

## The Ages 451

### Chapter 451: Crown Prince Consort

The plaza was dead silent. When everyone looked up, they saw a savage expression on the West Hall King's face. He seemed ruthless, and at the edge of his patience. Bai Mo, on the other hand, looked at them calmly, as if everything was going according to plan.

"Wei Wushang wasn't his match at all."

"Who was the one that said he wasn't strong? He was able to defeat Wei Wushang right after ascending to sainthood. If he isn't a genius, what is he?"

"He's so scary that I can't even properly fathom it."

"That was definitely a face slap, wasn't it?"

"He used the Mountshield Tome without any blood. Given that he could almost teleport, he must be a patternscribe too."

"I don't even feel like talking anymore. Is there no one that can stand up for those of us of the clans? Are we to let him continue acting so arrogantly?"

The answer to that question was obvious: nobody could stop Tianming. Of all the Ancient Clan disciples on the ranking, Wei Wushang had been the strongest. Only the Theocrats could possibly send someone to defeat Tianming now. But with Autarch Yun's ascension, no one on the rankings still bore the Dongyang name. Above Tianming on the rankings were five Jiang Clan imperials, though.

"To be honest, Li Tianming was far too ruthless. Does that mean the Decimo Dao Palace's own four halls have completely fallen out with the six halls belonging to the Divine Capital?"

"That's right. It was a matter of time before it happened, anyway."

"I saw the Future Hall King stop the West Hall King just now."

"Come to think of it, the West Hall King broke the rules, right? They said it would be a fair fight, yet Wei Wushang was provided with a two star heavenly pattern tome. The power of a Goldlance Tome would've been enough to kill anyone in the top ten. Li Tianming almost lost his life."

"How shameless."

"Thankfully, Li Tianming's cultivation isn't that high yet. If he was able to cultivate faster, there'd be nobody left to stop him."

"I feel that the chaos outside has seeped into the Decimo Dao Palace as well. I wonder if it's related somehow."

"One of them is a power struggle in the imperial clan, while the other is a fight for the palace. They should be unrelated, right?"

"But then why are these two things happening at the same time?"

"Don't you see? The West Hall King and Earth Hall King have both played their hands. I doubt they'll take the loss they suffered this time kindly."

"The factions of the Divine Capital should've been fighting among themselves. It seems like the Future Hall King's involvement will cause them to unite instead."

"I believe so, too. The six halls have even more disciples. I doubt the other four halls can afford to make enemies of them. The Divine Capital has managed to send their roots deep into the palace, to the point that not even the palace lord dares remove them. So, how could the four halls possibly do anything about it?"

They really didn't understand why the Future Hall King and the rest were being so daring.

"Everyone, listen!"

"What is it?"

"Think about it. Could it be that the Dark Hall is taking advantage of the power struggle to deliver a blow to the Divine Capital's halls? Perhaps they're trying to go against the Theocrats."

"The clans and Saint Martial Manor are affiliated with the Theocrats."

"That's possible..."

"I think it's best if we leave conjecture aside. It was just a battle between the younger, more reckless disciples who act without considering the consequences. This Li Tianming is the king of mindlessness. Perhaps the Future Hall King will get in trouble because of him. He only values him because of the potential he has as a pentabane."

"That's right. Let's not overthink this. You might draw unwanted attention if you do."

"Then again, I still feel they're using the juniors as proxies to incite conflict to test the Theocrats' patience..."

"That's right. Li Tianming is Li Muyang's son, the son of the person who fought against the Ancient Theocracy. Not to mention, he's Li Shenxiao's descendant, someone who the Theocracy could barely handle. The Decimo Dao Palace used to be inferior to the Theocrats, and was driven to this place. I bet the Dark Hall is trying to use the ascension of the new autarch as an opportunity—"

"Shut up!"

"Okay!"

Some of the more experienced and wise people knew the lasting implications of this battle.

"Basically, Li Tianming is their sword. I wonder how far they're willing to swing him."

Many turned and looked at the ranking board. Now, Tianming's place took the tenth place, though where would it settle after the matches were over?

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Tianming and the rest left as the crowd stared at them. After the battle, Feiling undid their Spiritual Attachment and appeared before everyone. Regardless of how unique she was, Tianming felt that she didn't deserve to be forced to live in secrecy. Freedom was the right of all sentient beings, and that included her as well. It was only a matter of time before those of the dao palace recognized her anyways, so Tianming decided he would no longer hide her.

"Rumors say that Tianming was at the spiritual convergence when Su Hongyin took action. Her assassination target was a girl called Jiang Feiling, and that apparently infuriated Tianming."

"The Divine Capital is a land of romance, where heroes have saved countless beauties since ancient times. Beauties have always been fought over by many powerful people since those same ancient times. There are even many who sharpened their wits to marry into powerful clans, and wars have even been fought over beauties. There have even been cases where princes fought each other for a single beauty. The Primeval Autarch also had a harem of three thousand of the Theocracy's most beautiful. Who wouldn't envy him?"

"The reason the Theocrats are so powerful and prosperous is because of their countless descendants that the autarchial harem facilitates! If the woman is talented, their children will be even more so. If the man is powerful, their bloodline will follow suit as well."

"Quite a number of talented beauties have been fought over by the Theocrats; rivers of blood have flowed for them."

"While this Jiang Feiling girl isn't even a Beast Vein cultivator, she might grow into an existence that could threaten to overturn a nation. After all, the mysterious powers she just showed are sure to catch some attention."

"Oh, you noticed it too?"

"That's right. When she was attached to Li Tianming, I felt his power increase. Those wings and some other weird slowdown domain ability are surely thanks to her, too. There was even some kind of formless wall!"

That was a discussion among the patternscribes and seniors, not normal disciples.

"Actually, everyone is underestimating her."

"What do you mean?"

"She's already capable of toppling a nation as she is now."

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There was a light drizzle in the Divine Capital that evening. The dark skies and annoying raindrops caused the citizens to scurry into shelter like ants.

Amidst the rain, Jiang Yu walked along the streets, feeling a little dazed. The sight of the young girl smiling brightly as she held Tianming's arm, and the loving gaze she showed him, played back nonstop in his head. It was enough to drive him mad. He felt his heart dripping blood as the raindrops continued falling.

"Jiang Yu, come!" someone called out all of a sudden. He looked up and saw a bunch of people passing him by. That group of people donned black hoods with hats that sported a veil, obscuring their faces. No feature of theirs was recognizable apart from their large builds. The voice that called out to him had sounded rather familiar, though. Jiang Yu shook, then hurriedly walked toward them.

The leader of the group pushed their veil away and revealed a half-black face. While it was as dark as ink, the dark part of the face didn't look ugly. In fact, a threatening sense of terror radiated from it.

"C-crown Prince!" Jiang Yu knelt in a hurry.

"Rise," said the man.

"Understood." Jiang Yu hastily stood up. He knew that the cohort was trying to travel covertly, without drawing attention.

"I heard you're working on a piece of art called 'Impeccable Beauty'. Let me have a look," the man said, putting his veil back down.

"Alright." He took out a scroll and handed it to the man.

"Jiang Yu, I heard that you drew all the beauties in the Divine Capital in this piece, right?" he asked with a smile as he unfurled the scroll.

"Yes..."

"You look like the docile kind, yet you act much like one of us. You definitely have a pure bloodline," the man joked, causing the other black-clad men around him to laugh.

"Yes, Sir!" Jiang Yu lowered his head, letting the rain continue falling onto his long hair. The man had unfurled the scroll completely and given it a quick scan.

"Gu Xiyu, Gusu Yuyao, Jiang Yufei, Jiang Yutong, Zhao Kexin, Xiao Yuhe, Mu Beibei, Chi Lan... I've had my fun with half of those you consider beauties. I was about to take them into my Skysource Palace," the man said with a smile.

"Your Highness truly is amazing...." Jiang Yu didn't know how to react. Either way, his heart was still metaphorically bleeding.

"Jiang Yu."

"Yes?"

"Do you like the beauty in the middle, too?" the man asked, his eyes peeking through the veil with a domineering pressure.

"The middle?" He had drawn her from memory, and she was his favorite part of the piece.

"That's right."

Jiang Yu's body shook when he recalled the man said 'too'. "I wouldn't dare!"

"It's fine, I was just messing with you." The others around the man laughed again. When he finished, he returned the painting to Jiang Yu and patted his shoulder.

"Your Highness, I'm honored to be of service," he said, cold sweat forming.

"Listen well. Come to my place tonight. I'll give you something. Use it to kill Li Muyang's son on the day he challenges you," the man calmly said, as if he was talking about the most trivial of matters.

"Understood!" Jiang Yu said with bloodshot eyes.

"Wei Ji is sick in the head for giving away a two star heavenly pattern tome as a trump card. Haha, what a joke..." The rest joined the laughter once more.

Jiang Yu didn't dare say anything, for all of them were people he should avoid antagonizing as best he could. He and Wei Wushang were merely small fish in the pond, while that man was the undisputed ruler of all the juniors in the Divine Capital. In fact, he could be the one to decide the fate of the Theocracy. In terms of status, he was Jiang Yu's uncle, of sorts.

"Everyone's seen it, right? This young lady is indeed a stunning figure. I wonder how I'll change when she rides me instead," he said.

"We all want to know, too," said the rest.

"Your Highness, isn't this just a matter of making an edict? Why go through the trouble?" someone asked.

"That, is what you don't get. Women are prey. You need to hunt them like game. Women that are too easily obtained taste bland. That's not the case for the women of our enemies, though," said the man.

"Is Your Highness going to make her a consort?"

"That's something that merits serious consideration. While she's enchanting, she might not live for too long. While I... am fated to never perish!" The man looked toward the palace compound with a begrudging glare. He pressed Jiang Yu's head down, causing him to roll on the ground. Jiang Yu got back up and knelt without moving. He was now completely wet and muddy, but he didn't even dare spit out the mud in his mouth, choosing to swallow it instead.

His stomach felt ill and his heart still ached. By the time he looked back up, the man was already walking away. Jiang Yu's bloodshot eyes seemed like those of a ferocious beast.

## **Chapter 452 - Azure Pavilion**

The training room was pitch black, with countless heavenly patterns shining on the wall. On the desk, a young man and woman were smiling as they held hands. The smaller hand was holding on to the bigger hand, dipping a brush in ink and writing on a Blank Book. The tip of the brush flew across the pages, each stroke forming a blue heavenly pattern on the book. As the heavenly patterns merged, it seemed like an ocean was being placed on the small desk.

"Big brother, concentrate. This is the first time I'm trying the Oceanspirit Tome, and I have no confidence in it." Feiling was entirely focused on inscribing the heavenly pattern tome. Her pupils looked like blue sapphires with the blue fluorescent light reflecting in her eyes.

"You're not confident? And you still can talk with me?" Tianming smiled. In the entire process, he only needed to maintain the supply of saint ki while Feiling controlled his hand.

"I can divide my mind." Feiling smiled cheekily. She had been studying the Oceanspirit Book for half a month, and she already knew it well.

"Naughty girl." Tianming smiled. "This Oceanspirit Tome might only be a one star heavenly pattern tome, but it's a great help to me. I can release seawater in large amounts. Although the seawater is all created by heavenly patterns, there's no difference in battle. As long as there's a sea, Lan Huang will become stronger. Ying Huo can fly in the sky, and the seawater also further empowers Meow Meow's lightning. This Oceanspirit Tome is perfect for me. It'll allow me to forcibly change the battlefield in any place." After Lan Huang was born, Tianming obtained the Primordial Terraqua Physique and wasn't afraid of the sea.

"Yeah. Otherwise, I wouldn't have looked into the Oceanspirit Tome," Feiling smiled.

"Ling'er, have you thought about trying a two star heavenly pattern tome? The Goldspear Tome that Wei Wushang used was a two star heavenly pattern tome," asked Tianming.

"I did, but it's a little too much for me right now. I'm still making progressive improvements. Two star heavenly pattern tomes are just too difficult for me right now. The Southsky Barrier is a two star heavenly pattern barrier, and if I could inscribe a two star heavenly pattern tome, I should be able to create a similar barrier as well," said Feiling.

"You're saying that Wei Wushang nearly used the Southsky Barrier just to cripple me?"

"Big Brother, you're wrong about that. If we don't include the azure dragon pulses, the Southsky Barrier isn't as valuable as a Goldspear Tome," replied Feiling.

"Holy shit. Being a patternscribe is a real moneymaker. The saint crystals we earned from the Mountshield Tomes are almost all used up, and the same goes for the tomes. Let's make some money for Feng and me to go into seclusion in the Spiritual Convergence," said Tianming.

"Alright! Ling'er has to work hard for my boyfriend."

"It feels great to have someone supporting you," Tianming sighed. Patternscribes have been a wealthy profession since ancient times, but their cultivation wasn't much faster than others. That's because it takes a lot of time to study a heavenly pattern tome, which slows down their cultivation.

Ling'er was a top genius in the field, and even she had to spend a lot of time studying, to say nothing of beginners. That was also the reason patternscribes were rare. There were many benefits, but it was tough getting through the beginner stage.

On the other hand, Tianming's strength was in his cultivation, and if he took up too much time to study heavenly patterns, he might fail to break his Aeonic Grandbane. He would die if he failed, even if he managed to become a patternscribe. But with Ling'er inscribing the heavenly pattern tomes, it was different. In the process of helping her with her inscriptions, he could slowly pick it up from her. With her guiding his hands, he would eventually learn how to inscribe a Mountshield Tome and grow more proficient in it. That way, he wouldn't have to spend too much time on becoming a patternscribe and could focus on his cultivation.

My training as a patternscribe might progress slowly, but it'll still be faster than others, Tianming pondered. In a nutshell, everything was going well for him.

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“Big brother, did you sense it?” Feiling suddenly asked when she was two-thirds of the way done with the Oceanspirit Tome.

“You mean the Decimo Dao Palace?”

“Yeah.”

“After I defeated Wei Wushang, there seems to be rumors that the Decimo Dao Palace is trying to regain control of the six halls. It’s equivalent to pitting themselves against the other powers in the Divine Capital. Honestly, this is a good opportunity, because the Theocrats have never been this weak in the past thousands of years. As long as Dongyang Ling doesn’t show up, the new autarch won’t make any moves,” said Tianming.

“And you represent the new power in this power struggle, rushing at the forefront. The elders are using you to test the reactions of every power in the Divine Capital,” said Feiling.

“Ling’er is pretty smart.” Tianming smiled.

“But if that’s the case, don’t you feel like you’re being used?” Feiling asked.

“You can’t think of it that way. Based on my relationship with the Decimo Dao Palace, it’s better to say that we have a common interest,” said Tianming.

“What do you mean?”

“My father is the enemy of the Theocracy, Li Muyang. I might even have been killed, if it weren’t for the sudden passing of the previous Primeval Autarch. Either that, or I’d be used as bait to lure my father over. So I have a bone to pick with them, right?” Tianming asked.

“Yeah.”

“Also, because of my mother, I have a blood relationship with the Li Saint Clan, my foster father, and Qingyu. That implicates us because of the relationship between our first ancestor and the Decimo Dao Palace. My foster father is now involved with the Decimo Dao Palace, not to mention that I’m part of that same palace. So everyone values me as much as my foster father, right?”

“Yeah.” Feiling nodded.

“Then there’s something that you need to think through about this. The Theocrats already wanted to kill me, so the Decimo Dao Palace will do their best to protect me, not to mention that there’s also Big Sister Bai and so many friends here. Even Feng has a grudge against the Theocrats. There’s only one way out for me: fighting the Theocracy with the Decimo Dao Palace as my backing. I don’t need to be concerned if they’re using me because we’re just helping each other,” Tianming explained.

“I think it’s because you can’t forget Big Sister Bai, right?” Feiling pouted.

Tianming was speechless.

“I’m just messing with you!”

“Haha.”

Under the joyous atmosphere, the Oceanspirit Tome was finally completed. Next up would be the hugging and sleeping session.

“You’re not allowed to take the Grand-Orient Sword to bed.”

“Okay!”

“Ling’er, there’s actually one important goal for me to be doing all this.”

“What is it?” Feiling asked.

“I want to know if he’s really a cruel person who killed his lover, as the rumors say. I’ve risen to fame here, and sooner or later he’ll come to hear my name. Then, maybe he’ll come and tell me everything. But if he doesn’t come, then I want to ask the Theocracy’s core figures about the truth! But that requires the Decimo Dao Palace to possess the strength to suppress the Theocrats. This is actually my greatest objective in the Divine Capital,” said Tianming.

“You’re talking about your father, Li MUYANG?”

“That’s right.”

“Big brother, you’re really someone who works hard for your goals.”

“You’re flattering me too much.”

“But....”

“But what?”

“C-can you take the Grand-Orient Sword away when you’re saying such emotional words?”

In the end, Tianming could only perform a tactical suppression on his ‘sword’.

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The streets along the Romance River were decorated with colors and flowers. In this place, the Azure Pavilion might not be the biggest, but it was definitely the most elegant. There were rumors that the beauties in the Azure Pavilion weren’t from lowly births. All of them were proficient in poetry, singing, and dancing; there were many talented and famous artists gathered here.

In the Azure Pavilion, the ladies only sold art, and nothing else. In the indulgent lifestyle of the Divine Capital, the Azure Pavilion could be considered pure. The young masters didn’t frequent this place, and there would only be one thing that would get them to visit: if women were coming with them.

Seven ladies were dancing elegantly on the stage in plain clothes in a tasteful and spacious room, with others playing the zither, flute, and singing on the side. The beauties here were all stunning, and the music built up the atmosphere nicely.

Beneath the stage were seven youths of both genders with delicacies on their table. The wine was made with spirit herbs, while the dishes were made from demon beasts’ meat. However, these people weren’t enjoying the food or the performance much, but only talking among themselves.

Although Jiang Yu was seated in the chief seat, he was only drinking and didn't talk much. For someone who called himself 'Young Master Yu' in the Divine Capital, his clothes looked sloppy compared to his friends'.

"Jiang Yu, why have you been looking so depressed lately? Are you afraid that Li Tianming will take your position in the ranking?" said a youth dressed in black, with beasts embroidered on his clothes. He was tall and lean, with a pair of narrowed eyes and a high nose. He looked a lot more ferocious than Jiang Yu; his name was Jiang Chengfeng.

Naturally, he had only recently changed his surname. His grandfather was currently in charge of the fifteenth bloodline, as he was the fifteenth son of Autarch Qian and the Death Hall's Hall King. His grandfather had a similar status to Jiang Yu's grandmother, Jiang Jianying.

"That's not it." Jiang Yu shook his head.

"Big Brother Jiang Yu, you must be thinking about girls, right? Why don't you show us the 'Impeccable Beauty'? I heard you painted Yuyao, Yufei, and Yutong in it. They want to see how you painted them." The one who said that was a youth by the name of Jiang Junhe, who was very handsome. He was the great-grandson of the eighteenth bloodline, and his grandfather was also one of the Hall Kings in the Decimo Dao Palace—the East Hall King.

There were three other girls in the room, disguised as men. But honestly speaking, anyone could tell that they were all women with a glance. But they only disguised themselves a little so they wouldn't be so eye-catching in the Romance River. They had a love and hate relationship with the 'Impeccable Beauty', afraid that they would appear ugly in the portrait.

Jiang Yufei and Jiang Yutong were twins, and looked exactly the same except for their temperament. The other one was named Gusu Yuyao. She was from the Dazzling Pavilion. She was rather mysterious in the dao palace, as she was rarely seen. She was aloof, and her reputation was even higher than the twins beside her. Jiang Yu had once admired them, especially Gusu Yuyao. But when he heard what was said on that rainy day, his gaze was now indifferent as he looked at the three ladies.

### **Chapter 453 - Final Ranking Battle**

"Big Brother Jiang Yu, quickly take the portrait out!" Jiang Junhe said excitedly.

"Next time, I didn't bring it with me today. Don't you guys want to discuss the counterattack? You don't have to bother about me." Jiang Yu took a sip of the strong alcohol and got a little tipsy.

"Jiang Yu, buck up!" Jiang Chengfeng stood up furiously. "Don't forget that the ranking battles will be held on the Decimo Dao Battlefield two weeks before the ranking deadline. All the top hundred disciples would be coming out to compete for the final ranking even if they're in seclusion. It'll last for fifteen days, and it's open to the entire Divine Capital! At that time, our parents, and even important figures of the Ancient Theocrats will be present. This battle concerns the Theocrats' reputation. It didn't matter in the past, because no one challenged us. Regardless of whether it was the clans, Saint Martial Manor, or the Dazzling Pavilion, they were all our siblings. Everyone could play however they want. But now someone is stepping on our heads, and even crippled Wei Wushang. As brothers, we have to take revenge for him!

"It doesn't matter if we lose. Even the empyrean manna is nothing. But most importantly, where will our faces be as members of the Theocracy? Don't you know how much pressure the elders have put on us in the past few days? If we allow the dao palace to ride on our heads, all seven of us here will die!" Jiang Chengfeng said with a heated gaze.

Jiang Yu smashed the wine flash on the ground, frightening the girl dancing on the stage into shrinking back. Even the music was abruptly paused. Standing up, Jiang Yu replied, "Jiang Chengfeng, do I need you to tell me that?"

"You don't have to scare me. We're all brothers, and I'm reminding you for your own good. Don't worry about it. We'll deal with Li Tianming if he comes to us. You don't even have to lift your finger. But if it's really your turn, then that means we've messed up. At that time, I hope you'll fight for the clan's dignity. Our clan has controlled this territory for so long, and no one has ever ridden on our heads. My father said that the dao palace is clearly taking advantage of this moment to suppress us. If Li Tianming takes the lead and suppresses all of us, they'll gradually tear us apart and plant their forces in the other halls. We have no reason to lose, nor can we afford to lose," said Jiang Chengfeng.

"Don't worry. Even if I die, I'll drag him with me." Jiang Yu pursed his lips and sat back down.

"That's great." Jiang Chengfeng waved his hand.

After the room quieted down, a woman disguised as a man in white said, "Chengfeng, you said you have a way to deal with their offense. Why don't you tell us about it?"

Her long hair was tied up. Although she hadn't put on any cosmetics, she still looked cold and had an arrogance that came from deep in her bones. She was Gusu Yuyao. The Dazzling Pavilion was purely women, and she wasn't simple, since she could suppress her peers and stand out from the masses.

"Listen well. We'll mobilize the disciples of our six halls and challenge those from the four halls on the ranking. Since Tianming has taken the lead, we'll learn from him and cripple everyone we see. So in the following time, we'll keep issuing challenges to them, force them to take up the challenges, and make them lose miserably. None of them are stupid, and they'll know that we're taking revenge. We'll start with those without any background. If we beat them up, they can only resent Tianming for involving them. Eventually, everyone will apply to transfer to our halls to avoid a miserable end. So we'll have more people, and they'll have fewer as time passes. So at that time, how are they going to suppress us?" Jiang Chengfeng glanced at the crowd confidently when he was finished speaking.

"Did you think up such a cruel method?" Gusu Yuyao asked.

"No, my grandfather did," Jiang Chengfeng confessed.

"The royal grandpa?" Everyone exchanged a look.

"That's right. But we can only rely on ourselves in this plan," said Jiang Chengfeng.

"Is this your objective for calling us over today?"

"Yeah."

"Okay. Since it was from royal grandpa, he must've already told our elders about it."

“Let’s get them!”

“At that time, we’ll empty the four halls. I can only imagine how brilliant their faces will be at that time!”

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Tianming had become rich after selling newly-inscribed Mountshield Tomes, earning more than ten thousand saint crystals. Now that he had too much money, Tianming couldn’t keep it and started distributing it. When Li Qingyu sweetly called him big brother, Tianming would give her a thousand saint crystals for it. After all, it was right and proper for a big brother to reward his sister.

Even when Ye Lingfeng was looking at crickets fighting and anxiously pinching one of them, Tianming would toss a bag of saint crystals over to him. As for Feiling, he would buy her anything she wanted. After all, it was her money, to begin with.

In the end, even Bai Zijin came and called him ‘big brother’ in a sweet voice. Tianming immediately gave her a thousand saint crystals and begged, “I’ll give it to you, just don’t call me that. If Ling’er heard that....”

“Okay, I’ll help you with your sales. But I’ll take ten percent of your profits. Otherwise....” Bai Zijin winked.

“You’re a money grubber.”

“Too late that you only found out about it now.”

Tianming already knew how to inscribe the Mountshield Tome by himself, after helping Ling’er so many times. Although he still had a high probability of failure, he still managed to succeed at least once. That also meant that he could be considered a one star patternscribe now. He knew that failure was only the beginning, and his success rate would get better in the future, unlike Feiling’s sixty percent success rate.

Honestly speaking, Ling’er was just guiding him to become a patternscribe, while Tianming’s attention was entirely on his cultivation. The Spiritual Convergence was a place that he frequented, and he could now enter the first region. During this period, Ye Lingfeng had also worked hard and defeated a Theocrat, Jiang Yutong, and entered the eighth rank. He was two ranks higher than Tianming now.

Both of them had been cultivating in the first region recently. Tianming had initially thought that he could meet people in the top ten rankings here, but he discovered that they rarely came here when he was there. Maybe they were making preparations for the final ranking.

In the evening, Tianming came with Ye Lingfeng to the Spiritual Convergence again. Although the final ranking was still two months away, the Decimo Dao Palace was already shrouded in a cloudy atmosphere. When many people looked at him, he could see hatred and resentment in their eyes. There didn’t seem to be many neutral people around, which was strange. It felt as though he had become the target for hatred in the dao palace.

“Didn’t they say that we have about twenty or thirty percent of the people in the dao palace standing on our side? Why am I getting the feeling that nine out of ten look at me as though I dug up their ancestral grave?” Li Tianming was puzzled. There were too many Ancient Theocrats in the dao palace; the Jiang

Clan practically occupied the cultivating resources. Therefore, no one was pleasing to Ye Lingfeng's eyes, and the unpleasantness came from the depth of his soul.

Under those resentful eyes, Tianming returned to the First Pavilion. He could see someone standing by the door. Isn't that Jiang Yu? Tianming narrowed his eyes into slits. Jiang Yu was previously named Dongyang Yu, and ranked first in the ranking. But Tianming was confused about what he was doing here, since they were opponents.

Walking up to Jiang Yu, Tianming asked, "Can we help you?"

Jiang Yu was well-dressed today with his hair neatly combed. He only glanced at Tianming, but didn't respond.

"You're crazy." Tianming pushed open the door. When Feiling heard the commotion, she immediately ran out.

"Big brother, I learned the—" Her eyes were bright, obviously asking for credit. But before she could finish, she saw a person standing by the door.

"Can I have a word with you?" Jiang Yu looked at Feiling with his gentle gaze.

"Big brother, close the door." Feiling's face turned cold. She obviously knew that this guy had stayed outside for a long time.

"Okay." Tianming turned his head and reached out for the door, but Jiang Yu blocked it. He didn't even look at Tianming and showed a warm smile. Mustering his courage, he declared loudly, causing a commotion among the onlookers with an emotional voice, "You're the prettiest goddess in the world, and a person of filth isn't worthy of you. I like you, and I love you. I hope that I can touch your heart one day and make you my bride."

"Get lost," Feiling replied.

"How touching. What an idiot." Tianming slammed the door. He was very, very upset. If the final ranking battle wasn't coming soon, making it futile to fight now, he would have immediately made a move against Jiang Yu.

"Big brother, he's doing it on purpose. I have a feeling that he's trying to irritate you." Feiling frowned.

"I know, it's alright," Tianming whispered in her ears. "Before absolute strength, all schemes and conspiracies are just like paper, breaking with a single strike."

"I got it."

Four Hall Kings came to visit when it was close to midnight. They were the Future Palace King, Bai Mo, Life Hall King, Situ Qinghe, South Hall King, Qin Jiufu, and the Sky Hall King, Weisheng Yumo. Tianming had only recently learned that there was also a Weisheng Clan in the Decimo Dao Palace, and their history could be traced to ancient times.

The Sky Hall King, Weisheng Yumo, was an important person in the clan. In the Weisheng Clan, there was only one person whose status surpassed the Sky Hall King, and that was the Decimo Palace Lord, whose surname was also Weisheng. Li Shenxiao's wife, Weisheng Yuyin, was an ancestor of the

Weisheng Clan. Back then, the first ancestor had wandered around in Theocracy of the Ancients and met Weisheng Yuyin in the Decimo Dao Palace.

“What’s the matter?” Tianming immediately came out to receive them.

“Tianming, have you heard of the changes in the Decimo Sky and Earth Ranking recently?” Bai Mo asked.

“No, I’ve been concentrating on my cultivation recently. What’s the matter?”

“They’re targeting those disciples without any background, forcing them to switch factions. Anyone who disobeys is ruthlessly dealt with. They’re well organized and planned. They’re doing this for us to see,” Bai Mo said in a solemn voice. He hadn’t expected that the other party would use such a dirty tactic against them.

“Is it serious?” Tianming asked.

“It’s still under control, for the time being. But the final ranking is two months away, and in these two months, it’s enough for them to destroy our disciples. Furthermore, they’re also targeting the descendants of the Dark Hall’s brothers. It’s a pity that we have a disadvantage in numbers. If we can’t swiftly resolve this matter, the consequences will be dire.” Bai Mo frowned.

“I believe you guys have a solution, seeing that you’re here?” Tianming asked.

“We do. The palace lord can push forth the final ranking battle,” said Bai Mo.

“That’s possible?”

“The palace lord might not be able to change the rules, but changing the date is nothing. Furthermore, the palace lord can rightfully change it,” Bai Mo replied.

“So when’s the final ranking? Are you guys seeking my opinion and asking when I’ll be confident in taking down the outsiders?” Tianming asked.

“That’s right. So which day do you think is best for you? A month from now? If that’s the case, we can at least lower our losses by half,” said Bai Mo.

“Hall Kings.”

“Mhm?”

“I only need five days,” said Tianming.

“What do you mean?” The four of them were stunned by Tianming’s words.

“I’m saying that the final ranking battle can be held five days from now.”

“Are you sure about that?”

“Absolutely.”

The four Hall Kings briefly exchanged a glance, then replied, “Then we’ll announce it tomorrow!”

**Chapter 454 - Dongyang Fen**

The entire capital was talking about the readjustment of the final ranking battle's date. There were naturally objections, but the Hall Kings couldn't say anything, as it was the palace lord's decision.

Five days passed in the blink of an eye, and the final ranking battle had arrived before many people could react to it. On this day, the Decimo Dao Palace's largest battlefield was crowded with people, with a million or so people watching. Throughout history, this place had been a holy land in the contest between geniuses. Not only the Decimo Dao Palace ranking battles, but many other battles in the Divine Capital were held there as well.

The battlefield was like a huge wilderness, with mountains and rivers, and it wouldn't be a problem if millions of people were placed in it. There were tall platforms outside the battlefield, which formed a circle of spectator seating around the battlefield. The seats were stacked one level after another, ensuring that the spectators could see the entire battlefield from almost any position.

The ranking battle would last for fifteen days, and the spectators were also prepared to watch for the entire time. The seats weren't filled, for the time being; there were only about two hundred thousand people there. But people were still trickling in and filling up the seats. The Decimo Dao Palace didn't set any limitations for spectators, so with the sheer size of the Divine Capital, many people were naturally interested in the ranking battle.

They'd heard about the changes in the Decimo Dao Palace, and they were here to see how things would unfold. The ranking battle had yet to begin, but the Decimo Dao Battlefield was filled with people looking around. The audience was talking among themselves. They were practically all talking about Tianming's status as the son of a sinner, and the importance and protection that the Decimo Dao Palace had given him. Either that, or they were talking about the Ancient Theocrats' face. This involved the factional conflict in the Divine Dao Palace.

"The top hundred of the Earth Ranking are all gathered here."

"There are still challenges ongoing for those who hope to get into the top hundred."

"They don't have much hope; there's only two weeks left. It's been nearly a year, and if they could enter the top hundred, they would've already made it in."

"I heard that the six halls were pressuring the disciples without any background, and the dao palace has effectively relieved the pressure by pushing the ranking battle forward."

"I heard that it was an idea from the Death Hall King, Jiang An. He's really ruthless and taught the Decimo Palace Lord a lesson."

"How interesting..."

The host of this ranking battle was Bai Zifeng, the Future Hall Lord. When he announced the beginning of the ranking battle, he didn't introduce any of the guests. There were introductions in the past, but not this time. Perhaps it was because there weren't any big shots around, or that the dao palace simply just didn't want to introduce them.

When the ranking battle started, many people looked behind the battlefield, where the Evil Suppression Plaza was located. In that direction stood the towering Evil Suppression Pillar. The spectators could even

see the golden names listed on the pillar, and many people were mainly looking at the first ranked Jiang Yu of the Earth Hall, and the tenth ranked Li Tianming of the Future Hall.

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Located at the Decimo Dao Battlefield's highest position, there was an ash-colored palace, with many important figures seated within. From their position, the entire Decimo Dao Battlefield could be seen in a panoramic view. The palace was above the audience seating, and everyone who could be there were those with paramount status in the Decimo Dao Palace.

There weren't many people in the palace, but looking around, they were mostly all elders at the age of a hundred. Among them, the Life Hall King, Situ Qinghe, was the oldest. He was close to a hundred and fifty years old, and judging from the three-hundred-year lifespan of the Saint stage, he would pass his prime in about two or three decades.

Beside him sat three Hall Kings, Bai Mo, Weisheng Yumo, and Qin Jiufu. Slightly further from their seats were five others. They were the West Hall King, Wei Ji, Earth Hall King, Jiang Jianying, Death Hall King, Jiang An, East Hall King, Jiang Xiao, and the North Hall King, Zhao Shenhong. Among them, the Death Hall King, Jiang An, was the fifteenth son of the previous Autarch, while the East Hall King, Jiang Xiao, was the eighteenth son. Autarch Yun was their elder brother, and before he ascended the throne, the two of them were the fifteenth and eighteenth princes.

But now, they had to change their surnames. As for the North Hall King, Zhao Shenhong, he was the Divine Capital's Grand Marshal. He belonged to the Saint Martial Manor and was a representative of the Theocracy of the Ancients' military. The Past Hall King was also the deputy pavilion lord of the Dazzling Pavilion, but she wasn't present today.

One side represented the Theocracy of the Ancients, while the other side represented the Decimo Dao Palace. Both sides were quiet and said nothing. By now, everyone already knew the other party's purpose, and there was nothing left for them to talk about.

"Jiang Xiao, will thirteenth brother send someone over?" asked the Death Hall King, Jiang An, a tall and cold man. He was nearly a hundred years old, but his eyes were as piercing as a falcon's.

"Who knows. But he's currently His Majesty right now. You might get beheaded if you keep calling him thirteenth brother," said the East Hall King, Jiang Xiao. This person wasn't young, but he had an elegant air about him. He was probably a casanova when he was younger.

The second he finished talking, someone knocked on the door behind them. It was a man dressed in a black and gold robe. He looked to be roughly in his thirties, judging from his appearance, but his face wasn't looking very good. When he entered the door, he greeted Jiang An and Jiang Xiao before sitting down by himself.

"Dongyang Fen, did your father instruct you to come over?" Jiang An asked.

"Yeah. He gave me this boring and meaningless task. I'm just here to cheer," said Dongyang Fen. Since he still retained the surname of Dongyang, that meant he was a direct descendant of Autarch Yun! Because aside from Autarch Yun's descendants, everyone had to change their surname to Jiang.

“Don’t worry about it. We never expected that your father would establish the ninth as the crown prince. After all, you were his eldest son,” Jiang An said.

Clearly, Dongyang Fen was Autarch Yun’s eldest son. But it was a pity that, after Autarch Yun ascended the throne, he had appointed Dongyang Fen’s ninth brother as the crown prince. After the death of Autarch Qian, Jiang An, Jiang Xiao, and Jiang Jianyin’s husband, the seventh prince, were no longer considered royal princes. Although they were still princes, they couldn’t inherit the throne.

“Cut it out. Don’t let others laugh at us. Are you old foxes trying to comfort me, or mock me? Who knows. But that doesn’t mean anything. Who says that only the crown prince can inherit the throne? Didn’t several crown princes pass away during my grandfather’s reign?” Dongyang Fen laughed and shrugged. His sitting posture was a little sloppy; this was the tradition in Autarch Yun’s lineage.

“Dongyang Fen, your father only instructed you to come here and watch? Nothing else?” asked the East Hall King, Jiang Xiao.

“He’s busy now, catching the traitor. Speaking of which, the traitor isn’t hiding among you, right?” Dongyang Fen laughed.

“What nonsense are you talking about?” The three Hall Kings said indifferently.

“The two of you should find the time to explain to my father personally. Make your stance clear. My father was the rightful heir as decreed by the previous Autarch, personally issued by the Autarch beast. The traitor will die, sooner or later, so why are you just sitting around watching?” Dongyang Fen said.

“Don’t talk anymore. Change that temper of yours. You’re still blabbering even at this age. The Theocrats naturally work for the Autarch, so why do we need to make our stance clear? We’re naturally on His Majesty’s side,” said Jiang An.

“Oh.”

Their conversation was heard by the Future Hall King on the other side. It seemed that Autarch Yun’s focus was still on Dongyang Fen, so he wasn’t paying much attention to Jiang An and the others.

“Dongyang Fen, your father really didn’t say anything?” Jiang An asked in a low voice.

“He did. I brought a backup plan so you won’t lose. Since the dao palace wants to take advantage of this situation, we’ll rip their skin off.” Dongyang Fen rolled his eyes, looking at the Future Hall King’s side; his face was full of disdain.

Jiang An, Jiang Xiao, and Jiang Jianying exchanged a look; they roughly knew what Dongyang Fen meant. After getting confirmation from Dongyang Fen, the confidence in their eyes grew stronger.

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The ranking battle had already started, and the current challenges were basically all for the two-digit rankings. But as everyone wanted to climb higher in the Earth Ranking, their fights were fairly intense. To be in the top hundred, they needed to be in the second level of the Earth Saint stage, but most of them were in the third level. This signified that every one of them was an incredible talent in the Theocracy. If these people were placed in the Grand-Orient Realm, they could even compete with the elders.

However, no one saw Tianming or Ye Lingfeng. According to the rules, they were required to stay on the Decimo Dao Battlefield. But the reason why they weren't seen was that the battle didn't affect them. After all, the others in the top ten hadn't made their appearances either.

Tianming and Ye Lingfeng were in a secret chamber somewhere on the battlefield. There were many saint crystals piled up, and the spiritual energy in the room was almost liquid. The scene only illustrated one thing: rich.

"It's been roughly a month since I defeated Wei Wushang. Cultivating in the Saint stage is truly more difficult than the Heavenly Will stage. But the ranking battle will last for fifteen days, and I'm not in a rush to go out, since no one's challenged me." Tianming stood by the window and indifferently watched the battlefield. He was now making swift progress, charging forth at maximum horsepower. He had unlocked the Grand-Orient Sword's second gate when he reached the Saint stage, and now he was studying the black and gold heavenly patterns. Thanks to his black arm, that allowed him to decompose and analyze heavenly patterns, Tianming was making rapid progress.

In his Insightful Eye, the gold and black heavenly patterns converged together and gradually entered Tianming's consciousness before condensing on his Imperial Will. In a daze, he saw an emperor's figure, from which Tianming was gaining insight into Imperial Will. Although his progress wasn't as fast as when he was in the Heavenly Will stage, he still had plenty of time, so he wasn't in a hurry. After all, he would only lose his way if he rushed.

"Let's continue. They're all ranked above me, and they can only wait for me to challenge them. When we fight fully depends on me, so let's wait until the last day."

#### **Chapter 455 - Figh**

There were many secret chambers on the battlefield. Since Tianming hadn't come forth, neither did Jiang Yu, Jiang Chengfeng, or the others. Those who were in the meeting at the Azure Pavilion were all together in a secret chamber. Among them, Jiang Yutong had already been defeated by Ye Lingfeng. The seven of them looked coldly at the battle outside through the window.

"We can't take the initiative and can only wait?" Jiang Junhe asked.

"His ranking is lower than ours, so we can't challenge him. We can only wait. But it doesn't matter, since the fifteen days will pass in the blink of an eye," said Gusu Yuyao.

"I heard that Tianming made rapid improvements. So for us, forcing them into bringing forward the final ranking was only beneficial," Jiang Chengfeng was proud. After all, this scheme had been proposed by his grandfather, the Death Hall King, Jiang An. When he looked at Jiang Yu, Jiang Chengfeng noticed that the latter was acting very strange. However, he couldn't be bothered to ask about it.

Right at that moment, the door was suddenly kicked open and a youth clad in black and red strode in. His clothes were messy, and his walking posture was sloppy. With a wicked smile, he said, "Oh? So you're all here."

"Dongyang Zhuo, what're you doing?" Jiang Chengfeng stood up. When everyone saw Dongyang Zhuo, they couldn't help taking two steps back, especially the twins, Jiang Yutong and Jiang Yufei. The two of them even looked frightened.

“None of your business. Screw off, or I’ll make you a eunuch. I just happen to lack eunuchs lately,” said Dongyang Zhuo. He looked at Jiang Chengfeng, who shut his mouth, and smiled. “Jiang Chengfeng, you’re really timid. Well, it only makes sense, since you grew up in the dao palace.”

Jiang Chengfeng could only gnash his teeth in the face of Dongyang Zhuo’s insults. Everyone knew that when Autarch Qian was around, he had personally taught Dongyang Ling and Dongyang Yun’s lineage. Now that Dongyang Ling’s line had disappeared, the palace was only left with Dongyang Yun’s line.

So Dongyang Zhuo hadn’t been on the same path as Jiang Yu and Jiang Chengfeng ever since he was a child. The education he received was the guidance for elites, and it only made sense for him to be even more outstanding, since Autarch Qian had personally taught him.

Sweeping his gaze around, Dongyang Zhuo continued, “Ladies and gentlemen, I’m only here to tell you one thing: if you guys can’t obtain the first ranking and embarrass the clan, all five of you with the surname Jiang will die. Even if the elders don’t kill you, I’ll play around with you in the Divine Capital. Is that clear?”

However, no one responded to him. Stepping forth, Dongyang Zhuo grabbed Jiang Yu’s chin and sneered, “Understood?”

This was an act of humiliation. Dongyang Zhuo let go of Jiang Yu and laughed, patting Jiang Yu’s thigh, “We’re the Ancient Theocrats, a clan that rose from blood and fire. Aren’t you ashamed to look so tender? What a humiliation.”

“Do you think that you’re part of the orthodox lineage by appearing to be sloppy and arrogant?” Jiang Yu said without any emotion on his face.

“That’s right. My surname is Dongyang, while yours is Jiang. I cultivate in the Imperial City, while you can only stay in the dao palace. In the future, you won’t even have the qualification to compete with me, Jiang Yu!” Dongyang Zhuo emphasized the Jiang surname heavily. “Don’t forget—my grandfather is the new Primeval Autarch!”

“Unfortunately, your father, Dongyang Fen, isn’t the crown prince,” said Jiang Yu.

“Are you courting death?!” Dongyang Zhuo’s face changed.

“I don’t dare. After all, the Dongyang surname is the orthodox lineage of the clan. You can leave now. I won’t see you off,” said Jiang Yu.

“You’re finished,” Dongyang Zhuo sneered. He turned and glanced at everyone else. When he saw the reverence in their eyes, he finally smiled and left.

“Why’re you bumping heads with him?” Jiang Chengfeng said, but Jiang Yu didn’t reply as he continued looking at the battlefield in a trance.

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When the disciples of the Theocrats, clans, or Saint Martial Manor challenged Tianming, he would go down and easily resolve them. His cultivation wasn’t affected at all. Most of the time, he and Ye Lingfeng would keep their silence. No matter how ferocious the fighting became, Tianming remained calm.

He sat among the saint crystals with his black arm on the Grand-Orient Sword, trying to explore this sword's origin. "Emperor, the Theocrats are also an imperial clan. They've ruled this land for a long time, and their history goes way back. The Hall King said they're a conqueror clan, crushing everything in their path and leaving behind corpses. And now, the entire Theocracy of the Ancients is firmly in their hands. Is this the imperial path of the Ancient Theocrats?"

Tianming had been pondering about what an imperial path should be. "By standing together with the Decimo Dao Palace and confronting them, I can feel their will and enrich my own."

Tianming struck the Grand-Orient Sword and gradually reached the 'one with himself' state. Despite the battles outside, his attention was entirely directed at the scenery appearing in his Insightful Eye.

"To be a monarch, I have to be strong enough to suppress the entire territory, making my presence intimidation itself. Autarch Yun might be strong in my eyes, but he's not strong enough in the entire Theocracy. So his imperial path isn't complete. That means strength is the core of the Imperial Will!"

Tianming had been thinking about many things recently, using the Ancient Theocrats as the basis. He turned and looked at Ye Lingfeng with envy. "It's really good to have eighty thousand souls to hold discussions with."

Compared to Ye Lingfeng, Tianming could only rely on himself to comprehend his Imperial Will. But fortunately, he was making steady progress.

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As time passed, the atmosphere in the Decimo Dao Battlefield became more restless. The final ranking battle was already coming to an end, but where was the show they had been waiting for?

There was only one day left in the final ranking, and the top ten rankings were basically unchanged. Today, the Decimo Dao Battlefield would close, but everyone was here to watch the Ancient Theocrats punish Tianming! But the final ranking battle was already coming to an end, so where was Li Muyang's son?

"I've been waiting for him for so long, so where is he? Is he only here as a joke?" Many people were unsatisfied, because they couldn't see what they came for.

"There's only one day left, and the results will be out soon. But is he not going to challenge? This will make him a laughingstock."

"What's the palace lord thinking? Using Li Muyang's son to stand out for such a big thing?"

"Why can't they change it to someone more reliable? The deadline is coming up, and he's still nowhere to be seen!"

Many elders of the Jiang surname, descendants of the Ancient Clans, generals of Saint Martial Manor, beauties of the Dazzling Pavilion, and even representatives from the nearby realms were in the audience, completely dwarfing the number of Decimo Dao Palace supporters. Among the audience, the number of Theocrats was astonishing. At least a quarter of the people in the entire Divine Capital had the surname Jiang.

“Bai Zifeng, can you get Li Muyang’s son out? We’re all here to watch a show, but the ranking battle is already down to the last day. Are you guys messing with us?” someone asked impatiently.

But just when Bai Zifeng was about to say something, many people directed their attention at Tianming and Ye Lingfeng, who were walking out of the secret chamber together. Closing the door behind them, they stepped forth under everyone’s attention, and at least ninety-nine percent of the people here had never seen them before.

When they made their appearance, the Decimo Dao Battlefield immediately calmed down. The audience’s gazes were all on Tianming, scrutinizing him. Most of them were elders, and their gazes were gloomy. Some of them even sneered with indifferent smiles.

“That’s Li Muyang’s son?”

“Yeah.”

“I heard he didn’t inherit his father’s capability. Li Muyang reached the Sky Saint stage at his age, and before that, no one had ever reached the Sky Saint stage before the age of twenty, right?”

“Yeah, and he had already stepped into the Empyrean Saint stage when he committed his crime.”

“I heard that this Tianming is also a pentabane, like Li Shenxiao. I wonder why he’s so vastly different from Li Muyang? I even heard that he’d just reached the Saint stage.”

“The dao palace said that the pentabane’s talent isn’t to increase your cultivation speed, but to give you the ability to fight stronger opponents.”

“What a bizarre ability. Why do you even need to fight stronger opponents if your cultivation is fast enough?”

There was no one challenging on the battlefield right now, so Tianming stepped directly into the battlefield. Fourteen days had passed, and the rankings were basically finalized. Under the countless skeptical gazes, he looked at Bai Zifeng, “Hall Lord, I wish to challenge the seventh place on the Earth Ranking.”

The Decimo Sky and Earth Ranking had a rule. Everyone could only challenge a higher ranking opponent within three ranks of them. As Tianming was in tenth place, he could only challenge the person in seventh place.

“Permitted. Rank seven of the Earth Ranking, Jiang Junhe, come and face the challenge!” Bai Zifeng said calmly.

Upon hearing that, the Decimo Dao Battlefield instantly became lively. Many elders stopped their conversations and looked at the young man on the stage. Not only did he have a complicated identity, but he had also become the sword of the Decimo Dao Palace. As for his strength, it would soon be revealed. At the very least, there was no room for him to be arrogant, if the strength he used to defeat Wei Wushang was all he had.

Jiang Junhe hopped onto the battlefield. He was the favorite grandson of the East Hall King, Jiang Xiao. Jiang Junhe was handsome, and when he made his appearance, it instantly caused a wave of screams from the young girls.

“Tianming, I’ll—” Jiang Junhe’s eyes blazed, and his blood was boiling. He already expected that Tianming would challenge him first, and he had been waiting for this moment. He wanted to throw out a threat, but Tianming suddenly disappeared.

“What kind of speed is this?!” Jiang Junhe was dumbfounded. He knew that Tianming had already made a move without hearing his words.

“Do you think I’m Wei Wushang?!” Jiang Junhe barked.

The white-haired youth had already appeared before him with the Trivita Fiendfist—Cataclysm.

“Get lost!” Jiang Junhe immediately executed three counterattacks. He didn’t even have time to take out his weapons and could only use palm techniques, in addition to immediately summoning his lifebound beast. He wanted to dodge Tianming’s fist, but had never expected that his resistance would all be in vain under Tianming’s absolute strength.

### **Chapter 456 - Battle Between the Two Fengs**

A deafening crash was produced from the battlefield. With his punch, Tianming broke Jiang Junhe’s arms on the spot, making them look twisted. The power behind that punch then fell onto Jiang Junhe’s chest. Under that tremendous power, Jiang Junhe’s chest caved in. Letting out a scream, he was smashed to the ground and stayed down.

It was an instant defeat, and it hadn’t even taken a single breath! Before everyone could react to the shocking scene, Jiang Junhe’s lifebound beast appeared. But it was useless for the lifebound beast to appear now; it could only watch its beastmaster lying on the ground before it could even join the battle.

A deadly silence swept the entire battlefield. Jiang Junhe’s lifebound beast belonged solely to the Theocrats, and Tianming couldn’t help taking a second look at it. It was rumored that the Ancient Theocrats had two kinds of lifebound beasts, and only those with the purest bloodlines could inherit them. As for Jiang Nancheng, his lifebound beast didn’t have much to do with the Ancient Theocrats. The two lifebound beasts were the hydra, used by the men of the Ancient Theocrats, and sydra, used by the women. The strongest hydras and sydras had nine heads, but there was a slight difference between them.

The hydra’s heads were more ferocious, covered in thick scales, had sharp fangs, and mouths shaped like a crocodile’s. It had powerful hind limbs and agile forelimbs, with a thick tail much like Lan Huang’s. The back of a Hydra was also covered in spikes. On the other hand, a sydra was smaller, and had round, silky heads. It had the body of a giant snake, so a sydra was actually a nine-headed giant snake.

The two kinds of lifebound beasts had been passed on for thousands of generations. But not all hydras and sydras had nine heads. On the contrary, nine heads were rare, and they represented the purest bloodlines and strongest talents. For example, Autarch Qian’s hydra had nine heads.

Within the Ancient Theocrats, as long as one had a pure bloodline, the heads of their lifebound beasts represented their talent, and the heads wouldn’t increase in number even during evolution. Previously, when Ye Lingfeng had defeated Jiang Yutong, Tianming had seen her lifebound beast, a three-headed sydra.

As for Jiang Junhe, his lifebound beast was a gigantic four-headed hydra. Obviously, with just a look, a hydra was clearly stronger than a sydra, which was why women had relatively low status in the Ancient Theocrats.

Jiang Junhe's lifebound beast was a sixth-order saint beast, an Azurestorm Hydra, and it had four, blue-scaled heads. It had a total of sixty-five stars in its eyes. Even just possessing a hydra meant that Jiang Junhe had a pure bloodline, and the four heads further signified his status. But as soon as the Azurestorm Hydra came out, Ying Huo quickly pounced on it with Meow Meow, giving it a beating before it could escape with Jiang Junhe.

"What's Jiang Junhe's cultivation?"

"Fifth-level Earth Saint, but he's stronger than Wei Wushang."

"Did Tianming trounce Wei Wushang as well?"

"Probably not...."

The moment Tianming stepped out onto the battlefield, he easily defeated his opponent and took seventh place. When everyone watched Tianming leave, they had a concept of his strength in their minds.

"Speaking of which, being able to fight someone stronger is also an ability."

"That's not what you said earlier."

"You got slapped in the face!"

As the same person couldn't challenge consecutively, Ye Lingfeng went up as soon as Tianming came down. This black-haired youth was mysterious, and not many people knew anything about him. They only knew that he didn't have a lifebound beast, but he had still defeated Jiang Yutong. However, no one cared about his existence. Everyone had their attention focused on Tianming, wondering who he would challenge next.

"Ye Lingfeng challenges the fifth ranking, North Hall's Zhao Tianlu!" Zhao Tianlu came from Saint Martial Manor, and he belonged to someone on Zhao Shenhong's side. He was unfortunate, running into Ye Lingfeng, but he was also fortunate because he wasn't a member of the Ancient Theocrats.

In the end, Zhao Tianlu, someone in the fifth-level of Earth Saint, was easily defeated by Ye Lingfeng. The stinging pain that he felt during his battle with Ye Lingfeng was deeply engraved into his soul. With that win, Ye Lingfeng's strength had also attracted many people's attention.

It had been a month since Ye Lingfeng had made his breakthrough, and he had already reached fifth-level Earth Saint when he came out with Tianming. The farther the road, the more difficult it would be. So it was beyond Tianming's expectation that Ye Lingfeng had only needed a single month.

Fortunately, they had both completed their missions before the final ranking battle came to an end. On the other hand, Tianming had reached second-level Earth Saint five days ago, and he had just been waiting for Ye Lingfeng to come out.

“There’s something weird about Ye Lingfeng’s fighting style. I have to look into it after the final ranking battle comes to an end.” The same thought crossed many people’s minds. They had a hunch that these two teenagers would do something big today.

Next, Tianming challenged the fourth place on the ranking. He just needed to cross this last hurdle and he could face Jiang Yu, who was first on the ranking. At that time, he would be able to accomplish his goal and obtain the empyrean manna. It’ll be smooth today, as long as everything goes according to plan.

He knew that these people would desperately try preventing him from reaching the top, but it didn’t matter. He had come well prepared, and his objective today was to suppress the Ancient Theocrats—next up was the fourth on the ranking, Gusu Yuyao from the Past Hall.

Gusu Yuyao landed on the battlefield, looking like an ethereal fairy and causing a commotion in her surroundings. Being from the Dazzling Pavilion only made her even more mysterious. As the fourth-ranked beastmaster in the ranking, she was the fourth-strongest person in the dao palace. In the Theocracy of the Ancients, who else could be ranked among the top ten aside from the royal family?

Tianming had read the information about her; she was in the sixth level of the Earth Saint stage, one level higher than Jiang Junhe and Wei Wushang. Her lifebound beast was a Dreamscape Butterfly with sixty-seven stars. It was a rare illusion-type lifebound beast, and those trapped in its illusion would suffer fates worse than death.

“Tianming, your footsteps stop right here, right now. I’ll make you kneel before me without lifting a finger,” Gusu Yuyao declared.

But twenty breaths later, her hair was in a mess and her clothes were torn. She was covered in blood and dirt as she knelt on the ground. Beside her was a gorgeous butterfly trembling on the ground from being electrocuted, and its wings had been torn to pieces by Ying Huo.

“You’re an illusion-type beastmaster?” Tianming couldn’t help laughing. Illusions were utterly useless before his Insightful Eye. With the Prime Tower, not even Ye Lingfeng’s soul attacks could suppress him, let alone a mere Gusu Yuyao. “Get lost!”

Gusu Yuyao’s world collapsed. She was talking big earlier, but she didn’t expect that she wouldn’t even be able to hold her ground for twenty breaths. She was pressed into the ground, kneeling before Tianming. When she left in tears, the Decimo Dao Battlefield fell into silence once more.

“He’ll be able to challenge Jiang Yu next.” In the next moment, many faces from the Ancient Theocrats turned pale. This would be the most exciting moment in the final ranking battle; could Tianming represent the dao palace and humiliate the Ancient Theocrats?

The suspense would be resolved in a while, but before that, it was Ye Lingfeng’s turn to challenge once more. The rewards for the second rank were generous. At the very least, it was better than Ye Lingfeng’s current ranking. His opponent was Jiang Chengfeng.

Jiang Chengfeng was also in the sixth level of the Earth Saint stage, only a level higher than Ye Lingfeng. This was a battle between the two Fengs. When Ye Lingfeng learned that this man standing before him

turned out to be Autarch Qian's great-grandson with a pure bloodline, his eyes turned red with murderous intent.

"Feng, you can't kill him," Tianming warned.

"Okay." Ye Lingfeng nodded.

"There's at least two hundred thousand people here with the surname Jiang. So the Hall Kings will have a headache if you kill someone," said Tianming.

"I understand. But will I be able to kill them in the future?" Ye Lingfeng asked.

"That depends on the situation. I'm just afraid that you won't be able to kill them all." Tianming pursed his lips. He looked at everyone around him with the surname Jiang. Their eyes were clearly warning him, and he knew that it would be impossible for them to make peace in the future if this continued.

"I'll be going, Big Brother Tianming," said Ye Lingfeng.

"Feng?"

"Yeah?"

"You can't kill, but if the other party is arrogant, feel free to teach him a lesson. At the same time, let these people know that we're not people who will be stumped by some threats."

"Okay!" Ye Lingfeng's eyes lit up. He turned around and stepped into the battlefield, facing Jiang Chengfeng.

"Ye Lingfeng, I'm going to dispose of you before Jiang Yu takes out Li Tianming," said Jiang Chengfeng.

"Okay," Ye Lingfeng said with excitement flickering in his eyes.

"Okay? Are you an idiot?" Jiang Chengfeng said with disdain on his face.

"No. I want you to come harder at me," replied Ye Lingfeng.

"Hahaha!" Jiang Chengfeng smiled. He didn't expect that this person would turn out to be a fool.

"If you do, I can also become more ruthless with you," Ye Lingfeng grinned. It was an innocent smile, both naive and creepy at the same time.

#### **Chapter 457 - Billions of Dead Souls Beneath the Divine Capital**

"Jiang Chengfeng!" Someone yelled among the audience. When Jiang Chengfeng raised his head, that person continued, "Cripple his saint palace and cut his legs off!"

"Someone's trying to ride on our heads, so break his legs! Destroy his wishful thinking!"

"Hahaha!"

After so many years of inheritance and development, there were just too many people from the royal family. Their laughter caused the hundreds of thousands of spectators to laugh along.

"Okay!" Jiang Chengfeng could feel his blood boiling from the cheers.

Honestly speaking, it would be good if a third of the seats would be filled in the previous final ranking battles, and most that came were elders. But today, Jiang Chengfeng knew that his position in the Divine Capital would rise if he made everyone happy. He turned his cold gaze onto Ye Lingfeng, who was holding two daggers. He felt jealous when he saw the number of saintly heavenly patterns on them.

“A bumpkin from the Grand-Orient Realm can use such good weapons?” Jiang Chengfeng’s gaze blazed with greed and insanity and a black saber appeared in his hand. The saber had a crimson eye on the handle, and blood dripped down from it. The saber had forty-four saintly heavenly patterns on it. It was a Ghostking Saber.

It might be slightly inferior to the Infernal Soul Daggers, but the Ghostking Saber was also releasing a torrential, ominous aura. At the same time, a black beast appeared beneath Jiang Chengfeng.

The enormous beast was covered in black scales and had sharp claws and fangs. It had a blade-like bone spur on its neck, measuring several meters long and shaped like a huge knife. It had five heads, and looking from a distance, it had five huge blades growing out of its body. It was a Dark Demonblade Hydra.

Although it was also a sixth-order saint beast, like the Azurestorm Hydra, it had one additional star and head compared to the latter. This proved that Jiang Chengfeng’s talent was stronger than Jiang Junhe’s, and was the reason Jiang Chengfeng could firmly stand on the second rank. He had no problems entering the top five in the Divine Capital, despite not even being twenty years old.

His lifebound beast was the most ferocious-looking among the Ancient Theocrats. So the moment it was summoned, it immediately caused a wave of exclamations. The Ancient Theocrats’ elders were filled with confidence in Jiang Chengfeng. This was a battle that concerned the Theocrats’ face, so it naturally made them more excited.

“Go to hell! You’re just a piece of trash without a lifebound beast!”

As the Death Hall King’s grandson, Jiang Chengfeng naturally had a huge reputation, and was known for his love of killing. He had killed many disciples who had disputes with him, the knowledge of which was suppressed by his grandfather. The ferocity deep in his bones broke out when he fought, and he showed no mercy when he attacked.

The enormous Dark Demonblade Hydra charged toward Ye Lingfeng on the battlefield, causing the earth to tremble in its path. Before the hydra even got close to Ye Lingfeng, it was already using its ability. The hydra’s ten eyes flickered, unleashing an eye ability—Dark Demon World. In Ye Lingfeng’s eyes, his world suddenly turned black, and he was surrounded by black shadows while the ten eyes approached.

“Mhm?” Ye Lingfeng smiled. Jiang Chengfeng obviously knew nothing about him, as he was using Ye Lingfeng’s forte against him. Ye Lingfeng went along with the act and pretended to be confused, causing Jiang Chengfeng to lower his guard. It only took an instant for the Dark Demonblade Hydra and Jiang Chengfeng to arrive. Jiang Chengfeng’s strength was in the fact that his lifebound beast could use the five blade-like heads to execute battle arts, performing the Dark Dragonslayer Sutra together with its beastmaster.

Although the Dark Demonblade Hydra was slightly slower in executing the battle art than Jiang Chengfeng, it was equally powerful. This was Jiang Chengfeng’s strongest move, and he just wanted to

finish his opponent as soon as possible to protect the Ancient Theocrats' face. But right at that moment, Ye Lingfeng's eyes flickered. He wasn't targeting Jiang Chengfeng, but the Dark Demonblade Hydra, who had a slightly weaker soul in comparison.

The Dark Demonblade Hydra violently shook its heads. It was under the assumption that Ye Lingfeng had been drawn into its ability, but it was surprised to see its prey suddenly launch a counterattack. A crimson thread suddenly stabbed into the hydra's consciousness, and the soul-deep pain made the hydra issue a mournful cry.

Coincidentally, the five heads were executing the battle art and were locked onto Ye Lingfeng. But the sudden confusion had caused something unthinkable to happen; it cut itself with its blades instead. As its blades sliced into its flesh, everyone was shocked to see the Dark Demonblade Hydra's five heads cutting each other up, and one head was nearly chopped off.

No one could tell what was going on. The scene looked as if the Dark Demonblade Hydra had made a mistake in performing the battle art and nearly killed itself. With that, the gigantic lifebound beast dropped to the ground, rolling around in pain. Even Jiang Chengfeng was stunned, then flung away.

"That's impossible!" His eyeballs nearly bulged out of their sockets. He had practiced this battle art countless times, and it had never failed. So why did his lifebound beast nearly kill itself?

While Jiang Chengfeng was still dumbfounded, Ye Lingfeng stabbed toward him with his daggers, using the Soul Crushing Art—Lifesteal.

"Die!" Jiang Chengfeng jumped up. Holding the Ghostking Saber, he clashed together with Ye Lingfeng, ignoring the Dark Demonblade Hydra that was slowly getting up from the ground. After a clash of saint battle arts, Ye Lingfeng was forced to retreat.

"You're only a fifth-level Earth Saint!" Jiang Chengfeng sneered. He realized that he had overestimated his opponent; there was no way Ye Lingfeng could defend himself against absolute strength.

"Yeah." Ye Lingfeng took a few steps back. But right at that moment, he suddenly changed and Jiang Chengfeng felt a sharp pain in his head. Ye Lingfeng had suddenly turned into countless mutilated corpses, grabbing and reaching for Jiang Chengfeng.

"Ancient Theocrat, give me your life..."

"I'm miserable... we're miserable... we want you to be like us..."

"Eat him! Eat his spleen, heart, liver, and lungs!"

"Boil his ears, eyes, nose, and tongue with chilis!"

"Extract oil from his flesh..."

The voices sounded like ants crawling into Jiang Chengfeng's ears. He had never believed in ghosts, but he was trembling at this moment.

"What the hell is this...!" Jiang Chengfeng tried shaking his head, but the corpses were still around. When he lowered his head, he saw a three-year-old girl grabbing his thigh, looking at him with a naive smile, "Big brother, I want to eat your flesh!"

As she said that, she bit on his thigh.

Jiang Chengfeng howled in pain. It wasn't coming from his thigh, but his head. He could already feel the deadly danger, but Ye Lingfeng was nowhere to be seen!

"Die!! All of you, die!!" Jiang Chengfeng closed his eyes and used his ears to identify a direction and swung his saber over. When he felt his saber slice through flesh, he thought that he had killed Ye Lingfeng. But when he opened his eyes, he saw his lifebound beast screaming out in pain. The Dark Demonblade Hydra had just struggled to its feet when it suffered the attack from Jiang Chengfeng.

"Ghosts?!" Jiang Chengfeng's heart trembled.

"Of course, ghosts exist in this world. Jiang Chengfeng, your clan has committed too many atrocities. Your rise came about thanks to the slaughtering of innocents. You are murderers! How many corpses are buried under the Divine Capital? This city was built on the corpses of billions!" What made Jiang Chengfeng tremble the most was the voice speaking to him.

"Bullshit! The rise of the greatest clan requires absolute power! Only then can we enslave everyone and live for eternity!" Jiang Chengfeng said with bloodshot eyes. But right from the beginning, he was just talking to himself. He had already lost his mind under Ye Lingfeng's soul attacks.

The sound of flesh being torn apart rang out as a figure suddenly appeared before Jiang Chengfeng with his dagger stabbing into Jiang Chengfeng's back.

Jiang Chengfeng reached out with trembling hands. When his saint palace was pierced, his saint ki started dissipating, and he soon lost the strength to even hold his weapon. He had been crippled. From the time he started struggling with the ghosts in his heart, he was already destined to lose. It was expected that Ye Lingfeng would cripple him with a single strike.

But Jiang Chengfeng couldn't accept this reality. Under no circumstances could the Ancient Theocrats be humiliated, because he would humiliate his father, grandfather, and ancestors. Before Autarch Qian's death, he was still the royal great-grandson, a well-known figure in the Divine Capital. But now, he had been crippled by a nobody who didn't even have a lifebound beast.

"Ye Lingfeng, I'll dig your heart out and tear it apart with my teeth!" Tears of blood streamed down Jiang Chengfeng's cheeks. But there wasn't any fear in his eyes, because the will of the Ancient Theocrats would never extinguish.

"Heart..." Killing intent surged in Ye Lingfeng's eyes. As he spoke, he stabbed the other dagger into Jiang Chengfeng's chest. Perhaps he had no intention of killing Jiang Chengfeng, but the hatred in his soul was controlling him.

"Feng!"

"Big Brother Feng!"

"Kill him!" Countless voices were calling out to him.

## **Chapter 458 - Will of the Ancient Theocrats**

"Feng!" An even louder voice came from Tianming.

Just when Ye Lingfeng's dagger was stabbed into Jiang Chengfeng's flesh, he suddenly stopped. Not only did he not stab it in, he even pulled out the other dagger in Jiang Chengfeng's saint palace and left. On the other hand, Jiang Chengfeng collapsed onto the ground.

"Big Brother Tianming...." Ye Lingfeng could feel the burn in his throat and his breathing became heavier as he walked toward Tianming.

"Come here!" Tianming quickly grabbed him.

"Look here." Tianming looked at Ye Lingfeng with the Insightful Eye from a hidden angle.

"Are you better now?" Tianming patted Ye Lingfeng's back.

"I'm fine now...." Ye Lingfeng took a deep breath, and the bloodlust in his eyes finally disappeared.

"Who did you see?" Tianming smirked.

"You, without any clothes on...." Ye Lingfeng replied with a blank expression.

"What the fuck?!" Tianming felt his head buzzing and almost vomited blood. "Holy shit, can you be more normal? You and I are impossible!"

The Bewitching Pupil was an art of seduction. By now, Feiling and his three lifebound beasts were all laughing together at Tianming. But this atmosphere didn't last for long. It was interrupted by someone howling, "Ye Lingfeng!"

The shriek came from Jiang Chengfeng. He was still kneeling on the ground, weeping blood and looking at Ye Lingfeng and Tianming with a distorted expression like a beast. "You guys will definitely die at the hands of the Ancient Theocrats! And that goes the same for everyone who's related to the two of you!"

His eyes were bloodshot, and a smile hung from his lips. Then, he struggled up and looked at the other members of the Theocrats with an indifferent expression and said, "Fellow elders and ancestors, I'm sorry for being defeated. I put the Ancient Theocrats to shame, and I deserve to die. Please dump my corpse outside the Theocracy of the Ancients. I'm not worthy of my status."

He wasn't the same as Jiang Junhe and Jiang Yutong. He was a loyal, fanatical heir of the Ancient Theocrats' will. He kowtowed heavily on the ground three times before looking at the palace and weeping. "Father, grandfather, I'm sorry. I let the two of you down. But please take revenge for me! I'm already a cripple, and I'll only continue to bring shame if I carry on living. If there's an afterlife, I still want to be born in the royal clan!"

When he was done, he plunged the saber in his hand directly into his chest. When he pulled it back out, blood started gushing out from the wound. Staring at Tianming and Ye Lingfeng, his corpse collapsed into the puddle of blood.

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The entire battlefield was enveloped by silence. Tianming turned to look at Jiang Chengfeng, kneeling on the ground after his defeat with a grim face. Jiang Chengfeng had reminded him of the conversation he had with Bai Mo a few days ago. It was a conversation that made him truly understand what the Ancient Theocrats were all about. He could only say that if Yueling Long were still alive, she would absolutely fall

in love with the clan, because their will coincided with her ideals. So much so that Jun Shengxiao even mentioned that they merely learned from the Ancient Theocrats when he had used commoners as cannon fodder.

That day, Bai Mo spoke to him in a grave voice, "Long ago, the Ancient Theocrats used to be called the Nineshades Clan. But one day, that chanced upon the Cyclic Mirror. The mirror would absorb fate souls to aid them in comprehending the heavenly will, and since that day, the clan's rise began. They violently expanded their territory through bloody means, ultimately destroying the predecessor of the Decimo Dao Palace and establishing the Theocracy of the Ancients."

The method of absorbing fate souls to cultivate shared some similarity with the Infernal Soul Race, but at the same time, it was on a whole new level. The Cyclic Mirror was crueler and less efficient than the methods of the Infernal Soul Race. The Cyclic Mirror needed five hundred thousand souls to be completely filled, not to mention that it wouldn't last for long.

"Many people lost their lives to the Cyclic Mirror, and the number of corpses buried under the Theocracy of the Ancients is as high as tens of billions!" Bai Mo's voice trembled when he said that.

When Tianming heard that number, his scalp immediately went numb and he muttered, "Tens of billions over the past tens of thousands of years...."

"That's right. Everyone's out for themselves, and this was the teaching passed down in the Theocracy. It's something that'd already been imprinted deep in their bones. That was the reason they would plunder resources for their own use and cruelly suppressed anyone who retaliated against them, including the Infernal Soul Race. As for the Ancient Clans, they could only survive by bowing to the Theocrats.

"The Decimo Dao Palace managed to seize some resources from the Theocracy of the Ancients and preserved our inheritance. But it still wasn't enough. If it weren't for our forefathers holding on, the four remaining halls would've been infiltrated by now. And without the dao palace, the Dark Hall will only get smaller. Not only do they plunder resources, but women as well. They have two surnames in their clan, Dongyang and Jiang, respectively, with the Dongyang surname ruling the clan. Women are nothing but tools to them, so every royal clan member has multiple wives.

"For tens of thousands of years, all the outstanding women have been seized by them to birth to talented descendants, ensuring the inheritance and prosperity of their clan. After all, their talent depended on the number of heads of their lifebound beasts. So the birth of a descendant with a nine-headed lifebound beast would shake the nation. The Primeval Autarch was never the strongest in their clan, but the soul of their clan.

"As a result, birthrate and plunder have always been important to the royal clan, which led to the multiple chaotic factions in the clan. For example, Autarch Qian has just died, right? But his youngest son, who's in the same generation as Autarch Yun, is just a newborn...." Bai Mo was shaking his head when he shared this with Tianming.

There were many misfortunes in the Theocracy of the Ancients, such as the commoners' miserable life, or the bloody vendetta in the royal clan. This was also the reason why there was so much unrest within

the clan when Autarch Qian died. So much so that the conflicts between factions had come to the surface.

"I believe you're also curious why they're so cruel, right?" Bai Mo asked.

"A little. At least, for the time being, I haven't encountered anything pleasing to my eye," said Tianming.

"Well, that's not surprising. That's the will of the clan. The newborns are instilled with the mindset of plunder and competition between them from a young age. Their elders would teach them to bully others, and their ancestral teachings forced them to give birth. This resulted in the cruelty and hideousness of the clan. But at the same time, it's also guaranteed their prosperity for the past tens of thousands of years. At least until Princess Skyfate, not a single woman in the history of Ancient Theocrats had any position," said Bai Mo.

"Princess Skyfate? Why is that?" Tianming sounded his curiosity.

"To be honest, there's something unusual about that, as well. Autarch Qian had hundreds of children, but he only had one daughter. Even after Princess Skyfate's death, Autarch Qian was never able to produce another daughter," Bai Mo explained.

"Hundreds.... Does he even know everyone?" Tianming was stunned by Bai Mo's revelation.

"You want to know the truth?"

"Yeah."

"Aside from his first twenty children, he couldn't even remember the rest."

Tianming was flabbergasted.

"Tianming, do you find it unbelievable?"

"Yeah. But I don't think that it's unbelievable anymore, after hearing about the will of their clan. After all, there's all kinds of birds in a forest, and every single one of them has its own way of surviving. At least for them, they don't feel that there's anything wrong with their actions. But since the beginning of their reign, many people have only been able to tremble in fear," said Tianming.

"That's right. They think that they're right. But the funny thing is that they lost the Cyclic Mirror more than four decades ago." Bai Mo suddenly smiled.

Tianming trembled when he heard that. He asked, "Because of my father?"

"That's right. Your father is the savior of countless lives."

"Savior?"

"That's right. Otherwise, why do you think we'd protect you? Just because of Li Wudi? Li Wudi isn't reliable, but your biological father is the greatest person in history!" Bai Mo replied.

Tianming was hearing this story for the very first time. His father, who was called a sinner, suddenly became the greatest person?

“Do you know why so many people share a different opinion from ours and hate your father?” Bai Mo asked. Tianming could only respond with a shake of his head.

“A rabbit will never feast on the grass near its nest. The Ancient Theocrats never used the Cyclic Mirror on anyone in the Theocracy of the Ancients. After all, they were elites. They mainly targeted remote nations, those without any influence in the Theocracy. They reared them like livestock,” Bai Mo replied.

Tianming knew what Bai Mo was saying. He meant nations like Vermillion Bird. Jun Shengxiao naturally knew that the Theocrats cultivated by using others’ fate souls, so he must’ve provided the commoners of smaller nations to the Theocrats as the Grand-Orient Realm’s ruler. The truth had a huge impact on Tianming.

“As for those in the Theocracy of the Ancients, they think it’s fine as long as it has nothing to do with them. In their eyes, a true hero is labeled a traitor. The Ancient Theocrats hold the authority here, so whatever they say is the law,” said Bai Mo.

“I see... I have another question.”

“What is it?”

“Why did my father kill Princess Skyfate? Is it because Princess Skyfate was also someone like you’ve described?” Tianming asked.

“No. Jiang Lingjing was a good girl.”

“Then why—”

“I don’t know the reason your father killed Princess Skyfate. Perhaps there’s another side to the story. After all, what you hear around here is only what the Theocrats want you to hear, and no one knows what actually happened,” replied Bai Mo.

“Okay.” Tianming was relieved to know that, at the very least, Li Muyang was on the righteous side when he stole the Cyclic Mirror. He was worried that Li Muyang would turn out to be someone he detests. As for the original story, only the Primeval Autarch and his father probably knew about it.

“Then why didn’t Autarch Qian look for the Cyclic Mirror since they’re so desperate about it? There wasn’t any response from him when I came here. Is it because he was about to die?” Tianming questioned his doubt.

“Tianming, I can only say that we’re all curious about that. Honestly speaking, the majority here don’t know about the Cyclic Mirror’s actual usage. But we do know that, without it, the Theocracy will decline. At the very least, Autarch Yun isn’t an empyrean saint. He should be feeling anxious about getting back the Cyclic Mirror, but he doesn’t seem that way at all.” Bai Mo frowned.

“Even you guys have no idea about the Cyclic Mirror’s actual usage?”

This question could only be left in his heart. Tianming was having a headache when he thought about the connection between Princess Skyfate, Jiang Lingjing, Wei Jing, and him. Most importantly, he would probably never be able to find out, since Autarch Qian was dead.

“It’s complicated between your father and the Theocrats, and we’re unsure of many things. But since he’s still alive, the truth will come out, sooner or later,” said Bai Mo.

“Yeah!” Tianming nodded. He was already looking forward to that day.

### **Chapter 459 - Lock onto her Soul!**

After Jiang Chengfeng committed suicide, the entire battlefield was enveloped in silence for a long time. If Jiang Chengfeng hadn’t been so quick with his action, he would’ve been stopped. But no one stopped him. The elders of the Ancient Theocrats only indifferently looked at him from beginning to end. Even Jiang An, the Death Hall King, didn’t stand out.

A long time later, someone came out to carry Jiang Chengfeng’s corpse and the heavily wounded Dark Demonblade Hydra away from the stage. In the entire process, that person only glanced at Tianming and Ye Lingfeng. The man’s gaze was pale, and filled with indifference. Tianming knew that he was one of Death Hall’s Hall Lords, the son of Jiang An and father of Jiang Chengfeng.

The battlefield was still shrouded in silence even after that person left. But if anyone raised their heads, they would see indifferent gazes from the Ancient Theocrats. They didn’t cause any commotion, only coldly looked at the culprit.

This time, Tianming had been taught a lesson. Jiang Chengfeng had told him about the Theocrats. They weren’t the same as Heaven’s Elysium; Heaven’s Elysium didn’t have that kind of will. Back when Yueling Long had been killed, Heaven’s Elysium could only yell out insults. However, there was no embarrassment on the faces of the spectators here; they were only looking on indifferently. So right at that moment, the pressure Tianming felt was greater than anyone.

The silent battlefield was a little creepy, but despite that, the white-haired youth still firmly stepped onto the stage. In the Theocracy of the Ancients, every member of the Ancient Theocrats was related to each other, one way or another. Right at that moment, Tianming took a deep breath and spoke out with a voice as calm as he could, “Tianming of the Future Hall wishes to challenge the first on the Earth Ranking.”

His voice wasn’t loud, but it was resounding. It echoed like a bolt of rumbling lightning, filled with provocation.

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Within the palace, the Sky Hall King, Weisheng Yumo, asked, “Why don’t we call it a day?”

“We can’t stop it,” Bai Mo replied.

“Yeah.” Qin Jiufu nodded.

Bai Mo turned and looked to his left. Including Dongyang Fen, five Hall Kings were quietly watching. When Bai Mo turned his head, the Death Hall King, Jiang An, was also looking over and smiling. Jiang An looked fine as he turned back to the battlefield.

Bai Mo turned his head back and looked at the silhouette on the battlefield. He knew that Jiang Chengfeng had succeeded in provoking the conflict between both parties by committing suicide. Now that Tianming was in the middle of the storm, his enemy wasn’t just Jiang Yu, but the Ancient Theocrats’

will. Bai Mo no longer knew how to get out of this mess. Closing his eyes, Bai Mo could feel the souls of everyone who died a wronged death burning his soul.

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Among the millions of spectators, there was a group of special people. They were clad in cloaks, sitting on their seats and practically radiating a chill.

“Interesting...” the leader of the group said.

“Your Royal Highness, can Jiang Yu defeat this person?”

“Just watch. Li Tianming is a patternscribe, after all, so he definitely has a trick or two up his sleeve. He’s a lot stronger than Jiang Chengfeng,” said the man.

“Jiang Yu had better not lose this fight. It looks like the dao palace is really pushing it, not knowing how ‘death’ is written.”

“It doesn’t matter. Whoever stands out will die. After Li MUYANG’s son is dead, I’ll see how they carry on jumping around.” The man grinned.

“Well, yeah. Your Royal Highness even went so far as using something worth a million saint crystals. Not many people can afford that, even in the Divine Capital. But for some reason, I find it a waste to use it on the sinner’s son.”

“Don’t worry about it. It’s only saint crystals. All the saint crystals in the world will be mine, sooner or later. Moreover, this thing can lock onto the soul. My Ling’er is still attached to him, and only this won’t put her in danger.” When a breeze blew past, half of the face that had been hidden under his cloak was vaguely revealed.

“Your Royal Highness, I heard your elder brother, Dongyang Fen, is here. And he even brought his son along, Dongyang Zhuo.”

“Dongyang Zhuo? He probably brought him here to save some face. But it’s a pity that Dongyang Zhuo won’t be of any use now.”

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Amid the storm, Jiang Yu went up on the stage and stood before Tianming. His gaze was fixed on Tianming, trembling. No one knew what was going through his mind.

“Is Jiang Feiling currently attached to you?” Jiang Yu asked, but Tianming couldn’t be bothered to respond. The oppressive gazes directed at him from his surroundings made Tianming feel unhappy, and he wanted to vent all of that unhappiness on Jiang Yu.

“Jiang Yu, will you commit suicide if you lose as well? Is suicide a trend in the Ancient Theocrats?” Tianming asked in a faint voice, retrieving the Grand-Orient Sword. At the same time, Tianming summoned his three lifebound beasts.

Jiang Yu didn’t reply to Tianming’s question. He wasn’t the same as other Theocrats, and it was reflected in his eyes; his gaze wasn’t fierce. For some reason, Tianming had a feeling that Jiang Yu was somewhat

sick in his mind. But Tianming had no interest in what kind of pressure Jiang Yu experienced that resulted in the him of today. He just wanted to show what kind of person he was to those who wanted to suppress 'the sinner's son'.

Jiang Yu was a sixth-level Saint and a twin beastmaster. Both of his lifebound beasts had sixty-nine stars, and at the same time, he was a one star patternscribe. He was ranked first on the Earth Ranking. That meant that, excluding those with the Dongyang surname, he could be ranked among the top three in the Divine Capital. His achievement was shocking, given that he was under twenty years old.

If he hadn't spent some time becoming a patternscribe, his cultivation would be higher. When Tianming summoned his lifebound beasts, Jiang Yu summoned his Bluewing Frost and Blackspike Aquatic Hydras.

The Bluewing Frost Hydra had a pair of azure wings and six heads. This proved that Jiang Yu's talent was pretty powerful, even in the royal clan. The Blackspike Aquatic Hydra also had six heads and was covered in densely-packed spikes all over its body. Its six heads and three tails looked like nine maces, and they could all be used as formidable weapons. There was once a saying that the appearance of a lifebound beast was a manifestation of the clan's will.

For example, the two Yuwen brothers back in the Grand-Orient Sword had a decent appearance, but their lifebound beasts were hideous. On the other hand, the Kunpeng lifebound beasts from the Li Saint Clan looked a whole lot better. Likewise, the Jun Clan from Heaven's Elysium had dragons, which represented righteousness. No one in the Jun Clan's history had done anything atrocious, aside from Jun Shengxiao.

The Ancient Theocrats were majestic in Tianming's imagination, but the two hydras before him looked a lot more ferocious, which went against the clan's will. After all, they'd been called the Nineshades Clan tens of thousands of years ago.

Jiang Yu's lifebound beasts were smaller than Lan Huang, but they seemed more ferocious and had no fear of the gigantic dragon. Standing between the two Hydras, Jiang Yu held a brush—the Autumn Ink Brush—with forty-five saintly heavenly patterns on it. It was rare to see someone use a brush as their weapon.

Then, Jiang Yu and Tianming charged at each other without uttering a single word. This time, Meow Meow had taken its Regal Chaosfiend form to intercept the Bluewing Frost Hydra, while Lan Huang sent the Blackspike Aquatic Hydra flying with a headbutt. As for Ying Huo, he was still serving as an assassin around Meow Meow and Lan Huang. Tianming wanted them to break the balance, which had always been their strategy.

But he had his doubts as to whether or not Jiang Yu was qualified for Tianming to use a strategy. Holding the Grand-Orient Sword, the Celestial Wings unfolded behind him. He dashed over to Jiang Yu with three saint kis and the Grand-Orient Vortex stirring within him. Besides, his strength had been further enhanced by Feiling's Spiritual Attachment. The power of the three saint springs was also empowering the Grand-Orient Sword.

Tianming executed the Shenxiao Sword Art's fourth move, fusing Pyros Imperius, Fulgueros Imperius, Oceanos Imperius, and Olympos Imperius together. When the sky saint battle art exploded, nothing could stop his sword.

Even Jiang Yu's face changed, facing Tianming's sword. But in the end, he could only firm his resolve and clash head-on with the white-haired youth. Jiang Yu executed two moves from his Frostseal Stroke— Frostwave and Ice Domain.

But under the Shenxiao Sword Art's fourth move, the Autumn Ink Brush broke in half.

After Jiang Yu's saint beastial weapon broke, the remaining power from Tianming's sword struck Jiang Yu's right shoulder. That was the arm Jiang Yu used to inscribe heavenly pattern tomes. When Jiang Yu lost the arm, his eyes turned bloodshot. Right at that moment, a heavenly pattern tome appeared. Jiang Yu was a patternscribe, so he could activate his heavenly pattern tomes much faster.

"That's a Frostarrow Tome!" Feiling instantly recognized the heavenly pattern tome. But Tianming didn't care what it was and took out a Mountshield Tome, activating it at the same time. The Frostarrow Tome turned into a hail of arrows, clashing against the Mountshield Tome, but the Mountshield Tome ultimately held on.

"You're too weak!" Tianming charged over, stabbing the Grand-Orient Sword toward Jiang Yu's saint palace. His speed was too fast and ferocious, and entirely suppressed Jiang Yu. Not even the first-ranked Saint on the Earth Ranking could stop Tianming.

Even Jiang Yu's lifebound beasts had quickly lost, especially the Blackspike Aquatic Hydra. When Lan Huang intercepted the Blackspike Aquatic Hydra, Ying Huo flew into its abdomen and tore a sinister wound in it.

Jiang Yu had utterly lost the fight. His saint beastial weapon was broken and his arm was gone. Even when he used a heavenly pattern tome, he was still suppressed by Tianming.

"It's over!" Tianming appeared before Jiang Yu.

"Haha!" Jiang Yu suddenly let out a burst of maniacal laughter.

"Tianming, I'll be honest with you. I have no intention of killing you. I just don't want such a beauty to be ruined by you and that bastard, Dongyang Fengchen. Jiang Feiling is too perfect, and she should live in dreams instead. She shouldn't be in reality." But before he could even finish, the Grand-Orient Sword had stabbed into his saint palace. Jiang Yu's face was pale; he had lost his strength, but he was still laughing maniacally.

"What were you saying again?" Tianming didn't hear what Jiang Yu said. He only knew that he had crippled Jiang Yu.

Jiang Yu's shoulders were trembling. With his only remaining hand, he took out a tome. It was a heavenly pattern tome, and unlike others, this one was incredibly thick. Jiang Yu's blood had already stained the heavenly pattern tome.

"Tianming, someone paid a million saint crystals for your life. But I didn't do it. I just want to lock on to her soul and let her die while she's at her prime. She'll be the one to accompany me to hell!"

## **Chapter 460 - Monstrous Wrath**

Jiang Yu's smirk was filled with relief and satisfaction. Having done all of this, he was ecstatic. Under the pressure of the morbid Theocrats, his heart had been twisted, hence his sick pursuit of beauty.

To destroy was to live forever? If he couldn't have her when she was alive, he would die together with her.

Jiang Yu's eyes were filled with madness, and the thick heavenly pattern tome in his hand had been stained with blood. A deadly threat emerged from the rare tome that was worth millions of saint crystals. It seemed as if Jiang Yu wasn't holding a heavenly pattern tome, but a primordial beast.

Tianming was furious! In fact, being targeted this way was only to be expected. His reaction would have been frosty at most, instead of such fury. But who knew Jiang Yu would actually target Feiling instead! The previous time, he beheaded Su Hongyin, and this time, his rage resembled a volcano, mid-eruption.

Fortunately, the Dao Palace was prepared for this. The four Hall Kings had allowed him to declare war by trampling on the Theocrats and fighting for first place. Such precautions were the minimum requirement.

Tianming wasn't afraid of competing with the others, or worried about their use of illegal hidden trump cards. Just a few days ago, Bai Mo had given him three life-saving artifacts.

They were three saintly heavenly pattern tomes—two with two stars and one with four. Bai Mo allowed Tianming to use them accordingly. If his opponent used a two star heavenly pattern tome, then he was to use his two star tome to block the attack.

The grade of heavenly pattern tomes could be judged by their thickness.

At the time, Tianming thought that he had struck gold. However, Bai Mo soon reminded him that the tomes were to be returned if he didn't need them. After all, the four star heavenly pattern tome was worth hundreds of thousands of saint crystals, even close to a million. And even if one had the money, it still might not be available in the market. A four star patternscribe like Bai Mo needed at least a year or two to create such a tome, and his success rate wasn't high.

Obviously, in order to keep Tianming alive, they were willing to use these treasures. This was why Tianming was enraged, but not flustered. After all, the Theocrats weren't the only wealthy ones in the Divine Capital.

At a glance, Tianming could tell the heavenly pattern tome in Jiang Yu's hands was at least four stars from its thickness. A one star heavenly pattern tome was worth thousands of saint crystals; a two star was worth tens of thousands of saint crystals; a three star was worth two to three hundred thousand saint crystals; and four star heavenly pattern tomes were worth almost a million saint crystals!

Tianming didn't hesitate to pull out the four star heavenly pattern tome given to him by Bai Mo—the Still Spirit Barrier. Any hesitation and he would die!

As soon as it was activated, the tome turned into a transparent spherical barrier, protecting Tianming within. Naturally, Feiling was also within its scope of protection.

At the next moment, Jiang Yu's heavenly pattern tome turned into a black paw that stretched toward the two, but it was blocked by the Still Spirit Barrier.

"Necrosoul Lock Tome!" someone exclaimed.

The black claw scratched the barrier, making a harsh sound. However, the Still Spirit Barrier was as immovable as a mountain. This was a treasure of the same grade, so Tianming and Feiling were safe and sound.

"Big Brother, I read the introduction of this tome. It can lock onto a soul and completely annihilate it, leaving nothing behind. However, it's different from Feng's soul attack. This so-called locking of the soul just means locking on to the target soul. It's locked on now, but its power is still being blocked by the Still Spirit Barrier." Feiling sounded relieved.

"You mean, we're okay?"

"Yes, don't worry."

"Alright."

Though relieved, his monstrous rage was still there. Tianming's eyes were red as he stared at Jiang Yu.

"Are you all sick? What did Ling'er do to provoke you? Everyone's coming for her! First Su Hongyin and now you!"

As the two treasures battled, Jiang Yu suddenly crumpled in pain and despair. This time, he had defied Dongyang Fengchen in order to realize his most absurd desire. Yet now he failed. The power of the Necrosoul Lock Tome gradually dissipated, having failed to inflict the slightest harm upon Feiling.

"Hahaha..." When everything had faded, Jiang Yu appeared forlorn as he clutched his chest in response to the big blow he had just received. "Tianming, you can't keep her. You can protect her today, but there'll come a time you'll regret this. By then, it'll be too late!" Jiang Yu roared with laughter.

Tianming approached him with the Grand-Orient Sword in hand.

"It's a pity she's so short-lived. She'll soon be a withered willow." His eyes were filled with despair.

Tianming couldn't bear to listen any longer.

At this moment, Jiang Yu pulled out a dagger and plunged it into his own heart. Another suicide!

"Remember, my name is Dongyang Yu, not Jiang Yu!"

As expected of an Ancient Theocrat, dying so decisively.

Right then, something unexpected happened. Tianming's sword flew toward Jiang Yu's dagger!

"Doesn't he want Jiang Yu to die?" Many wondered.

But soon, the suspense was lifted. Tianming's Grand-Orient Sword pierced through Jiang Yu's chest.

"My apologies. You won't be given the chance to suicide before me!"

The moment Tianming withdrew his sword, a stiff Jiang Yu had his eyes wide open. But in the next moment, he fell flat on the ground, silent and breathless. The result was the same, but the process was worlds apart. Jiang Yu hadn't committed suicide, but was killed by Tianming. For the Theocrats, one had died decisively, while the other died in shame.

With the Grand-Orient Sword stabbed into the platform, Tianming was still enraged. The reason he had dissuaded Ye Fengling from killing his opponent was because the situation was different at the time. However, Jiang Chengfeng's suicide was already a controversy. Additionally, Jiang Yu had used a four star heavenly pattern tome meant to kill. From the very first attack, it was a life-and-death battle.

In fact, the decisive battle for the Earth Ranking this year had changed, and so had its significance. The conflict between Tianming and the Theocrats had reached the point of no return.

At this moment, Tianming leaned on the Grand-Orient Sword, looked up, and scanned the spectators as he roared with rage, "Any other bastards so generous they'd spend two million saint crystals just to kill me? If any of you have that much to spare, you might as well take out your saint crystals and buy a life."

At the thought of this, Tianming was upset. Together, Ling'er and Tianming earned a little more than ten thousand saint crystals a month. If there was no progress in patternscribing, they would require twenty years to earn two million. Had the Theocrats' determination to kill him reached this extent?

"If you dare, then stand up instead of playing these dirty, unscrupulous tricks. Shouldn't you be open and aboveboard to be worthy of your honorable identity as Theocrats?" Tianming grinned.

His words caused a sensation in the Decimo Dao Battlefield. Tianming had defeated Jiang Yu, won first place in the Earth Ranking, escaped an attack worth a million saint crystals, and even spoken sarcastically to the Theocrats. This kind of humiliation was something they had never seen.

"Go to hell!"

"How dare you!"

The elders of the Theocrats jumped up and rushed toward the battlefield.

A transparent barrier suddenly appeared over the battlefield. Layer upon layer of dense heavenly patterns covered the surface—three in total—completely sealing off the entire Decimo Dao Battlefield. At the same time, the Theocrats were blocked outside.

This was the Decimo Dao Barrier, a five star heavenly pattern barrier at the same level as the Bloodbane Barrier. But while the power of the Bloodbane Barrier lay in killing, the power of the Decimo Dao Barrier lay in its defense.

One by one, the Theocrats crashed into the barrier and bounced off.

"Stop!"

Right then, the Hall Kings appeared on the azure hall, accompanied by a number of Hall Lords. There was also a man dressed in black—the eldest prince, Dongyang Fen.

Their expressions were ugly. For the Theocrats, what Tianming had done was a direct provocation. Even if it was slight, they couldn't bear it, what's more it was from the son of the sinner, Li Muyang.

Blocked by the Decimo Dao Barrier, their cold gazes were obvious. Perhaps in their hearts, they had already given Tianming the death sentence.

Tianming knew that this day would come sooner or later. Technically speaking, killing Jiang Yu wasn't an issue. After all, he wasn't the first to break the rules.

As for these people, there was no way he would show them the slightest courtesy. Even if he knelt before them, they would still kill him. So why bother? In order to protect him, Bai Mo had even taken out a four star heavenly pattern tome, which already explained everything.

"You don't have to be so excited, do you? Jiang Yu, a disciple of the Earth Hall, has been defeated by Tianming and lost his place on the list. However, he went against the rules and used a four star heavenly pattern tome that didn't belong to him. In retaliation, Tianming killed him. His move is reasonable. This is a competition between the disciples of the Dao Palace, and the rules of the Dao Palace shall prevail. Please don't go against the rules. Otherwise, the ten Hall Kings and I will have to invite you out," said Bai Mo.

He sounded neither servile nor overbearing as his voice spread to the ears of the Theocrats. Of course, those who were agitated were only tens of thousands, at most. Right now, they stood still without losing their grace—that is, if the Theocrats had possessed any grace to begin with.

It was shameful to kill someone in public, in violation of the rules, and having that pointed out by someone else. But Bai Mo's words were hard to refute. The six Hall Kings of the Theocrats and their supporters seemed to have nothing to say in regards to being forced to represent the Dao Palace.

"Sit down. There's still half a day in the battle for the Earth Ranking so it's not over yet. It's uncertain who the winner and loser might be," said the Death Hall King, Jiang An.

His position in the imperial family was rather high. Even when his grandson, Jiang Chengfeng, had committed suicide, he failed to respond. Clearly, he was a cold-blooded man. The Theocrats all had many children, not to mention grandchildren, so the death of one was nothing. At most, they suffered a degree of humiliation.

"Haven't you lost yet?" Weisheng Yumo glanced at Jiang An.

By this point, Bai Zijin had already placed Tianming's name at the top of the list. Since Jiang Yu and Jiang Chengfeng were dead, they were removed from the list.

First place: Li Tianming.

Second place: Ye Lingfeng.

Both were from the Future Hall.

Within their age group, who else in the entire Decimo Dao Palace could compete with them?