or doubt his dedication.

"Again!" It felt like more than six hours had passed. It was the longest battle Tianming had ever fought. Maybe half a day had gone by. He no longer remembered why he was here—in fact, he forgot about everything, including Prime Tower. His will was entirely focused on Archfiend.

"Die!" Forget life and death and transcend mortality! Archfiend lashed out countless times and sent his alter-ego stumbling back, but each time felt slightly different. That feeling was the core of Life-Death Whip Art. It felt like the grim reaper was there to harvest lives in droves. Wherever the chain struck, lives would be claimed. On the thousandth time he struck, Archfiend broke through everything and embedded itself in the head of the black-haired Tianming.

Poof! The head turned into a white mist and filled the whole place. Transcendence had been achieved! Tianming had done it. Only by breaking through himself could he kill himself. This fight had changed his mentality so much, almost like the time he killed Lin Xiaoting. The moment he struck his alter ego, he felt that his heart and will were as strong as steel. All of his doubts had been dispelled, leaving nothing behind but the intent to void the will of the gods and transcend mortality. Like cast metal, his form was set and firm.

He had once more undergone metamorphic change.

Now, he no longer had any doubts about himself and his relationship with Ying Huo and Meow Meow. Nobody would be able to reach the point he was at before facing themselves first. Once he was done, he was at the brink of death. He had subsisted to the end on willpower alone. But when it was all over, his pain vanished from his body.

He didn't check whether he was injured, as he was focusing on his alter ego dissipating into mist and turning into a white-haired old man. The old man had a kindly expression as he smiled at Tianming.

"Li Tianming, throughout history, there have been none with Aeonian Grandbane that have achieved what you did. You've taken the first step by standing firm and fighting with your will. You have to suffer the pain of Lifesbane first. Only then will you be able to enjoy the benefits that allowed our clan to dominate. Li Tianming, on the day you break your Lifesbane curse, even the sun, moon, stars, earth, and the cosmos will have to part to make way for you!"

Each one of the old man's words resonated in his ears. When the old man finished, he turned back into white mist. Tianming didn't know who he was, nor why he had appeared. It was something with no clear answer, but it definitely had something to do with the Li Saint Clan and Lifesbane. He could do naught but remember how he looked and what he said. Most importantly, he learned the name of what he was suffering from: Aeonian Grandbane.

According to legend, it was the very first Lifesbane that emerged from chaos. The key lay in the 'grand' part of the name. It wasn't normal Lifesbane, but a grand version of it!

"Don't tell me there's a clan that's afflicted with Grand Lifesbane too...." He could only guess; it was still too far off. Even so, it gave him endless hope for the future. He knew that from this day forth, he wouldn't bother to explain himself to those that doubted him.

All he had to do was to prove himself through his actions.

Soon, he felt his ears ringing with the sounds of Feiling, Ying Huo, and Meow Meow. He felt the pain on his body vanish. Looking down, he saw that he was fine.

Perhaps the trial had happened entirely in his mindscape. Even so, he had endlessly benefited from it. Soon, the voices grew louder and he opened his eyes.

It seemed like he had his eyes closed the whole time. It was as if the battle hadn't happened at all. The moment he opened his eyes, he found himself back on the third floor of Prime Tower.

Soon, he heard Feiling's anxious voice. "Big Brother, wake up! Ying Huo and Meow Meow can't take it any longer!"

He just realized that the trial had knocked him unconscious. He didn't know how long he was inactive, but it shouldn't be more than six hours. Now, he saw a battle taking place before him.

Ying Huo and Meow Meow were fighting Yuwen Zhenxing, the Bloodfiend Taotie and Gongsun Chi, as well as his lifebound beast, the Imperial Flame Locust. The locusts frantically tried to attack Tianming, but they were intercepted by Ying Huo. Not to mention, there was a five-sided Spatial Wall protecting him, along with Ying Huo's Infernal Armor.

Even so, Feiling was at her limits. Tianming felt her fatigue from maintaining so many walls. All she could do was fly around and avoid the locusts while Tianming was unconscious. Ying Huo and Meow Meow, on the other hand, remained far away from her. They were occupied, fighting Yuwen Zhenxing and his taotie.

While their foes numbered few, they were incredibly hard to deal with. Tianming saw the wounds Meow Meow had suffered from blocking the hits of the locusts. Ying Huo, on the other hand, defended him from Yuwen Zhenxing and Gongsun Chi. The Yuwen scion had charged toward Tianming. Seeing that he was unmoving, he figured he was rendered unconscious by the third floor. There was no better time to kill him, so they immediately started the fight.

Tianming watched as the little chick fearlessly battled Yuwen Zhenxing. When Gongsun Chi tried to circle around, it desperately shot back to drive him back. By now, its small body was considerably wounded, but it kept fighting like a true man. Even after it fell, it climbed back up and sneered at Yuwen Zhenxing.

"Baldy, what kind of man fights with numbers? I will fight you to the death!" It didn't fear for his own life, but rather Tianming's, especially with the shifty Gongsun Chi in the vicinity.

"Haha, the little chick wants to play hero." Gongsun Chi didn't bother with it and came from behind Tianming. Yuwen Zhenxing joined in with a warblade in hand. They ignored the chick and came for Tianming. "You pathetic losers!" Ying Huo blocked Yuwen Zhenxing and used Voidgod sword ki to force him back in a magnificent display. However, Gongsun Chi's sickle was about to lop Tianming's head off.

The little chick had given its all to block Yuwen Zhenxing's slash, suffering a wound on its imperial wings that showed its bone. Meow Meow was occupied with the taotie, bloodied all over from the tussle. While it usually liked to mess around, its performance now made Tianming's eyes bloodshot.

They were brothers alright; there was no need for words. What he saw was enough to convey that. He blamed himself for not breaking through the tower's challenge sooner and putting them in so much danger. He had sworn to never let them get hurt. The loss of Midas wasn't something he could ever recover from, and he was angry from almost repeating his mistakes.

"Die!" The little chick watched as Gongsun Chi tried to take Tianming's head off. But right at that moment, the white-haired youth suddenly grasped the sickle. Nobody could imagine what happened next: he reversed the sickle and swung, taking Gongsun Chi's head off while his eyes were still widened in shock. The body collapsed in front of Tianming as he tossed the Flamedevil Sickle to the ground.

Now, Tianming wielded Archfiend in his hand. Looking up, he focused his chilling gaze on Yuwen Zhenxing, who stood where he was and watched Gongsun Chi die.

"Li Tianming, how dare you murder him?!" he bellowed.

"Murder?" Tianming smirked. "You lot dared hurt my brothers. Killing him in retaliation is nothing in comparison. Don't forget that I'm coming for the whole Yuwen Clan, too!"

Chapter 276 - Bloodburn Curse, Boiling Fiendblood

"Fool!" There was no situation Yuwen Zhenxing hadn't prepared for. He was someone who had survived countless battlefields. His Bloodsea Field surged around his body, covering the area in a bloody tint. He held a crimson warblade in hand that looked thick and heavy. Its edge was lined with jagged teeth, off of which blood dripped. It was called the Bloodsea Fiendblade. Word was that Yuwen Zhenxing had killed more than five hundred people with that very weapon. He was a true murderer among the disciples of the Grand-Orient Sect, and now he had his attention on Tianming.

"Killing a pentabane like you will be enough for me to brag a lifetime. After all, if you're allowed to develop, you may become an existence on the level of an empyrean saint!" Yuwen Zhenxing said with a twisted expression.

"Penta?" Tianming smiled. He held the twenty-or-so-meter-long Archfiend in hand. He quickly walked towards his foe, causing his chain to scrape against the ground and produce an ear-piercing sound. As he charged, he glanced at the little chick with his burning gaze.

"Kill!" At that moment, the little chick turned into a flaming mirage as it charged toward the taotie's flank. With a burst of Skyscorch Featherblast, countless burning needles shot out. The panicked Imperial Flame Locust that had lost its beastmaster was impaled by countless needles that started burning with an eternal flame. Even the fire-type locust feared this terrifying, hellish flame. At the same time, the little chick doubled down by spitting out a phoenix of flame towards the locust.

"How dare you bully my little brother?!" it chirped with rage as it looked at the bloody marks on Meow Meow. The flaming phoenix enveloped the entire locust, causing it to shriek as it tried frantically to escape, but it was all in vain.

There was no way it could avoid its fate of being burnt to crisp.

"Now it's only you left. I'll let you taste what it's like to be ganged up upon!" Like a descending war god, Ying Huo climbed atop Meow Meow's Regal Chaosfiend form. Meow Meow had been splattered with quite a lot of burning blood and exposed to the bloody miasma that came from the Bloodfiend Taotie's spiritsource ability, Bloodburn Curse.

However, Meow Meow still pounced toward the taotie that was easily twice its size, and countless bolts of black lightning surged forward with it.

The taotie let out an earth-shaking roar. Within its blood-colored field, it and Yuwen Zhenxing's blood started boiling under the effects of its other spiritsource ability, Boiling Fiendblood. Tianming could clearly feel that the two's capabilities had been boosted considerably by its effect, making them look even more savage. Even so, that alone wasn't enough to douse the killing intent in his heart.

The clash started as Meow Meow morphed into a bolt of lightning and shot toward the taotie at blinding speed. Meow Meow was the perfect fighting machine, possessing stellar speed, explosiveness, defense, and ruthlessness. The little chick hid somewhere on the giant cat, wielding its wings and claws that were just as terrifying. The wings, used like swords, executed the Demise of Man-Earth-Heaven and the Voidgod Sword Intent, while both of its claws could be used for Soul Hook and Death Requisition.

When the chaotic lightning bolt clashed with the taotie, the little chick came out in assault. At the same time, countless lightning bolts gathered at the top of the third floor of the tower. When the fight began, the nine lightning snakes circled above it, striking in tandem with each bite, pounce, and claw, causing the taotie to shriek in agony.

"Man, you need to shut up!" The taotie never expected the little chick would fly straight into its mouth. The next time it roared, blood flooded from its stomach and burst out, burning like a stream of magma. It was another spiritsource ability, Bloodsea Forge.

However, Ying Huo was much faster. With a flap of its wings, sword ki filled the area. It cut and tore the tongue of the taotie away and used it as a shield. Blood flooded the taotie's mouth as it desperately spat fire and blood out, to no avail. Ying Huo was nowhere to be seen. Instead, it had remained in the taotie's mouth and gone on a rampage with its bestial arts.

"You think you're so tough, huh? Cry! Cry more for me!"

The taotie was completely floored; it had never met a foe like this before. Even as its mouth flooded with blood, it suffered a blow from Chaos Disaster. The crackling of electricity caused the taotie to roll its eyes. With a loud wham, the Chaos Regal fiend came ramming at it again. It opened its mouth and revealed electric fangs that bit down on the taotie's neck, pressing it to the ground in the process.

That was how lions hunted on the plains. Even when faced with the largest of wild bulls, the lion would bite down on its neck and never let go until its prey stopped breathing. In addition to that, Meow Meow silenced the taotie's struggles with its three-pronged electric tail, plunging it deep into the taotie's eyes and sending even more black lightning into its foe.

The current flowed nonstop through the taotie's body, slowly turning its bloodshot eyes white. Eventually, its frantic struggling slowed down. Soon, a pool of blood had flowed out of its neck. What was more terrifying was the streams of sword ki continually bursting out of its mouth from within, making countless holes in the process.

In the end, the little chick rampaged its way into the taotie's guts. When the ugly beast let out its final whimper, the bloodied chick burrowed its way out of the taotie's belly. Only then did the black cat feel fatigued. It cancelled its Regal Chaos fiend form and lay on the ground licking the blood from its fur. It was probably a clean freak, based on how desperately it was cleaning the gunk from its little head.

Chapter 277 - Live Well in Your Next Life

The little chick was getting worn out. The battle had sapped quite a lot from it. After it killed the taotie, it slumped onto the ground and panted, but it still came up to check on the cat.

"What are you looking at, Chicken Bro?" the cat asked as it frantically groomed itself.

"You aren't injured at all!" Ying Huo complained. It appeared that most of the blood on Meow Meow was that of its foe. To think that it had gotten mad for the lazy cat's sake.

"Well of course. This cat isn't a pushover." Despite its cute appearance and googly blue eyes and pink toe beans, it was the same beast that had savagely pinned the taotie to the ground and rapidly stabbed its eyes with its tail.

"Darn it! I feel like my feelings were wasted on you!" Ying Huo chirped. It really did feel rather mad now, but seeing Tianming back with them made him feel more relaxed. It put both its wings behind its head and laid on the ground with its claws crossed. Somehow, it managed to find a toothpick to bite on as it began to watch the show.

"Chicken Bro, you're too dirty. Let me lick you clean," said the black cat once it finished cleaning itself.

"Hey, phrasing! Other people might misunderstand!"

Each time the cat licked, its rough tongue took a few feathers off it. If it continued, Ying Huo would go bald.

"Stop, Meow Meow!" the little chick cried in pain.

"Hold on. You'll be clean in a jiffy."

"Stop licking! My hairstyle! No! Now my horn is exposed!"

"I think it looks good, meow."

"Really? Then keep licking."

Thus, Tianming's two lifebound beasts slacked off while he continued his desperate battle. Though, calling it desperate did nothing but to add to the drama of the situation, for as far as he was concerned, Yuwen Zhenxing could do naught but lose. That was especially the case after he witnessed the death of his lifebound beast and freaked out.

"Li Tianming!" It almost seemed like his eyes were going to ooze blood.

"Congratulations, you're crippled. I hope you enjoy the retired life," Tianming said as he whipped the chain of eyeballs toward Yuwen Zhenxing from afar.

"Killing my lifebound beast is akin to killing me! You'll pay for this a thousandfold! Even if you manage to leave this place, you're dead!"

"Yuwen Zhenxing, aren't you the naive one? I can hear the fear in your voice. I'm sure even you can't believe you're feeling this way. You thought that with your family backing, I wouldn't be able to kill you even if I was stronger, huh? Too bad you don't understand me well. I'm a reasonable person, you see, but if you look down on me and try to plot against my life time and again, as well as my brothers' lives, I'll send you to hell no matter who you are just for the rush I get! Do you fear me now?!" His lips curved into a sinister smile that chilled even a killer like Yuwen Zhenxing.

With his lifebound beast dead, it was over! Even though he had given it his all fighting Tianming, he couldn't manage to kill him. That was proof of the junior sect master's strength. He was so strong it made even Yuwen Zhenxing shudder. No matter how much he wanted to deny it, his shaking legs revealed his fear.

He had killed more than a thousand people, but even that wasn't enough for him to resist Tianming's sheer will. He had finally been awed by a pentabane. The endless fear brewed into a storm in his head, causing him to feel chills.

"Huff! Huff!" It took all he had just to control his breathing. As Tianming approached, he frantically backed away.

"Are you really the murderous demon others say you are?" Tianming said, dragging the spiked Archfiend behind him as he approached Yuwen Zhenxing.

"If you dare touch me, my grandfather, uncle, and father will make sure you die a horrible death!"

Even the toughest of people would mentally crumble at the brink of death.

"It's a shame you won't live to see it then."

"Die!" Yuwen Zhenxing finally snapped. He used all his energy on a unity-ranked battle art, God of Slaughter's Blade Mantra, and sliced toward Tianming. A dense buildup of ki surged toward the junior sect master. This blade strike was much stronger than Gongsun Chi's attack.

"Yuwen Zhenxing, watch carefully!" At that moment, Tianming's eyes almost resembled his black-eyed alter ego's. Having practiced the Life-Death Whip Art countless times, he was able to effortlessly unleash it. He would transcend life and death with a single whip!

Archfiend shot out and wrapped around the Bloodsea Fiendblade and Yuwen Zhenxing. When the whip tightened, all of the spikes on Archfiend pierced into his body.

In an instant, he had been turned into a pincushion and his battle art had been neutralized by Transcendence. With all the different, complex forms Transcendence was capable of, Tianming could easily use it to kill Yuwen Zhenxing. However, he wanted to show him something instead. He dragged the man toward him as he shrieked in pain, then slammed him onto the ground.

"Do you see it?" Tianming brought his left arm closer to Yuwen Zhenxing. In an instant, the man gasped and paled. He had been shown death through Transcendence, and though he had taken the lives of many, when time came for his own life to be claimed, he broke down.

"What... is this...?" He saw a few black words on the arm.

"These are the bane-rings of my clan. I wonder if you still think I'm really a pentabane."

"Ten!" It was as if lightning was coursing through his body. He turned to Tianming with a gaze of fear and terror. He knew about the five bane-rings on Tianming's right arm, but seeing the other five on the left told him Tianming was in fact a decabane! His eyes were shaking so much they were about to burst. He knew from the revelation that he definitely wouldn't be left alive, and his guess was right.

"Forgive me..." he said, his gaze now empty.

"Maybe next time." Tianming took the spike at the tip of Archfiend and ended it without the slightest bit of hesitation. "Live well in your next life and be sure to not go against me."

Withdrawing the spike, he let Yuwen Zhenxing fall to the ground unmoving. Even now, his eyes were still widened in shock. It was all over.

Tianming took a deep breath.

Chapter 278 - Fortune In The Prime Tower

Tianming released his pent-up breath. The battle he had just fought was nothing; the purpose of killing Yuwen Zhenxing was to provoke a violent storm.

"Hey, how long has it been since I entered the third floor?" asked Tianming.

"An hour and a half. So you have that much time left," replied Feiling.

That was to say, the actual time it took to deal with black-haired Tianming was about half an hour.

"There's still an hour and a half before the test on the third floor will end, and outsiders will realize that Yuwen Zhenxing and Gongsun Chi are dead," said Tianming.

"Big Brother, what'll you do when you leave the tower?" asked the worried Feiling.

"It's not like the word 'murderer' is written on my face," Tianming retorted.

"But they'll know it was you."

"They have no evidence. Don't worry, you'll understand later. I know what to do." Tianming patted his chest, his lips curling in a smile.

Despite her worries, Tianming's nonchalance put Feiling at ease. In truth, she knew the more Tianming behaved like this, the more reliable he was. And a reliable person was always reassuring.

"Ying Huo, burn their bodies," ordered Tianming.

There was no reason to hesitate. One huff at each body, and soon both men and beasts were burned to ashes.

Before that, Tianming had removed Yuwen Zhenxing's spatial rings, grabbing the manna sphere from the first floor and throwing away everything else. Those items were hot potatoes.

The manna sphere in his hand should contain a high-tier terrestrial manna. However, Tianming soon realized there was no manna inside.

There was only one piece of paper that read: Choose one of the following high-tier terrestrial manna.

A total of ten manna were listed on the paper, all of which were available in the Grand-Orient Sect. How convenient for Tianming! He could select the most suitable one.

Fortunately, the Venomfiend Bloodclaw was suited for both Ying Huo and Meow Meow. With how few celestial manna there were, it was naturally impossible to list ten types and select one. The Venomfiend Bloodclaw had originally been specifically reserved for Yuwen Zhenxing.

Unfortunately, Yuwen Zhenxing was dead.

"At the end of the third hour, they'll have to enter the tower and search for a long time. It's more than enough time for me," Tianming muttered to himself.

"Oh don't be so suspenseful. What are you planning?" Ying Huo asked.

"Look at the changes in these two areas," Tianming pointed out.

When he'd defeated black-haired Tianming and regained consciousness, the third floor of the tower had undergone two changes.

The first change—above Tianming's head appeared a passage where one could see the blue sky outside. However, he noticed that the passage seemed invisible to Yuwen Zhenxing, who was just under it. If he had seen it, he'd have escaped. That suggested the passage was meant for Tianming.

"This is the passage for clearing the third floor! Taking the passage is equivalent to conquering the Prime Tower. If the positions of the four prime disciples weren't fully taken, I'd be a prime disciple immediately

upon leaving the tower. Now, though, I'll have to defeat another prime disciple and replace them," explained Tianming.

He already had a candidate in mind, but he was still a step away.

"Big Brother, you mentioned changes in two areas. What's the other change?" wondered Feiling.

"Can't you see?" Tianming turned around and headed to the back. On the ground in front of him stood a small white tower.

"Is there something there?" puzzled Feiling.

Neither Ying Huo nor Meow Meow could see it either.

The small white tower was the same one that had transformed into the black-haired Tianming. It had reappeared after his victory over the mirror image. At the start of his battle with the others, he had already noticed it.

He approached the tower and picked it up.

"I see it now. Isn't this the Prime Tower?" exclaimed Feiling. From her perspective, Tianming had picked up something from the ground that gradually turned into the Prime Tower.

"Yes."

"How's it possible for the Prime Tower to shrink and appear here?"

"I don't know."

However, Tianming thought of the white-haired old man and what he called the Aeonian Grandbane. Perhaps this was a gift from the old man. Just as the thought crossed his mind, there was yet another change.

"The Prime Tower just disappeared!" blurted Feiling.

"It didn't disappear, it's in my lifebound space." Tianming sounded even more surprised than Feiling.

The white tower appeared in his lifebound space. And what was even more amazing was the fact that the remaining eight eggs were arranged in eight directions around the tower, orbiting it in an organized manner.

Now, the Prime Tower was full of ki that enveloped the eight Primordial Chaos Beast eggs and seemed to integrate with them.

"Did something unusual happen?" asked Feiling.

"I don't know. I can't understand what's happening, but it's definitely a good thing," assured Tianming.

"But why are there two Prime Towers?"

"It's very likely that the small one is the real Prime Tower, while the big one may just be a tower," Tianming speculated. That was to say, the white-haired old man had just handed the real tower to him. Of course, that was merely a guess that couldn't be proven.

The small white tower in his lifebound space was currently incubating the Primordial Chaos Beast eggs. When the little chick and black cat returned to the space, they sensed the change.

"That's strange. The spiritual energy of heaven and earth inside is very abundant, almost the same as standing next to Li Shenxiao's tomb," voiced the little chick.

"Doesn't this mean we can cultivate at advanced speeds any time, anywhere?"

Tianming was amazed. Generally speaking, when lifebound beasts cultivated together with their beastmaster while they were in the lifebound space, they relied on the beastmaster to absorb the spiritual energy of heaven and earth through their unity field. This was the first time he had heard of a lifebound space that possessed its own spiritual energy.

In this way, they could absorb spiritual energy internally without needing to pass it through Tianming's unity field, so the effects would be far superior.

"If we recuperate next to the Prime Tower, the speed of our recovery is accelerated," beamed Ying Huo. Their previous injuries were healing at a speed visible to the naked eye.

"Amazing!"

The appearance of the Prime Tower was simply a godsend. Additionally, there might be other effects.

"The Prime Tower is our greatest gain this time! In comparison, although the two manna are precious, they obviously can't be compared to this treasure."

Over the past few days, Tianming had heard a lot about the Grand-Orient Sword and the Prime Tower. It was the first ancestor, Li Shenxiao, who had obtained the two sacred objects in a place called the Theocracy of the Ancients, which was said to have been forged by the gods.

Now the tower had become his, while the tower in which he stood was probably just a special building.

"Yuwen Shendu plans to visit Heaven's Elysium to compete for the Grand-Orient Sword. I'm afraid they never imagined I'd obtain the real Prime Tower. Even the Gods are on my side," Tianming said, his eyes burning with passion.

Chapter 279 Battle of The Prime Disciple!

All three treasures were in Tianming's hand!

Yuwen Zhenxing and Gongsun Chi had paid with their life, a result that could only be described with three words: feels damn good! The best recompense was the Prime Tower, which equipped both Ying Huo and Meow Meow with tremendous combat strength and endurance. In the future, all they had to do was return to his lifebound space to recuperate after suffering injuries and they would be back at their peak condition in a matter of minutes. Such a miraculous treasure couldn't be found in the entire Grand-Orient Realm.

Even generations of the Li Saint Clan ancestors had never obtained the real tower.

"The Grand-Orient Sword must be an unrivalled divine artifact. The prime disciples will participate in the Realm Wars, so perhaps I can, too!" Tianming smiled.

He could see a bright, limitless future ahead.

"Big Brother, although you have the Prime Tower, you killed Yuwen Zhenxing. Won't the Yuwen clan kill you as soon as you leave the tower?" Feiling failed to comprehend.

"If I become a prime disciple before they find Yuwen Zhenxing's body, they won't be able to kill me," explained Tianming.

Killing a direct disciple and killing a prime disciple were two completely different things. Since a direct disciple only belonged to one elder, the killer would offend that elder alone. Though Ye Shaoqing might demand a life in return, the council of elders was unlikely to step in during this special period. However, prime disciples belonged to the entire Grand-Orient Sect, which included the council of elders; that is, they belonged to all thirty-three elders. To publicly kill a prime disciple would require the approval of all thirty-three elders.

Tianming understood the delicate balance between the Yuwen Clan and the council of elders. Before the results of the Realm Wars were known, no one would willingly break the balance. Although the Yuwen clan dared to suppress Ye Shaoqing, they would have trouble going against the entire council of elders; especially at this critical moment.

"So if you choose to defeat a prime disciple in three hours instead of a month from now, you won't die?" asked Feiling.

"Yes, Ling'er. When the time comes, even if they know I killed Yuwen Zhenxing, there's no evidence. Whether or not I'm the murderer isn't actually important. All that matters is my position and strength. This time, I've finally come to that realization. All along, I didn't want to offend the Yuwen clan because I was worried about Master. Now, it seems that as long as I give them a headache, they'll always find reasons and means to kill me. Since that's how it's destined to be, I might as well kill a few of them first."

In fact, Tianming was well aware that the moment Yuwen Zhenxing had died, he'd already stepped into a battlefield of life and death. However, he had a clear line of reasoning. As a genius, he had to win over those in neutral positions by leading the masses and displaying his outstanding talents so they would hate to see him die.

Cowardice was a death warrant. If he proceeded bravely, a magnificent road awaited him! Becoming a prime disciple was his best opportunity to unsettle the council of elders; therefore, killing Yuwen Zhenxing wasn't a matter of momentary recklessness, but the result of careful planning.

"I see. As long as you're safe and sound, I'll be at ease."

"Ling'er, I'm sorry for worrying you," Tianming said.

"It's alright. Nothing untoward will happen if we're together!" assured Feiling.

Lips curled in a wide grin, Tianming looked up at the passage in the sky.

"Big Brother, won't it be difficult to defeat Su Wuyou now?" Feiling wondered.

"Yes, which is why I'm not in a hurry to leave."

Tianming wasn't planning on increasing the difficulty of battle.

"What will you do, then?"

"Cultivate and advance."

Unexpectedly, Tianming actually sat down. Today's struggle had caused numerous breakthroughs in his state of mind. In fact, it had been ten days since he'd advanced to fourth-level Unity. Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Tianming were stuck on the border of fifth-level Unity, having so far failed to advance.

This time, he perceived a change. All the killing intent from the battle with the black-haired Tianming, as well as Ying Huo and Meow Meow's distress, had loosened their bottlenecks. At that exact moment, Tianming was enlightened with a deeper comprehension of Unity.

Perhaps that was the sentiment of true brotherhood. Ying Huo and Meow Meow weren't pets; they were his flesh-and-blood brothers. Tianming was deeply moved after witnessing the bloody battle they had fought to protect him.

Even the lazy Meow Meow, who only ever cared about sleeping, had fought against the gigantic Bloodfiend Taotie and suffered harassment from the Imperial Flame Locust. That was something Tianming would never forget.

His lifebound beasts were indomitable! Perhaps not at first, but Tianming's temperament had wrought a great influence on them. At Unity, the beastmaster and his lifebound beasts were one.

Fighting on the edge of life and death was the key to advancing. Of course, their efforts were built on outstanding talent and solid foundations as well. Those ten days of cultivation had laid a strong foundation for breaking through to the next level.

The three began the final sprint toward fifth-level Unity. Brothers who fought side by side, they had integrated their Unity field, racing toward the next level like an irresistible force. Breaking through to fifth-level Unity had only been a matter of time, and now the time had come.

"A few life and death battles were enough. I can't let the three of them keep taking risks with me. So I must become stronger and crush my opponents. What's the point in torturing myself?"

Tianming wasn't that kind of person. He wanted to crush his enemies until they begged for mercy. Hence, he wasn't in a hurry to leave, and instead stayed to communicate and share with Ying Huo and Meow Meow what he had learned from his battle with the black-haired Tianming and Yuwen Zhenxing.

Most importantly, the spiritual energy of heaven and earth supplied by the Prime Tower had an effect on their cultivation equivalent to that of Li Shenxiao's tomb.

"Moving forward, us brothers will only grow more united."

"Yes."

"Kill them as they come, bring chaos, and leave nothing behind."

"Protect Ling'er together!" declared Ying Huo.

"Fuck off, that's my job," Tianming retorted.

"Then I'll protect my Xiao Yueyue," said Ying Huo.

"Aren't you starting a harem?"

"That's right. I'll protect Xiao Yueyue, riding the donkey while I search for horses in expansion of my harem."

"How dare you call Shuo Yue a donkey! I'm going to tell Qingyu when she comes back."

"Tianming, how dare you betray your brother!" roared Ying Huo.

"Um, can we speed things up? This cat is sleepy," interjected Meow Meow.

"Get up!" yelled Tianming.

"Why sleep so much now? You can sleep all you want when you're dead!" chided Ying Huo.

"But Chicken Bro, I'm afraid I won't die."

That was indeed a valid problem.

Tianming continued leading their cultivation, inspiration pouring out from him. Meanwhile, Feiling helped regulate his breathing. When the conditions were right, success would naturally follow.

"Fifth-level Unity, success!"

Breaking through, a smirk rose to Tianming's lips. He and his two lifebound beasts continued to grow at an unprecedented rate. This was the body of a decabane, the talent of an Aeonic Grandbane.

Perhaps life and death were intertwined and the path ahead was filled with thorns, but one thing remained constant: Tianming's talent was undoubtedly unparalleled in the entire Flameyellow Continent. Both his talents and his lifebound beasts were perfect.

The recent breakthrough had brought about yet another surge in strength.

"Among those under Heavenly Will, I'm invincible. Even Li Yanfeng, before arriving in Ignispolis, wasn't my opponent. My progress is astounding."

It had only been a few months since he moved to Grand-Orient Sect. Despite the pace at which he progressed, he remained stable. And to this, Tianming had only three words to say: feels damn good!

"There are a hundred thousand people outside, thirty-three elders, and the Yuwen clan waiting for the results of the third test. They're all looking at the top of the tower to see who makes it out."

There was still an hour before the struggle on the third floor would draw to a close and they discovered Yuwen Zhenxing's death, which was enough for him to become a prime disciple.

Tianming stood up, ending their cultivation.

"I've kept you all waiting."

His eyes burning, he leaped off the ground and his Celestial Wings gained momentum. Like a ray of light, he burst out of the tower!

As soon as Tianming stepped out on top of the Prime Tower and faced the sunshine and blue sky, appearing before everyone, he found that all eyes in the First Grand-Orient Sect Battlefield were focused on him. Under the sun, the young man's white hair flew in the wind; he was a magnificent sight to behold.

At that moment, it was as if a god had descended.

Deathly silence pervaded through the First Grand-Orient Battlefield for a whole ten breaths. Then, a sudden roar of cheering swept through like a storm at sea. What a monumental scene indeed!

1. This is a Chinese idiom that means settling for the current option till a better one comes along.

Chapter 280 - Pointing The Sword At Su Wuyou

Emerging from the top of the Prime Tower could only mean one thing: Tianming had passed the test of the third floor! If the positions for prime disciples weren't fully occupied, he would be a prime disciple at this very moment.

How was this progress achievable by a young man who had spent less than three months in the Grand-Orient Sect? Among the hundred thousand spectators present, the more familiar they were with Tianming, the more shocked they were. In truth, all they had expected was for Tianming to live through the tower.

Yet only two hours had passed, and he'd actually cleared the third floor.

Countless looks of astonishment were riveted on him.

Nobody in the audience had ever regarded Tianming as a wastrel, and all were well aware of his heaven-defying talent. But out of convention, they had never imagined he would perform so unbelievably.

The cheers from the audience swept across like a violent storm.

"Junior sect master!"

"Li Tianming!"

"This is how a junior sect master should be! Talented enough to become a prime disciple!"

Tianming's popularity in the Grand-Orient Sect reached a peak at this moment. Their enthusiasm for him was almost comparable to that of Yuwen Shendu and the other three prime disciples.

Additionally, they knew very well that even Yuwen Shendu had failed to show such progress. He'd surpassed his peers, but had never exceeded their imagination. However, Tianming's growth had repeatedly toppled their beliefs.

A lion defeating an elephant would cause little amazement, but an ant lifting one would be truly shocking. However, Tianming had more important matters to handle.

Ye Shaoqing, on the other hand, failed to remain calm. He stood by the window, dumbfounded. Next to him stood Ye Yuxi, who had the same look upon her face.

"Did he cheat? Did the Li Saint Clan's ancestors open the back door for him?" Ye Shaoqing stared blankly.

"How can you question your own disciple?" Ye Yuxi chided.

Ye Shaoqing fiddled with his fan, trying to regain his composure. When he turned around, he noticed a teary-eyed Ye Qing.

"Old man, are you crying? Are you moved?" asked Ye Shaoqing.

"Oh, stop fanning. You've blown the wind into my eyes!" Ye Qing said, then turned his gaze back to the young man on top of the tower.

"He gives me the same impression as the first ancestor," remarked Ye Qing.

"He does resemble the portrait," said Ye Yuxi.

"So?" asked Ye Shaoqing.

"Protect him with your life. Don't worry about the Ye clan. We will fight them to the death!" Ye Qing gritted his teeth.

"Old man, you have courage," said Ye Shaoqing.

"Li Wudi, the shock caused by your son far surpasses yours. It seems you can take that last step with peace of mind." Ye Shaoqing knew better than anyone else what responsibility the sect master had to shoulder.

Thus, he left the hall of Azure Immortal Mountain and walked up to Tianming.

"What are you doing here?" Tianming asked.

"You're precious now, so of course I'm here to protect you from being slaughtered," said Ye Shaoqing.

"Isn't this rather excessive?"

"You haven't seen the expressions on the Yuwen clan's faces," said Ye Shaoqing.

With Tianming in tow, he returned to the First Grand-Orient Battlefield. At this exact moment, Tianming could feel fiery gazes upon himself, probably from the Yuwen clan.

However, the looks of admiration and fanaticism far outweighed the menacing looks shooting from the Yuwen clan. The words 'junior sect master' echoed through the First Grand-Orient Battlefield, giving him the chills.

Tianming wasn't aware what kind of discussion was under way at the hall of Fengtian Mountain, much less how many were determined to kill him.

Upon realizing Tianming's popularity, Yuwen Kaitai said, "Did we underestimate the influence of this annoying fly? I think we need to kill him as soon as possible, regardless of how Ye Shaoqing resists."

"The speed of his progress is truly miraculous. I think Kaitai makes sense," Chen Nantian frowned.

"Leaving the third floor of the Prime Tower proves he's not simple. He already has the qualification to challenge a prime disciple. Throughout the next month, he can still make progress. If he does defeat a prime disciple, I'm afraid Huangfu Fengyun and Ye Shaoqing will join forces."

Second elder Su Yun turned to look at Su Wuyou, acknowledging she was the weakest prime disciple. A month from now, Tianming was bound to challenge her. Although Tianming was currently no match for her, who knew how far he would grow in a month!

"We have to make our move. I've underestimated him, never expecting a pentabane to show this much talent," admitted Yuwen Fengtian.

The others glanced at Yuwen Taiji, who was considered the most authoritative among them. Even his father, Yuwen Fengtian, listened to him.

Eyes narrowed, he declared, "I'll do it. I'll kill him before he becomes a prime disciple." The insignificant fly he once cared nothing for had originally been chosen as a training opponent for Yuwen Shengcheng. Afterward, he was designated for Yuwen Zhenxing, instead. With Tianming's current achievements, he could only be suppressed by Yuwen Shendu. Yuwen Taiji didn't want to rock the boat, let alone allow Tianming to continue growing; his talent was gradually breaking the delicate balance between the elders.

This was definitely not a good sign.

A genius at Unity wasn't much use; however, he would pose a threat if he managed to sway the neutral members on the council of elders. Thus, Yuwen Taiji made a decision.

"When Zhenxing leaves the tower and the Prime Struggle comes to an end, I'll head to Azure Dragon Sword Mountain and personally swat this fly. Leave Ye Shaoqing and the others be. The day we seize the Grand-Orient Sword and return to the sect is the day we annihilate the Ye clan," Yuwen Taiji's voice resounded in the empty hall.

At this point, his impatience was obvious.

"Big Brother, Ye Tianlong has taken refuge in our clan," prompted Yuwen Kaitai.

"Kill him."

"Yes."

Yuwen Kaitai lowered his head, well aware that his eldest brother despised people like Ye Tianlong. Right now, they were waiting for Yuwen Zhenxing to leave the tower, so the Prime Struggle could draw to a close.

However, contrary to their expectations, Tianming didn't return to Azure Dragon Sword Hall. Instead, he consulted Elder Su Zhen, "Excuse me, elder. Does passing the Prime Tower give me the qualification to challenge a prime disciple and replace them?"

Su Zhen turned pale. "Yes, you have a month to prepare."

The eyes of the audience shone with excitement and eagerness for the show ahead. All they had to do was wait another month.

Unexpectedly, Tianming drew the Onyx Dragon and descended onto the First Grand-Orient Battlefield, pointing his sword at Fengtian Mountain as his voice boomed with majesty, "I don't need a month, I'll challenge a prime disciple right now!

"Su Wuyou, I'll give you ten breaths to show yourself!"

Silence reigned as the audience stared blankly at Tianming.