

The Ages 371

Chapter 371 - Earthorigin Realm, Hellshaker Black Tortoise

Tianming had no idea how many people he killed. This was a battlefield, and he had killed more people than he normally would in a lifetime. But it was inevitable. Under this atmosphere, everyone had been turned into killing fiends. After all, they had to kill or they would watch their companions being killed. There's no turning back once you're on the battlefield.

A battle with your life on the line could allow one to grow, and Tianming had gained many insights in the process.

"So much death is the result of the Imperial Will and the Emperor's rage? The Elysian Emperor is the emperor of the Grand-Orient Realm, and it was his ambition that resulted in so much bloodshed." Imperial Will was a positive, but there were some negative sides to it as well, and Tianming had firsthand experience of how terrifying it could be.

He only knew what war was after looking at the corpses and blood that littered the ground. This had all been caused by the Elysian Emperor. Tianming gained an insight as he continued the slaughter. "So, this is a crucial insight into the Heavenly Will realm. Furthermore, many insights come from battle and slaughter."

Tianming had slowly found his own Imperial Will in the bloodshed. This battle had greatly benefited him, and it was all because he had to be on the front line as the junior sect master. This was definitely the most earth-shattering sect war in the history of the Grand-Orient Realm.

"Yuwen Taiji first allied with the Onyx Sect. And although father had grudges with him, he still inherited Yuwen Taiji's will. This is also the reason why we're able to slaughter our enemies. So that means that Yuwen Taiji made a great contribution to the sect. No wonder father had to emphasize that killing Yuwen Taiji was because of personal grudges...." Tianming could clearly see that most of the corpses lying on the ground belonged to the Cloudmist Sword School and Heaven's Elysium. They had gone too deep into the barrier, and facing an army of similar numbers that wasn't affected by the barrier, along with Sikong Jiansheng's death, the army had collapsed, and not many of them managed to escape.

But the battle was still ongoing. The purifiers hid behind the keepers, so the keepers would die before them. As for Tianming, he had already killed many purifiers. They weren't much older than Mu Yang, but all of them had died in Tianming's hands.

All of a sudden, the earth began trembling right before Tianming's eyes and a colossal beast broke out from the ground; it was a tortoise beast.

Black tortoises were top-tier lifebound beasts, and they were on the same level as phoenix and dragons. But even among black tortoises, there were differences. This black tortoise before him looked enormous, with an impenetrable defense. Even the snake looked incredibly tough. In its eyes were fifty-six stars!

"A fifth-order saint beast!" Tianming was shocked. A fifth-order saint beast was at least on the level of Ye Shaoqing. Among the younger generation, no one had such a powerful lifebound beast aside from Yueling Long. Moreover, this colossal tortoise was clearly growing.

Standing on the black tortoise's head was a young man with brown eyes. Judging from his appearance, he only seemed to be in his twenties at best. But that young man had a powerful aura with a pair of ferocious eyes. It was clear that he had a noble bloodline, otherwise he wouldn't be looking at Tianming from high up with disdain.

"Who are you?" Tianming questioned. His danger sense was giving off alarms when he saw this young man.

"You're not qualified to ask me that question!" the young man sneered. In the next second, his fifth-order saint beast slammed on the ground, sending countless spikes rising from the ground in Tianming's direction.

Tianming immediately flew into the sky to avoid the spikes. On the other hand, Meow Meow struck the tortoise shell with Chaos Disaster, but the shell was tough and took it head-on.

"You want to run?" Neither the young man nor the black tortoise could fly, but the young man leaped into the sky. He chased after Tianming and threw a punch, creating rumbling noises that instantly broke apart Jiang Feiling's Spatial Wall. "Since you dared to kill Jun Nianchang's woman, you can only dream of escaping after meeting me!"

Tianming could sense that this young man was at least in the seventh-level of Heavenly Will. He turned around and threw out the Trivita Fiendfist—Cataclysm. But when their fists clashed, Tianming flew into the sky and spurted a mouthful of blood from the impact.

He's strong! Tianming was puzzled. After all, there shouldn't be anyone who could injure him with a single punch at such a young age, aside from Jun Nianchang. Honestly speaking, he was reaching twenty-one, and he wasn't any younger than his opponent. If he included the Aeonian Grandbane, he would be reaching twenty-five!

He could tell that his opponent wanted to capture him. The young man jumped once more when he touched the ground. But it was a pity that his punch had blown Tianming away, and relying on the rebound force and his wings, Tianming had climbed to a higher altitude. Moreover, the shock that Tianming felt to his internal organs gradually recovered thanks to the Prime Tower. Although he wasn't injured, Tianming was furious that he was being suppressed by someone close to his age. He didn't recall that there was such a figure among the five sects. "Who are you?!"

"You're pretty good at running. But you're dead the next time I catch you," the young man said, a sneer on his lips. He couldn't be bothered to tell Tianming about his identity because he felt that he was unworthy. But just as he was speaking, someone suddenly appeared before him and threw a punch.

The black tortoise immediately summoned a huge shield around them. When the shield shattered, the young man and black tortoise had both been blown away, gushing blood from their mouths as they fell to the ground.

When Tianming looked over, he saw it was Yuan Huntian. As the hall master of the Azure Dragon Sword Mountain, Yuan Huntian was a saint. So he was more than enough to crush this young man.

“He’s not dead?” Yuan Huntian landed on the ground and charged over at the young man once again. Although Tianming didn’t say anything, he knew Yuan Huntian had been following behind him, worried that he might encounter a formidable foe.

When Tianming saw Yuan Huntian, he descended from the sky. This wasn’t a spar, but a life and death battle. So even if the young man was powerful, he wouldn’t be able to escape death facing Yuan Huntian’s attacks.

Yuan Huntian threw out another punch, one that was ten times stronger than the previous. It would instantly kill the fifth-order saint beast if his fist connected.

“STOP! I’m Yuan Chen, the junior sect master of the Earthorigin Sect! If you dare to kill me, my Earthorigin Realm’s army of five hundred thousand will trample your Grand-Orient Sect!” The youth was covered in dirt as he got on his feet, resorting to threats since he was facing a saint.

Although he sounded arrogant, he was terrified by Yuan Huntian to the point of immediately declaring his origin. To protect himself, he even mentioned an army of five hundred thousand to threaten the Grand-Orient Sect. Now that he had suffered a loss, he finally became obedient.

“Earthorigin Sect?!” Yuan Huntian immediately stopped to look at the young man in shock.

“A fifth-order saint beast, Hellshaker Black Tortoise—you’re indeed someone from the Earthorigin Sect. The Grand-Orient Realm doesn’t have a black tortoise bloodline. But why are you here?! This is a sect war and it has nothing to do with the Earthorigin Realm!” Yuan Huntian clearly didn’t dare to kill the young man.

“I’m a good friend of Jun Niancang. So why can’t I be here?” The young man’s gaze turned dark.

“Jun Niancang is also here? Is he dead?” Tianming immediately came up and asked with a murderous gaze.

“How can he die when you and the Grand-Orient Sect still exist? You’re nothing but a frog in a well,” Yuan Chen mocked.

“I bet that tortoise doesn’t dare to come in. Oh, wait... you’re the tortoise!” The Hellshaker Black Tortoise was a combination of a tortoise and snake, so wasn’t it naturally a tortoise?

It was taboo to call the Earthorigin Sect’s clan a tortoise clan, so Yuan Chen immediately flew into a rage. “You’re courting death! Come and fight me if you have the guts! Don’t just hide behind someone else!”

“Do you think I’m an idiot? Get lost immediately. Otherwise, don’t blame anyone if you die here.” Tianming smiled. Tianming could tell that Yuan Chen was clearly stronger than him from their previous exchange; he was at least in the seventh level of Heavenly Will, not to mention that he even had a fifth-order saint beast, the Hellshaker Black Tortoise. So Tianming wasn’t foolish enough to court death. After all, there were plenty of chances in the future for them to fight again.

“Coward!” Yuan Chen mocked.

“Scram!” Yuan Huntian roared, showing that he would make his move if Yuan Chen still stayed around.

“I’ll remember you! As for you, you’re dead!” Yuan Chen sneered and burrowed into the ground with the Hellshaker Black Tortoise, escaping the battlefield. It seems that he was relying on his unique lifebound beast to not be affected by the fog, which was the reason why he had dared to enter. If Yuan Chen hadn’t revealed his identity, he would’ve already been killed by Yuan Huntian.

“Young sect master, there’s nothing we can do about him. The Earthorigin Realm is just beside the Grand-Orient Realm, not to mention that they’ve already unified their entire realm. So they’re stronger than Heaven’s Elysium. And we can’t kill him, since he proclaimed that he’s their junior sect master,” said Yuan Huntian.

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll take revenge in the future, if there’s an opportunity,” said Tianming. Yuan Chen was pretty daring to wander around on the battlefield, and had even attacked Tianming.

“With your talent, it’s just a matter of time before you defeat him. There’s something that I admire about you, your ability to control yourself. You can bow your head when needed, and you’ll never put yourself at risk if you’re not confident about it.” Yuan Huntian smiled.

“Is that how you compliment someone?”

“Haha!”

So it turned out that Yuan Huntian had been protecting him in the dark.

“Junior sect master, we’ve almost won. This battle will surely create a huge sensation and leave a mark in the Grand-Orient Realm’s history!” The purifiers had also collapsed after the keepers.

“Junior sect master, let’s go and watch a show!” Yuan Huntian laughed.

“What do you mean?”

“Did you not see that the masters of our sect and the Onyx Sect have already surrounded the East Cardinal King, Jun Dongyao, and the forty elders that came with him?”

When Tianming turned around, he noticed that all of the Cloudmist Sword School’s elders had been eradicated, so Li Wudi, Ye Shaoqing, and the Onyx Emperor had gone after Jun Dongyao. Yuan Huntian brought Tianming and headed over to the final battlefield. “We’re finally going after those arrogant bastards now!”

Chapter 372 - The Army Falls

The ninety-nine imperial dragon pulses all gathered and glared at the enemy. However, all of a sudden, their gaze shifted to Li Tianming. Tianming was stunned when he felt some activity from the Prime Tower and the third egg. However, he wasn’t sure if the sensation was a mistake.

The next moment, the enemy was surrounded by the dragon pulses. These enemies were led by the Cardinal King, Jun Dongyao. There were nearly fifty of them, and they were the strongest in Heaven’s Elysium’s army.

These previously cocky elders now all had ashen expressions, especially Jun Dongyao. He had come full of confidence as reinforcements, wanting to immediately render merit. As soon as he arrived, he had

successfully forced the Onyx Emperor to abandon his Empress and begin the assault on Grand-Orient Sect.

“Cardinal King, the Cloudmist Sword School is almost wiped out!”

“Our Elysium purifiers have suffered heavy losses. We’ve lost nearly twenty of our seventy thousand!”

Several elders spoke with pain.

“I know!” Jun Dongyao shouted hoarsely. He could no longer stand straight on his feet when all he could see were corpses of his purifiers.

“Cardinal King, how will we explain this to the Elysium Emperor when we get back?”

Jun Dongyao nearly coughed out blood himself when he thought about the Elysium Emperor coughing out blood. He roared, “Shut up! All of you just shut up!”

“Dammit! We lost so badly, and Sikong Jiansheng even got himself offed by some kid!”

“That fucking Onyx Sect! They actually dared turn traitor!”

The elders could only powerlessly complain now.

Before this cruel reality, the years of arrogance Jun Dongyao had cultivated came crashing down. His heart felt like it was being ripped apart by these scenes.

“Cardinal King, what should we do now?”

“Run!” Jun Dongyao spat out that humiliating word. It was an utter humiliation to say that; however, was being humiliated the end of it?

“Friends from Heaven’s Elysium, aren’t you being too optimistic?” Cutting off the direction Heaven’s Elysium’s elders were fleeing in was Li Wudi, with Ye Shaoqing and the Onyx Emperor flanking him.

They were accompanied by many onyx elders, as well as Grand-Orient Sect chiefs and hall prefects in the Saint stage. Their number was nearly twice that of Heaven’s Elysium!

Perhaps it might take two or three chiefs to fight off one elysium elder. However, they had Li Wudi, the Ancient Infernalblood Kunpeng, the Grand-Orient Barrier, and the ninety-nine imperial dragon pulses on their side!

“Li Wudi!” Golden light emanated from Jun Dongyao’s eyes as he looked at Li Wudi. They were of the same generation, and Li Wudi had even once been insignificant and the laughingstock of the Grand-Orient Sect. But he, Jun Dongyao, had been the legend of his generation!

“Jun Dongyao, who the hell do you think you are to call me by name?” Li Wudi snorted.

“Don’t be too pleased with yourself. You think this ragtag bunch can stop my Heaven’s Elysium?” Jun Dongyao roared. “All elders, follow me as we carve a path out in blood!”

They were certainly an impressive sight. However, what Li Wudi wanted to do was to crush that impressiveness.

“My brothers from the Grand-Orient Sect, it’s time to wipe clean all of our humiliation. My brothers from the Onyx Sect, it’s time to have your vengeance!”

In response, both sects charged in for the kill.

Jun Dongyao still daring to fight at this point could only be chalked up to him being too arrogant. He still didn’t believe Heaven’s Elysium could lose! His eyes locked on to Li Wudi’s, and Li Wudi’s blood-colored eyes were fixed on his.

The ninety-nine dragon pulses rushed forward, each elysium elder having to suffer the attention of at least two, as well as various saint experts! As time passed, corpse after corpse of elysium elders fell.

Wielding a weapon with thirty heavenly patterns, the Elysium Vajra Halberd, Jun Dongyao took on Li Wudi. He was also a twin beastmaster. Tianming had seen his fifth order saint beast, the Elysium Brilliance Dragon, before. However, now there were two of them!

Elysium Radiance!

Elysium Form!

Two spiritsource abilities burst out. A scintillating pillar of golden light shot at Li Wudi, while Elysium Form caused the two dragons to double in size until they were even bigger than the kungpeng. Jun Dongyao grew to over six meters in size as well. It almost looked as if his body was forged with gold. Before him, Li Wudi looked like a baby.

Jun Dongyao was much stronger than Sikong Jiansheng. Without the Grand-Orient Sword, Yuwen Taiji wouldn’t be his match either.

However, the kungpeng simply spat out a blood-colored current that eradicated the pillar of golden light.

“Die, Li Wudi!” Jun Dongyao unleashed a saint-ranked battle art, God Beheader! “You can’t handle my Elysium Form!”

“Is that so?” Li Wudi smiled. Then, blood ki filled the world!

Jun Dongyao wasn’t bad. Li Wudi hadn’t been able to one-shot him. However, that didn’t change the fact that they were on different levels.

Tianming’s blood boiled as he watched. The kungpeng took on both dragons simultaneously and dragon scales flew into the air. At the same time, Li Wudi, saber in hand, utterly crushed Jun Dongyao.

The ear-piercing clang of metal rang out again and again, until the saber swept past Jun Dongyao’s head, decapitating him!

“Ahhh!!” The giant golden head was still screaming as Li Wudi grabbed it.

Finally, the corpse fell to the ground.

Everyone watched as Li Wudi soared into the air, holding the giant head aloft. “The Cardinal King Jun Dongyao has fallen! Elysium purifiers, are you not surrendering yet?”

The mist receded as Li Wudi spoke, allowing all the purifiers to see Jun Dongyao's head! Their morale was instantly broken.

"Haha, sorry, sorry, that was a joke. I'm not accepting surrenders today. All of you must die." Li Wudi tossed the head aside, then started a massacre.

The bugle horn blew to order the final charge. This was war, not a game. It was them or us! Mercy would only cost your fellows' lives.

All of the Grand-Orient guardians and Onyx legionnaires felt their morale soar, Tianming included. As for the Elysium purifiers and Cloudmist keepers, the only thought in their minds was to flee when they saw all the dead elysium elders.

Of sixty thousand Cloudmist keepers, not even ten thousand had escaped. Bloody and battered, they all rushed in the direction of Cloudmist Sword School like stray dogs. From now on, this sect war wouldn't have much to do with the Cloudmist Sword School.

This defeat had dropped the Cloudmist Sword School to a third or fourth-rate sect! For at least a thousand years, they wouldn't recover.

However, even unluckier was Heaven's Elysium's army. They were all surrounded and ganged up on, especially by the Onyx legionnaires. In the past, Heaven's Elysium had killed at least thirty thousand of them. Practically every legionnaire here today had a brother or friend among the dead. They hadn't been happy to attack the Grand-Orient Sect, because the ones they truly wanted to kill belonged to Heaven's Elysium!

And now, their wish had come true.

Even if Li Wudi had wanted to spare the Elysium purifiers, the Onyx legionnaires wouldn't have been willing to.

By the end, not even five thousand purifiers managed to successfully escape. And only six elders fled. The rest were either dead or captured.

The battle had come to an end.

The casualties had been heavily skewed toward the Cloudmist Sword School and Heaven's Elysium. The Grand-Orient Sect and Onyx Sect actually had very few casualties, thanks to their advantages.

The result of this battle would shake the Grand-Orient Realm for years to come.

"Ha! Heaven's Elysium thought they could make our Onyx sect submit! They thought they could make us their dogs, but that was their biggest mistake! We never forgive and never forget! We were just waiting for an opportunity. Thank you, brothers from the Grand-Orient Sect, for this chance!" Tears were flowing from the Onyx Emperor's eyes as his voice reverberated everywhere.

"Thank you!" the Onyx legionnaires roared.

"We also thank the brothers from the Onyx Sect. We could only turn this around today with your help. Next, let's look forward to when the Elysian Emperor hears the good news!" Li Wudi's words made everyone break out into cheers again.

Next, they divided the spoils of war. The treasure left behind by a third of Cloudmist Sword School and Heaven's Elysium was enough to make both the Onyx Sect and Grand-Orient Sect stronger.

Tianming also received quite a bit. However, he suddenly felt his scalp tingle. Looking up, he saw the ninety-nine imperial dragon pulses looking at him again, or, more accurately, the third egg in his lifebound space. Or perhaps, the most accurate description would be that the third egg was staring at the dragon pulses.

"That can't be. It should be a dual-type. These dragon pulses are earth-type spirit hazards. They can't help support the symbiotic cultivation. Don't be impulsive, it's not time to hatch yet!"

However, the Prime Tower seemed to be trembling. Tianming wondered if perhaps it had a way of keeping the dragon pulses for now.

Chapter 373 - Primordial Mountains and Seas World

The Grand-Orient Sect and Onyx Sect were currently cleaning up the battlefield and treating the injured. However, they didn't expect the imperial dragon pulses to wrest free of their control at this moment. Roaring, the dragon pulses gathered above Li Tianming.

"What's going on!" Stunned, they watched as they descended toward Tianming. "Junior sect master!"

The dragon pulses had charged many a time like this during the war, and had killed many. Now, they were doing the same thing to the junior sect master.

"Who's controlling the dragon pulses? Is there an enemy at the core?"

"That can't be. He's not marked by the barrier. Even if someone turned traitor and is controlling it, they still can't make the spirit hazards attack!"

It all happened too fast for even Li Wudi and Ye Shaoqing to react, and Tianming was swallowed up!

"Tianming!" Li Wudi rushed over.

However, the dragon pulses couldn't be stopped. If they intended to kill him, a moment would be enough to turn him to dust. At that moment, white light suddenly shone out from the center of the dragon pulses. A massive white tower appeared where Tianming was, seemingly protecting him within.

"The Prime Tower! Wasn't it on the Sacred Mountain?"

To the Grand-Orient Sect, the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower were treasures of equal importance. However, the sword was more valuable. That was because the Prime Tower was fixed at the Sacred Mountain and unusable by others.

"The tower is protecting Li Tianming!" Or rather, it was more accurate to say the tower was sucking in the dragon pulses. Dragon pulse after dragon pulse entered the tower, gradually turning it light brown.

No one had even comprehended this new development before the mighty dragon pulses were all gone. And then, the tower vanished.

The only one left was Tianming! He looked completely unharmed. However, his eyes were closed and he was frowning slightly, as if he was uncomfortable.

Presently, Tianming was experiencing a vision of a shocking world. He had experienced this twice before. The first time, he had seen an eternal flaming bird devour the sun. The second time, he had seen a lightningfiend born from primordial chaos refining countless worlds.

This was the third time!

He was standing in the endless void, a massive continent without end in front of him.

There were countless mountains on that continent. Nine of them in particular that were so massive they reached the heavens. Countless beasts roamed the mountains, possessing endless longevity. Stars glittered in the sky, all giving off scorching light. Tianming didn't have to count to know that there were at least ninety thousand suns there baking this continent.

However, all of the life on this divine land easily withstood it, a clear indicator of how powerful every creature was.

The crux was that this was just one side of the continent. On its reverse side lay nine azure seas. One of them was even so deep that it was bottomless. They were filled with all kinds of aquatic life, all massive in size and some even bigger than planets!

Above those seas were ten thousand blue moons, all giving off ethereal blue light and making the nine azure seas incomparably beautiful.

"What is this place?" Tianming was once again stunned by the scale of the Primordial Chaos Beasts. It was no wonder they had billions of stars in their eyes.

Suddenly, as if to answer him, a name appeared in his mind: Primordial Mountains and Seas World.

Where did this world exist? Was this really a world? Tianming could see this boundless continent was slowly moving through the endless void. It seemed the continent, with its mountains and seas, was itself a living creature.

Then finally, Tianming saw it. At four different corners of the continent, four limbs extended. They were dragon claws, so massive in size that countless living things existed on them.

One side's two dragon claws were formed from seawater. There were countless dense scales on them, each like a continent.

As for the other two, they were formed from soil and had numerous sharp brown scales.

At the very end of the continent was a thick dragon tail. It had eighteen rings of scales, of alternating blue and brown. At its end, it split in two, tapering off in two sharp ends.

Then, what would be at the front of the Primordial Mountains and Seas World?

Tianming looked there and saw two massive dragon heads. The left was brown, while the right was blue. The brown head was filled with power, while the blue head was beautiful.

This was the truest of divine dragons, imposing and massive.

“This isn’t just the boundless Primordial Mountains and Seas World, this is also a two-headed dragon! It had nine mountains on its back, and nine seas on its bottom half! It nourishes countless living things as it roams the void.”

At this point, how could Tianming not realize this was his third Primordial Chaos Beast?

“What kind of dragon is this? Well, this one definitely looks the part of a Primordial Chaos Beast!” Although Tianming was shocked, it wasn’t his first time, so he still remained calm.

Although the third egg hadn’t hatched yet, perhaps the Prime Tower had let him see this scene ahead of time.

It was at this moment that the black hand turned up once again, just as Tianming expected. It slapped downward, causing mountains to collapse and seas to roll as countless creatures died.

Draconic scales were ripped off!

No matter how furiously the dragon howled, it couldn’t defy that black hand!

And once again... “Henceforth and forevermore, I am the master of all primordial chaos and reincarnation.”

Suddenly, Tianming felt his face burning, as if someone had slapped him.

“That...” Tianming hadn’t finished cursing before the vision was replaced by Li Wudi’s glaring face!

“What did you hit me for!” Tianming said, dissatisfied. If not for Li Wudi, he could have watched the shocking scene for even longer.

“You little bastard. You really screwed me over!” Li Wudi wanted to cry but had no tears.

“Li Wudi, is your son fine? Where did the imperial dragon pulses go?” the Onyx Emperor asked.

“Haha! The Prime Tower kept it for a bit. No worries, I’ll release it in the Abyssal Battlefield soon,” Li Wudi laughed. He hurriedly continued, “Brother, what are you waiting for? Quickly release Brother Onyx Emperor’s wife!”

“Yes,” Ye Shaoqing said.

When the Onyx Emperor heard that, he quickly departed with Ye Shaoqing.

“Tianming, quickly release them! Those are for protecting the sect!” Li Wudi hurriedly pulled him aside.

Tianming felt a headache coming on. He saw the Prime Tower was already back in the lifebound space. It had temporarily turned brown, and the imperial dragon pulses had already been absorbed. The tower was actually covering the third egg, as if it were incubating it.

The dragon pulses were slowly being absorbed by the egg. However, it still wasn’t hatching, probably because they were lacking water-type spirit hazards.

“Godfather, this was absorbed by the Prime Tower. I can’t do anything,” Tianming said helplessly.

Without the dragon pulses, the Grand-Orient Barrier would drop in power by at least half.

“You... you, my god, you really screwed me over!” Li Wudi said.

“It wasn’t me!”

“Speaking of which, since when did you have the Prime Tower? I was wondering why the Prime Tower on the mountain had lost its spirituality. So, you’d taken it away.”

“An old man gave it to me during the Prime Struggle.”

“Describe him.”

Tianming went through what had happened that day.

“That was the first ancestor, Li Shenxiao.” Li Wudi was flabbergasted.

“So?”

“I’m envious of you, but that doesn’t change how you screwed your dad over!” Li Wudi grit his teeth.

“Don’t sweat the small details. By the way, are there any water-type spirit hazards in Grand-Orient Realm that are of equal level to the imperial dragon pulses?” Tianming asked expectantly.

“The Southsky Barrier was created by the first ancestor as well, and has ninety-nine azure dragon pulses,” Li Wudi said.

Tianming’s eyes lit up!

“Little punk, what are you thinking?” Li Wudi asked warily.

“Nothing much, I was just thinking I wanted to take a vacation to the Southsky Sect when I have the chance,” Tianming smiled.

Chapter 374 – The Blood Puking Jun Shengxiao

Outside the Grand-Orient Barrier.

“Dead, they’re all dead!”

“Damn the Onyx Sect, curse those traitors!”

Shrieks of anger and misery could be heard everywhere as eight thousand Cloudmist keepers scrambled back to their own sect.

“This will be the end of our sect. Thousands of years of history all gone to waste, and the Cloudmist Sword School is no more.”

“Run while you still can, forget Heaven’s Elysium!”

The Cloudmist keepers weren’t the only ones in distress. The Elysian purifiers who were lucky enough to escape the slaughter were also wandering the mountains like headless flies. With their numbers limited and their morale gone, they no longer posed a threat. The priority for them now was to heal the injured with spirit herbs before their injuries worsened, then find their way back to their own sect.

Some of the remaining Elysian elders gathered in a corner together with Jun Niancang, who was still alive. He had intended to join the battle during the final cleanup, but the Onyx army joined the fight before that could happen. He could only watch helplessly as the Cloudmist keepers and the Elysian purifiers were slaughtered inside that living hell.

“Grand-Orient Sect, Li Wudi, Li Tianming!”

It was like the last day of the Realm Wars again, when he had witnessed Yueling Long being killed. But this time, it was the Elysian purifiers being destroyed, and he even saw his eldest brother, Jun Dongyao, being beheaded. He remembered the giant golden head glistening under the sun, its eyes open wide with fear.

Jun Niancang could feel a flame of hatred engulfing him and his eyes were bloodshot. As he put his hands on Yueling Long’s crystal coffin and looked at her resting peacefully, he couldn’t help but spit out a mouthful of blood. He remembered his promise to wipe out the Grand-Orient Sect and bury her on the peak of the Sacred Mountain. But reality was far from that, and it was Heaven’s Elysium that was on the chopping board instead.

“How did this even happen....” Jun Niancang’s teeth were stained with blood and his hand trembled on top of the coffin. His hatred was gradually consuming his humanity.

“You were way too careless and arrogant. Although the Onyx Sect lost their barrier and are unprotected, you should’ve factored in the possibility that the Grand-Orient Sect could offer them protection. Either you were made careless by their obedience, or you underestimated your enemies,” Yun Zhenzhen said indifferently. What she said sounded harsh, but it wasn’t her people that died.

“You’re right. We paid a price for disrespecting our enemies.” Jun Niancang could feel himself burning up. The mist inside the Grand-Orient Barrier had cleared, revealing the piles of bodies that belonged to the Elysian purifiers and the Cloudmist keepers.

“How are you going to report this to your father?” Yun Zhenzhen asked in a more serious tone.

“How else? We lost, but it’s not over yet. My father shall slay those bastards!” Jun Niancang’s eyes glowed even redder.

“Jun Niancang, you’ve changed. You used to purely pursue martial arts, but now you’re blinded by hatred,” Yun Zhenzhen sighed.

Just then, Yuan Chen returned, his face pale and clearly injured.

“I thought you died in there,” Yun Zhenzhen said.

“It was close. I took a punch from a senior. If not, I would’ve helped apprentice-brother Jun bring that Li Tianming out.” Yuan Chen grit his teeth.

“He was there on the battlefield?” Jun Niancang asked.

“Yes. And he killed quite a few people, in fact. He was the one who finished off Sikong Jiansheng, too,” Yuan Chen hissed.

“How interesting,” Yuan Zhenzhen smirked, curious about Li Tianming after hearing so many stories.

“Shame I wasn’t inside,” Jun Nianchang said gloomily.

“It wouldn’t change anything. If it weren’t for my Hell-Breaker, I would’ve died in there too. You fell right into their trap this time,” Yuan Chen said, unsatisfied with how this battle turned out.

“Yuan Chen, do me a favor,” Jun Nianchang said seriously.

“What is it?”

“You mentioned last time that your second uncle Yuan Hun is here in the Grand-Orient Realm, right? Can you contact him?”

“And?”

“Help me ask if there’s any chance Earthorigin Sect is willing to help Heaven’s Elysium.”

“Alright, I’ll pass that message.” Yuan Chen was briefly stunned before he answered.

“The least we can do is to make that Li Tianming pay for what he did.” Yuan Chen’s gaze was grim.

“Have you developed a hatred for that boy, too?” Yuan Zhenzhen asked.

“Well, not really. But so far in my life, I haven’t left any person that I dislike alive. Why should I make an exception here?”

.....

On one of the uninhabited islands near Southsky Sect, the main bulk of Heaven’s Elysium army was waiting for good news to arrive back from the Grand-Orient Sect, many bored by the lack of action. That was when Jun Nianchang and six elysian elders returned with barely two thousand men left. They faced the hundred and eighty thousand strong army, the most awkward one being Jun Nianchang. He was still carrying Yueling Long’s crystal coffin around, which could be considered somewhat disrespectful to the deceased.

“What happened?” The Elysian Emperor, three Cardinal Kings, and over a hundred Elysian elders who were there to welcome them gawked. It was as if time had stopped, and no one dared make a move or sound.

“So? Did you attack the Grand-Orient Sect?” the emperor snarled.

“Father!” Jun Nianchang and the rest dismounted from their beasts and dropped to their knees, many of them crying and covered by blood. It was a pathetic sight to behold, and one that took the army by surprise.

“What happened? Why are you back?”

“How did it go in the Grand-Orient Realm? How many people did we lose?”

The three elysian elders were the first to break the silence. But the returning group were all silent, their faces red with anger and sorrow. With only one option left, everyone turned to Jun Nianchang, who was the one in charge.

“Father!” Jun Niancang banged his head to the ground and said with grief, “Elder brother and Sikong Jiansheng commanded the hundred and thirty thousand men to attack the Grand-Orient Realm. But the moment we stepped into the Grand-Orient Barrier, the Onyx Sect turned their swords against us and attacked us together with the Grand-Orient guardians!”

“Their betrayal was too sudden! The elders from the Onyx Sect also caused the Grand-Orient Barrier to double in power. As for Sikong Jiansheng, he was slain by Li Wudi right at the beginning of the battle, causing the Cloudmist guardians to fall apart.”

“In the end, only about twenty thousand people made it out alive. Elder brother was also slain by Li Wudi!”

“Not only did we lose the sect war, but we lost horribly!”

No one interrupted Jun Niancang, and the entire island fell into dead silence as he finished reporting with his head still glued to the floor.

“Haha... Niancang, this really isn’t funny. The Onyx Sect doesn’t even have a barrier, so how could they ever dare to betray us?” the South Cardinal King laughed, trying to ease the atmosphere. But when he turned back, he could see that all of the purifiers present had gone pale.

“We accept any punishment from the emperor!” the two thousand people cried, all of them banging their heads on the floor. The emotions they showed proved that they definitely weren’t joking.

“So, there’s only so few people left?”

“Even if you couldn’t win, shouldn’t there be more who could escape the barrier? Where are they?”

“The East Cardinal King is dead?”

“Yes!” Blood and tears formed a small puddle under Jun Niancang’s head. His reply was enough to stir a storm in the army.

“No!!” Many burst into tears as a wave of anguish swept across the island.

“Seventy thousand guardians, sixty elders, and this is all that’s left?” The South Cardinal King trembled.

“Yes!” Jun Niancang hit his head on the ground again and again, ignoring the blood flowing out from his forehead.

Many of the elders and guardians had collapsed to the floor as if they had been struck by lightning. The Elysian Emperor himself was holding on to his chest as he spat out blood three times in succession. He had to take multiple steps back to steady himself.

This was the first time Heaven’s Elysium had witnessed the emperor having a breakdown. Most knew him as one who wouldn’t show his emotions easily, even when the Grand-Orient Sword was taken away. But this time, Jun Dongyao had died in battle, and seventy thousand men had perished together with him. This was no doubt the biggest blow he had taken since the beginning of this war.

“Your Majesty!” Many were worried about his reaction.

“Dongyao’s body, did you bring it back...?” He asked, his voice trembling.

"No...." Jun Niancang was still repeating the same action.

Everyone knew the emperor had intended to take over the Grand-Orient Realm without losing a single man. But in reality, not only had they achieved nothing, but they'd also lost nearly one-third of their power! It was an outcome that hadn't appeared even in their wildest imagination.

"Curse the Grand-Orient Sect, curse the Onyx Sect!" the army roared.

With an earth-shattering boom, the emperor dropped to his knees, the impact of his action causing at least a thousand people to take a step back. But it was his heart that bled the most.

"Jun Shengxiao!"

At that instance, a voice suddenly ringed from the direction of Southsky Island. Two figures had appeared outside the giant water ball—Weisheng Cangyuan and Weisheng Tianlan.

Chapter 375: Wei Qing's Letter

Weisheng Cangyuan laughed heartily and said, "Jun Shengxiao, you've never lost even once in your entire life. I bet you didn't think your first loss would be so dire!"

Behind him stood many experts from the Southsky Sect, all of them outside the barrier.

"You'll never take the Grand-Orient Realm! Who do you think you are to force others to submit to you and use them as cannon fodder? You thought you held fate itself in your hands. Now, I'm sure you just realized what kind of mistake you've made. You deserve all of this for not caring about the people you want to give their lives for you! This is the karmic retribution you've earned after decades of ruthless domination!"

Weisheng Cangyuan was on top of the world. He loved seeing people suffering the punishments they deserved. Who was it that had fanned the flames of war and bullied other sects in the first place? None other than the Elysian Emperor!

"Jun Shengxiao, come fight us! We of the Southsky Sect don't fear you! If you don't plan on coming, don't bother approaching. Stay there like a cowardly mutt! I, Weisheng Cangyuan, look down on you!"

The surroundings rumbled with the laughter of the countless members of Southsky Sect. It cut sharper than any knife ever could have.

"Shut up!" Many people from Heaven's Elysium raged, but that only served to expose their positions. It was the worst shame they had felt ever!

"Heaven's Elysium is nothing but a bunch of cowardly bastards! Why are you on my doorstep? Are you stray dogs begging for food?"

Laughter filled the surroundings once more. Even though Heaven's Elysium's army had twice their number at a hundred and eighty thousand people, their morale was at rock bottom, having suffered the loss of a third of their entire sect. If they were to force an attack on the Southsky Sect now, not only would they fail, but they would pay a heavy price—at least a hundred thousand more deaths! Not to mention, the Southsky Sect's morale was at an all-time high.

"We can't fall for their trap! The moment the other two sects come to reinforce them, we'll lose even more!" Despite saying that, losing seventy thousand was already far beyond what the Elysian Emperor could tolerate.

"Oh? You're not attacking then? Can I assume you're here to beg?" Who could have expected the once-arrogant Heaven's Elysium would suffer such humiliation? Every one of them was fuming with rage. "Those who like to mock are often mocked themselves. Jun Shengxiao, drag your ass back from whence you came! Oh, wait, a cowardly tortoise like you probably already has its ass in its shell! There's nowhere for you to drag it back to!" Weisheng Cangyuan laughed loudly once more.

"Kill the Southsky Sect and Weisheng Cangyuan!"

"Obliterate them!"

"Flatten the Southsky Sect!"

The Elysium purifiers were so enraged that their mouths were on the edge of turning into bloody fountains. Everyone turned their gaze to the shamed Elysian Emperor. Would he really swallow the humiliation without retaliation?

The Elysian Emperor raised his head and wiped the trace of blood off of his mouth, having calmed down. Then he raised his hands and announced, "Retreat to Heaven's Elysium!"

"Huh?" All the Elysium purifiers were dumbstruck. While they knew their sect was on the verge of extinction for the first time in a millennium, with the achievements of their forebears nearly all wiped out, were they really going to leave like beaten dogs?

"I didn't think they'd run after having their dignity stomped on. How unseemly."

"Go back home and eat dogshit!"

Mockery and laughter came from the Southsky Sect's side once more as the hundred-and-eighty-thousand-strong army retreated, leaving behind a trail of tears of humiliation. They had come all this way only to leave without doing anything.

Weisheng Cangyuan's words never rang truer than they did now: those who like to mock are often mocked themselves. Heaven's Elysium had always operated like they owned the place and had no regard for others, yet they had forgotten that beasts driven to desperation often bit back. And this time around, the bite tore open their jugulars.

Heaven's Elysium had grown complacent throughout their millennium of supremacy. And now, they were being paid back the debt of pain they had inflicted upon others.

.....

An army of bright white and gold were solemnly retreating. Atop a snow-white divine dragon sat the Elysian Emperor and his son, Jun Niancang, facing each other. The winds blew strongly, causing their long hair to flutter. The two of them seemed calm, as if they had already snapped out of the shock.

"Father, everything will go back to normal, right? We'll slaughter all these pigs, right?" Jun Niancang asked.

"That's right." This was something he had promised his son some time ago. "They were right. All my life I have only lost just this once. This lesson has truly come with an enormous price, but there won't be a second loss."

Jun Shengxiao watched the vast expanse of the realm with a cold gaze; he was the epitome of calm.

"Father, I have someone to introduce to you," Jun Niancang said.

"Who?"

"Yuan Hun of the Earthorigin Sect."

"I was just about to seek him out!" the Elysian Emperor said, his eyes glowing.

"There's nothing more flattering than to be sought after by the Elysian Emperor himself," someone said as he came onto the white dragon. The figure was dressed in a long, black robe and he seemed so frail and slender that he almost resembled a wraith. He had a pair of green eyes that glowed like wisps in the dark, giving him an eerie appearance.

"Greetings, Elysian Emperor," said the figure with his hands raised in salute. His palms were as bony as his frame suggested.

"Long time no see, Yuan Hun. Why didn't you come visit Heaven's Elysium to rest up, since you were here in the Grand-Orient Realm?" The Elysian Emperor stood with his hands behind his back, seeming far calmer than before. Only those who could resist humiliation and still act casually were fit to aspire to greatness. If it were anybody else, they wouldn't have ordered their troops to retreat, on account of the dignity they would lose, not to mention regaining their rationality in the depths of humiliation.

"You were busy unifying the realm, Elysian Emperor, yet this lowly one was only taking a leisurely trip. I wouldn't dare to impose."

"We lost too horribly this time. I hope it at least made for an entertaining show," Jun Shengxiao replied jokingly.

"My condolences. To be honest, even I never could've imagined Li Wudi would achieve such heights."

"There's no need to bring up the past. Did Yuan Chen tell you what my intentions are?"

"He did."

"What do you think of it? Or rather, what does the Earthorigin Sect think of it?"

"Shall I be frank?"

"Please do."

"If you're willing to cede the hundred and thirty countries the Cloudmist Sword Sect controls to the Earthorigin Sect, we'll send our own to directly occupy the land. We'll also bring a hundred sect elders and a hundred and fifty thousand Earthorigin defenders to your aid until you unify the Grand-Orient Realm!"

"That is a staggering demand indeed, for your side to demand a fifth of the Grand-Orient Realm's territory," Jun Shengxiao said with an intense look.

"Elysian Emperor, that is a reductive way of putting it at best. We're willing to send so many of our own to fight to their deaths by your side. That entails great risk for us. As such, nobody will come without a reward. Not to mention, with the Cloudmist Sword School crippled, not even you would be able to hold such a large border.

"Considering the fact that they're located just at the border of Earthorigin Realm, our sect is just next door. As you may know, the Earthorigin Sect is always serious and never haggles. Not to mention, you're our friend and ally, so we're willing to take some losses for a friend. I wonder what you think about the points I've highlighted?" Yuan Hun finished with his eyes letting out a glowy pulse.

"Haha...." The Elysian Emperor waved his hand and asked, "When are you sending your troops out?" It was a sign of his agreement.

"Oh, the Elysian Emperor sure is decisive. The ceding of territory has to first be officiated by the Theocracy of the Ancients. Once you notify the Divine Capital about ceding the territory to us and get their authorization, we'll immediately send out our troops." Yuan Hun seemed well prepared.

"Then it'll be a month, at least. Perhaps even three months."

"Oh? Will the timing be an issue?" Yuan Hun asked.

"You think?"

"Haha, I can't even guess. However, I look forward to the day you unite the Grand-Orient Realm and fulfill your destiny!"

All the while, Jun Nianchang watched silently from the sidelines. He knew that the Grand-Orient Realm had never had any territory ceded in the past ten thousand years. Now that his father was the new ruler of the realm, he was forced to rely on the Earthorigin Sect and hand over a fifth of the realm's territory. Was that really what an Elysian Emperor should do? Or was it an act of a traitor of the realm?

Though Jun Nianchang had no answer for that, he understood one thing: his father and sect were definitely not in a state of calm. While he still seemed to be able to chat and laugh, the loss he'd suffered had caused his mind to erupt like a volcano.

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The battle had ended not long ago. One of the Grand-Orient guardians Ye Shaoqing had sent to Vermillion Bird returned with a letter addressed to Tianming. It looked like his mother's handwriting.

"I was just back at Ignispolis. I wonder why mom's writing to me so soon?"

Upon opening the letter, it read, 'Tianming, after Uncle Yang's lifebound beast evolved into a saint beast, he has considerably grown in power. We want to travel around and see the world with our own eyes. Next time we meet, you'll have to start calling Uncle Yang your dad. P.S. don't miss me too dearly, alright?'

Tianming felt his head spin after he finished reading it. "Gosh, isn't this too abrupt?" His expression was one of total dumbfoundment. "They hooked up? Damn, what about my biological father, Li Muiyang? Did he just get cucked? Man, the world of adults sure is messed up!"

It took him quite a while to properly calm down. The guardian told him that Mu Yang and Wei Jing had left after bidding farewell. With him protecting his mother, she should be quite safe, but...

"How can she just hook up with another man like that? She didn't give me any time to get used to it! Well, it's Li Muiyang's fault that he left my mom alone for two whole decades! He deserves to wear a green hat!"

He decided he wouldn't stick his hand into his mother's affairs. It was her decision to make, and twenty years was probably plenty long enough for her to move on. As for Li Muiyang, Tianming didn't think too much about him, for he hadn't even met him once.

Well, he would let things take their course. At the very least, he trusted Wei Jing to be someone who thought through huge decisions like that.

Chapter 376: Terrifying Vortex-like Heavenly Will

Within a pavilion at the peak of the sacred mountain sat Li Wudi. He was sunbathing and sipping wine, watching the clouds roll by and humming a tune. Ye Shaoqing was nearby, fanning himself with a hand fan as he said, "I heard the Elysian Emperor vomited blood on the spot when he heard the news. It truly is relishing to hear."

"Well, vomiting blood isn't a big deal. What is it how he was mocked and provoked by the Southsky Sect and had no recourse but to command a humiliating retreat!"

"Then again, for someone like him to be able to retreat despite the huge blow to his dignity shows how troublesome he can be to deal with."

"That's right. I believe that he won't attack from now on, unless he has at least a seventy percent chance of succeeding," Li Wudi said.

"Well, you did manage to kill Jun Dongyao. I doubt he'll be able to endure this for long. If anything, I think he'll jump at the chance to fight us again. Though, I'd personally like it if he would wait for a bit so we may have better odds. We can't wait too long either, as our pals from Onyx Sect will have to eventually return to the Onyx Hole."

"Then we'll have to give Heaven's Elysium another heavy blow!"

Their gazes locked as they smiled at each other, before they finally felt an awkward attraction sparking between them. "Ptooy!" The two spat in disgust at the same time, though the identical reaction only served to prove the opposite point.

"I heard you decided you won't be marrying again," Ye Shaoqing said after he awkwardly cleared his throat.

"Well, I don't need to. I already have my daughter. What about you?"

"Well, I don't have anyone I particularly like. There's too many beauties and I don't even know where to start."

The two's eyes met again and they almost balked. Nothing was more awkward than two single men hanging out by themselves.

"By the way, Yuan Huitian just reported something to me," Li Wudi said, changing the subject.

"What is it?"

"He met the junior sect master of the Earthorigin Sect, Yuan Chen, on the battlefield."

"You think they'll stick their hands into our matters?"

"With the Grand-Orient Realm now in chaos, it's not really a surprise. If it were you, wouldn't you take advantage of the chaos to reap some benefits?"

"I would, but will the Elysian Emperor let them?"

"While he might not have before this, I can't say for sure now. As calm as he wanted to appear, we all know that Jun Shengxiao's true personality is anything but."

Li Wudi's mouth curved into a smirk. Just as he prepared to pour Ye Shaoqing another cup of wine, he felt a chill down his back all of a sudden. "Who is it?" he snapped, turning his head back.

Ye Shaoqing also stood up with Azureflame Emyrean in hand. This was the Grand-Orient Sacred Mountain, so no expert should be able to appear next to a sky saint like Li Wudi without making his presence known.

Li Wudi turned back and saw a black-haired man in black robes. Unlike Li Wudi, he looked completely refined and tranquil, though he seemed as mysterious as a pitch-black vortex. His eyes almost seemed like two glowing mirrors, making it impossible for others to tell what he was thinking. Beside him stood a young girl that seemed much more normal in comparison, but Li Wudi could tell that the young girl was actually a tribane of the Li Saint Clan.

"Who in the world are you?" Li Wudi drew his Crimsonblood Saber immediately.

"Wait!" Ye Shaoqing said, pushing his hand down, then looking a little blankly at that person. "Brother Mu Yang, why are you here?" He noticed that Mu Yang looked completely different from how he seemed before.

"Do you know them?" Li Wudi asked.

"This is Tianming's mother, and this man here is—"

"His father," Mu Yang interrupted.

Li Wudi's eyes brightened as he slapped his thighs and laughed. "I was wondering why he seemed a little familiar. So they're in-laws! Oh, wait, no! He's a comrade! We're both Tianming's dad!"

"Don't mess around. He's the real one and you're just a bargain-bin tie-in," Ye Shaoqing said. Even so, he still felt really shocked at how his scalp tingled when he looked at Mu Yang. "Brother Mu Yang, are you still the same person you were a few days ago?"

He recalled that Tianming hadn't called Mu Yang his father back then. He could also tell how serious and perplexed the two seemed.

"Yes," Wei Jing replied, much to Ye Shaoqing's relief.

"I knew that Brother Mu Yang wasn't just an average person, but I didn't think it would turn out like this. It's no wonder you have such a talented son as Tianming. I wonder, did you come to the sect to look for him?"

"We're not here for him, but you two instead," Mu Yang said.

"Let's take our time and talk over some drinks. I'll treat you to the finest brew of our sect," Li Wudi casually said.

"We can't stay long. Brother Li, Brother Ye, we came here today to ask you for help."

"Friend, just tell us what you need. Consider me your sworn brother on Tianming's account. Please don't hold back," Li Wudi said.

"I need the best manna, as many as possible, and spirit gems. Ideally with saintly heavenly patterns," Mu Yang said directly.

"Oh?" Li Wudi and Ye Shaoqing's eyes met again, both shocked.

Li Wudi continued, "What kind of manna do you need?"

"Mountain or water, ideally ones that are dual-types."

"No problem. Mid-grade mountain-water celestial manna is the best I can offer you for now."

"Thank you, Sect Master. Tianming really is lucky to have such a generous godfather like you," Wei Jing said.

Mid-grade celestial manna was enough for his lifebound beast to evolve into a fifth-order saint beast. These items would no doubt be the most cherished of treasures in any sect, yet Li Wudi was able to just casually give it to them.

"You're too polite, Sister-in-law." Li Wudi handed over a spatial ring and continued, "Brother Mu Yang, we've gotten quite a lot of spoils from the recent victory. The sect master of the Cloudmist Sword School and the East Cardinal King's belongings are also within. There's about a dozen saint-level treasures. Please take it all." To think that he would be so generous as to give Mu Yang the wealth Sikong Jiansheng and Jun Dongyao carried on their person.

"Brother Li, words can't express how thankful I am. I'll definitely pay back this generosity," Mu Yang said.

"There's no need. It must be fate for us to meet out of all the other people I could've run into. Let's not split hairs over something like this. Tell me if this isn't enough—I have some more."

"Thank you!" Mu Yang looked at them solemnly and said, "It just so happens that I'm also surnamed Li. We are of the same clan."

"Haha, our meeting has truly been nice."

"Once again, I have to thank you two. Time is running short, so we have to leave," Mu Yang said.

"Won't you see Tianming?"

"No. Also, please don't tell him that we've come."

"Why not?" Ye Shaoqing asked.

"You really don't know what life is going to throw at you next. It turns out that we'll have to run for our lives soon," said Mu Yang.

"Understood. So this could involve Tianming as well, huh?" Li Wudi asked.

"Not for the moment. In fact, we have to lead our pursuers as far away as possible. If someone too powerful shows up in the future, please don't resist them. I have ways of dealing with them," Mu Yang said.

"Understood. Godspeed!"

"Brother Wudi, you're a genius who managed to change your fate. Let things take their course and you'll eventually be able to surpass the Life-Death Tribulation and achieve godhood!"

"I humbly accept your best wishes," Li Wudi said as something flashed across his eyes. As far as he was concerned, there were fewer than five people who even knew the words 'Life-Death Tribulation', not to mention that Mu Yang thought he could achieve godhood. Was he really someone from Vermillion Bird?

After saying their goodbyes, Li Wudi and Ye Shaoqing watched as Mu Yang and Wei Jing faded away from their eyes.

"How do you feel?" Ye Shaoqing asked.

"Weird, really weird!"

"How so?"

"He's only at Heavenly Will—the sixth level, to be exact—but I felt a pressure from him that surpasses that of even an empyrean saint! This pressure comes from his soul, his Heavenly Will! How can I describe it? It's like a Heavenly Will that has insight beyond the Empyrean Saint stage! How can someone like this still just be at Heavenly Will?" It really didn't make sense to him. Only someone who didn't have enough resources to progress to match their level of insight could possibly be like that. Yet, how could someone have such a powerful heavenly will in their sea of consciousness?

"His heavenly will was like a boundless vortex, an abyss without end," Li Wudi said with a furrowed brow.

"I got it!" Ye Shaoqing exclaimed.

"Got what?"

"A few days ago when I went to Ignispolis, his lifebound beast only had eight stars. That day, I gave him a mid-grade terrestrial manna. Yet now he suddenly showed up asking for more manna and cultivation resources. Basically, he really does lack cultivation resources. However, the insight into Heavenly Will within his sea of consciousness is a sign that as long as he has enough resources, he'll grow at a terrifying rate until his actual level catches up with his insights. Also, he mentioned they were running for their lives and drawing pursuers away...."

"That's right. Tianming's background truly isn't simple. I wonder if it has anything to do with the Theocracy."

"Let's keep this among ourselves. If his parents aren't willing to disclose it, we shouldn't do so either."

"That's a given."

Li Wudi felt a little unnerved, despite sitting within such a calming pavilion.

"Those people are not like me. I can be considered to be a young genius with exceeding talent that rose back to prominence after my fall. Like Tianming, my growth still has limitless potential. But that fellow was strong to begin with. His strength isn't his talent, but rather his vortex-like Heavenly Will. Given his stable Heavenly Will, his level will recover to what it once was. It isn't actually growth. But if even someone like him has to go on the run, just who are the people that are pursuing them?"

Li Wudi wanted to help out, but it appeared that this was far beyond his means.

"With the Grand-Orient Realm fallen into chaos and under threat from forces within and without, we should look out for ourselves, first," Ye Shaoqing said.

"Where's Tianming?"

"Probably still cultivating in the mausoleum."

.....

Under the veil of night, three black-clad old folks appeared on the wide, expansive plains. One of them stretched out a palm, from which a small, heavenly pattern barrier sphere manifested. The fist-sized sphere seemed to give off a dark glow as it spun, causing many of the patterns on it to swirl together.

The other person was holding a large map. "It really took quite some effort to transfer the Cyclic Barrier onto the map! This thing only works to show the location of the Cyclic Mirror once every three days. The next activation is in two hours. So let's head to the Grand-Orient Realm, first."

It seemed like they were afraid of causing a commotion, for they flew across the skies far above the clouds. Within two hours, they arrived at their destination.

"Now, let's determine their locations once more!"

It had been three days since they had last pinpointed the mirror's location. Under the moonlight, the Cyclic Barrier gathered the moonlight and shook for a time, then focused a beam onto the map.

"Earthorigin Realm, Woodsprite Kingdom, Fallbear City!"

Their expressions immediately shifted.

"That is truly fast! They reached the Earthorigin Realm in three days!"

"We have to give chase!"

"Since the Cyclic Mirror has shown up, he'll definitely not escape!"

Chapter 377 - Shenxiao Sword Ar

On Shenxiao Mountain within Li Mausoleum, Tianming had one hand on the Grand-Orient Sword and the other on Li Shenxiao's tombstone. The sword supplied arcane energies, while the tombstone and Prime Tower supplied spiritual energy that was superior to what he could glean from spirit gems with saintly heavenly patterns.

Behind him was Feiling, dressed in a light-blue miniskirt and leaning against a boulder. She crossed her fair legs and focused her attention on reading.

She was quite the oddball, having read many books like historical chronicles, encyclopedias, and even some about battle arts and cultivation. She not only read at a staggering pace, but also had impeccable memory. Not to mention, she also had a strange interest in heavenly patterns and the Heavenly Will stage.

The boy trained while the girl read, and neither interacted with the other, but the atmosphere around them was rather pleasant. If not for the tombstones around them, one might even say it was a little romantic.

After Tianming finished his daily training, he would play around with her or go to the sacred mountain to visit Qingyu, who had just broken through to the ninth level of Unity. She had finally caught up to Su Wuyou and was trying to advance to Heavenly Will.

"Qingyu, ever since you overcame Lifesbane, your rate of growth is catching up to mine. I bet my talent will rise even more once I overcome my own as well."

That was the key right now, as Tianming was already showing immeasurable talent even before he overcame his Lifesbane. Yet Li Wudi and Qingyu only rose quickly after overcoming theirs.

At that moment, the gold heavenly patterns from the sword, as well as the white saintly heavenly patterns from the first ancestor's tombstone, swam around Tianming's body. They looked like ten gold dragons and ten white dragons. In time, Tianming noticed that the two different patterns seemed to blend together.

"I wonder if anything will change if I bring the sword and tombstone together..." Both of these things did in fact belong to the founding ancestor, Li Shenxiao, after all. He paused his cultivation and placed the tip of the sword against the tombstone.

That caused the two patterns to collide without passing through Tianming as a medium. All of a sudden, the tombstone shook just like Tianming's heart. Next, the tombstone no longer glowed gold like before. Instead, he saw a sight of boundless mountains and rivers on the tombstone, as if it was real. The tombstone wasn't huge, but he could see so much detail from the visual it provided. It showed tens of thousands of cities, cultivation sects, and people.

"There's people inside!" Feiling said with shock. Tianming looked at where she was looking and saw some mountains that looked just like the Grand-Orient Mountains. There, a white-haired, white-clad old man wielding a black and gold greatsword exuded a dominating presence. He stood at the peak of the mountain, brandishing his sword as the masses worshipped him, then turned his head and locked gazes with Tianming.

"Shenxiao Sword Art!"

It was as if he said these words to Tianming.

"This is definitely the ultimate insight of the founding ancestor! It's a battle art that's made to suit the Grand-Orient Sword!" Tianming exclaimed.

It was definitely an accident. He had no inkling that the tombstone would have such a reaction. It seemed that wine wasn't the only prerequisite to unlocking the legacy left behind by the ancestors. Tianming bet that not even Li Wudi knew the Shenxiao Sword Art was hidden right under their noses like that.

"Oh junior of mine, there are five levels to Shenxiao Sword Art. While I'm the creator of this sword art, even I am only able to utilize three levels of it! While the other two have been created, they're not a good fit for my Heavenly Will!"

What kind of demonic genius would be able to create sword arts that didn't match their Heavenly Will? Tianming really didn't understand how that could be possible, being a Heavenly Will novice.

"This sword art is ideal for multi-type beastmasters, especially those with multiple lifebound beasts. In other words, the more heavenly wills you have, the more power you'll be able to bring out! The first step in training this sword art is mastering the five basic strikes. You'll need five heavenly wills, namely, water, earth, lightning, fire, and wind types.

"The second step is to master fusion strikes by slowly assimilating the five basic strikes with each other. That is the essence of the Shenxiao Sword Art. If you have five types of Heavenly Wills, and can completely fuse them together, you'll be able to rend the skies and earth apart!" The old man's voice was so loud that even deaf people would be able to hear him. "You'll see the kind of power this sword art has once you manage to master fusion strikes."

After that, Li Shenxiao began the demonstration. With but a swing of Grand-Orient Sword, the mountains themselves seemed to shake and creak. It took only one strike for the earth to begin to shake! One of the mountain peaks was actually cut flat by him, causing the top part to start tumbling down.

"Here's the first basic strike of the five: Olympos Imperius!" After saying that, he kept the sword away and closed his eyes, conserving his energy.

"The second level of the sword art, in other words, the second strike, isn't just a matter of mastering the second basic strike. Instead, it's about fusing the two basic sword strikes after mastering them. That's why, to me, the second strike of the sword art is a fusion of Olympos Imperius and Oceanos Imperius. Watch!"

When he finished, he struck again, ushering in mass destruction using the Grand-Orient Sword. This strike not only contained the dominating force of the earth and mountains, but also that of the endless ocean. The two forces fused and interacted with one another, making the fused strike far stronger than two individual strikes.

"Next comes the third strike of Shenxiao Sword Art. The way I mastered it was starting with the basic strike, Aetheros Imperius, then fusing it with the previous two strikes."

Tianming understood that the power of the five basic strikes were more or less the same, so the only way to improve them would be to fuse them together. Li Shenxiao's third strike was the fusion of Olympos Imperius, Oceanos Imperius, and Aetheros Imperius.

Li Shenxiao demonstrated the third strike, causing mountains to groan, seas to rage, and winds to howl. The three forces blended together, forming a twister-like sword ki that brushed through the terrain, tearing apart everything it came into contact with.

"There's still a fourth and fifth strike in the sword art, but the elements of fire and lightning elude me. As such, the best I can do is demonstrate Pyros Imperius and Fulgueros Imperius without fusing them. Watch!"

Apart from the difference in elemental type, the two strikes were more or less equally powerful.

"No wonder the sword art focuses mainly on fusing the five basic strikes. The more Heavenly Wills one has, the more one can fuse, and the more power one can bring out. Even the founding ancestor was only able to use the third strike. The fourth and fifth are no doubt even more powerful! So having many Heavenly Wills makes one more suitable to use the Shenxiao Sword Art, and the five basic strikes all have hints of Imperial Will in them. Mastering them individually might not be that hard at all."

At the very least, he was confident he could master Fulgueros Imperius and Pyros Imperius individually, but fusing them would be a whole other matter entirely. If his third egg hatched, perhaps he might be able to learn Olympos Imperius or Oceanos Imperius.

Apart from the ancestor's explanation of the moves, there were also some words on the tombstone that read 'Five Basic Strikes Mantra' and 'Fusion Strikes Mantra'.

"The ancestor only provided one method to fuse the strikes. Whether that succeeds will depend on my Heavenly Will and comprehending the two basic strikes. It's really complicated, but I like it!"

The more complex it was, the more powerful it would become! Putting other things aside, Tianming was curious what sort of power he could use by fusing the lightning and fire strikes. He began ravenously training.

"Ying Huo, help me comprehend Pyros Imperius."

"I don't need you to tell me that."

"Meow Meow, try learning Fulgueros Imperius." "What? You're disturbing my sleep again? I can't function in the morning, so good night," said the black cat, preparing to pounce away.

Yet, the huge egg of a Primordial Chaos Beast blocked his way.

"Whoa! Even this little one dares to bully me! There's no point in living anymore! I don't have feline rights!"

"Hahahaha...."

In the coming days, Tianming had a direction to lead his training in. He would rely on the Grand-Orient Sword, Prime Tower, and Li Shenxiao's tombstone to gain insight into Heavenly Will. For his battle arts, he would count on his two lifebound beasts to support him in mastering the lightning and fire sword strikes. When time came for their fusion, he would have to be the one to do it. With their goals clear and Meow Meow not holding them back, they made huge progress.

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"The heck? What are you lot training?" Li Wudi said, seeing the Grand-Orient Sword being used to test out a sword art that startled even him.

"Look, Godfather." Tianming placed the tip of the sword against the tombstone. It looked just like a projector that played back Li Shenxiao's demonstration of the strikes.

"I don't see anything, though," Li Wudi said.

"Nothing at all?"

"That's right."

"The founding ancestor is teaching me the Shenxiao Sword Art."

"What's that?" Li Wudi turned grim and almost tripped. He stood back up and balked, "Old fool! Don't run! I served you all my life, yet you didn't tell me about something so precious! I'll excavate your grave, I tell ya!"

Naturally, he only meant it as a joke.

"Godfather, do you want me to write the teachings down?"

"No need. This isn't suited to my Heavenly Will. I walk the path of domination, after all. Not to mention, since he taught it to you, it means you have good affinity with it," he said with a hint of saltiness.

"Alright!"

Chapter 378 - Li Wudi's Trump Cards

"I remember the Shenxiao Sword Art is a sky saint-ranked battle art. You sure you can master it?" Li Wudi asked. Sky saint-ranked battle arts were meant for sky saints, two whole stages above Li Tianming.

The Voidgod Sword Intent he had exhibited before was an advanced earth saint-ranked battle art. Ye Shaoqing himself knew no sky saint-ranked battle arts.

"I'll give it a shot. The difficulty and power of its five basic strikes are much higher than Myriad's Only. However, the hardest part is fusing them together," Tianming responded seriously.

"You have the lightning and fire types. If you can fuse them, you can use the second phase of the sword art. No one throughout the Theocracy can master this level of battle art in your age group," Li Wudi said.

Tianming laughed.

“Don’t laugh now. Wait until you actually master it first! Even I’m still taking a crack at it.” Li Wudi curled his lips. His Infernalblood Strike was a sky saint-ranked battle art from the second ancestor, Li Xinghe.

“Historically, the Shenxiao Sword Art was ranked number one, while the Infernal Blood Strike ranks second. You’ll really have surpassed your seniors if you actually master it!”

“Godfather, would you be unhappy if I master it?”

“Haha! Who, you? I’m a heptabane! I’m the real number one genius!” Li Wudi said smugly.

Tianming only continued laughing.

In truth, Tianming had begun a new path of cultivation after breaking through to the Heavenly Will stage. Heavenly Will was the true stage for unearthing the Aeonian Grandbane’s potential.

The spirit’s heavenly will and the body’s beast ki were two different components. Heavenly will was the understanding of heaven and earth, and lifted up the soul. Beast ki was the level of the lifeform and raw power.

The Saint stage was the transformation of the body’s beast ki, and had nothing to do with the spirit’s heavenly will. Spirit sources would change and beast ki would evolve to a new level. After stepping into it, the beastmaster and lifebound beast would see their lifespans greatly extended.

However, while great changes would be on the horizon for the body’s beast ki in the saint stage, the spirit’s heavenly will would remain on the same level for Heavenly Will, Earth Saint, and Sky Saint.

Tianming had now laid a strong foundation after becoming a Heavenly Will cultivator.

The difficulty of mastering the Voidgod Sword Intent during Unity might have been higher than mastering a sky saint-ranked battle art now.

“Alright, I won’t keep you from giving me grandchildren. I’ll make a move.” Li Wudi gave a dirty smile.

“Don’t talk nonsense, we’re cultivating!” Tianming hurriedly replied.

“Haha, I’ve been there too! Don’t worry, I understand.” Li Wudi even chose to give a wink.

“Right, one more thing.” Li Wudi turned around after taking just a few steps.

“Let whatever you want out.”

“I don’t know your plan, but the Southsky Barrier does have ninety-nine azure dragon pulses. However, that’s the barrier’s foundation. It’ll weaken by half if you take them away. We’re in a dangerous period now, so don’t go there, lest you harm them.” Li Wudi was finally serious.

“Don’t worry.” Tianming nodded. In truth, it hadn’t been his choice that time to swallow up the imperial dragon pulses.

“Godfather, does that mean the Grand-Orient Barrier has been weakened? Will the sect be in trouble?” Tianming asked.

“Don’t worry! Your old man has tons of trump cards. Nothing will happen,” Li Wudi said arrogantly.

“So badass?” Tianming was half believing, half distrustful. He also had the sense this man wasn’t reliable.

“Fiiiiinee. I’m currently still in the late stages of overcoming my Lifesbane. So, my cultivation will increase again. This rise will probably last a year before stopping. What I’ve shown you is just the tip of the iceberg!”

“One year?” It was no wonder that Li Wudi could cultivate so fast as a Sky Saint. It turned out he was still in the beneficial period of overcoming his lifesbane.

In that case, how long would Tianming’s last when he overcame the Aeonian Grandbane?

“And look around you.”

Tianming looked up. The only thing around was the blood mist. “What’s interesting about the bloodbane barrier?”

“Heh, think on it.” Li Wudi smiled confidently. Flicking his sleeve, he left.

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For an entire month, Heaven’s Elysium didn’t make a peep.

However, the Grand-Orient Sect, Onyx Sect, and Southsky Sect were still making their preparations for battle.

The Grand-Orient Realm couldn’t settle down, as if everyone was aware that the Elysian Emperor and Heaven’s Elysium wouldn’t take their defeat lying down.

However, protecting the sect was Li Wudi’s matter. Tianming continued focusing on cultivating. He needed to seize every moment to accelerate towards the Saint stage. Otherwise, he would die!

One month later...

A white-haired young man held the Grand-Orient Sword up on Shexiao Mountain and unleashed a shocking slash.

Hephaestus Imperius!

The power within his infernal source surged out, turning into a conflagration filled with countless strands of Grand-Orient Sword Ki. Then, it swept out like a fiery dragon!

The soil on the mountain was scorched black as the attack passed through, carving out a long and deep gorge.

“It really is stronger than Myriad’s Only, especially when I use the Grand-Orient Sword and the vortex inside.” Tianming’s eyes shone. “Also, I’ve made strides in understanding the golden heavenly patterns, and I have the enlightenment I had during the sect war again. Finally, I reached second-level Heavenly Will!”

The Heavenly Will stage was indeed much tougher to cultivate than Unity. Tianming had made great gains during the sect war. However, even then, he had spent a full month bitter training on the golden heavenly patterns before successfully comprehending his Imperial Heavenly Will.

“I’ve also mastered Pyros Imperius.”

The main contributor of that achievement had been Ying Huo. It didn’t need any urging, and the two had thrown their all into the sword art. Success had naturally followed.

“Meow Meow!” Now, Tianming and Ying Huo’s passionate gazes landed on Meow Meow, who was busy lying down asleep on Li Shenxiao’s tombstone.

“What!” After being startled awake, it leaped up three meters into the air. Shielding its privates, the cat looked warily at the two.

“What about Fulguros Imperius?”

“I’ll work super duper hard on it. It’ll be mastered within three days! ...starting tomorrow!” The cat started yawning.

“You nugget, you’ve been saying that for an entire month! If you slack off any more, there won’t be a tomorrow for you!” Ying Huo hollered and started chasing after Meow Meow.

“Chicken Bro, don’t be impulsive! Give me one last chance. A quick nap to revitalize myself, and voila, you’ll have one super duper hard working cat!”

“You’ve said that tons of times!”

“Meoowww? Did I?”

“Eat this!”

“Pervert! Why are you going for that part!”

Tianming rubbed his forehead and exchanged a wry smile with Feiling. He couldn’t count on Meow Meow. Apart from them, there was also another egg on Shenxiao Mountain, filled with cracks.

The two-colored egg was already over three meters in size.

As Ying Huo and Meow Meow horsed around, the egg excitedly chased after them. However, it was too heavy, and it caused the entire Shenxiao Mountain to shake as it rolled around.

“I’ll finally get a mount.” Tianming finally saw his lost dream reawakening after seeing the egg’s size.

“Big brother. That time, you described it as a dragon, with its body being used as a world itself?” Jiang Feiling asked.

“That’s right. I can’t put it into words how shocking and massive it was!” Tianming couldn’t forget that scene of the Primordial Mountains and Seas World.

“I suddenly have a premonition.” A naughty smile appeared on Feiling.

“What?”

“Your description reminds me of a small pet.”

“Pet?”

“Right, what carries a mountain on its back and has a sea inside?”

“What?”

“A little tortoise....”

Tianming shook as an ill feeling took over him.

“Hey... don’t speak nonsense! That was a dragon, it’s not going to be a tortoise!”

“Big brother, are you sure you want it as a mount?” Jiang Feiling asked, her smile widening.

“Of course.”

“Then, let me gift you a title.”

“What title?”

“The Tortoise Knight.”

Tianming saw the giant egg and felt a bout of anxiety. The mightiness of the Primordial Chaos Beasts had done nothing. It hadn’t even stopped a phoenix from becoming a chicken....

The title ‘Tortoise Knight’ shook Tianming to his core, and he could only pray.

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Heaven’s Elysium continued showing no activity, and Tianming continued training. With the carrot and the stick, he finally made Meow Meow train the Fulguros Imperius with him.

However, Tianming still mainly focused on raising his cultivation level, as that was the only way to overcome his bane. The days passed, and the Grand-Orient Realm seemed to enter a period of peace.

“Heaven’s Elysium’s disciples now keep sighing and have pale faces. Their higher echelons are staying sealed off, surely plotting something. However, godfather is getting stronger and stronger.”

Now, it was down to who could grow more in this time.

Like that, another two weeks passed.

Today, Tianming, Feiling, and Qingyu were idly strolling through Sacred Mountain’s Fortune Street. Fortune Street was much more crowded than in the past, now that the outer disciples and Onyx Sect disciples were all clustered in the thirty-three immortal mountains.

The street had many stores and a wide assortment of goods. Many people were trying to guess Feiling’s identity.

“That lady by the junior sect master’s side is even more extraordinary than Su Yiran.”

“Are you blind? They’re on completely different levels.”

“Looks like the title of Grand-Orient Sect’s number one beauty should change hands.”

“Su Wuyou?” Tianming remembered that three elders from her clan had died. Now, the Su Clan had fallen from grace and no one cared about them anymore.

Speak of the devil, as several girls just happened to pass by. Tianming scanned through them. Su Wuyou, Su Yiran, Su Tao, and Su Li. All of the girls in the Su Clan’s current generation were there; however, the present was unlike the past.

“Big brother.” Qingyu looked extremely uncomfortable when she saw Su Wuyou. Su Wuyou carried some responsibility for Guo Xiaofu’s death!

Chapter 379 – The Earth-Shattering Terra Blast Mace

For the past thousand years, the Su Clan had been the second most powerful clan in the Grand-Orient Sect. But after what had happened, they wouldn’t be able to recover from that devastating defeat within a hundred years.

Their meeting today was merely coincidental. When Su Wuyou and Su Yiran saw Tianming and the two girls following him, they paled and shrank to one side, afraid of making eye contact. The reaction from Su Tao and Su Li, the ones who bullied Qingyu, was even worse, as they were visibly shaking. It had barely been three months and the Li siblings had reached a height they found impossible to imagine. Even Su Wuyou, the prime disciple of her generation and the strongest among them, couldn’t fight Qingyu.

“Qingyu, do you want to vent your anger?” Tianming asked.

“It’s fine. The real culprit is dead, and I don’t want others to think that we’re abusing our power.” Qingyu bit her lips.

“Fine, they’re not worthy of being your opponent anyway.”

Su Wuyou could hear every single word that Tianming said. However, she couldn’t refute it at all.

“Scram.” Tianming didn’t want to see them anymore. Qingyu was way too kind, and if he were in her shoes he would have at least taught them a lesson.

Just as Su Wuyou’s group was about to leave, relieved that Tianming was letting them go, a gruff roar came from the crowd.

“Who are you to ask them to scram!”

Who in the Grand-Orient Sect still dares to taunt me? Tianming looked toward the direction of the voice. A short-haired disciple had made their way in front of Su Wuyou, and it was impossible to tell that person’s gender given their physique. They were more buff than a girl, but also more slender than a boy.

“Surely the junior sect master shouldn’t be terrorizing people on the streets of the sect. Unless you’re above the law here?” The person stared fiercely at Tianming.

“Who are you?”

“I’m Su Mu!”

Another member of the Su Clan? Tianming wasn't happy to be accused of 'terrorizing others' just for telling them to scram.

"Big brother, she's twenty-five years old and sixth-level Heavenly Will," Qingyu introduced.

"Hmm." Tianming nodded.

Just as Qingyu finished her introduction, Su Wuyou's group hurriedly gathered around Su Mu, as if they had finally found someone they could rely on.

"Aunt!"

"Did Li Tianming bully you?" Su Mu asked through clenched teeth.

"Get lost, Su Mu. What makes you think the junior sect master would even waste his time on the Su Clan now?"

"How cheeky."

Su Mu's appearance sparked many reactions from the crowd.

"Shut up!" Su Mu had a fiery temper. Recently, much resentment had been building up inside her from constantly hearing others belittle the Su Clan.

"It's a she? So both generations from the Su Clan are led by women?" Tianming had thought he was talking to a man until the others addressed her as 'aunt'.

"Li Tianming, what do you have against women?" Su Mu scolded.

"Are you trying to taunt me?" Tianming scoffed. He wouldn't let people get away with falsely accusing him twice.

"I just dislike people who abuse their positions. You're just a nobody without the sect master to back you up," Su Mu snickered.

Tianming admitted he had underestimated this girl. He thought she was just a fool looking for trouble, but she had successfully angered him in the shortest time possible. On top of that, she turned to Feiling.

"She may look attractive, but too bad she's just another useless pretty face." While Su Mu was briefly shocked by Feiling's beauty, it hadn't stopped her mouth.

"I haven't offended you in any way. Why should a toad like you comment about me?" Even Feiling was beginning to get annoyed. She was cheered on by the crowd. Clearly, most of them supported her, rather than Su Mu.

Usually, Tianming would just ignore those kinds of people, but he wouldn't let Su Mu get away after insulting Feiling.

"Come, I'll make you shut up in the Second Grand-Orient Battlefield," Tianming sneered. He could tell that she wasn't just looking for trouble. She wanted him dead to avenge the Su Clan elders who had died. Unfortunately, Tianming had already seen through her ploy.

“Pfft, you need a good beating to learn that the Grand-Orient Sect isn’t yours!” Deep in Su Mu’s seemingly insane eyes, murderous intent flickered.

They soon arrived at the Second Grand-Orient Battlefield, followed by many onlookers. It was a mini-arena normally occupied by practicing disciples.

“Have you heard? The junior sect master is about to fight that tyrannosaurus from the Su Clan!”

“She’s the most prominent member in the Su Clan now. Out of all of Su Yunzhi’s descendants, she’s the most likely to take over as a sect elder.”

News of the battle circulated fast, and they had already drawn a decent crowd. Su Mu clearly didn’t want a larger audience to gather, and she dashed up to Tianming the moment they stepped into the battlefield.

“Su Mu, I respect your courage. But, you do realize that there’s no way you can make it out alive if you kill me here?” Tianming was fearless.

“You realized? That’s all the more reason for you to die! It doesn’t matter if I die here today.” Su Mu was wielding her Terra Blast Mace, determined to trade her own life for Tianming’s.

At the same time, Feiling had attached herself to Tianming and disappeared into his body, shocking the audience.

“If you think my Ling’er is useless, then I’ll show you that no one in the Su Clan is even worthy of being her maid.”

When Tianming finished speaking, Su Mu’s fourth-order saint beast, the Terra Draconic Snake dove into the ground. It swam underground like a fish in water, ready to use its various abilities on Tianming at any time.

“Li Wudi destroyed the Su Clan, and I’ll destroy you! Your blood will be used to pay respects to my father, uncle, and brother!” Su Mu grit her teeth, her face that of a murderer. As the youngest daughter of Su Yunzhi, she was the current leader of the Su Clan. Knowing that this was her only chance for revenge, each strike of hers was aimed to kill.

Su Mu used the first stance of her Asura Mace Art, Asura Dance. She was surprisingly swift as she approached Tianming. However, it wasn’t long before she got trapped in the Temporal Field, and her mace was completely blocked by a Spatial Wall. Before she could even touch Tianming, he had already launched himself into the sky. With an aerial advantage, Tianming was unbeatable.

“See, these are all thanks to Ling’er. You may be older than me, which is why you can reach sixth level Heavenly Will. But did you really think I’d be defeated by a narrow-minded fool like you?” Tianming snickered as he drew the Grand-Orient Sword from his spatial ring.

She’s just a bit stronger than Sikong Lingfeng, so that means Yuan Chen should be seventh-level Heavenly Will. Using Su Mu’s strength, Tianming had a rough gauge on what level Yuan Chen was at. Not only was Yuan Chen younger, but he also had a superior lifebound beast.

“Die!”

Suddenly, Su Mu hopped on her snake and they leaped into the air. Although the Terra Draconic Snake was a ground-type beast that could maneuver underground, it also had giant wings that granted it flight. With the mace over the top of her head, she used her next move, Earth Fissure, and smashed her mace onto Tianming from above.

“At least she can be my training dummy.” Tianming merely smirked, his hands holding the Grand-Orient Sword. He was confident that no one in the realm could possibly imagine how fast he was improving.

Tianming used Pyros Imperius of the Shenxiao Sword Art, as his beast ki and the Grand-Orient Vortex gathered onto his sword. This was further enhanced by his own Imperial Will, as well as Ying Huo’s Infernal Will. It was a move that he had practiced more than a hundred times over the course of ten days, and having Feiling’s Spiritual Attachment only made it even more powerful.

The sword ki formed a flaming tornado, with Tianming’s Imperial Will infused in it. Each person’s will was a display of their own understanding of Heavenly Will, and likewise, Su Mu had her own will as well as her own heavenly-ranked battle arts. But before Tianming’s sky saint-ranked battle art and his Imperial Will, Su Mu didn’t stand a chance.

As the mace crashed into the sword, the mace was almost instantly shattered into millions of shards. Tianming’s sword intent engulfed Su Mu in flames, tearing through whatever protection she had. At the very last second, he tilted his sword and smashed the flat of the blade into her head.

With a crisp crunching sound, Su Mu’s eyes nearly popped out of her sockets as she fainted and fell off her mount. Her snake quickly caught her using its mouth and disappeared back into the ground.

Su Mu had been defeated. Tianming expected that, since he had already reached second-level Heavenly Will and used his strongest move while in prime condition. It would have been more surprising if he lost. As for whether she was dead or not, it was a mystery to the onlookers. Tianming didn’t kill her, out of respect for her courage. However, it would take half a year for her to recover from that hit on the head.

“The junior sect master just murdered someone....” Suddenly a cry of despair could be heard. It came from none other than Su Yiran.

“What did you say?” Tianming landed before Su Yiran and fixed his eyes on her.

“Don’t kill me, junior sect master, it was all Su Mu’s idea. I had nothing to do with it.” Su Yiran dropped to her knees, her legs trembling. Just a few months ago, Tianming was no different from a swine to her, but now the table had turned.

“Be careful what you say next time.” Tianming patted her on her cheek, but there was no reaction other than tears of humiliation. As he raised his head and looked around, he saw Su Wuyou backing away, her eyes also red and swollen. At the same time, the Terra Draconic Snake tunneled out of the ground and quickly slithered away.

There was no one left in the Su Clan that could stop Tianming. All that was left was fear.

Chapter 380 – A Three Hundred And Thirty Thousand Strong Army

On Shenxiao Mountain in Li Mausoleum.

When Yuan Chen attacked me that day, he was even stronger than Su Mu, which was why one punch from him could make me cough blood. But now that I have mastered sky saint-ranked battle arts, things will be different. If I can learn the second phase and understand the concept behind it, I will be much stronger, Tianming thought to himself. After all, even the first ancestor had only reached the third phase.

In the Theocracy of the Ancients, the Grand-Orient Realm is but one of the many regions. Yuan Chen is about the same age as me, and he's already the number one prodigy in the Earthorigin Sect. Even then, Jun Niancang and him have limited power in the Theocracy. I should aspire to compare with the geniuses of the Theocracy instead. Even though Tianming had never seen that land before, he set it as his goal.

If godfather is capable of crushing Heaven's Elysium and bringing peace to the sect, I should really take a trip to the Theocracy. Tianming was extremely curious about what kind of powerhouses and geniuses walked the land of that ancient regime. In terms of talent, no one in the Grand-Orient Realm could match him, other than Jun Niancang, who was a few years older.

As time passed by, tension continued brewing in the Grand-Orient Realm as if the battle would restart at any time. Tianming spent most of his time inside the Li Mausoleum, studying the golden heavenly patterns on the golden gate of his Grand-Orient Sword. Under Ying Huo's supervision, both Tianming and Meow Meow mastered Fulguos Imperius. They had reached a point in their cultivation where Tianming, who was in charge of leveling and battle arts, became the trio's main focus. On top of that, he needed to have a good understanding of the fusion strikes in order to understand his Imperial Will.

Studying heavenly patterns was a mentally draining process, and Tianming would practice the fusion strikes of the Shenxiao Sword Art in the Mausoleum with the Grand-Orient Sword when he was tired.

This is a fusion of fire with lightning. At least this is easier than trying to fuse fire with water. The trick to this sword art isn't just physically merging the two elements, but making sure that every bit of the two elements can exist in harmony, Tianming thought. The fusion of lightning with fire was something that even the first ancestor hadn't done before, meaning Tianming had no one to learn from this time.

Recently, Meow Meow had been having the time of its life. Ever since it finished learning Fulguos Imperius, it spent most of its time sleeping. It had even slept on every single one of the ancestors' graves, or as Ying Huo put it, slept with every single ancestor.

At that moment, Tianming approached and lifted it up by its neck.

"What do you want?" Meow Meow growled but could do nothing to resist as its neck was its weakness.

"Get down here and help me with my sword arts."

"No meow!"

Sadly, Meow Meow had no room for negotiation, as a sword-wielding Tianming chased it and Ying Huo down.

"Use Pyros Imperius and Fulguos Imperius, I'll take the both of you on at the same time."

"Are you an idiot? Where'd you even get your confidence from?" Ying Huo scorned.

“Brother Chicken, Ling’er is with Qingyu now. Shall we teach him a lesson?” Meow Meow was equally angry at having its rest disturbed.

“Let’s go, it’s time to bring down Tianming!”

Ying Huo could use Pyros Imperius with its Goldflame Featherblade, whereas Meow Meow needed to use its claws in place of a sword. While Meow Meow’s claws were weaker in terms of strength, the venom from the Venomfiend Bloodclaw made up for it.

The battle between the three almost turned the Mausoleum upside down. It was a tough fight for Tianming, as Ying Huo and Meow Meow were fearsome foes. Still, he battled on in order to understand the fusion of the two sword arts better. The two beasts stuck to using Pyros Imperius and Fulguros Imperius, while Tianming would intermittently switch between the two. As he practised, the time he needed to switch became shorter and shorter.

“If I can use both sword arts at the same time, it means I’m one step closer to fusing them. It doesn’t matter how many times I need to practice it, or how long it takes!” Tianming had plenty of time until Heaven’s Elysium made their next move.

“Even with my talent, figuring out the fusion strikes is proving to be an incredibly difficult task. I doubt my godfather can do it.”

Tianming was learning battle arts of the same level as Li Wudi, and they weren’t simplified, as the Demise of Man-Earth-Heaven had been. Ever since he had reached Heavenly Will and gained Imperial Will, Tianming was capable of using the three demises and the Voidgod Sword Intent to their fullest potential. In terms of battle arts, he was already miles ahead of his peers. But that wasn’t enough to satisfy Tianming, and he yearned for something challenging, like the fusion strikes.

Their battles carried on for days without stopping, causing Ying Huo and Meow Meow to plead for mercy.

“We’re sorry, boss, we shouldn’t have laughed at you.”

“Please, have mercy, we’re only a year old!”

“That’s right, how dare you do such things to me when I’m still underaged meow!”

Why did that sound... wrong?

“Stop whining. Get up and fight me!”

“Meow...” Meow Meow purred with tears in its eyes. It had no choice, or it might just be stabbed in the balls.

Fuse, fuse! Tianming couldn’t even count the number of hours he spent. His mind was fixated on the image of lightning merging with flames, each collision resulting in an overwhelming burst of energy.

Many days later, Tianming’s efforts finally bore fruit. As he swung the Grand-Orient Sword just as he had tens of thousands of times before, he could tell that he’d succeeded. It was the second phase, with the power of fire and lightning completely unified as one. When he pointed his sword toward the sky, a beam of sword ki shot through the Bloodbane Barrier and into the heavens. It even managed to punch a

small hole through the barrier. If one were to look closely, the beam was made of both fire and lightning entwined together.

“Finally!” Tianming was overwhelmed by a sense of achievement. On the other side, the two little creatures were panting and wailing on the ground, as if something unspeakable had been done to them.

“Get up, it’s time to study heavenly patterns,” Tianming instructed.

“I demand a change of beastmaster! Preferably someone soft and fluffy, like our superior mount!” Ying Huo cried.

“I agree meow!”

Days slipped by, and Tianming did a rough estimate.

“It’s been eighty days since my godfather defeated the Cloudmist keepers and Elysian purifiers. I’ve finally reached third-level Heavenly Will.” In other words, nearly three months had passed, which was equivalent to three years for Tianming. While he still had a youthful look and showed no signs of aging, his body was equivalent to that of a twenty-eight year old.

For this period of time, he had been hard at work cultivating, spending one month to reach second-level Heavenly Will, then another fifty days to reach the third level. It would only get more difficult as he progressed further. He had also learned the first two basic stances of the Shenxiao Sword Art, and even completed the second phase with much effort. Thanks to that, his strength had once again improved.

Even though I can start challenging some of the seniors now, I mustn’t slack off, as there’s a lot more to learn! Tianming knew that his talent came from his extraordinary lifebound beasts, but diligence and perseverance were his most valuable traits.

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In a pavilion on top of Sacred Mountain, Ye Shaoqing was playing chess with another middle-aged man dressed in blue. The two gave off the same kind of gentlemanly vibe, and the man was none other than Weisheng Tianlan. Just then, the red-haired Li Wudi walked up to them.

“Gentlemen-wannabes, we have work to do.”

“You have news for us?” Ye Shaoqing raised his hand and scattered his pieces across the board.

“Hey, that’s cheating!” Weisheng Tianlan was speechless, as he had been just about to win the game.

“Brother Weisheng, we have more important matters to attend to,” Ye Shaoqing said with a straight face.

“Screw off.” Weisheng Tianlan adjusted his collars and turned to Li Wudi. “So what does Jun Shengxiao want?”

“It’s simple, he wants assistance.”

“What do you mean?”

“He gifted the Cloudmist Sword School’s territory to the Earthorigin Sect in exchange for a hundred and fifteen thousand Earthorigin defenders. Their troops have already moved into the Grand-Orient Realm,” Li Wudi said with a contemptuous look.

“He’s crazy!” Ye Shaoqing frowned.

“The Grand-Orient Realm hasn’t lost any land for the past ten thousand years. He’ll be cursed for centuries to come for doing such a shameful act as the ruler of the Grand-Orient Realm,” Weisheng Tianlan said with a cold gaze.

“He must’ve lost his sanity when his son died. His sins can only be repaid by his death,” Li Wudi sneered and took a sip of wine. He seemed rather relaxed despite the bad news.

“That’s a hundred and fifteen thousand Earthorigin defenders and a hundred and eighteen thousand Elysian purifiers we have to face. That’s even more than what we had to deal with originally. What’s your plan, Li Wudi?” Weisheng Tianlan asked.

“I’ll need to see what plan they have first,” Li Wudi answered.

“Will Earthorigin Sect attack the Grand-Orient Sect while Heaven’s Elysium ambushes the Southsky Sect? Or will it be the other way around?” Weisheng Tianlan wondered.

“I’d say neither. First, the Earthorigin Sect will never attack alone. They’re here for their own interests, and don’t intend to sustain any injuries. Second, Jun Shenxiao changed his original mindset of not wanting to take any casualties. As long as he can take down the Grand-Orient Sect, sacrificing a hundred thousand people is no different from sacrificing seventy thousand to him,” Li Wudi calmly analyzed.

It was perfectly reasonable to assume that Jun Shenxiao wanted the Grand-Orient Realm at all costs. The Earthorigin Sect was unlikely to help them tackle the Grand-Orient Sect alone as well, as their allied forces were now able to conquer Southsky Sect together.

“So, you’re saying that the three hundred and thirty thousand people will gather their forces and take us down one after the other.” Weisheng Tianlan frowned.

“Likely. They’re already stronger than the original two hundred and fifty thousand Elysian purifiers. Can you survive their assault?” Li Wudi asked.

“It would’ve been possible, but now that’s unlikely, since the Elysian Emperor is taking a different approach,” Weisheng Tianlan worried.

“Rich of you to still be worrying about the Southsky Sect. Our own Grand-Orient Barrier, and even the imperial dragon pulses have been stolen by your son, so how are we even going to defend ourselves?” Ye Shaoqing asked.

“Don’t you worry about that. I have my trump cards,” Li Wudi laughed.

“Then stop being shameless and tell me what they are.”

“It’s no longer a trump card if I tell you about it, right?” Li Wudi grinned.

“Whatever, you’ll be the one regretting it forever if this screws up,” Ye Shaoqing said.

“You shouldn’t worry that much. Jun Shengxiao hates me to the core. Even with the Onyx Sect, the Grand-Orient Barrier isn’t as strong as the Southsky Barrier. They’re much more likely to kill me before they attack you. All we have to do is to destroy their troops once more and make sure they have no power left to touch your sect,” Li Wudi told Weisheng Tianlan, even leisurely taking another sip of alcohol as he finished.

“Is that even possible?” Weisheng Tianlan didn’t know where Li Wudi’s confidence was coming from.

“Time will tell,” Li Wudi said.

“So be it. I’ll put my faith in you, then.”

“That’s right. Just make sure to defend your Southsky Sect,” Li Wudi said confidently. They had been on the defending side since the beginning of this war, and the barriers were the reasons why they had lasted this long.

“But what if their alliance attacks the Southsky Sect first?” Weisheng Tianlan asked.

“Then all we can do is pray for you,” Li Wudi answered.

Weisheng Tianlan was speechless. Clearly, he could only hope for Jun Shengxiao to attack the Grand-Orient Sect first, as not even he knew exactly what Li Wudi’s trump card was.