

## The Ages 471

### Chapter 471: Listen Not to the Rain Hitting the Leaves

It was common knowledge that there was a lot of access to water sources in the Divine Capital, with tens of large rivers flowing through it and towards the sea. One of the rivers flowed north. It was among the most well known and developed places within the Divine Capital, and it was called Romance River.

The part of the river that flowed outside the capital toward the Northern Voidsea was called Northvoid River. It was said that the end of Northvoid River was the origin of the Ancient Theocrats.

Heavy rains would fall near the Divine Capital before the Fireworks Festival, causing the water levels in the rivers to rise considerably before they flowed toward the Northern Voidsea.

To the north of the Divine Capital was a wide and dense forest, through which Northvoid River flowed. The current was so rapid it could even uproot quite a number of other trees. As the rain grew stronger, the critters in the forest hid in whatever shelter they could find.

Somewhere along the river in the forest, an old man in tattered clothing wearing a woven bamboo hat sat in the mud with a long, thin bamboo stick in hand. There was a string hanging off the stick that led into the river, waving with the current.

The rain was so heavy that the mud on the ground splashed all over the old man, dirtying his face considerably. Yet he still wore a carefree smile on his face, like it wasn't bothering him. He seemed to be in his fifties, with some of his hair having whitened. There were some wrinkles on his face, and his back was beginning to hunch.

He had been sitting by the river for more than a couple of hours. Soon, a little girl around the age of six rode through the forest on her pig lifebound beast. She seemed to be having a lot of fun. Her laughter sounded clear like a morning bell. The sight of her playing amidst the heavy rain was truly mystical to behold.

"Old man, are you fishing?" she said when she saw the old man. Curiously, she jumped off her pig and walked to the man's side.

"Yes, little girl."

"The current's too strong. No fish will be hooked this way. Your bait will easily be flushed away, too."

"Is that so? But the big fish only come out during strong currents. Grandpa here loves big fish, you see."

"Greedy! Big fish are really powerful! I doubt you'll be able to pull them in!" she said, chuckling.

"How dare you look down on grandpa here, huh? Just you wait I'll fish up a big one for you to see."

"Heh, I'll wait then!" She sat down and began to watch.

The heavy rain also caused mud to splash all over her. However, not even the mud could stain her innocence and naivete. Her eyes shone like gems in the rain as the rainwater polished it further.

Moments later....

"The big fish is here!" The old man pulled on his fishing pole as the fish struggled before it was pulled out. The two of them looked at the fish that was only two fingers wide. It wouldn't even be enough as a snack for the pig.

"Haha, it's such a small fish! You lost, old man!" She was laughing so hard her stomach hurt.

"Hahaha... Grandpa really talked big just then! What a joke it turned out to be! I'm truly embarrassed." Later, the old man picked up a container, filled it with some water, and put the fish in.

"Are you giving me the fish?"

"You guessed right, smart girl."

"But of course! My parents keep telling me that I'm smart, too!"

"Then would you like to keep this fish as a pet?"

"Of course! Thank you! I'll raise it till it's big!" she said as she received the container, her eyes glowing with joy. While the fish was small, it was peculiarly multicolored and looked rather beautiful.

"Great. Grandpa here loves little fish too." He paused after some laughter, then continued, "Little girl, why don't you stay here for a chat? I'm old and lonely, so my thoughts always wander."

"Alright!" She sat down beside him obediently. "Are you all alone, old man? That's rather pitiful."

"Yes. It's been quite a while since I had anybody but myself. However, I like to fish, and raise them too. So, I guess it isn't as lonesome as it sounds."

"But fish can't talk. They can't help with boredom."

"That, you don't know, young girl. Listen to me. Any lifeform, even a fish, has its own thoughts. From the moment of their birth, they begin experiencing things. From there, they'll begin to have their own thoughts. While a fish might not experience much, tens of thousands together would. That amalgamation is called the Dao.

"Dao? What is it? Is it something tasty?" she asked with her head tilted.

"That's right, it's really tasty. Dao is my favorite food."

"I want to eat it too."

"Your mouth will rot if you do, you know."

"Then... forget it. I'll eat what my mommy cooks. It's delicious!"

"Haha, good. Only rotten people like me eat rotten stuff like that."

At that moment, some people could be heard calling out from afar.

The girl stood up in a hurry. "Old man, my parents are here for me. I'll go back for now. Let's play again, okay?"

"Sure."

"Come on, Piggy." The girl jumped on top of her pig with the water container in hand. "Bye, old man!"

"Goodbye, little girl."

However, the pig stumbled from the sudden rush, causing the girl to fall face first into the mud.

"Waaaaaah!" She began crying.

The old man put down his pole in a hurry to help her back up. He took out a piece of cloth and wiped her face clean. "You're still young. Better be careful when you walk. Many people can't get up after falling particularly badly, you know."

"The fishy's gone!" she said as she sobbed.

"Don't worry, let me find it. I have tons of fish, so don't worry."

All of a sudden, a young couple came out of the forest. They saw the old man holding the girl with an ugly smile on his face as she cried.

"Go away, shameless old man!" the man said, immediately kicking the old man flying into a tree. He wasn't able to get up after the crash.

"Daddy... you...." The girl was so terrified she could barely speak. Tears came flowing out of her eyes nonstop.

"Go home with Daddy, quick! There's lots of bad people out there in times like these. Are you trying to die?" the man said as he pulled the girl along.

"Old man... old man...." The girl wasn't able to say anything else before she and her pig were brought away.

Rain continued falling, and soon, the water began to flood and submerge the old man, who remained there unmoving. However, his eyes were open the whole time as he looked through the water.

"Got you!" he said as he stretched his hand out, grabbing a five-colored fish in his hand. "Still trying to get away from me, are you? Naughty!"

He stood up with the fish in hand as he tidied his clothes and put his hat back on. Then, he walked to the riverbank and looked toward the Divine Capital before turning toward the end of Northvoid River. He knew that was where his home was.

"The path to the heavens is infinitely vast and ignorant of human suffering. People are like fish in a river, swaying about at the current's mercy. To live is to suffer... nobody can escape it...." Tears began flowing from his eyes. "Life is but a dream to endure...."

He looked at the fish in his hand and sighed. "If I want to live, I need to eat this fish. Sigh..."

He was in great pain. Even so, he put the living fish into his mouth and bit it into two, causing its blood to spill out. He finished the whole fish with his second bite. He then coughed heavily, perhaps due to the bones of the fish, looking utterly pained.

But in the end, he still smiled. He picked up his fish basket and fishing pole, adjusted his clothes and hat, and walked along Northvoid River toward the Divine Capital in his tattered sandals. As he walked, he recited, "Listen not to the rain hitting the leaves in the woods; who cares if I sing as I go?"

"Who would worry that one with a bamboo crutch and straw shoes would be faster than one on horseback?"

"With but a coir raincoat, a whole lifetime can be spent in the rain."

"The chilly spring breeze sobers me. Though cold I may feel, warmed I am by the rays of the rising sun peeking over the mountains."

"Yet when I look back at where I once was and head back, it was as if the storm and sunshine was never there."

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After the storm, the bright sun once more cast its warmth on the Divine Capital. The beautiful weather persisted into the night, further enhanced by a cloudless sky that allowed the stars to twinkle at full glory. It was said to be the most beautiful atmosphere for the Fireworks Festival in recent memory.

The Theocrats were fine admirers of beauty; not just the beauty of the flesh, but also of grandness, the city, and the beauty of the radiant fireworks. The world was one during the Fireworks Festival.

Every festival night, the citizens of the Divine Capital would show off the tongues of flame they had so meticulously crafted in the past year, leaving their own brush strokes on the canvas of the sky. It was a most romantic night, during which many lovers made their vows.

Though, there were also those who betrayed, and those who reached the end of their lives that night. Regardless, Tianming was still caught up in cultivating the Invincible Sword Body, having completely forgotten the passage of time.

It had been twenty-eight days since he'd assimilated his first strand of Coldfire Sword Ki. During that short month, he had suffered the utmost pain and cried out so hard that his lungs almost collapsed. Yet he had borne it all.

During that month, he had spent half his time on his general cultivation and the other half on the Invincible Sword Body. It was the perfect balance, but also the most tiring way to cultivate. Yet he still managed to keep up.

Even Weisheng Yunxi thought it nothing short of a miracle that he managed to endure the torture of assimilating sword ki every single day. Though, Tianming didn't see it as a miracle. He was just doing his best to ensure Feiling and he could continue to live well.

He always told himself he would endure it one more day, and repeated that reminder every single day. By the time the Fireworks Festival came around, he had assimilated three hundred plus strands of sword ki, long surpassing the Hundred-Demise Sword.

Even Ying Huo managed to assimilate around a hundred and seventy strands. It was now also at Hundred-Demise Sword.

In actuality, Ten-Demise Sword, Hundred-Demise Sword, and Thousand-Demise Sword were just arbitrary designations, for the power of the Invincible Sword Body was directly proportional to the number of sword ki strands assimilated. The stages mattered far less than the actual number itself. Three hundred strands of sword ki was fundamentally more powerful than only a hundred, after all, and ninety-nine strands wasn't much different from a hundred. There was no fundamental change once the hundredth sword ki was assimilated.

Tianming had tested his newfound powers with the Shenxiao Sword Art and achieved amazing results. His month of hard work had indeed not been wasted.

"We've also broken through to the fourth level of the Earth Saint stage. After all, we have many saint crystals now, and it wasn't much of a problem. The me now is far stronger than how I was when I defeated Dongyang Zhuo."

Not only did his lifebound beasts evolve, he had also progressed two levels and gained the Invincible Sword Body.

Now it was time for the Fireworks Festival, the day when the Divine Capital would be at its most merry. Tianming had gone to look for Bai Mo first thing in the morning. He would be telling him that he wanted to go to the imperial palace that very night.

1. Coir is the fiber from a coconut husk and is used in some tropical areas to make rope and matting, in place of grass. I had to look this up, too. - Ed.

#### **Chapter 472: Together With Feng Through Life and Death**

When Tianming arrived at the Dark Hall, Bai Mo was there, together with three other Hall Kings, Palace Lord Weisheng Yunxi, and the Dark Hall Master, Ye Yi. This time around, Tianming had brought Feiling. It would be her first meeting with Weisheng Yunxi. She politely greeted her before standing next to Tianming.

"I heard that Lady Ling'er is truly an amazing person. It appears that the rumors were no exaggeration," Weisheng Yunxi said.

Tianming figured they were talking about the Fireworks Festival Feast. "Palace Lord, was I invited to join the feast?"

"You and Feng were."

"Then will we have to go?"

"There's no need. Since you killed Dongyang Zhuo, the Theocrats still bear hate for you. If you go there, the descendants, led by Dongyang Fengchen, will definitely try to get back at you. There's no point in fighting in their power struggle, it'd be nothing but unnecessary hubris." It seemed they already had plans figured out for Tianming.

"I heard that participating in the feast is also part of qualifying for entry into the Tomb of the Ancients. Does that mean I won't be able to go if I don't join?"

"You're right. However, the tomb has already been opened too many times. Nowadays, there aren't many good things remaining within. Not to mention, most that enter are Theocrats and their cronies.

There won't be any seniors inside to protect you, and there's nothing we can do about it here. You might well be humiliated or killed by them within. Not to mention, nobody among us really wants to enter it anyway," Weisheng Yunxi said.

"The palace lord is right. We'll be there during the Fireworks Festival Feast to prevent the other side from trying anything funny. But you'd be out of our supervision inside the tomb. Anything can happen there," Bai Mo said.

It would be even more dangerous than the Realm War, during which the seniors could at least see who killed who. Inside the tomb, there would be no way to prove anybody to be the culprit of any foul play, and that still wasn't taking into account the dangers innate to the tomb itself.

"Tianming, you should cultivate at your own pace. Given your willpower and talent, it's only a matter of time before you shake the Divine Capital," Weisheng Yunxi advised.

"There's a possibility I'll have to go no matter what."

"Why? Let us hear it." The seniors were a little surprised.

Tianming pulled Feiling closer and told them about her possible background and what had happened before.

"What?" Even Weisheng Yunxi gasped with surprise after hearing it. The Dark Hall Master and other four Hall Kings were just as shocked at the revelation.

"Tianming, are you sure?"

"That's right."

"Lady Ling'er, come with me. Let me see what's so special about your body," Weisheng Yunxi said. Both she and the Sky Hall King, Weisheng Yumo, were women, so it was much more convenient. Feiling followed them into a nearby room.

"Tianming, this is truly out of this world. The tomb's been there for near a hundred thousand years and has opened countless times. All sorts of weird things have been said to happen there, but this is the first time any mention of people living within has surfaced. If someone were there, they would've emerged to rule the Theocracy long ago. Why would they even let the likes of the Evil Suppression Pillar fall into our hands?" Bai Mo asked.

"Let's wait and see what the palace lord has to say," South Hall King Qin Jiufu said.

Tianming furrowed his brows after hearing their discussion. It appeared that even people on the level of Hall Kings and beyond hadn't heard of something like Feiling before.

Do gods really exist among us? Was the one who told Tianming that she had opened the tomb and ordered him to bring Feiling back one of those gods? Had she really existed for hundreds of thousands of years?

As he was still pondering, Weisheng Yunxi came out with Feiling.

"How is it, Palace Lord?" Ye Yi asked.

"Lady Ling'er, in her usual state, is no different from a mere mortal. She doesn't even have beast ki. However, she changes into another form when she uses Spiritual Attachment, which is akin to a divine miracle. I'm not able to figure it out at all, and the only things that can elude my understanding in this world are probably things created by the divine," Weisheng Yunxi explained. That was the conclusion she reached after the evaluation. They were now quite stumped by the result.

"Tianming, you've chosen to gamble on going into the tomb, right?" she asked.

"I'd like to hear all your opinions first."

"If you don't wish for Lady Ling'er to die, you don't have another choice. However, that'll put you in danger, too."

If Tianming didn't go, he would definitely be fine. But if he went, his safety would not only be threatened by the tomb itself, but also the Ancient Theocrats.

"I only want Ling'er to be able to live well," he said resolutely.

"I know how sentimental you are, so it wasn't hard to guess what you'd choose. I'm really sorry. This matter is out of our league. We're just as stumped as you are, so we aren't able to come up with any better suggestions. All we can do is let you enter the tomb with some life-saving treasures," she said apologetically.

"Don't feel bad, Palace Lord. I know how dangerous this will be, but it isn't certain that I'll die." After a pause, he asked, "Do you mean that you'll allow me to go to the Fireworks Festival Feast and try for a chance to enter the tomb?"

"We'll respect your choice."

"Thank you!"

"Tianming, the feast will take place tonight. Go back and prepare, and we'll come to fetch you when evening comes," Bai Mo said.

"Okay."

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When Tianming left, the rest smiled helplessly with resignation.

"Tianming is a truly good child. Not only is he talented, he's far more courageous than anyone. The willpower he showed in cultivating the Invincible Sword Body truly has me shocked. I'd planned to protect him and let him have a few peaceful years of growth, but who knew it would come to this point..." Weisheng Yunxi sighed.

"This is sure to be a dangerous trip for him. There's a good chance he'll die, since he could be going up against a god. However, he's not the type to turn a blind eye to the plight of his loved ones. Perhaps monstrous geniuses like him are forged through choices that would have otherwise led to death, like this one.

"People who would abandon their loved ones to their fate aren't deserving of becoming impeccably strong. Only those who'd fight to their deaths for their convictions can experience explosive growth. There are no empyrean saints that haven't gone through life-threatening hardships, after all," Bai Mo said.

"However, this trial will be far too tall a hurdle for him to overcome. Even I can't tell what's going to happen," Weisheng Yunxi said.

"Perhaps only things we don't understand can truly pose a threat to his life. That said, fate has been kind to him to have led him to meet Li Wudi, and by extension, us. He's also proven himself to us time and again."

"If he and Lady Ling'er can emerge from the tomb alive, he'll definitely stand tall among the elites in the Divine Capital," said Ye Yi. "Naturally, he still needs to pass tonight's trial, first. He'll have to take the opportunity to enter the tomb from the Theocrats."

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"Brother Tianming, are you going to the feast in the palace tonight?" Ye Lingfeng asked from outside the room.

A click sounded as Tianming unlocked the door. "I will."

"They'll definitely be waiting with some plan to avenge Dongyang Zhuo, right?"

"That's right."

"Then I'll go, too."

"Why would you go? I'm going because I want to enter the Tomb of the Ancients."

"I want to go there too."

Tianming fell silent. "You know it's a dangerous place, right? You might just die there. Why bother?"

"I don't care. I'll go wherever you go."

"Fine." It was no surprise, since Tianming was the only person he trusted. Ye Lingfeng was someone who wouldn't budge no matter what after he made up his mind.

"Brother Tianming, I also want to visit the palace. I'd like to see the people there and their ruler. I want to remember what they look like, and commit this place to memory. If I have a chance in the future, I'll avenge my kindred. If they dare touch you, I'll also kill them," he said, his eyes glowing red with hostility. While his memory was spotty, the desire for vengeance was engraved deep into his soul. One day, the pain and suffering suffered by the Infernal Soul Race over the past twenty thousand years would surface within and fill him with the dark desire for revenge.

"Feng, what stage are you at now?" Ye Lingfeng was probably the only person alive that could keep up with his rate of growth, even slightly eclipsing Li Wudi and Qingyu. However, the saint ki in his saint spring wasn't that powerful, despite his high level.



"The palace lord gave me an empyrean manna back then. After using it, I have seventy-five stars in my eye and broke through a level. With the saint crystals you gave me, I managed to break through again after a month of cultivation. I'm now a seventh-level earth saint."

Though Tianming had just reached the fourth level, Ye Lingfeng was already at the seventh. He was a combination of beastmaster and lifebound beast. He could even evolve his own body, which was almost unheard of. Weisheng Yunxi had given him a low grade empyrean manna and he had successfully absorbed it. Given that he didn't have a lifebound beast, it would be hard to even tell that he was someone who had been given an empyrean manna, so no other disciple would notice it and grow envious.

"Feng, I heard that the foes we'll have to fight at the feast will be really powerful. I'll do my best, but there's a chance we won't qualify to enter the tomb."

"It's fine. I'll just give it my all."

"Alright, then let's head there together."

### **Chapter 473: City of Hell**

To be frank, the opponents that those from the Grand-Orient Realm would face at the Fireworks Festival Feast were akin to their seniors in some capacity. Those under thirty in the Divine Capital were still considered juniors, as the period of rapid growth only ended at thirty. The ones who had trained near twenty-seven years were considered fully talented geniuses that had made rapid progress throughout their lives.

For instance, those on the sky ranking were on average ten or so years older than those on the Earth Ranking. Anyone who managed to get on the sky ranking would be considered a genius in the Theocracy, and it was indeed possible for them to far supersede the ones on the Earth Ranking with ten more years of training.

Being able to become a sky saint before thirty was the greatest measure for talent. Anyone that could achieve that feat would no doubt be a noteworthy figure in the Divine Capital. Those that managed to become Sky Saints before the age of twenty, like Li Muyang, hadn't been seen in at least ten thousand years, however.

Now, Tianming and Ye Lingfeng were much younger than their foes, who were around the age of twenty-seven. Once those people hit thirty, they would progress much slower through the Sky Saint stage. Even the most talented geniuses might need years to progress the moment they reached the first Sky Saint stage. For instance, Bai Mo and the other peak cultivators at the Sky Saint stage had only ascended to sky sainthood once they were around thirty.

Tianming knew that he and Ye Lingfeng, being rankers on the Earth Ranking, would have to attend the feast with those on the sky ranking to fight for a spot to enter the Tomb of the Ancients. Such occurrences were rare, if they ever happened at all. The last one at their age that was able to hold up against the Theocrats who were pushing thirty was Li Muyang. It was a shame that, when he was young, the tomb hadn't opened. Otherwise, he definitely would've soared to fame during the feast like Tianming, whose name was spread all over the Divine Capital after reaching the top of the Earth Ranking. Now, the Theocrats and their allies eagerly awaited his and Lingfeng's arrival.

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Soon, it was evening. The Fireworks Festival was held on the night of the full moon. Most of the disciples of Decimo Dao Palace had returned home to celebrate the festivities with their family, making the place rather tranquil and quiet. However, the streets of the Divine Capital were merrier than they had ever been, filled with sounds of laughter and cheer.

Meanwhile at Courtyard One....

"Big Brother, please be careful. The Theocrats are fuming at the mention of your name. Nowadays, people come in droves to challenge me. It's so annoying," Qingyu said worriedly.

"It's fine. I'll shut them up for good tonight."

"Ling'er, watch him and rein him in when he's about to get reckless," Qingyu said.

Feiling nodded with a smile. Soon, they would be fighting hard. She was ready to venture through the deathly path with Tianming for the sake of survival.

Later, Bai Mo arrived and Tianming told him about Ye Lingfeng's decision.

"He can go if he wants. Even though there's danger, you two are no longer rookies to be protected. Not to mention, even though his cultivation is higher than yours, he doesn't really stand a chance to get a place anyway."

The four Hall Kings, as well as the Dark Hall Lord, were also invited to the feast. Naturally, Autarch Yun had personally come to invite Weisheng Yunxi too, but she refused.

Moments later, Ye Yi, Weisheng Yumo, Qin Jiufu, and Situ Qinghe arrived. Among them, Dark Hall Lord Ye Yi no doubt was the most senior, but his power was rivalled by Bai Mo. There were three other youths that came with them.

"You young ones should get to know each other. Introduce yourselves," Bai Mo said.

The three of them were probably ranked on the sky ranking. They were close to thirty, a little younger than Bai Zijin. Eight years ago, she was a sky ranker herself, too.

"They're all famous. We've long heard of them. It's better if we introduce ourselves instead," said a woman in green. She seemed beautiful and lively, looking more like the optimistic type. "I'm Situ Yiyi. You may call me Sister Yiyi."

"Sister Yiyi," greeted Tianming and the rest. As their seniors were the ones protecting Tianming and the others, they quickly got acquainted.

There were two other young men, one of whom was dressed in a stylish white that contrasted against his eerie smile and gaze. He blinked at Tianming and said, "There's no need to introduce us. I'm already acquainted with Tianming, hehe."

He was Bai Xiaozhu, the grandson of Bai Mo and son of Bai Zifeng. Bai Zijin was his aunt, so they were indeed quite close. Tianming had met him a few times before, when he was being beaten up by his aunt. Come to think of it, his father, Bai Zifeng, had saved Feiling before.

The other youth was clad in black. He had a tall, slender figure and a cool gaze. He was the embodiment of all things prim and proper, and had been standing straight by Ye Yi's side since they had arrived together.

"I'm Chen Jinghong." Though he wasn't the talkative type, he managed a slight smile during his introduction.

"Brother Jinghong here is the son of Hall Lord Ye. He ranks first on the sky ranking, and has dominated quite a number of Jiangs," Qingyu added.

Actually, Tianming also knew of Chen Jinghong, having heard quite a few legends about him in the dao palace already. For him to be able to rank first in the dao palace, where the Jiangs dominated, was a sign of immense talent and capability. Even now, he could easily be considered the strongest of the younger generation, for being first on the sky ranking meant being the strongest disciple of the Decimo Dao Palace.

"Coupled with Feng, the five of you shall go together. Feng's also on their guest list, after all," Bai Mo said.

The other seniors nodded. Sending five disciples to the feast was good enough. Usually, the dao palace wouldn't send them out to the tomb to risk themselves, if they weren't strong enough. But this time, they would've sent Chen Jinghong and the other two even if Tianming and Ye Lingfeng hadn't planned on going.

Even so, the other six halls of the dao palace would be sending quite a number as well, though they would mostly mingle with those bearing the Dongyang name.

"Let's go!"

"Seniors, Tianming and the rest have basically never left the dao palace since arriving at the Divine Capital. Shouldn't we travel slower so they can take in the view of the Divine Capital during the Fireworks Festival?" Situ Yiyi asked. It was already evening, so the night lights would soon be lit. The citizens of the capital were looking forward to the beautiful festival sights.

"You're the one who wants to see it the most, right?" Situ Qinghe said.

"Of course."

"You're already twenty-eight, but you still behave like a child...."

"It's my fault for not disciplining her well," Bai Xiaozhu said. He was her newlywed husband and they were still lovey dovey with each other.

"I don't want to hear that from you. You're even worse. Look at Tianming and see how mature he is."

"Come on, we're young at heart!" Bai Xiaozhu argued. He then turned to Tianming and sighed.

"Young'uns these days really take things for granted. Yiyi and I are getting old and pining for the days of our youth...."

"To hell with your old! I'm already a hundred and fifty-eight and you don't hear me complaining!" Situ Qinghe snapped.

Once they left the dao palace, they looked to the north and saw the spiritual energy springs in the Divine Capital. They were rather hard to spot in the busy city.

"Tianming, Feng, Yiyi, you three haven't reached the sky saint stage yet, so you wouldn't be able to get a place to enter the tomb directly. I expect you'll have to fight one or two bouts, so be prepared," Bai Mo said.

"Understood!"

The rules of the Fireworks Festival Feast were thus: only thirty would be allowed to enter the Tomb of the Ancients, and every time, the Ancient Theocrats had decreed that only sky saints would be guaranteed spots to enter the tomb. The remaining spots would be fought over by the earth saints through fair competition. The Ancient Clans, Saint Martial Manor, Dazzling Pavilion, and other major factions like the Theocrats or the Decimo Dao Palace would send their disciples to fight for the chance.

"This time around there are twenty-one sky saints joining the feast, so there's nine spots left for the earth saints to fight over. Based on the invitation list, there are thirty-six earth saints participating. So they'll hold two rounds of elimination matches until only nine are left. That means you'll have to fight at least twice for a spot," Bai Mo briefed.

Basically, Chen Jinghong and Bai Xiaozhu, who ranked first and seventh on the sky ranking, would automatically get a spot. They only went to the feast to enjoy the top delicacies of the Theocracy. Tianming, Situ Yiyi, and Ye Lingfeng, on the other hand, would have to fight for their place for the viewing pleasure of the rest.

"In other words, the feast is an event where the various factions show off their promising juniors to the rest. It's also where the disciples of the dao palace clash with those of the Ancient Theocrats."

"As long as it's fair," Tianming said.

"The fairness is definitely guaranteed. This feast is mainly held for the Theocrats' amusement. Everyone there is someone with a reputation they can't afford to lose by cheating," Bai Mo assured.

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Soon, night fell, but it only accentuated the festive lights and mood even further. Despite how busy the streets were, Tianming and the rest managed to walk through them without being noticed by passersby, thanks to some weird technique their seniors used. Only powerful people spotted them, but they would immediately turn away after a glance.

Though the Divine Capital was large and filled with all kinds of people, Bai Mo and the rest were doubtlessly the strongest walking the streets right now. Tianming felt that the mood around them was almost like the new year's celebrations. There were those that made merry with song and dance, as well as lifebound beasts that played around on the streets.

Based on the outfits of the citizens, they seemed rather well off. There were few poor people in the Divine Capital; even the common folk could own treasures with saintly heavenly patterns. They had never experienced hardship, and as they began cultivating at the age of three, even the ones with worst talent would reach Unity by the age of ten.

"This truly is a land of prosperity. However, there's only one Divine Capital, while there are countless small countries like Vermillion Bird. If they manage to retrieve the Cyclic Mirror, who knows when a country would be wiped out without a single trace...."

Only the strongest would survive and climb the ladder to eventually reach the Divine Capital. There was no way that other "normal" folk would be able to decide their own fates. The prosperity of the Divine Capital was a deceptive facade for the sins that had been committed to enable their lavish lifestyles. According to Bai Mo, this was a cesspool of evil. The stability and prosperity enjoyed by those here over the past thousands of years had been built upon piles of innocent corpses.

It was heaven, bought at the price of hell. All the children here grew up happily and became powerful cultivators without the slightest hitch, thanks to the riches they had gleaned from the raids of the Ancient Theocrats.

For every laughing child there were thousands of other suffering children elsewhere. If not for Li Muyang taking away the Cyclic Mirror, there would be even more suffering, as regular bloody raids would be carried out every few years, causing hundreds of thousands of corpses to be dumped into Northvoid River to be carried into the seas while the elites in the Divine Capital continued living in debauchery.

"Is the Divine Capital prosperous?" Bai Xiaozhu asked.

"It is," Tianming said. But he knew that prosperity had been built upon blood and suffering.

#### **Chapter 474: Cyclic Mirror Lake, Fireworks Festival Fes**

The Cyclic Mirror Lake was round and wide, and the water within was impeccably clear. When moonlight fell on it, it looked just like a mirror from afar, hence its name.

Many grand buildings were built around the lake. They were grandly decorated to match the festivities. This was where the Fireworks Festival Feast would be held.

Autarch Yun and the other Theocrats were welcoming their guests to the venue. The ones who were qualified to participate in the feast were among the richest and most influential people in the Divine Capital.

The many clans, hegemon, officials, generals, imperial relatives, and even strongest fighters would be there to meet Autarch Yun. This was the first feast held since his ascension, hence why it was so grand. The whole Theocracy was greatly anticipating this year's event.

Young men like Tianming and the rest wouldn't be the mainstays of the event. They were an entertaining sideshow at best, held for their seniors' entertainment. The true purpose of the feast was Autarch Yun hosting the other greats of the Theocracy.

In a building around Cyclic Mirror Lake called Lakeside Parlor were many well-dressed people clad in all sorts of jeweled robes. They were none other than the youths of the Dongyang, Jiang, and other Ancient Clans. They were seated at tables filled with all sorts of delicacies. There were also many beautiful and flexible women in the parlor dancing and performing throughout the feast.

A man in a long, black and gold robe sat in the grandest seat. He gave off a sense of domination. Though half of his face was black, it didn't affect his looks, nor did it diminish his superiority at all. Instead, it made him look even more domineering. He was none other than the crown prince, Dongyang Fengchen.

To his left and right were tens of other youths standing in two rows. The ones that stood closest to him were naturally from the Dongyang Clan, followed by the Jiangs and those from the Ancient Clans. The way they saw it, Dongyang Fengchen was the undisputed ruler among the younger generation. He was a person who didn't show much emotion, making his personality rather hard to grasp. The other youths, with inferior statuses, were a little intimidated by his presence.

Currently, the song and dance was at its peak, yet, Dongyang Fengchen merely quietly watched the leading dancer, whose thin dancewear draped scantily over her soft, fair skin and supple flesh. Her movements were as enchanting and graceful as her unforgettable looks and her eyes seemed to speak of wonders that would rob one of their soul.

It went without saying that her gaze was fixed on Dongyang Fengchen. The change in her expression followed the beat of the song and rhythm of her dance. She seemed to be dancing in a deep trance.

Apart from Dongyang Fengchen, nobody dared to steal a glance at her. Soon, the dance ended and the dancer came to Dongyang Fengchen and sat next to him alluringly. She poured him some wine and served it to him warmly, her eyes locked on his the entire time.

Then, someone came in and made a report. "Your Highness, Li Tianming and Ye Lingfeng have arrived."

It was only now that the crown prince cracked a smile. The tension from before was no longer present. "He really is a brave one. This is going to be fun."

The other youths laughed heartily in response.

Dongyang Fengchen stretched his arm over the dancer's slender waist and asked, "Qingqing, have you talked it out with your patron?"

"Your Highness, it's done. As long as they come, we will have worthy foes for them."

"Good. Who's slated to fight them?"

"By Your Highness's orders, four eighth-level earth saints have been chosen. They're among the weakest we have," said the dancer.

"Oh? Which four? Let me see."

Four young men and women stepped out with their heads lowered toward Dongyang Fengchen.

"Do you all know what to do?"

"Yes, Your Highness. We'll feign a tough battle and lose to Li Tianming and Ye Lingfeng, letting them get the space in the Tomb of the Ancients. We'll certainly lose in such a way that the seniors will have no way to tell," said one of the four.

"Good. If the show fails, I'll have you pay for it."

"Understood!"

"You may leave now."

"Yes!"

"Ninth Brother, I'm feeling a little doubtful about this," said a Dongyang Clan member who sat near Dongyang Fengchen. He was tall and slender, not nearly as domineering, but oozed a little more charisma.

"Oh?" Dongyang Fengchen seemed a little dissatisfied.

"I mean, Your Highness! Forgive my transgression!" the youth said in a panic. He knew that even though he was also the son of Autarch Yun from the same mother, he could no longer just address the crown prince as brother. The youth was the fourteenth prince, Dongyang Fengxiao, and he was twenty-eight. Though he was the fourteenth prince, and his brother was the ninth, their mother had only given birth to the two of them. The other princes came from the autarch's other lovers.

"Tell me your doubts."

"That wretched Li Tianming killed Big Brother's son, Dongyang Zhuo, and still dares to act so arrogantly. He was invited to the feast precisely so we could get back at him. Why did the weaker ones get picked to challenge him, just to lose to him instead?"

"It's simple. No matter how hard we pay them back for what they've done, it would never regain face for our clan. Only by letting him into the tomb to die from unfortunate circumstances will the others know that we're a patient breed. They'll never know when we'll come for them for their transgressions." Dongyang Fengchen chuckled and the others joined in the laughter.

"But if we lose again, wouldn't we be embarrassed even further? We'd feel rather down about it, at least until we enter the tomb," said a woman in tight-fitting, purple clothes. She also had a half black face like Dongyang Fengchen's, though it was of a much lighter tone that clashed against her amazing facial features.

But even though she lost some beauty from the odd half face, she seemed even more domineering. It was as if she naturally inspired fearful respect. She was Jiang Fengyue, the nineteenth child of Autarch Yun. She was the daughter of the autarchess and five years Dongyang Fengxiao's junior, being only twenty-three. Her talent was far more impressive than Dongyang Zhuo's and her own elder brother's. Otherwise, there was no way a woman like her would be allowed to mingle with the crown prince's crowd.

She seemed a little impatient about getting revenge, having been there and watched the battle for the Earth Ranking. When Tianming called them the Nineshades Clan, she got so angry she killed a few innocent eunuchs and handmaidens to vent, though it didn't do her much good.

"Fengyue, His Highness wants Tianming to bring the girl called Jiang Feiling into the tomb with him. We'll let him win just this one time today so that he can suffer even more than," the dancer beside the crown prince gently answered, revealing his true intentions.

"Did I say you could reveal that?" Dongyang Fengchen said, glancing at her.

She lowered her head and stayed silent. Everyone knew that the crown prince was quite a lustful person who collected beauties. Even the sisters, Jiang Yutong and Jiang Yufei, weren't able to escape his grasp at the ages of sixteen.

"I heard that that Jiang Feiling girl is so beautiful that she pushed Sister Qingqing to second place on the beauty rankings...."

It was no surprise that the crown prince would have his eye on her. Dongyang Fengchen wasn't unique in that regard, though, for it was the tradition for all crown princes to seek out the most beautiful and talented women for their harems. After all, talented descendants were their trump cards. Some even said that if it weren't for Dongyang Fengchen's immense talent and potential, Autarch Yun might not have been the one to ascend to the throne.

"Alright, we'll let him enjoy the limelight for a little while longer," Jiang Fengyue said.

"Little Sister, the atmosphere of the feast can easily inflate someone's ego. If you hate him so much, you're free to vent it when we go into the tomb. Don't worry, this Li Tianming isn't even worth His Highness's attention," Dongyang Fengxiao said. He was right, for Dongyang Fengchen had many other rivals, like the first prince, Dongyang Fen. The teenage Tianming was only noteworthy because of Feiling; there was no other reason why someone at the age of thirty would want to have anything to do with a teenager otherwise.

"The last time Li Tianming fought, he was at the seventh level of the Earth Saint stage. It's too bad we couldn't even find any seventh-level earth saints ourselves to make it easier for him. I hope he improves, or the performance will be hard to sell."

The others broke into laughter once more.

"The seniors are about to enter. Let's go," Dongyang Fengchen said as he stood up.

"Okay!" Everyone proceeded to go downstairs.

"Qingqing, you stay back," Dongyang Fengchen said. The dancer started for a bit, then stopped worryingly. "Why did you say something you didn't have to today? Did you turn stupid or something?"

"I'm pregnant."

"How long has it been?"

"A month or so."

"Get it removed. You should only give birth after forty. It's still prime cultivation time for you, and giving birth will take up lots of your time and ruin your figure."

"Understood."

"Do you think you'll be able to control me if you get pregnant?" he asked, squinting.

"No. I just wanted to get closer to you."

"That's as far as you can go. There is no woman suited to stand by my side. If you're smart, I'll let you be the head of Skysource Palace. But if you meddle in my affairs...."



"Only death awaits?"

"You're as clever as usual. That's great," he said coldly.

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And so, the feast began. Tianming followed his seniors to Cyclic Mirror Lake. Many seats had been prepared, and the experts from the Decimo Dao Palace got the top seats that were just slightly lower than the Dongyang Clan's. It seemed that Autarch Yun was really giving them face.

The lake was rather vast, and the closer one was to it, the better the scenic view would be—especially that of the gleaming moon.

Around the seating were countless colorful lights. The guests were led to their seats, whereas their juniors, like Tianming, would stand in a corner and watch. Tianming didn't know many of the powerful officials or seniors that had come. Among those he recognized were Dongyang Fen, Jiang An, Jiang Xiao, Jiang Jianying, and Wei Ji from the Ancient Greedwolf Clan, as well as others from the Ancient Taotie Clan, which was the strongest of the Ancient Clans. Chong Yang, Jing Yue, and Ling Xing from the Ancient Qilin Clan were there, too.

#### **Chapter 475 - You Look Better Than Fireworks**

When Tianming arrived, he locked eyes with the other youths. It had been a short three to four months since Tianming had risen to startling heights in the Decimo Dao Palace through the Decimo Sky and Earth Ranking battles. His fame had spread all throughout the Divine Capital. Now, the three exalted ones were more low profile about their disdain for him and no longer caused him any trouble.

"Wow, even the pavillion lord of the Dazzling Pavilion is here," Situ Yiyi exclaimed.

Tianming looked where she was looking and saw an extremely beautiful woman around the age of thirty. She seemed really alluring and was certainly among the top beauties ever to exist, especially her enticing figure. She was elegant and mysterious, yet confident in the way she carried herself, and even stood out among all the powerful people there. After all, she was no doubt among the top elites in the Divine Capital.

The Dazzling Pavilion controlled most of the trade in the Theocracy and had influence all over its territory. Their pavillion lord, Meng Tingyu, controlled a faction that was far more influential than the Ancient Clans and Saint Martial Manor. She was a powerful woman indeed. Beside her was an old crone, strict and cold. She was called Gu Suli; she was the Past Hall King of the Decimo Dao Palace and it was Tianming's first time seeing her.

"Meng Qingqing's here too," Situ Yiyi said.

"Qingqing?" The name made Tianming's heart skip a beat. He looked up and saw a completely different woman than what he was expecting. She was far more beautiful and talented than Mu Qingqing could ever be. The only thing they had in common was a name, so Tianming didn't pay too much attention to her.

"Meng Qingqing really has it hard lately. She used to be the top beauty in the Decimo Dao Palace, but now that place has been taken by your Ling'er," said Situ Yiyi.

"Who would bother ranking my Ling'er? Do they have nothing better to do?"

"There's that disciple Zhou Yuanyuan. While he isn't really talented, his ratings are top notch and well argued."

"I'll give him a sound beating and get him to raise Sister Yiyi to rank one," Tianming said.

"Not bad. You have a way with words," Situ Yiyi said.

By then, all the powerful figures in the Theocracy had arrived, and their arrival was followed by a grand announcement, "His Majesty has arrived!"

Everyone watched as Autarch Yun entered the venue with the autarchess and Dongyang Fengchen amidst gleaming lights from the fireworks that had been lit during the moment of their entrance.

"Long live His Majesty!" The loyal officials immediately knelt to show their respects. Tianming noticed that while the Hall Kings and the rest saluted them, they didn't kneel. That was a sign that the Decimo Dao Palace was seen by the Ancient Theocrats as an equal, at least to some degree.

"Everyone rise," Autarch Yun said, his face full of smiles.

Tianming gave the new autarch a good look. He seemed to resemble Dongyang Fengchen quite a bit, with his half-black face making him even more domineering. He sported a large physique and looked no older than forty, seemingly just as vigorous as Mu Yang and Li Wudi.

It was said that Autarch Yun's cultivation and achievements far surpassed those of Dongyang Ling. While he seemed to be smiling brightly today, he was actually a savage beast that was not to be crossed. There was a reason he had been able to grab hold of the Theocracy and awe the world. Compared to Bai Mo and the rest, his cultivation wasn't one bit inferior. In fact, he looked even younger and livelier.

The crown prince, Dongyang Fengchen, followed tightly behind his father. Apart from his darker half-black face, he looked and behaved just like his father. Soon, the autarch made his way to his seat.

"Everyone, on this auspicious Fireworks Festival, We are holding a grand feast for all amazing figures in the Theocracy of the Ancients. Our wish is that all of you and We stand united in our hearts and minds to usher in another age of prosperity for the Theocracy," Autarch Yun said.

When he was done, the various elites represented their factions in a congratulatory salute. Though it was nothing more than a glorified flattery session, it was comparatively high class as far as those things went.

Autarch Yun beamed, setting a good atmosphere in the whole venue. When the feast began, all kinds of delicacies were served up, filling the air with mesmerizing aromas of chef's delights and fine wine brewed from the best of spirit herbs. Li Wudi would salivate at the chance to even be allowed to breathe in the alcoholic fumes here.

The fancy dishes were mostly made from the meat of demon beasts. Most demon beasts tasted rather bad, so they had to be painstakingly prepared to be able to taste as good as these dishes did. When others weren't looking, Tianming let Feiling sneak a few bites of it.

He couldn't be bothered to listen in to the seniors exchanging praise, nor was he interested in the scathing looks the young Theocrats were giving him. All he cared about was enjoying some delicacies with Feiling, and the fireworks.

When the feast was at its most merry, the fireworks were finally ignited. The plain night sky was suddenly filled with radiant, colorful fireworks that bloomed with gorgeous beauty.

"It looks so pretty!" Feiling said in awe.

Tianming, however, wasn't looking up, for the most beautiful sight for him was right in front of him. The lights from the fireworks only further accentuated her beauty.

"You look even prettier," he subconsciously said.

"That's right," she said with a wink and leaned her head against his shoulder. It felt like time had stopped for them. Currently, the cheers outside the Imperial City could be heard even from Cyclic Mirror Lake.

The fireworks would continue all the way until midnight, decorating the skies and drawing a clear line on the horizon, separating sky and earth, beauty and savagery, the realm of man and the bloody sea of corpses.

Eventually, the pavilion lord, Meng Tingyu, said, "Your Majesty, the fireworks are pretty indeed, but they lack impact. We should take the chance during this festival to let the young ones of the Theocracy compete with one another for some entertainment. Let us witness the promising talent that our great nation has!"

"Your suggestion is most welcome," Autarch Yun said.

"Since that's the case, I'll organize a lot-drawing. There are thirty-six youths here, but only nine spots to fight for. Let's all witness the amazing fights that are to come." Meng Tingyu's voice was so soothing it was an absolute pleasure to hear.

As far as the seniors were concerned, the competition was merely an addition to the night's entertainment. Feiling attached herself to Tianming upon mention of the competition. Even though her abilities could be considered distinct from Tianming's own, nobody in the Theocracy had chewed him out about it, so they probably wouldn't start now. After all, Dongyang Fengchen was counting on him to be strong enough to get a spot to enter the tomb.

Meng Tingyu drew two golden balls with names carved into them from a box. She gave them a look and smiled. "The first challenger is Yang Yang from the Ancient Qilin Clan."

A youth beside Chong Yang stood up. His fierce, passionate gaze and messy hair made him seem even more formidable, even marred by the stigma of the lifetime curse suffered by those from the Ancient Qilin Clan.

It had been many years since anyone from the Ancient Qilin Clan was allowed to attend the feast; it seemed that the autarch was in a forgiving mood after his ascension to the throne.

Yang Yang mustered his resolve and prepared to give a good performance.

"Yang Yang is Exalted One Chong Yang's grandson. He's thirty this year and an eighth-level Earth Saint. Comparatively, he isn't that talented, but if he didn't have the Lifetime Curse, he would've been a Sky Saint by now," Bai Mo said.

"Understood." Tianming made sure to remember him.

Then, Meng Tingyu announced, "Yang Yang's opponent is Li Tianming from the Future Hall of Decimo Dao Palace." She smiled and looked at the white-haired youth standing far off in the corner.

At the same time, thousands of Theocracy elites turned to him as well. With him being the son of Li Muyang and the one who called their rulers the Nineshades Clan, he drew a lot of attention. Everyone knew that his father had killed Autarch Yun's younger sister, but not even the autarch himself had brought the matter up. As far as their treatment went, they treated him like his own person, a normal disciple of Decimo Dao Palace.

Tianming stood up before the crowd. It was rather interesting that he was picked to fight first. Perhaps it was even rigged.

Letting me fight someone from the Ancient Qilin Clan, eh?

It was definitely malicious. They knew that the youths from that clan hated Tianming with a passion, but he couldn't go all out to beat them either, in fear of being chided and criticized for it. Yang Yang seemed completely unsurprised that he was facing Tianming, his reaction further proof that this was a setup.

Tianming smiled coldly and headed toward the lake, which was the battlefield for tonight's events. When Yang Yang stepped into the lake as well, a transparent heavenly pattern formation sealed the entire area. This way, the younger generation's fights wouldn't disrupt the activities of the seniors, who could continue doing whatever they wanted as they watched the show.

When Tianming stepped into the lake, he spread his wings and hovered above it. He had made all the preparations for a good fight today. Now, the lake was his domain. Even an eighth-level earth saint that was stronger than Dongyang Zhuo wouldn't be much of a match for him now. Without even looking back, Tianming knew that the seniors' eyes were glued to him, including those of the three exalted ones from the Ancient Qilin Clan.

A few months ago, I defeated the second-level earth saint Ning Wushuang in the Infernal Soul Purgatory. And now I'm fighting the thirty-year-old Yang Yang. Exalted Ones, get ready for a good show...

Two flaming qilins suddenly appeared on the surface of the lake. They were entirely crimson and had three bright, sun-like eyes each. There were sixty-eight stars in their eyes, marking them as sixth-order saint beasts. They were called Three-Eyed Crimsonsun Qilins.

They had almost twenty stars less than Ying Huo. Even though they were four levels higher, they still seemed a little lackluster. The two qilins stood on the surface of the lake, guardedly watching Tianming. At that moment, a gigantic two-headed dragon appeared on the surface of the lake, creating quite a lot of waves in the process. On the other hand, the phoenix and black cat stood on Tianming's shoulders.

"Is it finally time to fight? That's what we're up against?" Ying Huo said with a look of disappointment.

"I'll leave it to you," Tianming said.

Ying Huo smirked and said, "Meow Meow, Tortoise Bro, let's work up a sweat!"

### **Chapter 476 - A Hundred Invincible Sword Ki**

A large crowd was gathered at the north of the Cyclic Mirror Lake. They were all members of the Theocracy, here to watch the battle. They were expecting Tianming and Yang Yang to throw some insults at each other before fighting, but in the end, Tianming simply charged over after summoning his lifebound beast.

The commotion of their battle caused the lake water to roar violently. Lan Huang and Meow Meow went after the two Three-Eyed Crimsonsun Qilins. Right at that moment, an exclamation rang out from the surroundings, "Eighth-order saint beast! A total of eighty-seven stars!"

Ying Huo's order had surpassed the lifebound beasts of everyone here. Even Autarch Yun's lifebound beast was only on the same level as Meow Meow, only having eighty-five stars. So what did that mean? That meant the Decimo Dao Palace's palace lord, Weisheng Yunxi, had given all the empyrean manna that the Decimo Dao Palace had gathered over the years to Tianming!

When the six Hall Kings saw that, their faces turned black and they almost vomited blood. After all, they also had a share in the Decimo Dao Palace. But now, the order of a disciple's lifebound beasts was even higher than their own!

This fact alone was enough to make everyone narrow their eyes into slits, including Autarch Yun and Dongang Fengchen. A lifebound beast with eighty-seven stars was enough for everyone to divert their attention from the banquet. They watched as Yang Yang, the grandson of the exalted one, Chong Yang, fought with Tianming's phoenix lifebound beast while wielding a Crimsonsun Heavy Sword. The Crimsonsun Heavy Sword was a saint beast weapon with over forty saintly heavenly patterns.

As for the two Three-eyed Crimsonsun Qilin, one of them was intercepted by the Regal Chaosfiend, which was shrouded in black lightning, and the other was facing the twin-headed dragon. When the battle began, one of the Three-eyed Crimsonsun Qilins was dragged into the Cyclic Mirror Lake and suppressed by Lan Huang.

Above the lake, the other Three-eyed Crimsonsun Qilin ferociously clashed with the Regal Chaosfiend. The two beasts were biting at each other, one side covered with flames while the other was filled with lightning. Their clash created sparks, highlighting Meow Meow's Myriadfiend Venomfang.

Meow Meow and Lan Huang had instantly displayed a strength that was capable of crushing their opponents. But everyone's attention was still on Ying Huo. In recent times, Ying Huo had endured the hardship it needed to, in order to remain the boss. At the same time, it also possessed a terrifying lethality that Meow Meow and Lan Huang didn't have.

Shrouded in a hundred and seventy strands of Invincible Sword Ki, Ying Huo turned into a fiery blur, executing the Infernal Haze and splitting into countless clones. Hiding amidst the Infernal Haze, Ying Huo executed Pyros Imperius, accompanied by fifty strands of Invincible Flame Sword Ki.

Empowered by the Invincible Flame Sword Ki, the power of Pyros Imperius instantly reached a whole new level. And coupled with Ying Huo's physical strength and infernal saint ki, the four-level difference

in their stages was no longer that huge. Furthermore, Ying Huo was a lifebound beast who knew how to use a sky saint battle art along with the Invincible Sword Ki.

“Die!!” Ying Huo’s Wings of Agni tore through the air and instantly reached Yang Yang.

Letting out a huge roar, Yang Yang unleashed a slash with his heavy sword, containing the saint ki of an eighth-level Earth Saint and Crimsonsun Will, the Crimsonsun Heavy Crush.

The collision between Yang Yang and Ying Huo produced a huge commotion, and no one had thought that it was caused by the clash between a heavy sword and the wings of a lifebound beast. Moreover, Ying Huo had blown the Crimsonsun Heavy Sword away in the fight. After the sword was blown away, the Pyros Imperius was directed at Yang Yang’s head.

“AHHHHH!” Yang Yang’s pupils widened when facing death. But in the next moment, he narrowly escaped and suddenly hit the ground.

So it turned out that he was pulled back from the battlefield by a silver whip right at the critical moment. The silver whip came from the Dazzling Pavilion’s pavilion lord, Meng Tingyu. But even so, Yang Yang’s face was pale. He couldn’t forget the fact that he had just faced a near-death scenario, and his legs were trembling when he stood up. A lifebound beast defeated me using a battle art?

“GRRWWWOH!” Miserable cries came from the two Three-eyed Crimsonsun Qilins. Yang Yang didn’t even have the time to react before seeing his two lifebound beasts covered in blood and wounds. His eyes turned red and he immediately yelled out, “I give up! I admit defeat!”

He shivered when he saw his two lifebound beasts crawling over with trembling bodies. When he raised his head to look at Tianming again, his scalp had gone numb. He couldn’t accept the fact that Tianming had defeated him purely by relying on his lifebound beasts. Tianming was still being marked with the lifetime curse when Yang Yang had last seen him. Furthermore, Tianming had only fought against Qin Feng from the Ink Qilin Branch previously.

Qin Feng was in the eighth level of the Heavenly Will stage, while he was in the Earth Saint stage! The confusion and frustration Yang Yang felt immediately made him panic. He suddenly recalled what Dongyang Fengchen and the others said: they told him that if he wanted to go easy on Tianming, he had to make it look realistic, at the very least. But now, he felt that those words were simply a joke. He didn’t go easy and even gave it his all. But in the end, he had nearly died to a bird.

Tianming didn’t realize, nor would he care, that they actually wanted to go easy on him at all. After all, Su Yiran, the last person who went ‘easy’ on him, was in a terrible state.

Recalling his lifebound beasts, Tianming returned to his seat. He had easily won this battle without even lifting his finger. The banquet suddenly stilled, and even the blooming fireworks in the sky seemed to have gone quiet.

As for the three exalted ones of the Ancient Qilin Clan, they were dumbfounded. But when Yang Yang returned, their faces turned even uglier.

“Grandfather.”

“Don’t talk. Sit down.” Chong Yang said in frustration.

“Okay.” Yang Yang lowered his head in shame.

When Autarch Yun called for the event to continue, Meng Tingyu then resumed ‘drawing lots’ to arrange for others to fight.

“Father.” Dongyang Fengchen spoke out in a hoarse voice.

“I hear that you want to go easy on him and lure him to the Tomb of the Ancients?” Autarch Yun turned his head around.

“Yeah.”

“Don’t embarrass yourself. Send the strongest to fight. You can only go easy on someone if you qualify. If you don’t qualify, you’ll only be embarrassing yourself,” said Autarch Yun.

“Yes, father.” Half of Dongyang Fengchen’s face was black, and at this moment, the other half of his face had also turned a little darker.

“I just didn’t expect that the cultivation speed of a pentabane would be so fast,” Dongyang Fengchen frowned.

“Yeah. This brat is a tough nut. As for the other one, in the Grand-Orient Realm, he’s even harder to deal with. This time, you have to lure him into the Tomb of the Ancients. We’ll take down Tianming, then the other one if there’s an opportunity,” said Autarch Yun.

“Understood!” Dongyang Fengchen lowered his head. His eyes looked grim, and he asked, “Father, why do I have a feeling that our enemies seem to have increased?”

“It has nothing to do with you. If you can deal with Li Tianming, you’ll be able to sit firmly in the position of the crown prince,” said Autarch Yun.

“Understood!” Dongyang Fengchen replied, ferocity flaring in his eyes. He knew that he had to change his strategy now. Otherwise, it would be too fake if he got another eighth-level Earth Saint to target Tianming.

“I never imagined that your improvement would be so great. But that’s exactly what I want!” Bloodlust leaked from Dongyang Fengchen’s eyes the moment he lowered his head.

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Ye Lingfeng was scheduled in the seventh battle. His opponent was Autarch Yun’s great-grandson, Dongyang Bo. Dongyang Bo was born to Autarch Yun’s third son, making him one generation younger than the crown prince and Dongyang Fengxiao. He was twenty-seven this year, and he was also in the eighth level of the Earth Saint stage!

Dongyang Bo’s talent was weaker than Jiang Yu and Dongyang Zhuo, but he was at least stronger than the latter. His cultivation was one level higher than Ye Lingfeng, and he had a hydra as his lifebound beast.

However, Ye Lingfeng still emerged victorious after a bitter fight. Before coming, Tianming had already emphasized to Ye Lingfeng not to kill anyone, so he had restrained himself even though he was furious.

After that battle, Dongyang Fengchen's face had turned even darker. Dongyang Bo had no chance to go easy at all; he was utterly overwhelmed by Ye Lingfeng.

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In a blink of an eye, the first round was over, with eighteen people progressing into the final fights. That meant the next battles would determine the nine entrants to the tomb.

It was soon Tianming's turn again, and this would be his last battle in the banquet. His opponent was quickly determined: Jiang Fengyue.

"It looks like they're trying to get back some face this time. Be careful. Jiang Fengyue is Autarch Yun's nineteenth princess and was born to the Autarchess. Thus, she has the highest status among all the princesses. Her lifebound beast has eight heads, and she's twenty-three this year. She's not any older than you, but she's already reached the pinnacle of the Earth Saint stage and is one of the strongest among the thirty-six participants," Bai Mo noted in a soft voice.

"Got it."

He would be facing a true genius from the Theocrats. Her age was practically the same as Tianming's, and having a lifebound beast with eight heads represented a top talent in the Theocracy, second only to Dongyang Fengchen.

Yuwen Taiji was also in the pinnacle of the Earth Saint stage, but he probably wouldn't have been Jiang Fengyue's opponent. After all, Yuwen Taiji's lifebound beast was a fifth-order saint beast, and Jiang Fengyue's lifebound beast should be at least a seventh-order empyrean beast.

Jiang Fengyue had an irritable temperament. When she heard her name announced by Meng Tingyu, she directly stepped into the Cyclic Mirror Lake, as if she had known the outcome a long time ago. Her clothes were tightly bound to her body, and her skin was on the darker side. Her legs looked smooth and powerful, adding a wild air around her.

"Li Tianming, come up!" Jiang Fengyue hooked her finger. She knew that she would lose, but she still had to defend the Theocrats' dignity. As for the resentment that she accumulated during the process, she could only wait until her brother returned from the Tomb of the Ancients.

After all, when Tianming showed the strength to overwhelm Yang Yang, it would seem too fake if they arranged another eighth-level Earth Saint to be Tianming's opponent. Not to mention that only eighteen people remained, and there weren't many eighth-level Earth Saints left. Honestly speaking, she felt that they were overcomplicating this matter. No matter how they made arrangements, Tianming would still enter the Tomb of the Ancients.

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"You're Dongyang Fengchen's biological sister?" Tianming entered the Cyclic Mirror Lake.

"What about it?" Jiang Fengyue asked, narrowing her eyes into slits.

"Your appearance isn't that impressive," said Tianming.



Jiang Fengyue immediately flew into a rage when she heard that. Just that sentence alone made her struggle within her heart. If the Decimo Dao Palace wasn't in the way, she would kill Tianming. Her father was the Primeval Autarch, and she couldn't believe that there was someone she couldn't kill, besides her siblings.

"Die!" Jiang Fengyue immediately charged over.

"It's not my fault that you were born ugly. And you don't let others talk about it now?" It had only taken a glance for Tianming to know that Jiang Fengyue had a poor temper. He only needed to throw out a slight provocation for her to lose her composure.

His insults made Jiang Fengyue even more furious. When Jiang Fengyue summoned her lifebound beasts, it had taken Tianming aback. He never expected that she was also a triple beastmaster. She was the third triple beastmaster that Tianming had seen, aside from himself.

Interestingly, they were all females. But among the three of them, the formation of Jiang Fengyue's lifebound beasts was a lot more terrifying than the other two. She had three empyrean beasts, with seventy-two stars each. They might be inferior to Tianming's lifebound beasts, but they were a lot stronger than Ning Wushuang's.

Jiang Fengyue's lifebound beasts were three Black Nethervenom Sydras, with a total of twenty-four heads. Although sydras weren't as powerful as hydras, they were more vicious.

The three Black Nethervenom Sydras were clearly ice- and poison-type lifebound beasts, which meant the Cyclic Mirror Lake was their homeground. They were also covered with scaly armor. Looking at them, even Ying Huo, who had never rejected females, couldn't help muttering, "They're hideous...."

The two beastmasters summoned a spectacle, with a total of six lifebound beasts taking the field. This would clearly be the most exciting battle in the banquet, and it attracted everyone's attention. Tianming and Ying Huo were soaring in the sky, while Meow Meow stood on Lan Huang's head.

"Screw them up!" Ying Huo ordered.

The hot-blooded kid, Lan Huang, immediately issued a roar in response, raising a tidal wave with its voice. Surfing through the lake with incredible speed, Lan Huang charged toward the three sydras.

With its enormous size, it didn't seem like a problem for Lan Huang to take on the three sydras, but the sydras had higher cultivation. Fortunately, Tianming, Ying Huo, and Meow Meow were right above Lan Huang, so they immediately charged forth and joined the battle.

Just before the two sides clashed, the lifebound beasts had already unleashed their abilities. Meow Meow executed the Misty Hellthunder and Chaos Disaster, Ying Huo used the Sixpath Infernal Lotus, and Lan Huang set up the Mountainsea World.

But right at that moment, the sydras sank their heads into the water, causing it to turn black at a frightening speed. It was their spirit-source ability, Nethersea Venom. With this ability, they could turn the Cyclic Mirror Lake into a pure venom.

It would be a problem for Tianming and his lifebound beasts if they came in contact with the water. But fortunately, they all had shields.

Lan Huang had the Mountainsea World, Meow Meow had the Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape, and Ying Huo had the Infernal Armor. Moreover, it could also share the Infernal Armor with Tianming. After Ying Huo had reached eighty-seven stars, the Infernal Armor was further strengthened.

When the venom came in contact with the Infernal Armor, it produced a sizzling sound. But despite that, the venom wasn't able to penetrate the armor.

"Kill!"

The Black Nethervenom Sydras' abilities were lethal, so they had to ensure their defenses. Then again, Tianming's lifebound beasts' abilities also brought a huge threat to the three sydras, especially Meow Meow's thunder. When lightning spread through the lake, it drew cries from the sydras.

Right at that moment, the close-combat maniac, Lan Huang, collided with a sydra. The collision made the sydra furious and it sprayed out poisonous mist all around it as it bit at Lan Huang. Its eight heads were agile, and in addition to its tail, it brought the ferocity of the battle to a whole new level.

"Shrew, watch my sword!" Ying Huo flew between the eight heads using Infernal Haze, dodging all kinds of fatal attacks.

"Holy shit, where are your balls?" Ying Huo was stunned.

"Brother chick, are you stupid? They're female, so how can they have balls?" Meow Meow mocked.

"Whatever. I've been tortured by Invincible Sword Ki for the past month, and now it's their turn to have a taste of pain!" Ying Huo was furious whenever it thought about the Invincible Sword Ki.

The battle was chaos, and amidst that chaos, Tianming made his move. He was now filled with confidence for his lifebound beasts. Under the cover of their abilities, he directly charged over to Jiang Fengyue.

Jiang Fengyue wielded a slender sword, the Darknorth Sword, which had fifty saintly heavenly patterns. It was crimson, and anyone could tell that it was a murderous weapon with a glance.

"This sword of mine was drenched in the blood of 1865 people, and there will be another one today!" Jiang Fengyue executed her sky saint battle art, Frostwind Ocean.

"Do you take pride in how many you've slain?" Tianming positioned the Grand-Orient Sword and separated it into two.

"Killing will make me better!" Jiang Fengyue's eyes turned red.

Jiang Fengyue's sword ki covered the sky, lowering the surrounding temperature. When her technique was executed, Tianming felt as if he had been thrown into an icy purgatory, and the temperature made him tremble. Even his Infernal Armor had a hard time enduring it. But when the Celestial Wings unfolded, he shuttled through the sky like a bolt of thunder.

He retaliated with the Shenxiao Sword Art's fourth move, empowered by a hundred strands of Invincible Sword Ki. Despite wielding two swords, he only used one in his attack. The hundred Invincible Sword Ki strands rushed into the black Grand-Orient Sword, merging the thunder, ice, water, and earth sword ki together. When the might of the sword was unleashed, it left the audience shocked.

“Hundred-Demise Sword!” Many people instantly recognized the technique. They watched as Jiang Fengyue fell into a disadvantageous position and her sword broke into five segments. Tianming hadn’t just overwhelmed Jiang Fengyue, but had destroyed her sword as well.

When the Darknorth Sword broke, Tianming’s golden Grand-Orient Sword stabbed toward Jiang Fengyue’s throat. He only cared about killing; it was the Dazzling Pavilion pavilion lord’s responsibility to save Jiang Fengyue.

Sure enough, right when the golden Grand-Orient Sword was about to stab Jiang Fengyue, she disappeared. There was no way Meng Tingyu would allow Autarch Yun’s princess to die here.

But Tianming’s next action was outrageous. He immediately turned around and charged toward a sydra, slicing off one of its heads in an instant. When he swung again, the lifebound beast was also dragged out of the battlefield by Meng Tingyu.

There were still two other sydras on the battlefield, but they were quickly removed from the battlefield by Meng Tingyu. With that, this battle had come to an end. Although he had only managed to chop off one head, he still came to a stop. After all, his opponent was no longer on the battlefield.

Tianming clapped his hands and returned to the banquet. This time, he couldn’t be bothered to throw out any provocation and simply returned to Bai Mo’s side.

“That was great!” Bai Xiaozhu exclaimed out.

“It’s nothing,” Tianming said modestly.

“Is it too late for me to change husbands?” Situ Yiyi asked.

“Get lost!” Bai Xiaozhu smiled bitterly. But aside from them, the banquet was in dead silence.

Everyone looked at Jiang Fengyue and the hilt of her broken sword, sitting on the ground looking blankly before turning to Tianming, who seemed like nothing had happened. Everyone remembered that Tianming’s cultivation was only at Dongyang Zhuo’s level a month ago. At this moment, they finally knew why the Decimo Dao Palace lord had given Tianming the three empyrean manna.

For a brief moment, even masters of the Divine Capital could feel their scalps tingling at Tianming’s rapid growth, especially the Theocrats. Even the crown prince, Dongyang Fengchen, and Autarch Yun felt the same.

Silence enveloped the banquet. Autarch Yun wanted Jiang Fengyue to fight because he wished for Tianming to enter the Tomb of the Ancients, and at the same time, not to make the loss seem too bad. But now, it was humiliating to see Jiang Fengyue completely crushed by Tianming. It was something that not even he had expected.

After today, it was likely that the younger generation of the Theocrats would have a tough time raising their heads before Tianming. Perhaps the only good news was that Tianming must enter the Tomb of the Ancients, since he had taken one of the nine spots. But right now, he could only bear with it.

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“Your Highness, Fengyue...” Dongyang Fengxiao’s words were stuck in his throat. He knew that even if he was twenty-eight, it wasn’t guaranteed that he could defeat his younger sister. But Jiang Fengyue had been utterly crushed, defeated by the Hundred-Demise Sword.

“He chopped off the head of Fengyue’s lifebound beast, right?” asked the crown prince.

“Yeah.”

“You’ve not gone up yet, right?”

“Yeah.” Dongyang Fengxiao shook his head.

“Li Tianming is strong, and he’s practically invincible in the Earth Saint stage. But the strength of his brother, Ye Lingfeng, is only comparable to an eighth-level Earth Saint at best. Go tell Qingqing to have her mother arrange for you to fight Ye Lingfeng. The pavilion lord will know what to do. Take this opportunity to chop off one of his arms,” said the crown prince.

“We’re not letting Ye Lingfeng into the Tomb of the Ancients?”

“No need. He’s just one of Tianming’s small fry. He’s nothing. But Tianming will surely be furious if something happens to him. We’ll take our revenge first, otherwise all of us will have too much grievance pent up,” said the crown prince.

“Understood. What if I accidentally killed him if the pavilion lord’s too slow?” Dongyang Fengxiao asked.

“Oh, then that’d be a piece of good news,” replied the crown prince.

#### **Chapter 477 - You’re a Dog**

In a blink of an eye, there were only three out of nine places left, and six people who hadn’t fought; Ye Lingfeng was one of them.

“Feng, they probably have their emotions all pent up after suffering so many losses at my hands. I’m guessing that they’ll arrange someone difficult for you to deal with, like Dongyang Fengxiao,” said Tianming. Only five opponents remained, and the fourteenth prince had the highest status among them. After Tianming had defeated Jiang Fengyue, he could sense that everyone’s eyes had become colder when they looked at him.

“Is he someone important in the Theocracy?” Ye Lingfeng asked.

“I guess.” Dongyang Fengxiao was Autarch Yun’s biological son.

“Understood!”

“He’s in the ninth level of the Earth Saint stage. If you can’t beat him, remember to admit defeat. It doesn’t matter if you can’t enter the Divine Tomb as long as you’re fine,” said Tianming.

“I got it, Big Brother Tianming,” replied Ye Lingfeng. But when Tianming met his gaze, he knew that Ye Lingfeng would give it his all this time.

Everything went just as Tianming had guessed. Ye Lingfeng’s opponent was the fourteenth prince, Dongyang Fengxiao. Dongyang Fengxiao was now facing a scenario where he had to reach the Sky Saint

stage in two years. He would only be considered one of the top geniuses in the Divine Capital if he succeeded. But if he failed, he would be further away from being one of the strongest princes.

Under everyone's gaze, Ye Lingfeng walked into the Cyclic Mirror Lake. Not many people knew him, and most of them had only heard about him recently. After all, Ye Lingfeng was just someone who had lost his lifebound beast in their eyes. When the elders heard about that, their eyes turned colder.

It was common knowledge that one wouldn't be able to achieve anything if they lost their lifebound beast, even if it was turned into a lifebound spirit. But they would certainly change their mind if they knew what Ye Lingfeng's cultivation had been when he first joined the Decimo Dao Palace.

"Hall King, I'm worried they might play tricks in Feng's last battle. What do you think?" Tianming came over to Bai Mo when Ye Lingfeng went up.

"Don't worry about it. We're all here, and won't be careless with his safety," Bai Mo nodded.

This was a matter of life and death, so they couldn't rely on the other party to play fair. In everyone's eyes, Ye Lingfeng wasn't the same as Tianming; Ye Lingfeng didn't have an identity that everyone in the Divine Capital would pay attention to. At the very least, Dongyang Fengchen thought the Decimo Dao Palace wouldn't do anything even if Ye Lingfeng died.

Right at that moment, the fourteenth prince, Dongyang Fengxiao, stepped into the Cyclic Mirror Lake. A seventh-level Earth Saint facing a ninth-level Earth Saint? Standing on the surface of the lake, Dongyang Fengxiao squinted his eyes, looking at Ye Lingfeng like a predator eyeing prey.

"You wish to enter the Tomb of the Ancients?" Dongyang Fengxiao asked.

"That's right," replied Ye Lingfeng.

"You're a piece of trash. You don't even have a lifebound beast, so stop struggling. You're Li Tianming's dog, but he might not need you at all." Dongyang Fengxiao smiled.

"You're a dog," said Ye Lingfeng.

"What did you say?" Dongyang Fengxiao raised his brow. He had never seen someone insult so straightforwardly.

"I'm saying that the Ancient Theocrats are all dogs." Ye Lingfeng's eyes flickered with ferocity. He immediately retrieved his two daggers and lowered his body like a black cheetah.

"You're courting death!" Dongyang Fengchen was somewhat surprised. Even a piece of garbage dared to say something so outrageous in this banquet? Had the Theocrats declined to the point of being bullied?

After a brief moment of shock, he was soon overwhelmed by anger. He realized that talking to such an idiotic opponent was an insult to his intelligence. As he spoke, he summoned his lifebound beast, a six-headed hydra.

This proved that, as a prince, Dongyang Fengxiao's talent was only comparable to Jiang Yu. But even if there was nothing extraordinary about his talent, his cultivation was still in the ninth level of the Earth

Saint stage. Facing someone like Ye Lingfeng, he had the advantage in numbers, as well as cultivation level.

The six-headed hydra might be weaker than some, but it had already evolved into a seventh-order saint beast with seventy-three stars. It had a huge body, covered in azure scales. The most conspicuous part of it was its bat-like wings. Even the six heads looked like bats. The hydra looked ferocious, in line with the tradition of the Theocracy's lifebound beast. It was an Azurebat Winged Hydra.

At the same time, Dongyang Fengxiao took out his weapon, a black flute. The flute's tip was decorated with the sculpture of a bat head, and had fifty saintly heavenly patterns, making it a top-tier saint beastial artifact. The saint beastial artifacts used by the Theocrats were extremely valuable, reflecting their solid foundation and rich resources.

"Tianming, I remember that Dongyang Fengxiao's lifebound beast is a sound- and illusion-type, creating illusions through sound. This is Feng's forte, so there's a possibility that his opponent's attacks might have no effects on him. Then again, we still have to watch the battle. After all, Dongyang Fengxiao is a ninth-level Earth Saint, and his lifebound beast can also fly," Bai Mo said.

"Again? Previously, Jiang Chengfeng's lifebound beast was also an illusion-type, but relied on eye techniques. It's sound this time?" Tianming smiled bitterly. It looked like Ye Lingfeng was pretty lucky. If his opponent mainly focused on soul attacks, Ye Lingfeng would surely give them the shock of their life.

At that moment, the two parties on the Cyclic Mirror Lake had already clashed. Dongyang Fengxiao sat on the Azurebat Winged Hydra with a sinister smile. Retrieving his flute, he placed it on his lips and began playing it. For someone like him, music was part of his battle art.

The music was a sky saint battle art, the Nine Soul Funeral. It was a rare soul attacking method that could cause confusion in enemies. Dongyang Fengxiao clearly had talent in the field, and had also cultivated his soul in order for him to play this music.

Everyone outside the Cyclic Mirror Lake could only hear the music. They couldn't tell what was in it because it was directed only at Ye Lingfeng. When the music surged like waves, it started to get more irritating. It sounded like a piece of mourning music for a funeral; but that was only the beginning. The Azurebat Winged Hydra unfolded its enormous wings and dashed toward Ye Lingfeng, unleashing its spirit-source ability, Supersonic Wave. All six of its heads issued shrilling soundwaves, merging into the Nine Soul Funeral and increasing its lethality.

Honestly speaking, Dongyang Fengxiao didn't fear anyone in the ninth level of the Earth Saint stage, apart from Jiang Fengyue, who possessed three lifebound beasts. His sound attack was enough to take down most opponents.

"I hear that you're also proficient in soul attacks? Come, why don't you show it to me?" Dongyang Fengxiao looked smug.

However, Ye Lingfeng disappointed him. When Dongyang Fengxiao used the Nine Soul Funeral and Supersonic Wave, Ye Lingfeng just blankly stood there. His face was pale, and his body was trembling. Ye Lingfeng had already fallen into the illusion, and he seemed to have seen something terrifying that made him lose his combat prowess. This was the best effect that Dongyang Fengxiao's attack could bring out.

“What a piece of trash!” Dongyang Fengxiao blew his flute and approached Ye Lingfeng. As his music gradually became faster, Ye Lingfeng seemed to be in deeper pain.

He’ll be a fool after this music. But I’m afraid that the Decimo Dao Palace might react if I take my time... Dongyang Fengxiao pondered inwardly. As he continued playing the flute, the Azurebat Winged Hydra stopped its screeching and came before Ye Lingfeng.

Bite his head! Dongyang Fengxiao communicated in his heart.

This was a complete overwhelm, and Ye Lingfeng couldn’t even admit defeat. He had already been trapped in the illusion right from the beginning. But was he really trapped? Tianming had already noticed that Ye Lingfeng was just acting. Ye Lingfeng might seem a little stupid, but he was smart when it came to battle—especially when facing a stronger opponent.

Just as Dongyang Fengxiao was feeling content, Ye Lingfeng suddenly opened his eyes when the Azurebat Winged Hydra was about to bite down. In the next moment, it was the Azurebat Winged Hydra that screamed out in pain. Not only was Dongyang Fengxiao careless, but even his lifebound beast was sloppy.

Meng Tingyu was already prepared to save Ye Lingfeng, but she was planning to be slightly slower in her movements in order to allow the Azurebat Winged Hydra to kill him. Thus, the sudden turn of the battle left her stunned.

As the Azurebat Winged Hydra screamed, Ye Lingfeng turned into a blur and charged at his opponent. He plunged his Infernal Soul Daggers into his opponent’s abdomen before pulling them out. When he pulled his daggers out, blood started gushing from the wound, along with intestines. When the intestines fell out, they were all cut off by Ye Lingfeng.

With that, the Azurebat Winged Hydra fell into the lake, dying the lake red. It had a massive hole in its abdomen, and the more it struggled, the more internal organs fell out. All of this happened in an instant.

Meng Tingyu had initially wanted to give Dongyang Fengxiao an opportunity, but she’d never expected that the battle would turn out this way. The Azurebat Winged Hydra had been heavily injured in a blink of an eye.

When Ye Lingfeng saw Dongyang Fengxiao charging over with his flute, he immediately withdrew and focused on running, throwing out soul attacks whenever Dongyang Fengxiao got close. Dongyang Fengxiao’s lifebound beast had been heavily injured, and as time passed, it would die if it wasn’t given any emergency treatment.

“How are you fine?!” Dongyang Fengxiao felt as though he had been stabbed in his heart. He was confident in his soul attacks, but he never imagined that they would be ineffective toward Ye Lingfeng.

“It’s dying,” said Ye Lingfeng, pointing at the Azurebat Winged Hydra.

“You!” Dongyang Fengxiao’s rage peaked. Ye Lingfeng avoided any direct confrontation, and whenever he chased after Ye Lingfeng, the latter would take the opportunity to inflict more injuries on his lifebound beast.

## **Chapter 478 - Bad News, Your Majesty**

Ye Lingfeng's motive was apparent. He knew that he couldn't defeat Dongyang Fengxiao head-on, so he chose to drag the battle out. The entire battle lasted until the elders of the Theocracy felt greatly humiliated. Before Autarch Yun even spoke, Meng Tingyu tactfully pulled out Dongyang Fengxiao, who was on the brink of losing his rationality, along with his dying lifebound beast.

"F-father, I'm not finished! I can win!" Dongyang Fengxiao resentfully glared at Ye Lingfeng, who was coming out of the Cyclic Mirror Lake. His face alternated between blue and purple, and he was gasping for breath. He knew that he had fallen for Ye Lingfeng's scheme, which made him feel greatly humiliated.

"Get lost," Autarch Yun muttered.

Dongyang Fengxiao immediately collapsed on the ground, and a few people came out to bring him and his lifebound beast away.

At that moment, the atmosphere in the banquet had dropped past the zero point. It wouldn't be so humiliating, if Dongyang Fengxiao had simply surrendered. But Dongyang Fengxiao was anxiously chasing after Ye Lingfeng with no concern for proper demeanor. The key was that he had failed to get Ye Lingfeng, and his performance was ridiculous. But no one dared to laugh.

With fireworks still blooming in the sky, the Theocrats felt greatly humiliated that their descendants had all been overwhelmed. When the officials sensed the atmosphere, they immediately tried changing the topic. Meng Tingyu also arranged the remaining two battles, which eased the atmosphere.

What had just happened seemed to be a trivial episode. But everyone knew that two disciples from the Decimo Dao Palace had greatly humiliated the Theocrats in this banquet. To make things worse, they had even been personally invited by the crown prince. Amidst the waves of laughter in the banquet, groups of youths gathered in many corners of the palace. All of them had anger pent up in them.

"Jiang Fengyue and Dongyang Fengxiao, those two pieces of trash! Especially Dongyang Fengxiao, he's simply a humiliation!"

"If news of this spreads out, doesn't it mean that Li Muyang's son is riding on our heads?!"

"It doesn't make sense. Why is the Decimo Dao Palace so powerful? And why can't we, the Ancient Theocrats, kill a sinner's son?"

"The Theocracy has existed for tens of thousands of years, and we've never been so humiliated!"

But in the end, they could only swallow their anger.

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After the sparring ended, the banquet resumed with performances. At this moment, Autarch Yun turned to the crown prince and said, "Fengchen."

"Father!" Dongyang Fengchen's face had been ugly for a long time, but he tried his best to calm himself down.

"The frustration you feel today is a precious experience. Remember it well," said Autarch Yun.



“Yes. I didn’t expect that I’d be frustrated by two brats,” replied Dongyang Fengchen.

“Remember what you feel right now. It’ll remind you of what to do next. Do you know what I mean?” asked Autarch Yun.

“I understand. We can’t be too full of ourselves. We have to treat our opponent as someone on the same level as us. We might’ve been humiliated today, but there are plenty of opportunities for us in the Tomb of the Ancients. I have to be honest—I’m uncomfortable with the two of them. I’ve personally witnessed the pentabane, and he’s no joke. So I have to deal with him before he surpasses me,” Dongyang Fengchen said with his head lowered. He had already adjusted his mindset after watching the defeat of his younger siblings.

“The Tomb of the Ancients is your only opportunity. If you fail, the Decimo Dao Palace will surely hide him and let him cultivate peacefully for a few years. The next time you see him, you’ll only be able to look up to him,” said Autarch Yun.

Dongyang Fengchen felt a little uncomfortable when his father gave such a high evaluation to Tianming.

“In the history of the Theocracy of the Ancients, only the Pentabanes of the Li Saint Clan could be compared to the nine-headed talents of our clan. I never imagined that an almost annihilated clan would suddenly shine so brilliantly, and even allow the Decimo Dao Palace to seize this opportunity.” Autarch Yun’s gaze was dark, and no one could tell what was going through his mind.

“Don’t worry about it, father. If he dares to enter the Tomb of the Ancients, I’ll surely get rid of this threat,” said Dongyang Fengchen. He was confident that Tianming would enter the Tomb of the Ancients. After all, the Hall Kings wouldn’t have brought him here otherwise. The fact that Tianming participated in the banquet was itself a signal.

“What if you’re unable to deal with him?” Autarch Yun asked.

“Then I—”

“Then your elder brother will take over your position as the crown prince. You’re talented, and no one can match up to you. But the Theocrats have always spoken with merit. It’s great merit if you deal with the remnants of the Li Saint Clan. But if you’re unable to do it, you have to abdicate,” said Autarch Yun.

“Yes, father!” Dongyang Fengchen felt enormous pressure on his shoulders. He knew it was because he’d messed up the banquet. The heavier the pressure, the stronger the murderous intent grew in his heart. Fortunately, killing him is equivalent to squishing an ant for me right now. Dongyang Fengchen had never imagined that someone younger than him would be the one to decide his fate. But since Tianming had become a threat, he could only get rid of him before he could grow.

When the fireworks finally ended, the banquet also came to an end. Aside from some trivial matters, the banquet went smoothly, and the masters were all harmoniously talking and laughing.

But just as everyone was about to leave, a group of black-clad men charged into the banquet, regardless of the obstruction and reported, “Reporting! Bad news, Your Majesty!”

Judging from their outfits, they were likely intelligence personnel of the Theocracy. Their appearance instantly left everyone shocked, and their expressions turned grave. After all, this was an eventful time.

Almost everyone stood up from their seats, Bai Mo's group included. They subconsciously surrounded Tianming and the rest, protecting them in the middle.

"Your Majesty, the traitor, Jiang Ling, has appeared! He's united the sects from nine realms to launch an attack on Saint Martial Manor. Relying on the fireworks as cover, they infiltrated through the drainage system. Their sudden attack caused Saint Martial Manor to suffer a huge loss and many casualties."

This news left everyone shocked. Today was a solemn reunion festival in the Theocracy of the Ancients, and it was also the period when everyone was most relaxed. Saint Martial Manor was the residence of the Theocracy's officials. The reason why Autarch Yun could ascend to the throne was all thanks to the support of the Saint Martial Manor, and it was the foundation of his throne. But due to the festival today, he had invited over two hundred masters from Saint Martial Manor to the palace. Thus the Saint Martial Manor was essentially empty.

Jiang Ling was naturally Dongyang Ling, the ninth prince under the previous autarch. Not even Autarch Yun had expected Jiang Ling would launch an attack during the festival, or target Saint Martial Manor instead of the Imperial City. Back when the previous autarch had passed away, Jiang Ling disappeared with his trusted aides and descendants and went into hiding. Autarch Yun hadn't been able to find him since.

"The traitor finally showed up? Good!" Autarch Yun smiled. Would Jiang Ling, who attacked the Saint Martial Manor, still come for the Imperial City? Autarch Yun was already excited just thinking about it.

But right at that moment, his face suddenly changed. Over three hundred people in the banquet suddenly made their move, attacking those around them. The scene was chaotic, with many top-tiered lifebound beasts being summoned. The commotion created by them even caused the ground to tremble.

"Protect His Majesty!"

"It's the Ancient Clans! Damn it!"

"Outrageous! Ancient Greedwolf Clan, Ancient Taotie Clan, Ancient Bifang Clan, and the Ancient Qilin Clan. How dare you people commit treason against the Theocracy!"

But the Ancient Clans weren't the only ones involved in this coup d'état. Many members of the Theocrats with Jiang surnames acted out as well.

With the banquet plunged into chaos, no one knew who had joined Jiang Ling. At that moment, it was clear that Jiang Ling had been staying in the Divine Capital, and had just been waiting for this moment.

Autarch Yun might not be fond of the Ancient Clans, but he had already investigated them and they had sworn allegiance to him. He knew that there would still be some stubborn people, but he had never expected that there would be so many of them!

"Dongyang Yun murdered the previous autarch and usurped the throne! His sins are monstrous and unforgivable! He teamed up with Lord Virtuous to force the autarch beast to fake the imperial decree!"

Tianming was amazed by what was unfolding before his eyes. There were many things that he didn't know, including Jiang Ling's hiding spot. He also didn't know why most of the Ancient Clans and Theocrats supported Jiang Ling.

He only saw that Jiang Ling had taken advantage of the festival to launch a coup d'état, first launching an attack on the Saint Martial Manor to weaken Autarch Yun's influence and capture key personnel of the Saint Martial Manor to restrain the masters who supported Autarch Yun.

He even worked with the Ancient Clans and a portion of the Theocrats, preventing the formation from activating in the Imperial City. Tianming wanted to watch the show, but this scene was too chaotic and he would be injured if he was careless. As the battle continued, the palace, that had existed for tens of thousands of years, collapsed, crushing maids and eunuchs to death. The entire place was soon left in ruins.

"Let's go!" Bai Mo grabbed Tianming and Ye Lingfeng. The other three Hall Kings were responsible for bringing Chen Jinghong, Situ Yiyi, and Bai Xiaozhu. They sped off, and soon left the Imperial City.

When they looked back, Jiang Ling's army had already entered the defenseless Imperial City. The blazing fire illuminated the sky, with screams and roars polluting their ears. The Divine Capital had only enjoyed a brief moment of peace after the fireworks ended before turning into a battlefield. This was a contest for power between the Divine Capital's powerhouses.

The battle soon spread from the Imperial City to the Divine Capital. Countless beastmasters were heading toward the Imperial City, throwing the whole capital into chaos.

#### **Chapter 479 - Internal Strife in the Divine Capital**

"Have they gone mad?!" Bai Mo said, suddenly stopping in his tracks.

"Jiang Ling really is something. To think that he's remained hidden for such a long time.... Not only was he able to get the Ancient Clans to do his bidding, he even had the sects from the nine realms send some of their own to join their army, and involved the Ancient Qilin Clan as well!" Ye Yi said with amazement.

"He probably promised the Ancient Qilin Clan that the Lifetime Curse would no longer be mandated so that they can one day rise again," said the Sky Hall King.

"Autarch Yun has no choice but to deal with this in person. The festival grounds aren't defended at all. I bet he didn't think that Jiang Ling would be so daring as to attack Saint Martial Manor during the festival," the South Hall King said.

"Who cares about them. Let them fight, the more intense the better. All we have to do is sit and watch," Ye Yi said.

"Who do you think will win?"

"It's hard to tell. It's not like Autarch Yun is completely unprepared, and given his power, I'd say he even has the advantage. But one thing's for sure: since Jiang Ling dares to act, there will be no mercy. The Divine Capital will fall into chaos until there's a victor among the two brothers," Bai Mo said.

"It'd be great if this crippled the Theocrats," Ye Yi said with a smile.

"It makes sense."

The only faction that could remain secure throughout the fight between Jiang Ling and Dongyang Yun was the Decimo Dao Palace.

"Let's send the children back and observe the situation first," Bai Mo said.

"Sure."

"Wait," Tianming hurriedly said. "Hall King, what about the tomb? Are we still going in?"

"Don't worry. The tomb will open in half a month even if the fighting hasn't ceased yet. Even if they can't send anyone into the tomb, I'll still bring you there. You did get a spot already, after all," Bai Mo said.

"Alright," Tianming said, relieved. He couldn't care less about which of the two Theocrat bloodlines won. In fact, just like Ye Yi, he hoped that they would wipe each other out, or at least heavily maim one another.

Bai Mo and the rest sent the juniors back to the dao palace. Right as they returned, they noticed that the palace lord had activated the Evil Suppression Formation. The whole dao palace was surrounded in a powerful formation that forbade anyone but members from entering.

"Palace Lord?"

"Let it be known that no disciple is allowed to leave the dao palace during the power struggle in the Divine Capital. If they return to their clans, they will no longer be allowed back into the dao palace," Weisheng Yunxi decreed.

"Understood."

"Did Jiang An, Gu Suli, and the rest go join the battle?" she asked.

"That's right."

"Wonderful. Since that's the case, they'll no longer have to return. Let's use this chaos to reform the dao palace. Once they return, they'll no longer have any right to throw their weight around."

The others' eyes shone at the notion. It truly was the ideal moment to clear out the dao palace. The key figures of the six halls were mostly allied with the Theocrats, so they would have to leave and join their clans in battle. With there being fewer elites defending those six halls, the remaining ones, like Weisheng Yunxi, could take their time in removing the others. In fact, they could even justify it by insisting that Jiang An and the other Hall Kings had abandoned their posts in pursuit of personal vendettas.

This made for a good chance for Tianming and Decimo Dao Palace. With it cleared of any trace of Theocratic influence, nobody would be able to criticize them about how they were handling matters regarding Tianming, especially with the Tomb of the Ancients opening soon.

As a result, Tianming dove into deep, uninterrupted training after returning from the feast, regardless of the battles that were happening outside.

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After the Decimo Dao Palace closed itself off, people could only leave, but not return. The disciples that remained within had to consider whether they were going to stay or go. It was said that the Divine Capital had been reduced to ruins, and there was a good chance of being killed after leaving. There was no question that the Decimo Dao Palace was the most secure location in all of the Divine Capital right now. Not even Autarch Yun or Jiang Ling's men could circumvent the Evil Suppression Formation, after all.

Back then, fights between factions in the Grand-Orient Realm happened outside, but here, the battles were happening within the Divine Capital, causing much of its walls and many of its buildings to be smashed to ruins by elite fighters and their lifebound beasts. If this went on, the city would be flattened sooner or later, reducing the efforts of the Theocrats to ash. However....

"It's got nothing to do with me," Tianming said. He was still training in the sword ki pool, though it was more apt to call it self torture; too bad he didn't have a proclivity for pain. Eventually, the strands of Invincible Sword Ki in his body grew in number, and they got progressively harder and more painful to assimilate.

Currently, he was radiating sword ki. He could even pierce through a boulder with his finger alone, and no longer needed an actual weapon to use sword arts. Even his gaze could pierce flesh, should he will it.

Ten days later, he had five hundred strands within him. It was said that the founding ancestor, Li Shexiao, only reached nine hundred, but couldn't reach a thousand even with the aid of the Prime Tower. Then again, while training Invincible Sword Body was painful, there was no arguing with the benefits it brought.

As Weisheng Yunxi put it, Tianming screamed and howled like he was about to cave in, but never had he given up even once. Though the sight at the sword ki pool was gruesome, he managed to assimilate five hundred strands of sword ki within half a month, and his limits were still not in sight.

However, the time to enter the tomb was upon them. He was troubled that he could no longer assimilate more sword ki after leaving the pool.

"What are you troubled with?" Weisheng Yunxi asked.

"It'd be great if I could just bring the sword ki with me to the tomb," Tianming said.

"Well, of course you can do that."

"Is that true?!"

"Yes." She took out a fist-sized, transparent rock as she spoke. Tianming saw at least seventy saintly heavenly patterns on it. "This is a voidspace stone. It's a spirit ore used to make spatial rings, and it contains a pocket dimension within. However, voidspace stones are more stable and often used to store spirit hazards. The sword ki you see here was brought here using a voidspace stone in the first place."

"How many strands can it carry then?"

"Around a thousand."

"Wonderful." The time the tomb would remain open was around a month to half a year, averaging around two to three months. So, it would be open long enough for him to assimilate a thousand Invincible Sword Ki strands.

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After that, Weisheng Yunxi helped him pick sword ki that was suitable for him.

"Palace Lord, how is the situation outside?" Tianming asked.

"The fight on the night of the Fireworks Festival was harsh with many casualties on both sides, resulting in a stalemate. Autarch Yun is defending the Imperial City, while Jiang Ling is the pillar holding up the Ancient Clans. These two are like caged beasts who are resting for a time. However, one will eventually take the throne, and the other will die. The current stalemate will only last until one side shows its weakness and allows itself to be wiped out."

"Will we be watching the situation and pouncing to reap some advantages?"

"We won't be rushing to get involved. The situation is still volatile and could change at any time."

"I heard a few new Hall Kings have been chosen, right?"

"That's correct. Anyone that didn't answer my summons are considered to be in desertion of their post. How could Hall Kings leave their posts to join fights for personal stakes in the internal strife?"

Her tone of voice was so gentle it didn't seem to fit a leader of the dao palace at all. However, her decisions were final and unquestionable. With her in charge, the dao palace was headed for greatness.

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That night within Courtyard One, Feiling held onto Tianming's hand as they tried to make a breakthrough as patternscribes. They were about to make a two-star heavenly tome.

"If this works, the two of us combined will be two star patternscribes!" Tianming said.

"Why are you phrasing it so weirdly? Focus and don't waste ink," she snapped.

Two star tomes were twice as thick as one star tomes, so they had to remain focused the entire time. They had failed quite a number of times before, wasting a substantial number of empty tomes and portions of ink. They would be suffering a loss if the trend continued.

The tome they were trying to create was a Hallucination Tome. It was the creation of the Infernal Soul Race and could instantly create a hallucination formation covering a diameter of a thousand meters. The formation would induce phantom sensations to confuse the targets, allowing the users to escape. That was precisely the reason Tianming had chosen to make this particular tome.

He felt that he wasn't lacking in combat capability, but rather the ability to escape from grave danger. Having this kind of tome around would be much more helpful overall than an attack-type tome.

Under the starry sky, he tightly held Feiling's soft hand as they traced out the ink on the tome. This was enjoyable in itself.

"Big Brother, we'll be leaving for the tomb tomorrow, right?"

"That's right."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am."

"Alright."

"There's no need to overthink it. There are things in life that we will never be able to outrun. Let's just get this over with."

"Okay." She nodded with a resolute gaze. Perhaps, due to their mustered resolve, they managed to complete the Hallucination Tome two hours later. The two of them were officially two star patternscribes.

"I feel exhausted!" Feiling said, rubbing her eyes.

"Then let's get some sleep!" He immediately swept her off her feet.

"Let me go!"

"Cry out all you want, nobody's coming to save you."

"All you want."

"Huh?"

### **Chapter 480: Green Stone Building**

The next day, Tianming, Feiling, and Ye Lingfeng came to the main entrance of the palace. With the chaos outside, the Decimo Dao Palace was really quiet all over, with the number of disciples present far lower than usual. Soon, Chen Jinghong, Bai Xiaozhu, and Situ Yiyi joined them, along with Bai Mo and Ye Yi.

"We'll send you to the Second Divine Capital. If nothing else happens here, we'll stay there as well until your safe return," Bai Mo said. That meant they would remain there from a month to as long as half a year.

"Let's go. We'll head to the Abyssal Battlefield first."

There was an abyss that led to the Abyssal Battlefield near the entrance of the dao palace. After passing through it, Tianming once more emerged in that dark, lightning-filled world. An anti-sun loomed threateningly in the sky, swallowing as much light from the realm as it could.

On the abyssal side of the Divine Capital was a smaller capital that was mainly used to stop wildbeasts from passing through the abyss to the other side and causing chaos there. Bai Mo was using a transportation saint beastial artifact, the Decimo Ark, to transport the rest to the Second Divine Capital. The winds blew strongly as the ark soared through the sky at high speeds.

"Before entering the tomb, your spatial rings will be checked for forbidden items to prevent unnecessary fights from your personal grudges. The Theocrats have also decreed that no heavenly pattern tomes

that are purchased can be brought in. I'll also check your opponents' items before they enter," Ye Yi said.

"That's right. While there's many different factions in the Divine Capital, most are ultimately aligned with the Theocrats. There are twenty-five of them in total and they're all against you. Make sure you beware when you enter," Bai Mo warned.

"Hall King, how strong is the crown prince?" Tianming asked.

"I heard that he reached third-level Sky Saint two years ago. I wonder if he's made a breakthrough since. He's the second person among the Theocrats to have a lifebound beast with nine heads, after Autarch Qian, and he became a sky saint at twenty-two, only slightly slower than your father," Bai Mo said.

Tianming's actual age now was twenty-two. It had been a year since he left Ignispolis. While his abilities were nothing to scoff at, he was still quite some way from being a sky saint. Yet Dongyang Fengchen had reached the third level two years ago. Tianming recalled that the late vice sect master of the Earthorigin Sect, Yuan Hun, was a third-level sky saint. Dongyang Fengchen, being among the most talented of the Theocrats with their signature nine heads, was in many ways even superior to Jun Shengxiao, the Elysian Emperor.

"It's no wonder he looks down on me. He's capable in his own right," Tianming said.

"That's right. It seems that Autarch Yun no longer has a chance to break through to the Empyrean Saint stage, but Dongyang Fengchen stands a good chance even without the Cyclic Mirror," Bai Mo said.

It seemed that this crown prince was the next most promising Theocrat after Autarch Qian.

"It could be that he's even stronger than he was two years ago." Making progress as a Sky Saint was so hard that it could take a few years to a decade for one level. Even then, Bai Mo estimated that the crown prince could become an empyrean saint before he reached a hundred years old.

"Will he kill me?" Tianming said with a laugh.

"He will, but your biggest worry in the tomb isn't him."

Not even Chen Jinghong and the rest knew what Bai Mo meant by that, but Tianming did. If it weren't for Feiling, Bai Mo and the others would never allow him to risk himself in the tomb, for it was tantamount to suicide.

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Soon, they arrived at the Second Divine Capital, a walled city built on the Abyssal Battlefield. The walls stretched for hundreds of miles like a great black divide. The Second Divine Capital was currently controlled by Autarch Yun, and the one who stood guard here was Grand Sky General Zhao Shenhong of the Saint Martial Manor, who was also the North Hall King of Decimo Dao Palace. Ever since the internal strife in the Divine Capital started, he was sent by Autarch Yun to prevent Jiang Ling from ambushing the Second Divine Capital.

"I heard that the palace lord has removed me from my post as Hall King," Zhao Shenhong said as he coldly approached.



"That's right. She summoned you back to the dao palace, but you refused to answer the call. That's akin to abandoning your post, so the palace lord temporarily removed you from it. If you don't return soon, I believe that will become permanent," Ye Yi said.

"Why would the palace lord be up to childish shenanigans like that?" Zhao Shenhong said with a chuckle.

"Desperate times, desperate measures. If you don't like it, you can just return to the dao palace."

"Hmph!" It was obviously more important for him to defend the Second Divine Capital than to return to Decimo Dao Palace and resume his post. "Once Jiang Ling's dealt with, Autarch Yun will gain control once more. I doubt you'll forbid me from returning to the dao palace then!"

After all, he hadn't laid his foundations there for nothing.

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Soon, the thirty juniors that were to enter the tomb had all gathered at the center of the city. Tianming looked around and noticed that Dongyang Fengxiao and Jiang Fengyue were both there. However, hadn't they already lost to him and Ye Lingfeng, and their spots by extension?

"The power struggle among the Theocrats saw many of the Ancient Clans join Jiang Ling's side. As a result, the juniors of those clans had their spots revoked, so Autarch Yun filled them with his own kin," Bai Mo explained.

After all, Dongyang Fengxiao and Jiang Fengyue were among the most powerful earth saints. They were definitely qualified to enter the tomb. As a result, the original number of sky saints that were part of the thirty had fallen from twenty-one to eighteen, leaving three spots open.

They were all loyal descendants of the Theocrats who had half-darkened faces. The expressionless Dongyang Fengchen stood at their center. Even though they hadn't entered the tomb yet, he was giving off a cold, domineering aura.

Tianming didn't know many of the others, apart from the second on the Sky Ranking, Meng Qingqing, who was inferior to only Chen Jinghong. Both of them were said to be second-level sky saints. As for the rest, they were pushing thirty and were as strong as the strongest people in the Grand-Orient Realm.

Dongyang Fengchen, when he saw Tianming come, seemed a little happy and relieved. He wouldn't know what to do if he hadn't come.

"Brother Tianming, looks like he believes he'll definitely have you," Ye Lingfeng said. His observation skills were as sharp as a beast's.

"Well, he does have me here, alright. All we have to do is run when we run into him in the tomb." Tianming wasn't proud enough to underestimate any and everyone. It was a fact that Dongyang Fengchen was no doubt far more powerful than him right now. If it weren't for Feiling's matter, Tianming would be busy thinking how he could escape Dongyang Fengchen's vengeance.

"The tomb will soon open. Follow along to the entrance now," Zhao Shenhong said.

The thirty juniors followed behind as Bai Mo and Ye Yi watched. Along the way, the Theocrats followed the crown prince's lead. After a while, Dongyang Fengchen turned back to Tianming and raised his eyebrow. "Aren't you afraid I'll do something to you inside the tomb?"

"If I really were afraid of you, I wouldn't have come."

"Hahaha...." The crown prince's cohort joined in the laughter.

"That sounds like something a coward would say. Was what you said during the Earth Ranking battle nothing but ignorance?"

"What did I say again?" Tianming asked, but they couldn't even bear to quote him. "Oh, I called you the Nineshades Clan, didn't I? I'm sorry, that was completely intentional," he said with a smirk.

The atmosphere immediately turned cold. Dongyang Fengchen squinted; it was the second time he felt an itch he could scratch, thanks to Tianming. He clenched his fists so hard that the cracking sounds were piercing to the ear.

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An hour later, Tianming saw a stone building. It looked just like any other building in the Second Divine Capital, but it didn't have windows, only a door.

"What did Zhao Shenhong bring us here for?" Tianming asked.

"This is the entrance of the tomb, that's why," Bai Xiaozhu said.

"How can this be it? You're saying this decrepit old building is our destination all along?"

"Oh, you're completely mistaken. Every brick that forms this building can't be moved even by the strongest in the Theocracy. A long time ago, this building appeared on the Abyssal Battlefield, but no one has thus far been able to force their way in. Soon, it drew quite a lot of attention and people found out that this was none other than the Tomb of the Ancients. The reason there's so many similar stone buildings in the Second Divine Capital is to hide the existence of the tomb's entrance," he explained. It sounded truly mystical. At the very least, Tianming couldn't tell at all what was special about the building.

"No wonder they say that this is definitely the tomb's entrance." Based on the fact that it was indestructible alone, they could be sure it was the entrance.

Feiling seemed a little restless when they arrived and all Tianming could do was console her. He took a deep breath and resolved himself. I have to survive. Ling'er too!

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After six hours of waiting, a click was suddenly heard. Everyone looked at the building and saw the wooden door open. Within it was total darkness. It almost felt like there were evil spirits waiting inside, thanks to the howl of the wind gushing in. A wet, musty odor came wafting out.

The rotten wooden door creaked from time to time, as if it was beckoning them to enter like an old crone who had lost all her teeth, smiling insidiously. At least, that was a huge contrast to how Tianming

imagined it would be: grand like a palace and decorated with countless, unmatched riches. Instead, all he got was a puny, decrepit entryway without any illumination. The building was so small it didn't look like the thirty of them could all fit.

Is this really the place the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower came from? he wondered.

It seemed that nobody apart from Dongyang Fengchen had entered the tomb before. He seemed rather confident, while the rest were quite anxious. Situ Yiyi even shuddered and leaned against Bai Xiaozhu.

"Enter," Zhao Shenhong said.

"I'll lead the way," Dongyang Fengchen said and immediately stepped into the dark doorway, after which blood-red words depicting '29' appeared on the wooden door.