

## The Ages 461

### Chapter 461 - Seventh-Order Saint Beas

Obviously, Tianming's anger was unquenched. The Theocrats couldn't tolerate such provocation and rebellion, while Tianming couldn't stand their repeated attempts on Feiling's life.

"Of course not. Don't we still have half a day? There's someone from the Death Hall who has yet to appear!" The cold-eyed Dongyang Fen broke into a grin.

What did that mean?

"Ladies and gentlemen," the Death Hall King Jiang An smiled, "the Death Hall has a new disciple. Dongyang Zhuo, come over here!"

The name was obviously familiar to the people of the Divine Capital. Autarch Yun had just ascended the throne, and Autarch Qian's descendents couldn't compare to his. Those surnamed Dongyang were all descendants of Autarch Yun. They were the core bloodline of the Theocrats, and enjoyed the exclusive cultivation resources of the Imperial City.

"Dongyang Zhuo is the son of the eldest prince, Dongyang Fen, and the grandson of Autarch Yun!"

"Yes, that's him! He's number one among the youths under twenty in the Divine Capital."

"He wants to be a disciple of the Decimo Dao Palace?"

"Don't you get it? It's just in name."

Under the attention of the masses, a sullen-faced, somewhat sloppy young man appeared beside Jiang An and Dongyang Fen, lips raised in a smirk.

"That's him, Dongyang Zhuo!"

Well aware of Jiang An and Dongyang Fen's plans, many Theocrats laughed. In case of Jiang Yu's failure, they had a backup plan. In this delicate situation, it seemed they had contemplated how to allow their juniors to take control of the Decimo Dao Palace. Could Tianming stand up against the Necrosoul Lock Tome and Dongyang Zhuo? Perhaps Jiang An and the others were still in the dark about the Necrosoul Lock Tome's origins.

"Dongyang Zhuo, go to the Evil Suppression Dao Plaza and fight the others first, so you're qualified to challenge the top hundred. I'll arrange an opponent for you," said Jiang An.

Now that things had changed, Dongyang Zhuo immediately became a challenger as soon as he entered the Dao Palace. It wasn't against the rules. As the number one genius under the age of twenty in the Theocracy, how hard would it be for him to kill his way to the top ten? If Jiang Yan were to arrange opponents for him, all of them would surrender. In less than fifteen minutes, he would be able to challenge Tianming.

"Jiang An, why bother? Who here doesn't know the strength of Dongyang Zhuo? Who does he want to challenge on the ranking? You can just point him out," said Bai Mo.

"Since the Future Hall King says so, then choose, Dongyang Zhuo," said Jiang An.

While they were speaking, Bai Mo called Tianming to his side.

"This young man is very strong, and the first in the Divine Capital. I'm afraid you won't be able to deal with him," said Bai Mo.

"What's his cultivation level?"

"He's a seventh-level Saint, and his empyrean beast has seven heads," replied Bai Mo.

"I understand. I'll give it a go."

"Well, if you realize you can't win, don't try to be brave. You've done your best today and achieved our goal. It doesn't hurt to leave them some dignity. After all, your life is more important," added Bai Mo.

"But I don't want to give them that." Tianming looked solemn.

"Just because you almost died?"

"No, because they attacked Ling'er. Don't worry, Hall King. I may lose, but I won't die."

With his Celestial Wings, unless his opponent was a sky saint, there was nothing they could do.

"Alright."

Slaughtering the incompetent Jiang Yu felt as if he was punching cotton. But now, another Dongyang descendant had appeared. Just looking at Dongyang Zhuo's smirk ignited Tianming's desire to give the man a beatdown, and his rage soared at once.

"Li Tianming?" Dongyang Zhuo stood on high with a contemptuous look in his eyes. "The words you just said sound very courageous. Since that's the case, I will tell you this—I was the one who gave Jiang Yu the Necrosoul Lock Tome!"

Only then did the masses understand just how wealthy the grandson of the Autarch was. Obviously, his money came from his father, Dongyang Fen.

Enjoying the attention, he went on to say, "I think you're just like a grasshopper, jumping around and making everyone sick. I'd like to kill you so there's peace and quiet. Unexpectedly, these Hall Kings protect you like their own son. You enjoy such prestige." With that, Dongyang Zhuo gave Tianming a thumbs-up.

"So, are you going to challenge me now?" Tianming finally had an outlet for his rage.

Since the Necrosoul Lock Tome was given by Dongyang Zhuo, the idea had come from him. What could be better than getting revenge right here, right now?

"Of course! I also want to be number one on the Earth Ranking. Since you're so courageous and spoke so boldly, then let me ask you this: do you have the guts to fight a life and death battle with me? The last one standing will leave the Decimo Dao Battlefield. Do you dare fight to the death?" Dongyang Zhuo grinned.

"Fight to the death?" Tianming felt as if these four words were familiar. Last time he had fought such a battle, Lin Xiaoting died. There was also the life-and-death battle where he killed Yuwen Shendu. This time, Dongyang Zhuo of the Theocrats said the same thing to him.

"Are you afraid?" Dongyang Zhuo chuckled. "Next time, before you act all mighty, you should consider if you can bear the consequences!"

The masses laughed, but Tianming merely stared at Dongyang Zhuo with a cold smile.

"A life-and-death battle is no problem at all. But who knows if you have any other trump cards hidden in your spatial ring? All the Theocrats I've defeated so far have either committed suicide or gone against the rules and used a heavenly pattern tome to make up for their incompetence. Perhaps the Dongyang prince will do the same." As soon as the words left Tianming's lips, the audience fell silent.

Instead of being frightened, Tianming humiliated them once more by bringing up Jiang Chengfeng and Jiang Yu. Used to being bullies in the Divine Capital, the Theocrats were furious.

"That's easy. We can check each other. The elders are welcome to remove anything that goes against the rules." As his eyes turned icy, his body burned like a flame.

"Let's do it!"

Tianming simply returned the two life-saving heavenly pattern tomes to Bai Mo and allowed Jiang An to check him, while Bai Mo and the others searched Dongyang Zhuo.

"Hall King, I like dismembering bodies, so make sure to prepare a smaller coffin for Tianming. Human bodies might appear large, but after dismemberment, they can fit in a small bucket," laughed Dongyang Zhuo.

Bai Mo couldn't be bothered to answer him. After so many years, he had seen everything and all sorts of Theocrats.

"The Decimo Dao Barrier is closed and will remain so until one of you dies!"

In that instant, all eyes were focused upon them and a sensation swept across the Divine Capital. The number one genius under the age of twenty was confronting the son of Li Muyang, the former patriarch of the Ancient Qilin Clan.

What kind of battle was this? This was a fight for destiny and dignity. Up until this point, everything that had happened on the Decimo Dao Battlefield had surpassed the standard of the Earth Ranking battles.

On the vast battlefield, two young men were in position, both of them like fire and water. One was enraged, and the other was cold and cruel.

This wasn't the first time that Tianming's three lifebound beasts appeared. However, their many remarkable characteristics were eye-catching.

Aeternal Infernal Phoenix!

Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend!

Primordial Terraqua Dragon!

If these three Primordial Chaos Beasts hadn't been born as lifebound beasts, how could any empyrean beast even stand before them?

Dongyang Zhuo stood on a hydra the size of Lan Huang. It was the biggest hydra Tianming had ever seen, and its seven heads were proof of Dongyang Zhuo's talent.

Throughout the history of the Ancient Theocrats, their lifebound beasts rarely had eight or more heads. Possessing a lifebound beast with seven heads meant that Dongyang Zhuo would be close to the throne if he progressed well.

Tianming saw seventy stars in its eyes. Sure enough, it was an empyrean beast. It was the first one Tianming had ever come across, a Venomsword Ruinson Hydra. It was a huge beast covered in thick, dark red scales. There seemed to be several peaks on its back, giving it a shape that was slightly similar to Lan Huang's. However, its heads were more slender and shaped like a snake with the mouth of a giant crocodile. Its bite force must be amazing.

The most ferocious things about it were the sword-like horns on top of its seven heads. The horns burned with a dark red flame, and had dark red venom dripping from the points. The beast's body burned like a dark red sun, causing the temperature of the battlefield to rise.

Compared with other lifebound beasts, the Venomsword Ruinson Hydra had a remarkable aura, ancient and dignified. It was enough to make other non-empyrean beasts bow. This was apparently known as ancient ki, which was the miraculous ki contained in empyrean manna and the source of the empyrean beasts' power. It was clear that the descendent of Autarch Yun was more ferocious than Jiang Yu. In comparison, Jiang Yu's six-headed sixth-order saint beasts seemed like darlings.

"Are you afraid? Do you feel pressured by my empyrean beast?" Dongyang Zhuo asked.

"As if. All I see is how big its balls are! It might look domineering now, but we'll see just how miserable it looks after our battle." Ying huo smiled grimly, its expression dark.

"Chicken Bro, get him! I can't stand to watch them bully Ling'er!" Meow Meow yelled, protecting its balls.

"Are you that confident? It's five levels higher than you are," said Tianming.

With the Grand-Orient Vortex, three saint springs, and Ling'er attached to him, Tianming wouldn't suffer too much in terms of strength, even though he was five levels lower.

"When I advanced to the Saint stage, I underwent a huge physical transformation. I'm now a master at melee. This guy might have tough skin, but I'll chop off its head first!" laughed Ying Huo.

They were right. Even Tianming had had physical breakthroughs, not to mention them. And in this respect, Lan Huang's flesh had grown even more monstrously solid.

At the thought of Lan Huang, Tianming felt relieved as he stared at the mountain before him. In truth, any one of them could fight a sixth-order saint beast. Although the disparity in levels was huge, the difference in their actual strength was little.

To deal with this fire-type beastmaster and lifebound beast, Tianming had an effective trump card, aside from the fact that both he and Ying Huohuo were immune to flames.

This trump card was the reason he dared fight to the death!

## **Chapter 462 - Trampling On The Theocrats**

"Kill!!!"

One man and three beasts attracted much attention. Tianming's Celestial Wings shone on the battlefield as they fluttered in the wind. The Grand-Orient Sword dominated with its majesty.

A two-headed dragon darted across the battlefield, shaking the ground. On top of it was a blazing phoenix and a black cat wrapped in thunder, its eyes gradually turning scarlet.

"Chi Yan, here comes your lunch. Two snacks and a main course, your favorite—dragon!" Smiling grimly, Dongyang Zhuo patted one of his hydra's heads.

The hydra was fierce and dangerous, like a wildbeast. Its four huge feet shook the ground as it locked onto Lan Huang. The two mountain-like beasts collided and dust swept across the sky.

Compared to Lan Huang, the Venomsword Ruinson Hydra had an advantage in saint ki. However, this collision tested the strength of the flesh, so neither beast took a step backward. The hydra's seven poisonous swords stabbed at Lan Huang.

Ying Huo split in two with Infernal Haze, shuttling through the hydra's flames and charging for its abdomen. Ying Huo's scarlet eyes were looking for its opponent's weaknesses.

At that point, Lan Huang and the hydra were rolling on the ground. It was another rough and tumble battle!

Facing Tianming, Dongyang Zhuo held a forty-nine heavenly pattern Blackfiend Godslayer Trident. The murderous aura and blood stains on the trident made it a frightening weapon. He suddenly appeared, unleashing a battle art at Lan Huang, who bit the hydra's venomous heads.

This was a life-and-death battle. Dongyang Zhuo's attack was very powerful, a clear indication it was a sky saint battle art, which meant that Tianming's advantage would soon be lost. His trident came crashing down like a meteor, the power of the Blackfiend Godslayer Trident exploding. Laughing wildly, Dongyang Zhuo displayed great confidence.

"Bastard's son, with what are you going to compete? I'm going to let you taste a world of suffering!"

He assumed that he could instantly kill Lan Huang, only to find thunder falling from the sky. It was Meow Meow's Chaos Disaster! Enveloped in the Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape, Meow Meow blasted lightning several times in a row, making Dongyang Zhuo convulse.

At that moment, Tianming swooped in from the side with the Grand-Orient Sword, blocking the first lethal attack in this battle.

Weapons collided, and Tianming's opponent's mighty force sent Tianming flying backwards. Using her Spatial Wall to obstruct Dongyang Zhuo's path, Feiling immediately solved the crisis.

However, fighting the hydra's many heads was like fighting seven poisonous swords at the same time. They stabbed into Lan Huang, creating several holes in its Mountainsea World.

Fortunately, Ying Huo and Meow Meow appeared in time. Meow Meow's Soulchasing Hellthunder began taking effect, invading the hydra's bloodstream. In truth, the poisonous flame created from empyrean manna was far more toxic than Meow Meow's Venomfiend Bloodclaw.

Due to the growth of its feathers, Ying Huo's Skyscorch Featherblast had been enhanced. Countless flaming feathers filled the sky like a torrent, all of them headed for the hydra's balls.

Surprisingly, the Venomfiend Ruinson Hydra's balls were very hard. Although it screamed and released Lan Huang, it had merely suffered light injuries. However, its rage was aroused. This demonstrated that a bloody battle was required when facing Dongyang Zhuo. So far, only Lan Huang had been injured. Although there wasn't much venom in its body, who knew what would happen as the battle progressed?

"You're dead!" Like an angry god of war, Dongyang Zhuo unleashed yet another attack.

"Oh."

It was too soon for such words. In that instant, five sea-blue heavenly pattern tomes appeared in Tianming's hand. These were Oceanspirit Tomes. Prior to this, only Jiang An had seen them. Since they were created by Tianming, they were considered part of his combat abilities as a patternscribe.

Tianming activated all of the Oceanspirit Tomes he had at the same time. They were his own possessions, and worth tens of thousands of saint crystals. But in order to defeat his opponent, Tianming was willing to use them all.

"Lan Huang, it's time for you to go mad! Do your thing! Fight like your life depends on it!"

Although it was childish, Lan Huang seemed to appreciate this kind of motivation. Having just been beaten, Lan Huang was terribly annoyed. With Tianming spurring it on, its temper surged.

The two dragon heads roared; the battlefield was Lan Huang's.

A sea suddenly crashed into the Decimo Dao Battlefield. Under the enclosed heavenly pattern barrier, half of the space within was completely filled with water.

Ying Huo flew to the other half. Exploding with lightning and thunder, Meow Meow's tiny body galloped in the sea without any problems. Tianming's Celestial Wings could be turned into fins, if he desired. They were all-powerful in the sea and sky. Additionally, with the Primordial Terraqua physique, he was stronger underwater.

In the sea, fighting any water-type lifebound beast was a headache, especially now that Lan Huang was furious. Rotating its nine kui seas, Lan Huang was now the underwater overlord.

The battlefield had devolved into complete chaos. Both Dongyang Zhuo and the Venomfiend Ruinson Hydra were pure fire-types, and couldn't fly.

The hydra sank all the way to the bottom. Since the sea was created by heavenly patterns, and not made of real water, the hydra had no way of burning it dry.

At that moment, a fierce beast charged to the bottom of the sea at a terrifying speed. Before even reaching its target, the sky full of water slammed into its opponent's body.

"Kill it!!" Hanging from the dragon's head were Ying Huo and Meow Meow.

Misty Hellthunder! This ability worked much faster in the sea.

Then came the hydra's ability—Demonic Sun Advent. Light and flames converged and condensed into a dark red sun on each of its seven heads. In that instant, Misty Hellthunder struck its flesh and the Soulchasing Hellthunder exploded.

Demonic Sun Advent erupted at once, causing the sea to boil and thick smoke to billow. The hydra unleashed its Skyfire Poisonmist, which would poison the entire sea and cause much trouble.

Crashing into the hydra, Lan Huang used its claws, heads and tails, pinning its target down with the force of the sea as it attacked crazily. Lan Huang was as quick and sharp as Meow Meow in the water.

It let out a deafening roar that assaulted the hydra's ears. In the water, the vibration from its voice was more intense, causing the hydra to bleed from all fourteen of its ears.

"Now that I'm here, you can go to hell!"

As Lan Huang and Meow Meow, in its Regal Chaosfiend form, held the beast down, Ying Huo's sword strikes rained down from the sky. All seven heads and fourteen eyes exploded with clouds of blood. Screaming bitterly, the hydra struggled with all its might, its cries slowly turning into despair.

And the cause of this despair was Ying Huo, who had gone around the hydra while Lan Huang released its Primordial Soundwaves and Meow Meow shocked it with lightning. Pyros Imperius crushed the hydra's balls.

"Lord Chicken sterilized you, so now you're free of all six desires. We'll see how you parade around me again!"

Having lost its eyes and balls, the hydra was no different from a blind eunuch. No matter how strong and tough it was, it would be slaughtered without sight.

"Tortoise Bro, Meow Meow, you guys play with it. I'll go help Tianming," said Ying Huo. But as soon as it swam upstream, Ying Huo immediately turned around, as Tianming didn't need its help. All they had to do was play with the Venomfiend Ruinson Hydra until it was dead.

"Chicken Bro, his beastmaster just called the two of us snacks, and Tortoise Bro the main course. It seems like this guy likes to eat lifebound beasts!" Meow Meow frowned.

"Very well. We'll cut off its heads one by one. Let's see if it's still able to eat without them!"

Meanwhile, Lan Huang had already sunk its teeth into one of the hydra's heads. Blood spurted everywhere and dyed the sea red.

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On one side of the battlefield, the Venomfiend Ruinson Hydra was trapped at the bottom of the sea, its miserable screams making Dongyang Zhuo anxious. Obviously, this was an advantage brought about by the Oceanspirit Tomes. In no time at all, Tianming's lifebound beasts had reversed the situation, putting Dongyang Zhuo in great trouble.

When they searched Tianming earlier, they had noticed the Oceanspirit Tomes. But never had they imagined how powerful Lan Huang would be in the water. With it restraining the hydra, Ying Huo was able to strike the killing blow. The cooperation of the three was also a huge bonus.

Because they were of different types, not even three of Ying Huo or three of Lan Huang could pose the same lethality. Additionally, Ying Huo was the core of the team, the brains. It commanded the other two as well as sneaking attacks. Even a strong man could be stabbed to death by a sturdy child, what more two little ones with knives.

Now that Dongyang Zhuo's lifebound beast was blind and neutered, it would certainly be slaughtered. Despite Dongyang Zhuo's persistent attempts to dive down and save his lifebound beast, he was obstructed time and again by Tianming. Once his lifebound beast died, his future would be gone. This was a life-and-death battle, though, so as soon as Tianming's lifebound beasts returned, he would be dead as well. Unfortunately, Tianming was well aware of his thoughts.

"Don't go! Didn't you spend a million saint crystals just to buy my life? Come on then, I'll hand it over to you!" sneered Tianming.

With the Grand-Orient Sword in hand, a bloodthirsty Tianming charged toward Dongyang Zhuo. Enraged at having been stopped several times, Dongyang Zhuo was forced to come up with another idea to deal with the crisis—that is, kill Tianming before his lifebound beast dies. His hydra could only hold onto its life.

"Li Tianming!!" A furious Dongyang Zhuo flashed like a black flame, instantly striking Tianming.

Shenxiao Sword Art, Third Strike! Bright sparks crackled in the collision between the Grand-Orient Sword and Blackfiend Godslayer Trident.

With Celestial Wings, as well as Temporal Field and Spatial Wall, Tianming was far more flexible than Dongyang Zhuo. He dove into the sea with ease, rolling in the water and entangling his opponent.

Chaos ensued as Ying Huo sliced off the hydra's last head. A miserable wail filled the air as the beast perished. Dongyang Zhuo boiled with rage at the realization that his future was finished. Completely livid, he descended into madness. And madness was often a prelude to death.

"You're dead! You're dead!!" His teeth chattered as he attacked in the bottom of the sea.

"Really?" Tianming's eyes dripped blood.

Wings fluttering, Tianming sped up, splitting the Grand-Orient Sword into two.

"Dongyang Zhuo, I took my time with you, not because I can't defeat you, but because I wanted you to watch as your lifebound beast died! Now, it's your turn!"

This time, Tianming surged with his full power. On the golden sword, four forces converged, namely fire, lightning, water, and earth, as Tianming struck most forcefully.

Shenxiao Sword Art's Fourth Strike!

"Useless bug!" In a moment of rage, Dongyang Zhuo employed his most powerful move. His domineering strength managed to suppress the power of the Grand-Orient Sword, causing it to fly out.

"Ha... Uh!" Dongyang Zhuo was just about to laugh when the black Grand-Orient Sword, containing the power of four elements, came shuttling through the air, instantly piercing his mouth.

The black Grand-Orient Sword bore through Dongyang Zhuo's head. At the moment of death, Dongyang Zhuo's face was frozen in that cocky smile.

As soon as Tianming pulled out the black sword, the gold sword swept across and Dongyang Zhuo's head fell into his hand. At the same time, the effect of the Oceanspirit Tome disappeared. The water instantly dissipated and Tianming landed on the battlefield.

In fact, the audience outside had seen clearly, even with the presence of the sea. They watched as the seven heads of the Venomfiend Ruinson Hydra were cut off, its body bloodied and piled up on the battlefield like a meat mountain. They witnessed Dongyang Zhuo's limp body collapsing to the ground, his head frozen forever in a smile.

Tianming looked up, lips curling in a grin. Under all that attention, he threw Dongyang Zhuo's head to the ground, stretched out his foot, and stomped on his face.

The setting sun dazzled his eyes. Squinting slightly, Tianming smiled and asked, "Are all you Ancient Theocrats such weaklings? That's the strength of the so-called number one genius under the age of twenty?" He feigned surprise. Laughing, he continued, "Or perhaps the man I killed wasn't a Theocrat but a member of the Nineshades Clan..."

As soon as the last two words swept across the battlefield, the seats and brick walls collapsed. An earthquake originating from the Decimo Dao Palace shocked the Divine Capital.

### **Chapter 463 - Evil Suppression Barrier!**

The seats of the Decimo Dao Palace had stood strong for years. And today, they directly collapsed under the Ancient Theocrats. How furious were they? For the Theocrats, their arrogance was simply too ingrained in them.

That was why, eyes burning with fury, they all began attacking the Decimo Dao Barrier!

Countless attacks landed on the barrier. If it fell, Tianming would likely be instantly reduced to mush.

"Big Brother, were the words 'Nineshades Clan' really such a taboo?" Feiling asked.

"Yes." Tianming nodded.

"And you still went and did it..."

"Hah! How could someone as manly as me be scared of something minor like this?" Tianming said confidently.

"You sure?" Feiling could see the Decimo Dao Barrier was shaking, and on the verge of collapse.

"Well, that was a joke. Actually, it was the Hall Kings that wanted me to provoke the Theocrats. Jiang Yu made me so angry just now that I forgot, but the words 'Nineshades Clan' really are super effective."

Feiling relaxed. "I see, so what are they intending?"

“They might not care if the Theocrats fight for power outside. However, there’s a good opportunity now, so the palace lord wants to remove certain people from the dao palace!” Tianming’s eyes narrowed. Among the targets were, at a minimum, six hall kings and their lackeys.

“What does your provocation have to do with that?” Feiling asked.

“I’m lighting a spark.” When this spark bursts into a raging inferno, chances would pop up one after another. They had to make Jiang An and the rest unable to hold themselves back. Like right now, the Hall Kings who were part of the Ancient Theocrats all had ugly expressions.

Dongyang Fen had already joined in with the rest in their attack on the Decimo Dao Barrier. After all, the one being stepped on right now was his son! The East Hall King, Jiang Xiao, would probably have joined in too, if the Death Hall King, Jiang An, wasn’t blocking him.

It looked clear that the barrier was about to break.

“Who’re the ones daring to act so unbridled in my Decimo Dao Palace! Outsiders have invaded. Dark Hall’s Decimo Army, take up arms!” an awe-imposing voice suddenly rang out. In the next instant, a dense throng of warriors suddenly poured out of the depths of the dao palace.

A man in black armor was leading them. He was wearing a helmet, and a black cloak billowed behind him. He was the man who had just spoken.

“Enemies have invaded! Kill them!” the man roared as he mobilized the soldiers to attack. Their sudden appearance frightened the disciples in their path, who all tried to make themselves as small as possible, not daring to move a muscle.

Most of the spectators had already moved away, except for the Theocrats attacking the barrier. Those Theocrats were suddenly surrounded by Dark Hall beastmasters several times their number, giving them a big fright.

“Stop!” At that critical moment, Dongyang Fen, together with the five hall kings Jiang An, Jiang Xiao, Jiang Jianying, Zhao Shenhong, and Wei Ji, all hurriedly blocked the soldiers’ path.

“It’s a misunderstanding, a misunderstanding!”

“Ye Yi, stop!”

Finally, the army ground to a halt. However, their killing intent didn’t disappear.

“Jiang An. Jiang Xiao. Jiang Jianying! You three Theocrats, explain why your clan is attacking the Decimo Dao Palace for no reason!” Ye Yi, the man dressed in black armor, barked.

“It’s really a misunderstanding! All we did was attack the barrier...” Jiang An said.

“The Decimo Dao Barrier is the protective barrier of the palace! Are you declaring war here? Are you a hall king of our palace, or of the Ancient Theocrats!” Ye Yi pressed.

“So what if we’re declaring war?” Dongyang Fen stepped forward, exploding with fury.

“The dao palace is a land of cultivation, and has tens of thousands of years of legacy. We’ve done everything in our power to help the Theocracy nurture talents. If you attack us for no reason, we, the

warriors of the Dark Hall, will stake our lives on defending the palace. At least, none of you will leave here alive!" Ye Yi's voice thundered.

"Kill!" the warriors roared in unison, making Dongyang Fen subconsciously take a step back. How was this some school? This was a well-trained army!

If conflict broke out and it spread that the Theocrats had suffered a loss, people would definitely believe they had done something retarded. Dongyang Fen wouldn't be able to bear the responsibility for that, and neither could Jiang An.

The Evil Suppression Pillar suddenly shook at that moment, and black heavenly pattern power began to gush from it and spread out. It instantly filled the sky and settled into a hemisphere that covered the entire dao palace within, plunging the dao palace into darkness.

"The Evil Suppression Barrier!" Many of the Theocrats were even more stunned now. By now, all of their previous anger had been washed away by fear. Anyone with the slightest knowledge of history would know what that barrier represented.

"Are they trapping them here to beat them up?" Tianming was startled as well. He hadn't expected such an aggressive reaction either. It seemed that they were playing things by ear, based on his performance.

"I remember the Future Hall King mentioning to me before that this barrier was the exact reason why the dao palace could exist in the Divine Capital for tens of thousands of years without being exterminated," Tianming continued.

"That's incredible. You think they'll end up fighting today?" Feiling asked.

"Probably not. The Dark Hall is just showing their strength as a warning to the Theocrats. The palace lord did say to watch how the situation develops. We'll just use this situation to do some house cleaning."

Now that the Ancient Theocrats had lost their Primeval Autarch, it seemed the sun was setting for them. However, the dao palace still didn't want to rush into things. The other side didn't have the Cyclic Mirror anyway.

For now, removing the rot inside the dao palace was good enough!

While Tianming might appear impulsive at times, he actually did make judgements and plans. Now, the only path forward for him was to get stronger. That was the only way for him to protect his family, as well as find out the truth behind Li MUYANG and Princess Skyfate.

What followed was just as Tianming predicted. Ye Yi levied the charge of invading the Decimo Dao Palace on the Theocrats, causing them to be terrified.

"These people are too used to being tyrants. They think the whole Theocracy is their playground," Tianming said mockingly. Just because they had been a little triggered, they wanted to destroy the Decimo Dao Battlefield.

Now, the Theocrats had no choice but to suppress their anger, while their five Hall Kings tried to give the Dark Hall an explanation.

"Is that true? You weren't invading?" Ye Yi asked seriously.

“Yes, definitely not!” Jiang An insisted.

“Then it’s fine. Jiang An, you need to explain some things properly to your clan members. Our dao palace is loyal to the Theocracy, but don’t take us for cowards!”

“Of course, of course.” Jiang An nodded along.

“So you’re saying this was all caused by a disciple? What did he say?” Ye Yi asked.

Jiang An wasn’t able to answer that.

“For this, our palace lord will bring him to Autarch Yun to apologize. There’s no need to be so excitable, it’s just a kid’s words. Seriously, tens of thousands of seniors actually wanted to break down the barrier and bicker with him? That’s embarrassing,” Ye Yi chuckled.

What could Jiang An and the rest say? They all knew Tianming was just the spark, and the real issue was that the dao palace wanted to clean house! As members of the dao palace, that identity should have been the priority. However, now that they had stood on the Theocrats’ side, the dao palace had an excuse to remove them.

“And that’s it?” Dongyang Fen’s eyes were still lit up with fury.

“Go and ask your father, what can he do? He’s busy hunting down Dongyang Ling. Is he so bored he wants to add the dao palace to his list?” Jiang An glared at him angrily.

“Now that my grandfather has passed, all these rats are coming out of the woodwork to make trouble. One day, we’ll exterminate them!” Dongyang Fen’s veins were bulging.

“Nonsense. If it could be done, they would’ve been exterminated when the Theocracy was founded. You think they’ll be wiped out here today?” Jiang An was dumbfounded.

“Dongyang Fen, bring your people away!” Ye Yi barked.

“Watch out,” Dongyang Fen sneered coldly at Tianming.

“Leave!”

“Wait!” Tianming shouted. He used the Grand-Orient Sword to flick Dongyang Zhuo’s head toward his father, Dongyang Fen. “Keep it as a memento. A good sized bucket should be good for storing it.”

However, Tianming had forgotten about the barrier. The head simply bounced off, then randomly rolled on the floor for a bit.

And as everyone fell into deep silence, Tianming said, “Well, that was awkward.”

#### **Chapter 464 - Tomb of the Ancients**

First Prince Dongyang Fen took a deep breath. His face was already turning purple, the same shade as when Autarch Yun had announced the new crown prince.

“Li Tianming. From this day on, all of the Theocrats will remember your name!” Many people were furious.

“That’s alright. It’d be the case sooner or later anyway.” After all, he was the son of Li Muyang.

The Evil Suppression Barrier was shut down, and all of the spectators and Dark Hall beastmasters left. Finally, peace had returned to the Decimo Dao Palace. However, the difference was that Tianming had gone from someone overlooked to the number one of his age group in the Theocracy!

“Dongyang Zhuo’s strength was near my master, Ye Shaoqing’s,” Tianming considered. He was well aware of how fast he was improving. The black arm, Prime Tower, Primordial Chaos Beasts, and Aeonian Grandbane had all combined to make him faster than Li Wudi.

If he returned to the Grand-Orient Realm as he was now, he would be considered an expert there.

In truth, Dongyang Zhuo wasn’t weak. He had lost because Tianming had too many tricks up his sleeves. He had many beasts and the Oceanspirit Tomes, as he was a patternscribe. If they hadn’t fought inside the barrier here, an opponent wouldn’t have just stayed inside the sea he created.

“Normally, I’d struggle against a seventh-level Earth Saint even with Ling’er’s help. Fortunately, I’ll be getting the empyrean manna soon.” Tianming grinned.

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Several of the Hall Kings, and the Dark’s Hall’s hall master, Ye Yi, came to Tianming.

“Disciple Li Tianming greets the Dark Hall Hall Master.”

“A good performance. Later, go to the Dark Hall’s Sacred Dao Palace and withdraw your empyrean manna.” Ye Yi smiled.

“Yes!”

“Spirit, wits, and talent. You’re much better than your godfather,” Ye Yi praised.

“My godfather is quite badass though,” Tianming chuckled.

“That’s for sure, but he really does act in a way that’s just asking to be beaten up,” Ye Yi said.

Despite how domineering Ye Yi had been acting just now, Tianming now realized this senior was actually not bad after privately chatting with him.

“Alright, I’ll be making a move. Don’t forget your manna,” Ye Yi said.

“I definitely won’t.” There would have to be something wrong with his head if he forgot.

The Theocrats hadn’t all left yet when Ye Yi left. Jiang An’s group of five Hall Kings brought a man wearing a bamboo hat over to Tianming.

“Tianming, this is the Theocracy’s crown prince,” Bai Mo introduced mildly.

Tianming had already heard before about Autarch Yun’s ninth son, Dongyang Fengchen. Autarch Yun hadn’t hesitated to give him that position just three days after ascending to the throne. Supposedly, Dongyang Fengchen was rather young.

Although Dongyang Fengchen's face was covered by a veil, Tianming could still see that it was rather abnormal. It didn't seem like a birthmark, but half of his face was entirely black.

Tianming frowned; his instincts were telling him this crown prince was a terrifying person. However, it wasn't from power, but rather his willpower and gaze being much stronger than Dongyang Fen's.

Tianming was rather curious; how many heads did this man's lifebound beast have?

By this time, the crown prince had already exchanged greetings with Ye Yi and Bai Mo. When he was done, he suddenly looked over. "Li Tianming, your strength and cultivation speed is impressive. I have nothing but respect."

"I'm flattered, Your Highness."

"I have an eye for people. You have a bright future ahead of you. Right, the Fireworks Festival is coming up. My father will be organizing a feast for it, and you'll most likely receive an invitation." The crown prince's words were measured. Just now, the Theocrats had all desired to kill Tianming, but he had been an exception. Even now, his eyes didn't have any murderous intent, but appreciation instead.

"Tianming, quickly thank the crown prince," Bai Mo indicated.

Tianming thanked the crown prince. However, he didn't actually have any knowledge of this Fireworks Festival Feast.

"During the feast, my father will see the performance of the disciples of the dao palace. These few years, the disciples of the dao palace have been impressive, even outshining the youths from our Dongyang Clan. Who knows, maybe even more disciples will be able to go to the Tomb of the Ancients this year." The crown prince gave him a light smile.

"You must be joking, Your Highness. When has the Dongyang Clan ever not taken over eighty percent of the slots for the tomb? The dao palace disciples have never really had many gains over the past few centuries." Bai Mo smiled back.

"Maybe it'll be different this time."

"I wonder, is Your Highness overaged?"

"The Tomb of the Ancients opened forty years ahead of schedule this time. Maybe it's fate, but I can coincidentally enter one more time. The Tomb is the number one wonder of our continent. It birthed both the dao palace and the Ancient Theocrats. Even just going in is already incredibly beneficial," the crown prince said in a heartfelt manner.

"Your Highness is really lucky. No one has ever been able to go in twice before. You're an historic first," Bai Mo's words seemed to be a compliment, but his tone was slightly frosty.

"Future Hall King, stop joking. I got nothing last time, and it'll probably be the same this time. The marvels within aren't things that ordinary people like me can understand. Only with luck can you make it big and create a page in the history books," the crown prince said enviously.

He turned to Tianming and winked. "In my opinion, Li Tianming is one of those people."

“Your Highness really does have a good eye.” Tianming smiled. After being praised so many times, Tianming was too lazy to reply back about how flattered he was.

The crown prince and several of the people by his side laughed. The crown prince continued, “Tianming, you definitely have to come for the feast. You’re an interesting fellow, and it surely won’t be dull with you around.”

Tianming didn’t express his opinion, as he still wanted to ask Bai Mo more about the feast.

“Farewell, everyone.”

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After they left, Bai Mo gave Tianming a light pat on his shoulder. “Good work today. Your rate of progress is even better than Li Wudi’s. With you as an opening act, we can continue putting pressure on the Theocrats.”

“It was a small matter,” Tianming said.

“Dongyang Fen was actually willing to pay out a million saint crystals just to kill you. He really is serious.” Weisheng Yumo shook his head.

“Hall King.” Tianming looked at the Future Hall King.

“I know you want to ask about the feast and tomb. Let’s talk as we go,” Bai Mo said.

“Yes.”

After the battle, Tianming had become the most attention-grabbing disciple of the dao palace, No matter where he went, he would always be met with reverent gazes, even from members of the Jiang Clan.

“Tianming, have you ever heard that the Theocracy is a country that a god was born in before?” Bai Mo asked.

“I heard about it. Is it real?”

“Of course not. Those are the delusions of the common folk. None of us have ever seen a god before. Emyrean saints can only look enviously at gods. But one thing that’s certain is that the Theocracy has a god’s tomb, which has persisted for almost a hundred thousand years!” Bai Mo said seriously.

“A god’s tomb?” Tianming was stunned.

“Right.”

“How can we be sure? Does it have some tombstone saying so?” Tianming asked curiously.

“Of course not. However, many people have gone in to see, myself included when I was young. I can be sure that it’s something only a god can create. Those unfathomable things can’t be described using words. You have to see it to believe it. Only a god deserves to be buried somewhere like that,” Bai Mo said with absolute confidence.

Tianming, Qingyu, Feiling, and Ye Lingfeng all showed yearning.

“And the most important evidence!” Bai Mo said, causing their ears to perk up.

“Our dao palace’s ancestor once obtained the greatest treasure of this territory, the Evil Suppression Pillar, there. Using that, he established the dao palace, the greatest of all sects! We controlled what is now the Theocracy’s territory for thirty thousand years. Then, the Nineshades Clan obtained the Cyclic Mirror and became the Ancient Theocrats, overthrowing us and establishing the dynasty of the Theocracy of the Ancients. That’s why both the Theocracy and dao palace owe their existence to the Tomb of the Ancients. If it weren’t for the tomb, the Theocracy would probably still be some rural area now, filled with small sects.”

“Those two divine treasures must’ve come from a real god. That’s why that place must be the resting place of a god. The power of the Evil Suppression Pillar and Cyclic Mirror proves it,” Bai Mo said.

“Wait, wait....” Tianming was still busy being shocked, when he thought of something. He pulled out the Grand-Orient Sword.

Bai Mo grinned. “Right, your Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower were obtained by your first ancestor, Li Shenxiao, in the tomb. It’s different from the two treasures in that it seems its full power has never been fully unearthed, and it rejects everyone not from the Li Saint Clan. If you can fully use them in the future, who knows, maybe you can create an even bigger Theocracy.”

“Incredible.” Tianming had always heard the sword and tower were items created by a god, but he’d thought it was a baseless myth.

“It seems that the tomb is the source of many an expert in the Theocracy’s territory.” Qingyu swallowed, shocked as well.

“You’re right.” Bai Mo smiled. “The tomb is in the Abyssal Battlefield, in an area that corresponds to the north of the Divine Capital. It’s completely under the control of the Theocracy. They even built a city there and declared it the ‘second Divine Capital’, or ‘Abyssal Divine Capital’. Many powerhouses of the Theocracy stand guard there.”

“The tomb opens?” Tianming asked.

“Of course. How else would the ancestors enter? Normally, it happens every fifty years, or sometimes even centuries. There’s no pattern. However, every opening will be heralded by three great earthquakes at the Abyssal Divine Capital.”

“The time between openings this time was just eight years, the shortest in recorded history. We’re all shocked, and we’re speculating that perhaps there’s been some changes in the Tomb of the Ancients.”

#### **Chapter 465 - The Limit of Life, the Merciless Heavenly Dao**

“Huh. How did Li Shenxiao enter then? He spent fifty years overcoming his Lifesbane,” Tianming asked.

“Supposedly, it’s because overcoming it allowed him to become young again, thus circumventing the restriction,” Bai Mo said.

“Then can my godfather enter?” Tianming was surprised.

“Unfortunately, no. I’ve checked. His Lifesbane is different from the traditional one. His Lifesbane never burnt away at his lifespan, so all of its effects were on his cultivation and not his age. Now, his body is over forty years old,” Bai Mo explained.

Tianming had indeed noticed that Li Wudi hadn’t become younger.

He made some quick calculations. He himself should be roughly thirty by now. Fortunately, he had a sensation of being rejuvenated when he became an earth saint, so he felt much younger. As for his looks, he looked seventeen or eighteen. Taken altogether, he shouldn’t be past thirty yet, hopefully.

“Why in the world would this god insist only people under thirty can enter?” Tianming didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

“That’s a little complicated. It’s because, for sky and empyrean saints, under thirty is considered to be the age where you have the most talent and the fastest progress. Once you pass it, you’ll slow down. And once you’re a hundred... that’s basically your peak. Then, when you hit a hundred and fifty, you’ll start deteriorating from age. While sky saints have an age limit of three hundred, you won’t really be all there anymore when you hit about two hundred and fifty.” Bai Mo smiled helplessly. No one could escape fate, and everyone would perish one day.

“Tianming, many people mistakenly believe that even if an expert dies from old age, they’ll still be powerful before death. That’s wrong, because aging is a slow process. Your cultivation will regress as all of your saint ki is slowly returned to the world. Your flesh will fail and eventually return to the earth. After a hundred years of that, you die. It’s sheer nonsense to expect an old man to still be able to have a big fight. For us humans, we spend the first half of our life taking from heaven and earth, and the latter half returning it.” Bai Mo shook his head.

Tianming understood what he meant. If you didn’t die in battle, you would pass from age with white hair, wrinkles, a hunched back.... It wouldn’t matter what kind of expert you had once been.

Tianming and his lustrous white hair full of health was the exception, not the rule.

Bai Mo was now about a hundred years old. He looked to be in his forties—even younger than Wei Tiancang, who was in his sixties. He would probably look Wei Tiancang’s age when he hit a hundred and fifty. In fact, Bai Mo had already reached a point where his cultivation could no longer progress!

That was why, while the Sky Saint stage gave you three hundred years, only the first hundred were truly comfortable.

Autarch Qian having children when he was three hundred was because he was equivalent to an ordinary person in their fifties. Another few years, and he would probably have been incapable.

The laws of the world were merciless. The path to eternity was painful, and all experts would have to see their bodies slowly waste away as their strength left them. Even the Primeval Autarch was no exception!

“That means Autarch Qian didn’t die of old age. As an empyrean saint, he’d just passed his peak period. He definitely had at least a hundred years left in him. Right now, he’s considered as suffering a premature death. But who knows what the cause was. Maybe he committed suicide from fear of death. Theocrats often do that, unwilling to endure their fall from grace.” Bai Mo gave a mocking laugh.

In his view, youths like Tianming wouldn't understand. However, in truth, Tianming did indeed get it. He had just seized five years of life, after all. If he hadn't succeeded, he would have been resigned to watching his beast ki fade away.

"Hall King, can I enter the tomb?" Tianming asked.

"That'll depend on your performance at the feast. Only the best can go in, and they'll usually be at least twenty-six. Only special cases like Dongyang Fengchen, with his nine-headed hydra, can enter at twenty-two."

"Don't the Theocrats control the second Divine Capital? Why would they let us go in?" Tianming asked.

"That's because the Theocrats, and other powers of the capital, have already mixed into the dao palace. There was too much internal conflict when all of the Theocrats trained at the royal palace together. So, they purposely shifted all of the ones with the surname Jiang to us, in order to take our resources. Quite a few of them who joined us were quite strong, so the Theocrats gave them some slots, and the dao palace got some by association. But basically, it goes to them anyway."

"The slots are determined by battle. It's been that way for tens of thousands of years, so it's pretty fair. However, the tomb has opened so many times that there aren't really any treasures left, just some small toys."

"I see." Tianming nodded.

"I'll go and ask the palace lord about her opinion. It'll be difficult for you, as your opponents have a few years on you, so go train first. Right, and go get your empyrean manana."

"Understood!" Tianming nodded. There wasn't much to be concerned about, if the tomb was already cleared out.

For the crown prince to invite him to the feast, the situation couldn't be so simple. There was definitely a trap somewhere. He didn't believe the crown prince would be one of the good people in the Theocracy who would overlook his provocations.

However, he was still surprised. "That guy has a nine-headed hydra?" Such people, historically, were all capable of becoming Primeval Autarches. It was the reason Autarch Yun had immediately named him the crown prince.

"It seems that, in terms of talent, Dongyang Zhuo must have been quite a bit poorer than this crown prince. At thirty, he's already past the period of fastest progress. I wonder what stage he's at now?" Tianming was curious. If there had been someone of the crown prince's talent in his age group, he probably wouldn't have become the strongest in his age group.

"Whatever, I'll go get the empyrean manna first!" Tianming split up from his companions and proceeded to the Dark Hall alone.

It was his first time in the Dark Hall's area, but the guards all knew him.

"Not bad, kiddo!" The uncles at the gate directly picked him up and tossed him in, giving him a very warm welcome.

“Do you know the way to the Sacred Dao Palace?”

“Look up, you see that mountain?”

“Yes!”

“Right there on the peak, it is. Right, Li Tianming, remember to let us have a peek once you get an emptyrean saint beast, as thanks for us saving you today!”

“No problem!” Tianming had a good opinion of the Dark Hall, as they all valued loyalty.

Of course, it wasn't that people of the Decimo Dao Palace were good, while the Ancient Theocrats were bad. However, birds of a feather flock together.

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“Gods, it's a celebrity! Come and give me your autograph!”

“Wow, your skin is so white! Let uncle rub it a little for good luck.”

“Get lost, don't bully him! Big sister has your back!”

“Tianming, you're going to see the palace lord? Help big brother here and report the fatty next door to me. His lifebound beast keeps shitting at my door, so please relocate him.”

Tianming was speechless. However, he still made many friends en route.

“Tianming, when you said, ‘Nineshades Clan’, man, that got my heart pumping!”

Clearly, Tianming's performance had made them like him a lot.

After a while, he finally made it past all the big brothers and sisters of the Dark Hall and reached the Sacred Dao Palace. The palace had a refined, yet simple architecture. It was primarily black and white, and looked like an ink painting in the dense mist of spiritual energy.

It had a simple wooden gate, but Tianming saw many heavenly patterns, mysterious and profound, freely swimming on the walls in the shape of a black and white diagram.

“Tianming, come in,” a voice drifted out.

“The palace lord is female.” Tianming was briefly surprised. The voice was relaxing. It wasn't too young or too old, and sounded about Wei Jing's age before she had overcome her Lifesbane.

“Disciple Li Tianming greets the Palace Lord.” Tianming gave the wooden door a light push and entered.

#### **Chapter 466: Weisheng Yunxi**

Tianming had entered an elegant, rather plain courtyard with nothing but a stone table and stone chairs. It was a rather common furnishing for courtyards, without anything noteworthy, though there were heavenly patterns carved all over the place that formed a picture with varying effects.

Tianming stepped into the courtyard and walked along a cobblestone path. After walking around five hundred meters, he arrived at a stone building, outside of which stood a woman, who was obviously the palace lord. Tianming had to admit that he didn't quite believe she was the palace lord when he first set

eyes on her; she seemed gentle and plain and looked to be in her forties, neither old nor young. Her long hair was tied together and hung down to her waist. She wore a loose grey robe and had very slight wrinkles at the corner of her eyes, which made her seem a little frail.

She was gently smiling when Tianming arrived; the smile made him feel really comfortable and welcome. She looked a little like Wei Jing had before. It felt like he had returned to the days when he would finish cultivating, only to find his mother waiting outside their home for his return with a smile.

Someone so gentle and simple was the last thing people would imagine when thinking about the palace lord of Decimo Dao Palace, a person who stood in the highest echelons of the Theocracy. In fact, Tianming knew she was an empyrean saint, and was actually around two hundred years old. She was easily among the most senior in the dao palace. She was called Weisheng Yunxi, the aunt of the Sky Hall King, Weisheng Yumo.

"Tianming, come here," she said, waving her hand. The sunlight that touched her skin gave her a slight orange glow.

"Palace Lord," he said as he prepared to bow and formally greet her, though she stopped him before he could.

"There's no need. Just sit here."

"Okay." He nodded and sat down on a stone chair beside her.

"Tianming, this is your prize for taking first place in the Earth Ranking," she said without dallying, taking out three jade boxes from her spatial ring. The jade boxes exuded dense spiritual energy. There were many saintly heavenly patterns on them, which was a sign they were made of heavenly spirit ore. For something to be stored in jade boxes that precious, the items within were no doubt really valuable as well.

"Thank you, Palace Lord." Even Tianming had to be docile when dealing with such an agreeable and gentle senior. Despite easily being the most boisterous and rude person in the Decimo Dao Palace, he made sure to behave as politely as he could now. Though, after his expression of gratitude, he unceremoniously took the three boxes and kept them in his spatial ring.

"Won't you even look at what kind of manna it is?" Weisheng Yunxi asked.

"My mother taught me that I shouldn't open gifts from seniors right in front of them," he said.

"You had a good upbringing indeed."

"That's right," he agreed, nodding.

"But then, that means I wouldn't be able to see the surprised look on your face when you find the hidden gift I added," she said, still maintaining her gentle smile.

"A hidden gift?"

"That's right. It's quite troublesome when you think about it. Even as the palace lord, I had to wait until you claimed the first rank before even being able to give you something. Otherwise, there'd be many in the dao palace that'd endlessly quibble over it."

Given that six of the ten halls were in the Theocrats' control, everything had to be done according to regulations. Even a personal favor from the palace lord would be sure to inspire envy from the Jiangs and the rest, who would in turn cause a commotion among the rest of the disciples. But now that Tianming had taken the first rank on the Earth Ranking and deserved an empyrean manna, the others would have to shut up and bear with it.

"Palace Lord, might I ask what you have given me?"

"Three mid grade empyrean manna."

"What?!" Tianming felt that he had hit the jackpot. Empyrean manna was among the most precious treasures in the Theocracy. They weren't created spontaneously by nature; instead, they were formed from celestial manna that had absorbed spiritual energy for millennia. Yet it would be hard for anyone to find even one celestial manna every thousand years.

There were three levels of empyrean manna, namely, low, middle, and high grade. Most of the ones in the Theocracy were considered low grade. The middle grade ones, on the other hand, were incredibly rare items.

How hard would it have been for him to obtain three mid grade empyrean manna that had existed on the Flameyellow Continent for three thousand years? It wasn't something that could be easily made in that time either. A place with unique natural characteristics had to be used to cultivate the manna.

High grade empyrean manna could allow lifebound beasts to evolve to ninety stars and above, nearing the legendary hundred-star saint beasts. Something like that was greatly desired, but never found throughout history. Whether it had shown up before or not wasn't something anyone knew. In other words, middle grade empyrean manna was the best resource one could currently lay their hands on.

"Tianming, I promised to reward a disciple with empyrean manna after they took first rank, but I never said what grade it would be. Don't worry. If others bother you for this, that would only give me a good reason to take care of them." Though she wasn't young, by any measure, there was a hint of playfulness in her words.

"Palace Lord, I can't possibly accept this."

"If you don't want it, return it." She stretched her hand out.

"Stop! Thank you, Palace Lord, I'll put them to good use and won't let you down," he said, clutching his spatial ring tight.

"You're quite the drama king."

In truth, Tianming felt rather shocked by this. He knew that even ten low grade empyrean manna wouldn't be worth as much as even a single middle grade empyrean manna. The moment he successfully used them, few in the Theocracy would be able to claim to have better lifebound beasts than him. It was far better than what others had imagined the reward for the one to claim the first rank in the Earth Ranking would be.

"Palace Lord, to be honest, I'm still rather shocked. Isn't this too precious?"

"It isn't. Since times of yore, treasures have been given to deserving paragons and fateful persons. You're definitely deserving of such gifts, so don't overthink it."

"It's that simple?"

"If you feel bad about it, make sure you work hard to pay me back for it once you get stronger."

"No problem. I'll definitely serve the dao palace with my life!"

"You speak rather frankly, much like your dad. Back then, we were master and disciple."

"Master and disciple?"

"That's right."

No wonder she was so nice to him. Given her relationship with Li MUYANG, and the Li Saint Clan's ties with the dao palace, as well as Tianming's innate potential, she was willing to give him these treasures.

"Palace Lord, can you tell me what kind of person he used to be?"

"People are incredibly complex. You can't just sum up a person with a few words. You'll find out when you meet him in the future."

"Understood."

"However, I can tell you that he's a righteous man. He definitely won't disappoint you."

"I believe he is."

"Let me see the Grand-Orient Sword, Tianming."

"Alright." He took out the sword and handed it to her.

She traced her finger over the patterns on the sword. At that moment, Tianming realized that her eyes were a little glazed over.

"Palace Master, your eyes...."

"I was burned by Voidfire before, and lost my sight."

"Can't they be healed?" She had behaved so naturally that it had never occurred to him that she was blind. Normally, most cases of blindness could be healed.

"It can't. Voidfire is a spirit hazard that contains a hundred saintly heavenly patterns. There's nothing in existence that can nullify it."

"Who did this?"

"He's already dead."

"Was it Autarch Qian?"

"That's right."

It seemed like the Ancient Theocrats and the dao palace had their fair share of conflicts.

"Tianming, I heard you managed to split the sword in two, right?"

"That's right."

"Go back and do more research on it. This is an artifact of the gods. If we are able to unearth more effects that can match the Cyclic Mirror or Evil Suppression Pillar, you'll definitely become a legend. Your stepfather, Li Wudi, should be able to match the elites in the Divine Capital after his year of rapid growth ends. His potential is endless. But while you have fewer bane-rings, you possess this treasure and cultivate fast. There's a chance you'll achieve even more than him."

"The disciple overtakes the master. It'll be too easy for me to surpass him."

"Your personality is rather like Li Wudi's. Your birth father was much more humble." When she finished speaking, she stood up. "Let's go."

"Where to, Palace Lord?"

"You don't have a wind-type Heavenly Will, so you've almost reached mastery of the Shenxiao Sword Art. Come with me to the Nature Arts Hall. I'll recommend a battle art for you."

"Thank you, Palace Lord! I really feel bad for all this...."

"Why don't we forget it then?"

"Oh, no, I can't make the palace lord recant anything, or else your credibility will be called into question."

"Just come."

"Need me to escort you?"

"My eyes may no longer see, but my heart does."

"Alright."

"But I didn't say you couldn't lead me there," she said, stretching out her hand.

"Okay!" After getting so much from her, he would even be willing to give her a piggyback ride.

"I can tell that your body's physical traits are strong. It can be compared to a lifebound beast's. We have a rather unique battle art that doesn't have a normal classification, but could be as powerful as an empyrean saint battle art. I'd like you to give it a try."

"An empyrean saint battle art? Wouldn't that be too complex? I'm worried I might fail." There were few in the Theocracy who could execute even simplified empyrean battle arts.

"This one isn't heavy on comprehension, but only requires a strong physical body and the propensity for pain and hardship. It's said that those of the Li Saint Clan possess such qualities. That's why only Li Shenxiao managed to train it to the level of the Thousand-Demise Sword."

"It's him again! Why's he spoken of everywhere? He's a specter that keeps on haunting me!"

"You fool, is that how you should talk about your ancestor?" she said, giving his head a knock.

"I'm fine. I have a good relationship with him, so he won't mind. Not to mention, he sponged a lot of wine from me, you know."

### **Chapter 467: Invincible Sword Body**

Soon, they reached the Nature Arts Hall. This was where the Dark Hall of the Decimo Dao Palace stored their vast collection of earth and sky saint battle arts. The base requirement to become a Dark Hall warrior was to be a saint. Any disciple of the dao palace had to reach the Saint stage before thirty to become one of the warriors, any of whom would be able to easily outmatch a Grand-Orient guardian.

It wasn't long before they reached the last section of the Nature Arts Hall. Through a large entrance was an underground cavern with a flight of stairs leading down. Tianming escorted Weisheng Yunxi into the darkness below.

"Tianming, this battle art is called the Invincible Sword Body. It's something our forebears obtained from the Tomb of the Ancients," Weisheng Yunxi said.

"Invincible Sword Body? How is it cultivated?" He had learned much about the tomb today and was rather curious about it. It seemed that most of the Theocracy's top treasures had come from within.

"This battle art requires a unique training method. You don't have to meditate and deliberate over it. Instead, just tap into the sword ki pool and use Invincible Sword Ki to nourish your body, turning it slowly into an Invincible Sword Body by infusing the ki into every part of your blood and flesh.

"If you succeed, you'll be able to release Invincible Sword Ki and draw it back as you please. Let your body be the host of the ki and truly master it. It'll also be a huge boost to your physical capabilities. That's why it's classified as a rare body-refining battle art.

"The more Invincible Sword Ki you're able to store, the more power you'll be able to unleash. The battle art is broken down into four levels, namely, Ten-Demise Sword, Hundred-Demise Sword, Thousand-Demise Sword, and Myriad-Demise Sword.

"At Ten-Demise Sword, you'll be able to let out ten strands of Invincible Sword Ki. It follows that at Myriad-Demise Sword, you'll be able to unleash tens of thousands of sword ki in an instant. Not to mention, you can infuse Invincible Sword Ki into your Shenxiao Sword Art to elevate it to a whole new level. As long as you can use Myriad-Demise Sword with the fourth strike of the Shenxiao Sword Art, that strike will be on par with an empyrean saint battle art. In fact, it'll be stronger than most of them," she explained.

"Does such a mystical battle art really exist?"

"You're still young, so you don't know much yet. There's all kinds of battle arts. The Flameyellow Continent has a history that stretches too far back, and many mystical things have been created. There's so many of them that nobody truly knows the number. The Invincible Sword Body is only one such example. Tianming, you have to view the world with endless curiosity. Don't let yourself be limited by the boundaries of your imagination."

"Alright. But, Palace Lord, what's a sword ki pool and Invincible Sword Ki?"

"The sword ki pool is a vessel forged from saint spirit ore. Invincible Sword Ki, on the other hand, is a special spirit hazard. There's wind, fire, water, lightning, earth, ice, and other types. These spirit hazards exist in the form of sword ki, but there aren't many of them. Sword ki spirit hazards each have tens of saintly heavenly patterns and were harvested over the span of thousands of years by our seniors. Many of our forebears have trained in the Invincible Sword Body, but most were only able to reach the Ten-Demise Sword level. In other words, they couldn't absorb more than ten strands of Invincible Sword Ki. As a result, not much of the sword ki has been consumed throughout the generations, and it began piling up. Now, we have about twenty thousand strands of Invincible Sword Ki.

"Tianming, this technique doesn't rely on talent, but willpower. Don't be too optimistic about it. Don't think too much about it even if you fail. It's nothing more than a matter of compatibility. Also, you're free to pick any sky saint battle arts as well."

"Understood!"

"Just give it a try. Assimilate the first strand of Invincible Sword Ki, that'll show how suited you are for the battle art. After all, you have the strongest physique I've seen so far. It feels like you're a lifebound beast," she said as she gave his shoulder a squeeze. "You have some firm muscles, young man."

Light could be seen emanating from below them. Before Tianming even approached, he could feel the sharpness of Invincible Sword Ki from the sword ki pool. The closer he got, the more prickly his skin felt.

Soon, he saw the sword ki pool in full glory. They were currently underground, and not a single window was in sight. The pool lay beyond a thick door, filled with an incredibly colorful water. The sword kis caused a brushing sound as they swooped around. Some even scratched against the walls of the pool, creating a screech that irked most listeners.

Tianming stepped forward for a better look and saw more than twenty thousand strands of Invincible Sword Ki. They were spirit hazards of all sorts of types with unique shapes, ranging from the elements, to the blazing sun, and even the stars. All of these spirit hazards existed in the form of sword ki, incredibly sharp and fierce.

Additionally, all of them had many saintly heavenly patterns, with the more exceptional ones having up to sixty. Fifty saintly heavenly patterns was enough for a material to be used to forge saintly bestial arms. He saw quite a lot of fire, lightning, wind, water, earth, and metal sword ki. The fire ones were so hot that they could easily burn anyone nearby to death, if the pool wasn't keeping them safely within.

The sword ki pool shook audibly, as if the twenty thousand beasts were trying to burst out of it. Some of the sword kis clashed against each other, as if they were fighting.

"After thousands of years, these are all that's left. If you're capable enough to absorb all of them, you'll be able to reach the Myriad-Demise Sword level. The water, earth, lightning, and fire Invincible Sword Ki within number more than fifteen thousand. I suggest you try working on those four types first, as your lifebound beasts correspond to their elements. It should make it easier for you.

"Tianming, if you can achieve what Li Shenxiao did, this will all be yours. Don't worry about what others think, either. Jiang An, and many other Ancient Theocrats, have attempted the same without any success." It was obvious that not even she could do it either.

"Fire-type sword ki spirit hazards, huh..." Tianming saw how chaotic they were inside the pool. The color of the fire spirit hazards clearly differentiated them from the rest of the chaotic bunch.

I have an Aeternal Infernal Body, so I should have strong resistance toward fire-type abilities and spirit hazards. Same goes for lightning, ice and water, and mountain and earth. Would that make it easier for me to cultivate? he thought.

Turning back, he asked, "Palace Lord, how many strands of sword ki did the founding ancestor manage to assimilate?"

"More than nine hundred strands; close to a thousand. In fact, if you reach Hundred-Demise Sword, it can be considered a success. After all, assimilating Invincible Sword Ki is really difficult. It's a matter of fusing it with your physical body, and that feels rather unpleasant."

In other words, the remaining twenty thousand strands of sword ki was more than enough. Tianming wasn't that ambitious, and reckoned it would already be rather decent if he could master the Ten-Demise Sword level. Though, he had a feeling that his Aeternal Infernal Body, Genesis Chaos Body, and Primordial Terraqua Body would come in really useful for this purpose.

"How do I give it a try?"

"I'll lead one strand of Invincible Sword Ki out. Execute the battle art according to my demonstration to test how much your body can take. Which type would you pick?"

"The fire one then."

"Alright."

Not long after, Weisheng Yunxi drew out the smallest strand of fire sword ki with only fifteen saintly heavenly patterns.

"This is Coldfire Sword Ki. It's among the least hot of the fire-type sword ki. However, it should be far stronger than most flames. Be prepared," she said as she manipulated the sword ki.

"I'm ready. Is there anything I need to do, Palace Lord?"

"No, just work hard on screaming in agony," she said with a smirk.

She had him sit down and stood behind him. "The buttocks have the most amount of flesh, so the damage you'll suffer in the event of losing control is minimal. Should I start guiding it in here?" she asked.

"Alright." But before she could start, something occurred to him. "Umm... Palace Lord, can I change to another part?"

"What's wrong?"

"I'm worried my blissful life will be affected if you mess up."

"You sure have an interesting imagination, despite your young age." She didn't know how to react to him.

In the end, she changed the target to his arm. Not the black arm, of course, as it would be hard to test his compatibility given how tough it was. Invincible Sword Ki worked to reforge the whole body, so concentrating them on his black arm wouldn't help much.

"I'm going to begin."

"Alright."

Weisheng Yunxi guided the Coldfire Sword Ki with a strand of saint ki and pressed it against Tianming's right arm. He felt how truly vast and deep the amount of saint ki she had was. As expected of someone who had cultivated for more than two centuries. If his saint ki was akin to a small pond, hers was an ocean. This was the difference between an empyrean saint and a second-level earth saint.

The sword ki tore through his skin and burrowed into his body. Even though he had been ready for it, it still caused him to wince. While he didn't cry out from the burn, the feeling of being torn through felt like being pierced by a sword.

This is just the weakest sword ki, and I'm totally resistant to the effects of the fire. Yet it feels so painful just from the tearing alone.

He gasped from the pain. It was no wonder most people only managed to assimilate ten, at most, especially considering others probably endured far more pain than he was. After all, they had to suffer from the burns as well.

Even so, Tianming was able to resist in front of this senior. Cold sweat dripped from his forehead. He looked down and saw the Coldfire Sword Ki tearing through his body. Even with Weisheng Yunxi suppressing it, it didn't prevent the damage from the painful tears.

I can't embarrass myself! He endured using willpower alone. All of a sudden, a white glow shone around the parts where his flesh was torn.

"The Prime Tower took effect after all. Li Shenxiao relied on its recovery properties to endure up to a thousand assimilations." It seemed like the palace lord had brought him here knowing that he had the Prime Tower from the start. However, she wasn't able to tell that Tianming excelled far more in terms of his resistance to fire, lightning, and the other elemental aspects of the spirit hazards.

"Even though you can recover slowly, it's still going to be painful. You'll feel better if you yell from the pain," she gently said.

"I can deal with it." He closed his eyes and focused his attention on other things, like Ling'er's slender waist and thighs for example. It truly worked wonders.

#### **Chapter 468: Bring Her Back to the Tomb**

Soon, fifteen minutes passed. Weisheng Yunxi loosened her hands and looked at Tianming, seeming a little surprised. "You didn't cry out even the slightest?"

"I didn't. Is not doing so a sign of talent?" Tianming asked, wiping off his sweat.

"It isn't. However, your willpower is a big factor in how far you can go. True Invincible Sword Body talent is shown when you're able to assimilate a strand of sword ki within fifteen minutes. This is really good

efficiency. If you're able to take the pain, you'll at least be able to reach Hundred-Demise Sword. Perhaps you'll even be able to reach a thousand, like your ancestor." Her expression was one of delight.

She was surprised at Tianming's endurance, especially with how much stronger he was compared to others she'd seen. Not to mention, he had a reasonable tolerance for pain. Though, that was a little bit of an overestimation, for his fire resistance greatly lightened the pain he felt to tolerable levels. Tianming would have an even easier time reaching the Thousand-Demise Sword than Li Shenxiao.

But that didn't mean it would be a breeze, and reaching Myriad-Demise Sword was even harder. He was only just starting out.

"Good. In the coming days, spend some time each day trying to cultivate the Invincible Sword Body. If I'm free, I'll come and make sure you're on the right track. Try your best to reach a hundred before going for a thousand to match your founding ancestor. I'm confident you can do it."

While her eyes were pale, she still gave off a sense of a caring senior.

"Alright. Since the palace lord has such high hopes for me, I'll definitely tough through the hardship. No matter how tortured I am by the sword ki, I won't cry out."

"Oh, you don't have to force yourself. It's not like anyone will hear you down here. Just make sure you don't give up."

"Alright." He knew this would be a challenge, but he wanted to know how powerful his fourth strike of the Shenxiao Sword Art would be if he used it with Myriad-Demise Sword. How terrifying would a killing machine filled with Invincible Sword Ki be?

"Only by growing powerful will I be able to remain dignified and protect all that I care for. I'll take all the pain I can for those that I love. That's my purpose in life," Tianming said as he stood in front of the sword ki pool.

"Tianming, it's a little late, now. Take the manual of Invincible Sword Body back with you first. Once you're familiar with the basics, we can formally start."

"Okay."

"Let's leave."

"I'll lead you."

By the time they left the underground chamber, it was already getting late and there were no stars in the skies at all.

"Palace Lord, I'll take my leave now," he said, turning back and waving. Weisheng Yunxi stood beside the stone door of Nature Arts Hall, holding the door with one hand like a statue as she watched him leave.

"Tianming," she called out.

"Yes?"

"Muyang really impressed me. As his son, you have to walk the righteous path as well, and grow to be a person you can be proud of. On the path of cultivation, the most important thing is to know yourself."

Out of everyone in this universe, you alone are the one you have to strive to understand. Only after finding yourself and living by your principles can you walk the grand, boundless path. Humans are capable of many things, even scaling the heavens. But before all that, you have to be certain in your convictions and act without doubt."

Weisheng Yunxi's robe seemed to dull in the darkness.

"Alright." Tianming bowed to her and charged into the night sky.

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On the way back to Future Hall, Tianming tossed the three empyrean manna to his lifebound beasts. If things went well, they would have over eighty stars in their eyes, putting them among the top lifebound beasts in the entire Theocracy. If their evolution worked out, they would experience a complete metamorphosis. Being Primordial Chaos Beasts, they'll only grow stronger and reach their true form, like the ones I've seen in those dreams, he thought excitedly.

As the palace lord didn't give him detailed information on the empyrean manna, Tianming only knew their names. He figured he would only be able to understand their full effects once Ying Huo and the rest refined them and evolved.

The first manna was called Wings of Agni, and was most suited to Ying Huo. The moment he opened the box, he felt the dense empyrean essence radiating from it. It had been stored for at least three thousand years.

The second empyrean manna was called Myriadfiend Venomfang. He decided Meow Meow would be able to use it well, in tandem with Venomfiend Bloodclaw and Soulchasing Hellthunder, as it was obviously a poison-type manna. What he wondered was how its toxin compared to that of Venomfiend Bloodclaw.

The third manna was called Annihilation Godsword. While it would work for Ying Huo as well, the chick was better suited to Wings of Agni. Annihilation Godsword took the form of a tough greatsword. Given its design, most people would think that it could only be crafted by the gods. Tianming gave it to Lan Huang, as it could possibly increase its close-combat capabilities.

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Soon, he arrived at his destination. "I wonder if Ling'er is already asleep."

It was so dark that he couldn't see his outstretched fingers. Given how silent the outer courtyard was, however, Qingyu and Ye Lingfeng were probably working hard on cultivation. Tianming saw some starlight coming from Ling'er's room's window. She was likely still reading the Infernal Soul Heavenly Pattern Canon.

She's not asleep even though it's already so late. This lass really works hard, he thought.

He hurried up and gently opened the door. The lights in the room made for a rather amazing sight to behold, especially with the beautiful girl illuminated by its soft glow as she continued reading.

"Ling'er, you should sleep now," he said as he closed the door. At that moment, Feiling looked up and locked gazes with the smiling Tianming. He felt as if he had been struck by lightning.

"Ling'er!" He took a step back with his mind blank and emotions in turmoil. It felt like his head had been smashed in by a hammer. Gradually, Ling'er stood up with her hands clutching the table. Her eyes had turned into white vortices that seemed like they would suck in anybody's souls. Her expression was incredibly cold, and not a hint of red could be seen on her lips.

What was more terrifying was her aura. It no longer seemed like that of a human. Tianming had just seen Weisheng Yunxi, but the current Feiling felt even more terrifying than her, much like an actual god looking down at him, a mere mortal, from the heavens.

"You've finally returned. I opened the tomb for your sake," she said in a voice that resembled hers, but wasn't quite hers. She stretched her left, completely unsealed hand towards him. The nails on that hand were far longer and sharper. She raised it and suddenly choked herself with a bone-chilling smile.

"I want you to bring her to the tomb! Otherwise, I'll be able to snap her neck at any moment I wish!" Her white-vortex eyes caused the spirit in his sea of consciousness to tumble about. He felt as if his soul was going to be drawn out. This was the most terrifying experience he'd had in all his life. He didn't know who, or what, this was for it to be able to do something that unthinkable.

"Who are you?!" Tianming bit his lip hard and struggled to crawl forward with all his power.

Yet her smile didn't subside. She didn't answer his question, either. At that moment, her eyes glazed over and she slumped to the ground. The pressure in the room was suddenly gone and the night returned to its former calm.

Tianming rushed to her and picked her up. Upon quick inspection, she seemed completely fine; even her nails had returned to normal. Her face now seemed much livelier, and she looked no different from a sleeping girl.

Her eyes opened as she stretched her arms over Tianming's neck and leaned in. "Big Brother, you came back so late. I've been waiting so long and fell asleep on the floor.... How embarrassing."

"There there...." He carried her to the bed and tucked her in. "Don't leave," she said dazedly, tightly holding his hand.

Tianming continued hugging her. The Infernal Soul Heavenly Pattern Canon was closed and the room was quite dark. He watched as the girl slept soundly in his embrace. He looked at her slender fingers the whole night to the point his eyes were bloodshot.

When day broke, Feiling stretched lazily in bed. She knew that Tianming should be going out to train by now. However, she wanted to indulge in a little selfishness and keep him by her side for a little longer, so she tightly hugged his arm. Time gradually passed and the sun's rays eventually seeped in and blanketed them.

"Ling'er, will it be difficult for us to peacefully spend the rest of our lives together?" he whispered into her ear.

"It won't. As long as we're of the same mind, we'll be able to overcome any obstacle," she sheepishly replied.

"Alright." Tianming's eyes were now clear like those of a primordial, ancient beast.

"Ling'er, I want to promise you something," he said as gently as he could.

"What is it?"

"If one of us has to die before the other, let it be me."

Feiling turned to look at him, dumbfounded. "Touch wood! Don't say something so unlucky!"

### **Chapter 469: No Answers**

It was noon at courtyard one. When the sun had risen, Tianming began cultivating the Invincible Sword Body. It took around four hours before he felt it was more or less enough.

"The theoretical part of Invincible Sword Body isn't that difficult. The truly hard part lies in assimilating Invincible Sword Ki."

Battle arts were merely ways to apply techniques, but absorbing inherently chaotic spirit hazards into one's body was truly difficult.

"In other words, I'm forging my own body like a bestial weapon. Within the sword ki pool are sword ki spirit hazards of different types. When they clump together, they clash and repel one another. Assimilating them into my body by the thousands without them clashing will no doubt be a nightmare. The further I progress, the harder it'll be. I wonder if my Primordial Chaos Beast-like body and Prime Tower will allow me to reach the Thousand-Demise Sword level?"

That was the level when he could assimilate a thousand strands of sword ki. Relying on his physical body alone to withstand their fierce forces was terrifying to even imagine. However, as long as he succeeded, he would be the master of the sword ki, able to unleash them from every part of his body and retract them at will. If he wanted to, he could kill by spitting them at others.

"It's truly a technique that relies on torturing yourself to improve. The more pain, the more gain."

Just yesterday, he had been hesitating about whether he should suffer through that much pain. After all, he might achieve similar results by practicing some other sky saint battle art. However, his willpower and fighting spirit had grown through the night. From now on, no matter how much pain or torture he had to face, he would endure it all.

After all, he didn't want to be like Li Wudi, too weak to protect those he cherished when it mattered.

.....

As Tianming pondered over his new battle art, Ying Huo and the other two had successfully evolved. Ying Huo's mid grade empyrean manna, Wings of Agni, turned its small, feathered phoenix wings into Wings of Agni themselves. The colorful feathers from before now resembled black sword blades that were far tougher than saintly bestial weapons, and they could still be improved. Its blade-covered wings were now a pair of murderous weapons capable of bloodily cutting through Ye Lingfeng's Infernal Bloodsoul Daggers without a problem, and their sharpness greatly aided the power of Ying Huo's swordsmanship.

Now, Tianming was ready to drag it along to cultivate the Invincible Sword Body alongside him. As it had an Aeternal Infernal Body, all it had to do was assimilate fire-type sword ki. It would also be less affected

by the damage, thanks to being next to the Prime Tower in the lifebound space. Additionally, with its new wings, its Skyscorch Featherblast would be even more powerful.

"Ying Huo's bloodline underwent another change. The Primordial Chaos Beast abilities in it are growing stronger. Even though it's only at the second level of the Earth Saint stage, it would be able to take on the Venomsword Ruinson Hydra alone."

After all, the Venomsword Ruinson Hydra was the lowest-ranked empyrean saint beast and only had seventy stars, whereas Ying Huo had eighty-seven stars. It was no doubt among the top three in the Theocracy in terms of star count.

Tianming had asked the palace lord about it, and even her lifebound beast only had eighty-eight stars. Ying Huo now definitely had one of the most powerful bloodlines in the Divine Capital.

Given Tianming's age, Ying Huo could be considered a young teen. When it matured, however, it would definitely be able to face off against the Primeval Autarch's lifebound beast.

Meow Meow's Myriadfiend Venomfang, on the other hand, took the form of two small fangs with very dense colors. The nine colors on the fangs actually came from their venom. They glistened like treasures, but were no doubt strongly concentrated venom. There was no question that Meow Meow was now the most toxic lifebound beast in the entire Theocracy. Coupled with the demonic aura it exuded, its smile could inspire nightmares in others.

"I declare that from now on, I will let anyone that dares to touch my family jewels have a taste of this Myriadfiend toxin," it said.

It had two fewer stars than Ying Huo at a count of eighty-five. The key, however, was that its new fangs had far more damage potential than the Wings of Agni. It would only take one bite for it to incapacitate the enemy.

Lastly, there was Lan Huang, who, unsurprisingly, had grown even larger. It had eighty-four stars and was tall as a mountain. Tianming now had to look up to be able to see its heads. Whenever it walked, it felt like the ground itself trembled. Its breathing was also as loud as thunderous roars. The manna it got, Annihilation Godsword, was located at its tails. The morningstar that used to be there had taken the form of gigantic swords.

Tianming touched it and felt that it was about as tough as Ying Huo's Wings of Agni. It was so heavy that a simple sweep across the ground would be enough to create a trench, and so sharp that it could even cleave mountains into halves with relative ease. The Annihilation Godsword truly suited the huge draconic creature, especially when matched with the sharp kui mountains on its back and its dragon talons, complementing its close-combat capabilities considerably.

Not to mention, it would be good for Lan Huang to start training the Invincible Sword Body too, but it was too large and couldn't enter the sword ki pool at all. Tianming had wanted to ask Weisheng Yunxi whether they could have the sword ki pool moved outside, but Meow Meow's slacker attitude seemed to have rubbed off on Lan Huang lately. He wasn't sure if it would be interested in training the sword. It was too curious and playful, after all, and loved nothing more than running about and swimming. Ying Huo was the only one as hardworking as he was. Every time they saw Meow Meow sleeping and Lan Huang messing around, they sighed in unison.

"There's no choice. As their elder brother, it's my responsibility to bear," Ying Huo said.

"Come, let me see if your evolution brought me any benefits whatsoever," Tianming said.

"Why do you feel so tepid today?"

"I'll tell you about it when we get back."

When the three were evolving, they were unaware of what was happening outside. They returned to the lifebound space and sat around the Prime Tower while Tianming returned to his training room. Feiling and Qingyu were out playing while he continued cultivating. Every time they evolved, Tianming's physical body would undergo a bloodline transformation. It was a time when he had a high chance of making a breakthrough.

It had been quite some time since their last evolution. This time around, Ying Huo had jumped from around forty stars to eighty-seven, greatly changing its Aeternal Infernal Body in the process. The changes were also passed over to Tianming during symbiotic cultivation, and the same applied to Meow Meow and Lan Huang. The three of them helped Tianming forge an even stronger body.

After the symbiotic cultivation ended, Weisheng Yunxi would definitely be even more shocked to see how Tianming's body had changed. His physical attributes had multiplied manyfold. While that didn't fully translate into increased battle potential, it was still really beneficial to his talent and potential growth limit, being a transformation of a lifetime. In other words, Tianming himself was growing closer to becoming a true Primordial Chaos Beast.

He now seemed like a weak, growing cub....

"The bloodlines of the ten Primordial Chaos Beasts will eventually fuse into my body. I'll definitely be a legend! I need to endure and continue on this arduous path if I'm to defend my family."

His eyes burned with passion as he cultivated, radiating an undying and unyielding fighting spirit that was far stronger than before.

"I finally broke through to the third level!" As expected, his day of hard work in tandem with the bloodline transformations allowed his Heavenly Will and level to rise as well. The two thousand saint crystals he had had all been consumed for this breakthrough.

"Back then, I used five Oceanspirit Tomes to defeat Dongyang Zhuo, and those were worth ten thousand saint crystals. But if I were fighting him now, I wouldn't even have to act."

While he was a pauper once more, with Feiling around and his ability to make new Mountshield Tomes, he would definitely not be wanting in saint crystals. He couldn't even be bothered to go to the spiritual energy springs, as he would be too far away from Feiling.

"Ling'er...." The thought of what happened the night before caused him to fall into deeper considerations. Meow Meow was asleep, and Lan Huang was having fun spinning around like a top in the courtyard. Tianming sat in a pavilion with Ying Huo lying on the stone table, biting a stalk of grass in its beak and supporting its head with one wing. "You troubled about something?"

"Yeah."

"Let's hear it then."

Tianming told him about the night before.

"Wow, Ling'er is growing more daring by the day," it said, rolling its eyes.

"I've long had suspicions that her background isn't as simple as we thought. I didn't think, however, that it'd be related to the Tomb of the Ancients, something that's been around for tens of thousands of years."

"It sounds like that's not the only question."

"That's right. That existence told me two things. The first was that the tomb would be opened sooner because 'she' willed it so. Who is she? Why is she able to open the tomb? How could she control Ling'er's body to talk to me?"

"The second is that 'she' ordered me to take Ling'er 'back to the tomb', 'back' being the operative word. That means that Ling'er was inside it at one point. Not to mention, she asked me to make haste. What's her relationship with Ling'er?"

"I recall that Ling'er told me that the Vermillion Bird King, Jiang Cheng, found her on the Abyssal Battlefield when she was a newborn. He had never seen her parents before. Though, the Second Divine Capital, where the entrance of the tomb is, is also at the Abyssal Battlefield. In other words, it's possible that Ling'er indeed came from there."

"However, based on Hall King Bai Mo's description, it sounds like none among those who've entered the tomb over the past ten thousand years reported the presence of any people within it."

This was something he had been pondering for the whole night, but he still didn't have any answers to his questions; only more questions.

#### **Chapter 470: Ten-Demise Sword Body**

"It sounds rather absurd. I guess Ling'er's background really is complicated. Her abilities are weird, after all. It's hard to imagine normal parents gave birth to her," Ying Huo said.

"That's right," Tianming said helplessly.

"Then what do you plan to do? Take her there?"

"It's that or death. That's not a risk I'm willing to take."

"You might die if you go in, too," Ying Huo said.

"There's at least a chance for life. This might be a huge disaster for Ling'er, but we must definitely help her through it. I will not let anyone take her away from me."

"Deal. No matter what your choice is, we'll stand with you. For such a cute girl like Ling'er, I'll definitely kick the ass of that weird woman from the tomb no matter who she is!"

"Alright."

"Are you going to keep this from Ling'er?"

"No."

"Then why haven't you said anything yet?"

"I was a little confused yesterday, but I managed to sort my thoughts out. I'll tell her about it soon. This is something that concerns us both, after all. I must respect her wishes instead of playing it tough and keeping her in the dark. That simply isn't fair."

"What a thoughtful one you are... it's so touching I'm going to fall for you! Big Brother, come hug and spoil your little Ying'er!" Ying Huo teased.

"Buzz off, weirdo!"

.....

It was evening when Feiling returned from shopping. Joyfully, she twirled in her new clothes in front of Tianming, showing him how good she looked. The clothes sold in the Decimo Dao Palace weren't normal clothes; they were made from materials with saintly heavenly patterns and had a certain degree of defensive capabilities.

"What's wrong, Big Brother?"

"I have something to tell you."

"Okay."

She sat down and propped her chin on her hand, looking at him curiously as he told her what had happened that night.

"So, you're saying we have no choice but to go to the Tomb of the Ancients?" she asked. She didn't seem the least bit scared of that at all.

"Yeah. If we don't go, whether we live or die will be out of our control."

"Big Brother, since that's the case, let's just go. Relax." She came over and sat on his lap with her arms wrapped around his shoulders. "That person wanted me to return to the tomb, but didn't say anything about how I'd be treated. Perhaps they're my family and they want me to return."

"You're too optimistic. She sounded really fierce, you know."

"She's fierce because she wanted to make sure you'd come. No worries, we're husband and wife, we're of one mind. We'll survive whatever obstacles come our way," she said excitedly.

"Ling'er, don't worry about me. I'm calm right now." He hugged her closer and whispered, "I must admit that this will be troublesome. I have no idea how strong they are. There's still some time before we enter the tomb, and we still have to overcome the trials of the Fireworks Festival Feast first. That's why we need to give it some proper thought. We should at least consult our seniors and hear what they have to say."

"Alright. I trust you, as well as our luck. We'll be fine! Not to mention, I also want to know my origins and who my parents are. It might be a fateful encounter," Feiling said with a smile. She really did seem optimistic about it, and was trying to get him to think the same so he wouldn't be so stressed.

"Do your best!" she encouraged as she gripped his hand tightly.

"Alright."

A moment later....

"Big Brother, that's enough touching, isn't it?" Her face was completely flushed red.

"Huh? Oh, sorry." He retracted his hand that had been rummaging inside her clothes just now.

"Aren't you embarrassed? You were even pretending to think about the tomb just now," she said, pouting.

"You said we were husband and wife. What's there to be embarrassed about?"

.....

The next day, Tianming started formally cultivating the Invincible Sword Body along with Ying Huo. When they met the palace lord, he asked whether she could lead some sword ki out for them, and she agreed. Since that was the case, Lan Huang could also participate in the training. Yet, right before they were about to let Lan Huang assimilate the first Invincible Sword Ki, it chickened out from the pain.

While it had a thick hide, it yelled in pain the moment the sword ki entered its body. It was so loud that Tianming almost went deaf. As such, he had no choice but to give up on letting Lan Huang train it with them. Their eardrums wouldn't hold, otherwise. It could already fight well in close quarters anyway, and Meow Meow could use its abilities and poisonous fangs to fight, so Tianming left them to their devices.

"I wonder if I'll be able to assimilate a hundred strands before the Fireworks Festival Feast." It was still in question whether he would be able to survive his venture into the Tomb of the Ancients. All he knew was that, no matter the result, he would give it everything he had.

"Let's begin! Try keeping it under three strands a day. I doubt your body will hold up, otherwise. After all, a normal person can't even assimilate one a day," Weisheng Yunxi said.

"Is it that painful? Just watch me," Ying Huo said, having researched the technique beforehand. It had picked Coldfire Sword Ki as the first one it would assimilate, just like Tianming had.

"Aaaaaagh!" Ying Huo's agonized cries rang out throughout the underground compound.

"Hahahaha!" Meow Meow laughed from within the lifebound space, then went back to sleep.

After assimilating the sword ki, Ying Huo quickly went back into the lifebound space to be healed by Prime Tower. Seeing Meow Meow still sleeping soundly, it felt its anger building up.

"Have a taste of my sword!"

"Meow?!"

"Laugh at me again, I dare you."

"Chicken Bro, I was wrong! Forgive me!"

"That's more like it."

.....

This time around, Tianming picked a Violetbolt Sword Ki. Lightning- and fire-type sword ki were the most ferocious, boasting the most damage. Even though the ones he had picked didn't have many saintly heavenly patterns, they would still do considerable damage to his body. He did it without Weisheng Yunxi's help this time, relying only on himself. The purple sword ki tore open a hole in his body and burrowed its way in.

"Ugh...." Needless to say, it felt truly unpleasant. However, the thought of his beloved made him grit his teeth and endure the pain. He didn't want to howl in pain right at the start, as it would only get progressively more painful the more strands of sword ki he took into himself, as a result of the clashing elements.

Even so, he didn't want to impose a limit of only three strands of sword ki a day. Instead, he wanted to explore his limits, since the Prime Tower would be healing the wounds he would suffer from assimilation.

After half a day passed, the man and chicken cried in pain. They started out quite quiet, but ended up making lots of noise near the end.

"Almost there," Weisheng Yunxi said with a smile. Normally, nobody would be able to take it if they were crying out so loud in pain. She was surprised they persisted despite that. In a flash, four hours had passed. This child's still going on even though he's been tortured for so long....

It was a true sign of their dedication and willpower. Crying out from the pain was a kind of cathartic release, not something that Ying Huo or Tianming could control. They were beings of flesh and blood, so there was no way they would be able to ignore the pain of their flesh being torn asunder.

What was even more terrifying was the fact that they didn't stop, despite their harrowing cries of pain. Sometimes it sounded like their voices would give out, only for them to cry out even louder.

"Aaaaaagh!"

Weisheng Yunxi didn't know how to react. She hadn't thought that Tianming would be so stubborn. She thought that he had it easy because of his overwhelming talent.

When twilight came, Tianming finally emerged from the underground compound.

"How often did you fail?" she asked. A beginner like Tianming was sure to have a few failed attempts, as the sword ki would tear through the body and return into the sword ki pool if it wasn't correctly assimilated. The most torturous part of training Invincible Sword Body was assimilation failure.

"Quite a lot. I failed around ninety plus times, dammit!" He didn't know how he had managed to continue after all those failures. There was no way anyone could ignore the pain, unless they couldn't feel any to begin with.

"More than ninety?!" She was taken aback.

"Yes. Why am I failing so often? Am I too pathetic?"

Even though there were times when it seemed like it would work out, the sword ki would slip out of his grasp and render his efforts useless, much to his frustration.

"How... how many times did you succeed?"

"Thirteen times. Fourteen, if you include the first time when you helped. Ying Huo's even worse off. Though it boasted at the beginning and wanted to race me, it ended up failing a hundred or so times and only succeeded in assimilating nine. It wriggled back into the lifebound space before its tenth success."

Weisheng Yunxi was completely paralyzed. She couldn't find the words.

"What's wrong, Palace Lord? Did I disappoint you?" He felt like he had almost gone mad. His voice had almost given out from all the screaming. He didn't know how other people fared, but he knew he had tried his best. He hadn't felt so much pain in all his life.

"For you to absorb more than ten strands in a day.... How could that disappoint me? What were you expecting? Reaching Hundred-Demise Sword in a day?"

"I guess you have a point. Still, why did I fail so often?" Though he had succeeded thirteen times, he had suffered around a hundred attempts in total.

"That's normal. Just get used to it. However, it'll only get more painful the more strands you assimilate."

Tianming's face paled.

"Afraid?"

"No. The goal I set for myself is to endure this one more day. If I tell myself this every day, I'll be able to go on."

"Not bad. If you can endure this hardship, you'll be far superior to most others."

"I'm not interested in comparing myself with others. I just want my family to live a good life."

Though this wish of his sounded rather unambitious, it was the sole reason that drove him to go to such lengths. He would endure no matter how painful it was.