

## The Ages 511

### Chapter 511 - The Astral General, Li Tianming

Tianming couldn't be bothered with pleasantries, so he smiled and said, "Palace Lord, leave that to Li Wudi. I'm a free and easy man who's waiting to roam the mountains with Ling'er and have a bunch of babies!"

"Bullying Ling'er again, you naughty boy," Weisheng Yunxi chuckled. "That's all in the future. It might not necessarily come true. If it can be done, I'll certainly place your godfather here. Although he's rather arrogant and despotic, he's a man of strong means, a founding monarch. Fourteen years of tribulation was enough to create the perfect man."

Lightly patting Tianming on the shoulder, she said, "Let's go to the Decimo Sacred Hall and declare your position."

Weisheng Yunxi was going to arrange an army for Tianming. As a man who had never led a soldier in battle, Tianming was undoubtedly a little excited. Although he'd turned the tide in the Grand-Orient Realm sect war, he had yet to join the ranks of the strong. This time, he could rely on his own combat power to control the war.

"Autarch Yun, death is coming! It's time the Theocracy of the Ancients and the Theocrats are destroyed."

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The Decimo Sacred Hall was where the real decision-making happened. On this day, the top figures of the Dark Hall and the dao palace were gathered there. There were major decisions to be announced. Tianming was to enter the Dark Hall, so he could leapfrog from the school and immediately join management.

Tianming returned to grab Ye Lingfeng. Ye Lingfeng didn't dare stray too far away from the Soulfier; it was still an uncontrollable and uncertain factor. After returning from the tomb, the Soulfier was inseparable from Ye Lingfeng. Wherever he went, the Soulfier tagged along like a loyal and obedient servant.

The Soulfier had three heads. Except for the angry face it showed when fighting, it usually switched between joy and sorrow. During this time, the Soulfier and Lan Huang had become best buddies who played together. When walking down the street, the Soulfier had its happy head at the front, with all six arms swaying delightedly. Whenever the young disciples of the Dao Palace came across the ferocious monster, they quickly hid.

"I heard Tianming killed the crown prince Dongyang Fengchen."

"The crown prince! A peerless genius with a nine-headed hydra who once had the entire Divine Capital trembling in fear!"

"Yeah, the winds have changed. After the previous autarch passed, Jiang Ling and Autarch Yun started fighting for power. Infighting has caused huge losses, and even the crown prince was killed. The Shenwu

Legion actually marched to our doors on a punitive crusade in a bid to force us to hand over Li Tianming."

"There's rumors that the Dao Palace wants to support Jiang Ling in the war against Autarch Yun, who's retreated to the Imperial City. He's probably finished."

"Yes, in contrast, the Dark Hall is really strong. I'd like to join them in the future."

"The Theocracy has reached its most chaotic period since ancient times. If we join the Dark Hall, we can certainly sit back and relax. I have a clean background, so it shouldn't be a problem."

"Let's work hard then!"

They watched Tianming walk by, their expressions filled with envy.

"Is Li Tianming still a disciple of the dao palace like us?"

"I heard that he's valued by the palace lord and might become the future palace lord."

"Who would've thought he'd be so destiny-defying! When he first came, he looked like a complete bumpkin. I couldn't tell at all."

"Yeah, if we get the chance, we must curry favor with him."

"I heard that Zhou Yuanyuan of the Future Hall is good friends with Li Tianming, and now he has several girlfriends, all of whom are great beauties."

"Several.... Damn, doesn't that fat pig have kidney deficiency! I'm so jealous!"

They laughed.

In the crowd stood an inconspicuous, white-robed man. His eyes were red, body shaking.

"Is there still a chance for revenge?"

Jun Niancang leaned against the wall, a little unsteady. In his eyes, the young man who had provoked his monstrous anger in the Realm War was now unattainable.

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"Feng, the full title for the Dark Hall is the Seven Astral Dark Hall. The army of beastmasters in the Dark Hall is called the Seven Astral Legions. They're divided into seven legions: Skycore, Skyppearl, Skyrule, Skyjade, Stilljade, Shimmerglow, and Grandsol. Each legion is led by an Astral King. Under the Astral King are more than a hundred thousand powerhouses at Saint stage, meaning there's close to a million people in the Seven Astral Legions. They're the core power of the Dao Palace," Tianming explained on the way to the Decimo Sacred Hall.

"What about Senior Ye Yi? "Ye Lingfeng asked.

Ye Yi was currently guiding him in cultivating an extraordinary sky saint battle art.

"He's the commander-in-chief of the Seven Astral Legion. The seven Astral Kings are under his control," said Tianming.

"I understand."

"Additionally, under each Astral King are ten Astral Generals. Each general controls ten thousand people. And below the Astral Generals are chiliarchs, centurions, and squad captains," said Tianming.

Simply put, the Seven Astral Dark Hall was the army of the Dao Palace. Its discipline, as well as its internal reward and punishment system, was no different from the imperial army. In the Theocracy of the Ancients, the Decimo Dao Palace's real identity wasn't a school, but a small country within a country. It had been suppressed for tens of thousands of years, but had yet to be swallowed.

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The Decimo Sacred Hall.

When Tianming and Ye Lingfeng arrived, Weisheng Yunxi was sitting at the top, with Ye Yi and Bai Mo on her left and right respectively. Ye Yi represented the Seven Astral Legions of the Dark Hall, while Bai Mo controlled the school and was responsible for the passing on of disciples. The Future Hall had always been the number one hall. All of the halls were under Bai Mo's control, hence his great power.

Aside from them, the seven Astral Kings of the Dark Hall and nine hall kings were all there in their own places. The new North Hall King, Bai Zifeng, sat in the lowest position. After all, he was the youngest of them all. Below them were dozens of Astral Generals of the Seven Astral Legions, as well as the hall prefect of the school.

"Come in." Upon seeing the two, the elders in the Sacred Hall smiled.

"Greetings Palace Lord, Hall Master, Hall Kings, and Astral Kings," said Tianming.

The elders in the Dark Hall were basically familiar with him, especially since his performance in the tomb had been payback on their behalf. By the time Tianming entered the hall, Weisheng Yunxi had already finalized their battle plans.

As soon as Tianming arrived on scene, she announced, "In view of Tianming's contributions in slaying the son Dongyang Yun was most proud of, the Hall Kings, Astral Kings, and I have decided that he will be made an Astral General of the Skycore Legion, in command of an army of ten thousand under the jurisdiction of the Skycore Astral King, Bai Zijun."

This was an order, not a discussion. The other seniors seemed to agree with her decision.

"Thank you. I'll do my best to command the army and I won't let you down!" Tianming's eyes burned with passion.

An Astral General of the Skycore Legion with ten thousand troops! All of them were at Saint stage. This army alone was enough to crush the entire Grand-Orient Realm. There were hundreds of Astral Generals in the entire Seven Astral Legions, and the youngest was over forty. This was a position with real power, which showed how much the Decimo Dao Palace valued him.

Most importantly, Tianming's immediate superior, Astral King Bai Zijun of the Skycore Legion, was Bai Mo's second son and Bai Zifeng's younger brother. They were about the same age, with little difference in their strength.

Before today, Tianming had come across Bai Zijun several times and had long recognized the man. One of the seven Astral Kings, Bai Zijun was also the youngest among them. The man was a bright star, gentle and elegant—all in all, a handsome middle-aged man with a deep, mellow voice and the air of a great commander.

Bai Mo had two sons, one a Hall King, and the other an Astral King. It was no wonder Bai Zijun could do as she pleased in the Decimo Dao Palace and no one dared to provoke her. With such a father and two brothers, she was invincible....

There were a hundred thousand people in the Skycore Legion. Allowing a young man like Tianming to command ten thousand of them was both a sign of trust and a challenge.

While the others congratulated him, Weisheng Yunxi added, "Ye Lingfeng will assist Tianming as deputy general. Although the two young men have little experience, they have endless potential. With respect to strength, Tianming was able to kill Dongyang Fengchen, which places him on par with an Astral General. The Divine Capital is about to go to war. Brothers and Sisters, as their senior, resent them not. Help them grow quickly. Skycore Legion Astral King, Bai Zijun, this task is left to you."

"Don't worry, Palace Lord. Tianming and Feng are assets of the Dao Palace. If anyone refuses to accept them, the solution is very simple: just ask yourselves if you dare kill the crown prince of the Theocracy." Bai Zijun smiled and nodded.

"Very well." Nodding, Weisheng Yunxi stood up and declared, "The Seven Astral Legions will follow my arrangement, strictly execute it, and prepare for battle! Given the current situation in the Divine Capital, the day we go to war is near. As everyone is aware, Autarch Yun is a bloody and cruel tyrant who conspired to murder the previous autarch, angering both gods and men. On the other hand, ninth prince Jiang Ling is benevolent and righteous. He has the support of the clans and the major sects of the realm. The dao palace shall assist him. Only when Autarch Yun is killed, the ninth prince ascends the throne, and the chaos of the nation is put to rest can we be at ease."

"Yes!" the crowd shouted in unison, Tianming included.

He was well aware of the reason behind the dao palace's current move. They were aiming for Dongyang Yun in support of Jiang Ling. Even if they were the core of the dao palace, who could guarantee there were no spies amongst them?

Right now, they couldn't use the destruction of the Theocrats as their goal. Otherwise, Jiang Ling wouldn't dare accept their support. Both he and Dongyang Yun would have to deal with the dao palace.

For now, knowledge of the Decimo Dao Palace's resolve to destroy the Theocrats was limited to a few people. Others could only guess.

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With this, Tianming was now in charge of ten thousand Saint stage experts and would soon join the war against Dongyang Yun. When the meeting concluded, Weisheng Yunxi handed Tianming over to Bai Zijun. Next Tianming would officially meet his men!

**Chapter 512 - Tigress?**

After leaving, Bai Zijun came over with a smile and said, "Come, let the Skycore Palace get to know the first twenty-year-old Astral General in the Decimo Dao Palace's history."

Tianming knew that power meant responsibility. In the future, he would have ten thousand people fighting for him, and that meant that he needed to ensure their safety as their leader.

"Tianming, the Dark Astral Battalion doesn't have an Astral General. In the future, the ten thousand warriors under the Dark Astral Battalion will be your responsibility. Several deputy generals will assist you, and you can ask me if you have any questions.

"Honestly speaking, the logic behind managing a legion isn't the same as cultivating. But there's still some common aspects it shares with military force. You have to be meticulous about it. I believe that you can bring out the power of the Dark Astral Battalion with your comprehension," said Bai Zijun.

"I'll do my best. After all, I've never done anything like this before," replied Tianming.

The Skycore Palace was where one of the Seven Astral Legions, the Skycore Legion, was stationed. Everyone in the Skycore Legion had a courtyard of their own, which showed how massive the Decimo Dao Palace was.

"Skycore Legion, assemble!" Bai Zijun immediately ordered upon arriving. The difference between the Dark Hall's warriors and disciples was shown here. The moment Bai Zijun issued the order, a hundred thousand people stood before the Skycore Battle Stage in orderly ranks in just thirty breaths. A hundred thousand people standing together, their morale and fighting spirit sky-high.

"Violet Astral Battalion reporting!"

"Scarlet Astral Battalion reporting!"

"Indigo Astral Battalion reporting!"

"Dark Astral Battalion reporting!"

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Ten Astral Generals commanded the ten Astral Battalions. Tianming glanced at the Dark Astral Battalion. There were ten thousand of them, all wearing black armor. Their armor had starlight flowing across them, and every single one had at least twenty saintly heavenly patterns.

The Dark Astral Armor was the standard battle armor. The styles were unified, but there were different levels. Those with more saintly heavenly patterns would have stronger defensive capabilities.

The Dark Astral Armor that the Decimo Dao Palace allocated to Tianming had seventy saintly heavenly patterns. The defense was impressive, not to mention that it looked cool!

"Don't you think they assembled fast?" Bai Zijun smiled.

"Yeah, orderly and fast. It's an army with no slackers," said Tianming.

"You're right. The battalion has military orders, which are different from the disciples. But this is also because they've been in a state of combat readiness recently, and they're relatively free most of the time. The Dark Hall prioritizes being humane. We're all fellow brothers and sisters," said Bai Zijun.

“Understood!” The atmosphere here was entirely different than the Theocrats’ army.

Bai Zijun brought Tianming over and announced, “Today, I’m here to introduce your new companion in the Skycore Legion!”

“Isn’t that Li Tianming?”

“We know him.”

“He’s a famous person.” Everyone laughed.

“It looks like everyone knows him. Since that’s the case, I won’t introduce him any further. I hereby declare that, starting today, Tianming will be conferred as a Skycore General, commanding the Dark Astral Battalion. Ye Lingfeng will be his deputy!

“This is the decree from the palace lord, hall master, astral kings, and hall kings. This proves Tianming’s ability and strength. Furthermore, it’s also an acknowledgment of his achievement in killing Dongyang Fengchen back in the Tomb of the Ancients!”

Previously when Autarch Yun had raised the question, Bai Zijun still had Tianming deny it. But now that they had completely fallen out, killing the crown prince had become Tianming’s achievement. Honestly speaking, the news had long spread out.

Although everyone was under the impression that the Soulfier had killed the crown prince, Tianming had also participated in the battle. So it wasn’t much to say that Tianming was also responsible.

Most importantly, the position was something that the higher hierarchy in the Decimo Dao Palace had conferred upon Tianming. So even if Tianming was young, who would have any objection?

“Dark Astral Battalion! Astral General! Li Tianming!” Tens of thousands of people were called out at the same time, especially the Dark Astral Battalion. They were delighted with their new Astral General.

“Why don’t you say something?” Bai Zijun patted Tianming’s shoulder.

Tianming put away his goofiness and became serious. He said, “Fellow warriors of the Dark Astral Battalion, I’ll be honest with all of you. You’re my elders, and I can’t help feeling a little pressure, commanding the Dark Astral Battalion. But I don’t wish to disappoint the palace lord or let everyone down. So I’ll do my very best to learn and lead everyone. I might be young, but I’m comparable to any Astral General here in terms of strength. Please believe in me. From today onward, we move as one!”

His voice was resounding, and it didn’t seem to be a speech by a young man at all. Perhaps many people might question his qualifications. After all, young men were often linked with recklessness, causing unnecessary death. But judging from the looks he was getting, Tianming had a charm of his own.

“Tianming is absolutely qualified in terms of strength, and he’ll only grow stronger in the future. In terms of commanding, he’ll have four deputies, including Ye Lingfeng. You can all wait and see.” Bai Zijun was paving the way for Tianming. After all, he knew his future wouldn’t be limited to an Astral General.

“Understood!” the hundred thousand warriors replied.

The legion then dispersed. Bai Zijun brought Tianming, Ye Lingfeng, and the Dark Astral Battalion back to their camp.

“Sun Xingyu, Chen Fang, and Liu Yuyi,” Bai Zijun called out. The three deputies immediately took a step forth. It was a group with one female and two males. They were all over fifty, but they were all Sky Saints, so they looked like they were in their thirties. Among the three of them, Sun Xingyu was a tall man, Cheng Feng was much thinner, and Liu Yuyi was a gallant-looking woman.

“The three of you are to assist Tianming well,” Bai Zijun instructed.

“We will!” They immediately nodded their heads.

The Dark Astral Battalion also had a Dark Astral Battle Stage. It was used as a gathering place for the Battalion. As the Astral General, Tianming had a massive palace for himself, and he could let Li Qingyu and the others stay there. Lan Huang and the Soulfierd were too massive, and Tianming had already been thinking of moving. This Astral General Manor was at least a hundred times bigger than the First Pavilion, and had an enormous lake on its grounds, which was enough for Lan Huang.

“Tianming, I’ll be taking my leave first. You’ve just arrived, and you should get familiar with the brothers,” said Bai Zijun.

“Okay.” Tianming nodded.

“Come to me anytime you have any questions.” Bai Zijun immediately took his leave.

“General, this way please,” Chen Feng said respectfully.

The group went to the Dark Astral Battle Stage. Tianming looked around, and there were tens of thousands of people looking at him curiously.

Then again, Ye Lingfeng and the Soulfierd had attracted even more attention. Tianming first familiarized himself with the names of his three deputies and the rest of the officers.

He had a rough understanding of their strength. For example, the deputies were mostly at third- or fourth-level Sky Saint. Some deputies were reserve generals, and they already possessed the strength of one.

The Chiliarchs were mostly at first- and second-level Sky Saint, similar to Bai Zijun’s strength. This also meant that Chen Jinghong, the first on the Sky Ranking, was only comparable to a chiliarch in the Dark Hall.

As for the centurions, they were mostly at eighth-level Earth Saint. Only a few of them had reached the Sky Saint stage. That meant Ye Shaoqing and Yuwen Taiji could only be centurions if they joined.

After that, Tianming discovered that the ordinary warriors were mostly in the third level of the Earth Saint stage. There wasn’t a single first-level around here. Looking at the ten thousand men standing before him, Tianming had a firsthand experience of the hundred-thousand-strong legion’s fighting strength.

Tianming was new here, and despite facing these elders, he was neither humble nor arrogant. After all, he wouldn’t be able to convince everyone if he seemed too weak.

Then again, Tianming would execute his authority whenever it was necessary.

Bai Zijin walked over. When she showed up, the warriors all addressed her 'Lady Bai.' It looked like she was pretty famous as a Supernal Mentor.

"Big Sister Bai, what're you doing here?"

"I heard you became an Astral General, so I came to congratulate you," Bai Zijin smiled.

"So, where's my present?"

"You're asking me for one when?" Bai Zijin pulled Tianming to the side and continued, "You must know that if the Decimo Dao Palace goes to war, you'll be on the front lines as an Astral General. You have to keep yourself safe while being responsible for your battalion. You can't be reckless anymore. You hear me?"

"Alrighty," said Tianming.

"I know you won't listen to me." Bai Zijin threw her temper.

"I already registered what you said in my mind. I'll naturally remember how Big Sister Bai cared for me," Tianming said seriously.

"That's more like it." Bai Zijin glanced at the Dark Astral Battalion's warriors and asked, "So, have you built your prestige?"

"What do you mean?"

"At least let them know of your strength. Otherwise, how can you win them over and obey you? If anyone makes trouble for you in battle, you might even be dragged down by them," said Bai Zijin.

"You make some sense. But who am I going to beat up with everyone being so polite to me?" Tianming smiled bitterly. He couldn't just find a random reason to beat up someone, right? After all, no one had provoked him.

"How about this? I'm having doubts about your strength. I can't accept a brat like you catching up to me in the blink of an eye. I made my breakthrough yesterday and reached the third level of the Sky Saint stage. So I want to beat you up," Bai Zijin threatened.

"To comfort your middle-aged woman's self-esteem?" Tianming winked.

"Tianming, how dare you call me old?!" Bai Zijin raised her brow.

Tianming immediately turned and started running.

"Stop right there!" Bai Zijin immediately chased after Tianming and started beating him.

"Lady Bai, why are you bullying our Astral General?" The crowd immediately came out.

"Get lost!" Bai Zijin barked.

"Alrighty!" The crowd immediately dispersed.



Tianming had never expected that Bai Zijin would be serious about beating him up. She even summoned her lifebound beast. It was an Astral Winged Tiger. The tigress was mostly white, decorated with blue astral patterns. It was a seventh-order saint beast, with seventy-one stars.

“Bai Zijin, how dare you go against your superior! See how I’ll teach you a lesson today!” Tianming took out the Three-Thousand Starfield without summoning his lifebound beasts. He was going to fight the two by himself.

“Shut up! So what if I’m beating you up?” Bai Zijin charged forth, riding on the Astral Winged Tiger.

No wonder she didn’t like Meow Meow. It turned out that she had grown up with a tiger. She probably had enough of cats and was immune to their cuteness.

“You’re overestimating yourself!” Tianming smiled. Honestly speaking, everyone knew Bai Zijin was purposely putting a show for everyone. She wanted to dismiss everyone’s doubts by allowing Tianming to show his strength.

Rumors were spreading that it was the Soulfierd that killed the crown prince, so no one had an idea of Tianming’s strength. Then again, everyone could also tell that Bai Zijin wasn’t going easy on him, either.

The battle broke out immediately. Tianming’s attacks were ferocious; he even used an empyrean battle art. But without summoning his lifebound beast, he was having a tough time fighting Bai Zijin and the Astral Winged Tiger.

After their clash, Bai Zijin had disbelief on her face. She was having a tough time keeping up with Tianming’s ferocious attacks. When she finally lost, she was fully convinced of Tianming’s strength.

“You’re something....” Bai Zijin shook her head with a bitter smile.

Tianming was gentle with her. He hadn’t injured her, only subdued her with his strength. Shoving a bag over to her, Tianming said, “Here’s your reward.”

When Bai Zijin opened the bag, she smiled when she saw thirty thousand saint crystals. Tianming added, “That’s your pay.”

“Shut up!” Bai Zijin smiled bitterly. She was giving her best when she fought, not trying to put up an act for everyone. But she had ultimately achieved her goal.

Looking around, the surrounding Dark Astral Battalion members looked convinced by Tianming’s strength. But right at that moment, a burly figure stood up with a smile, “General is powerful, and my hands got itchy by watching. I’d like to spar with you and experience the strongest genius in the last thousand years. I wonder if you can fulfill this request of mine?”

His name was Sun Xingyu, one of the deputy generals. The Skycore Astral King, Bai Zijun, had told him there was a high possibility he would become an Astral General. But Tianming had appeared out of nowhere and taken it from him.

Before this, Sun Xingyu didn’t show any unhappiness for Tianming. But when he stood out and challenged Tianming, there was a hint of provocation in his tone. His words instantly caused the atmosphere to become tense.

Sun Xingyu had high prestige in the Dark Astral Battalion. Everyone had long acknowledged the fact that he would become the new Astral General. But Tianming's appearance had stolen it from him. As a result, the warriors of the Dark Astral Battalion were looking forward to this battle and waited for Tianming's response with anticipation.

They looked at Tianming, who was just over twenty years old. For them, Tianming was too young. Some of them had grandchildren the same age as Tianming.

Tianming smiled. "Deputy General Sun is a fourth-level Sky Saint. I'm naturally happy that you're willing to spar with me. But there's something you're wrong about."

"Oh? What do you mean?" A cold light flickered across Sun Xingyu's eyes. He didn't seem to be doing this for an ordinary spar; instead, he looked like he wanted to kill Tianming.

"Deputy General Sun, you're wrong about the fact that I'm the strongest genius in the last thousand years," said Tianming.

"You're too humble. You definitely deserve that reputation," replied Sun Xingyu.

"No. You got my words wrongly." Pointing at himself, Tianming continued, "I'm the strongest genius in the last ten thousand years!"

### **Chapter 513 - Scarlet Flame Staff**

Tianming's words left everyone in the Dark Astral Battalion stunned. They didn't cause a clamor, though, because he showed a strong confidence. On the contrary, they looked at him in a new light. As elders, they naturally had a sense of superiority in their age and experience.

But right now, Tianming's words hadn't just left an impact on Sun Xingyu, but everyone there.

"General, your confidence and pride are impressive," Sun Xingyi laughed after a brief stun. Shortly after, the other warriors of the Dark Astral Battalion laughed along.

"Please." Tianming went on the spacious stage.

"Arrogant or not, we'll know after the fight," said Bai Zijin.

"Lady Bai, don't misunderstand. I'm complimenting him when I say he's arrogant. After all, only geniuses are qualified to be arrogant," replied Sun Xingyu.

"Go up," Bai Zijin said faintly.

The surrounding atmosphere that had initially felt joyous suddenly became tense. Tianming knew this was a necessary process, if he wanted to command this battalion. In a world where strength was respected, he had to defeat his opponent with his power to subdue them.

Now that he was the Astral General, how could he get ten thousand people to hand their lives to him if he didn't have any ability? Retrieving the Grand-Orient Sword, Tianming plunged it into the ground and said, "Deputy General Sun, please enlighten me."

There was pressure coming from Tianming. In addition to the fact that he had cultivated the Imperial Will, he had a monarch's natural temperament.

“Great. Please enlighten me as well!” Sun Xingyu laughed and jumped onto the stage. When he descended, the Dark Astral Battle Stage trembled.

“Make your move,” Tianming said, summoning his lifebound beasts. They were now in a territory, and they could do whatever they wanted in the future. But only after they won over Sun Xingyu.

“Defeat this fellow, and we’ll have ten thousand lackeys! Who knows, we might even have a harem of three thousand!” Ying Huo smiled.

“Brother Chick, have you forgotten the fear of being dominated?” Meow Meow advised.

“Get lost. I didn’t fight well back then. It’s just Bai Zijin!” Ying Huo harrumphed and straightened its feathers.

“Then let’s get Big Sister Bai to bring you back?” Tianming smiled.

“No, don’t!”

“Brother Chick is chickening out.” Lan Huang’s loud voice vibrated everyone’s eardrums. Listening to Lan Huang’s words, Ying Huo nearly fainted from its anger. How could something that shameful be spoken aloud? But in everyone’s eyes, they felt that Tianming wasn’t taking Sun Xingyu seriously.

“Isn’t he a little too arrogant?”

“A little. But wasn’t he like that when he shouted the Nineshades Clan’s name in the Decimo Dao Battlefield?”

“I have no idea if it’s good or bad.” The discussions weren’t loud, but they could be heard.

“Alright now. Sun Xingyu is at the same cultivation level as Dongyang Fengchen. Back then, we won by ganging up on Dongyang Fengchen with his lifebound beast held up by the Soulfier. It’s not certain that we can win this fight. We’ll just do our best,” said Tianming.

“Just screw him up and don’t cower!” Ying Huo replied.

Roars echoed over from the two colossal lifebound beasts beside Sun Xingyu. There were two apes, covered with black and red fur. The apes had robust limbs and long fangs, and were known as Burning Starfier Apes.

Their order might be low, but they had reached maturity, unlike Ying Huo, so they had already drawn out their full potential. Working together, they wouldn’t be any weaker than Dongyang Fengchen’s Nethersea Regalfier Hydra.

Wielding the Scarlet Flame Staff with two lifebound beasts standing by his side, Sun Xingyu looked like a war god.

“I’ll be making my move now. Be careful!” Sun Xingyu called out, charging over with his lifebound beasts. The Burning Starfier Apes’ roars were ferocious. Everyone could tell that he had no intention of going easy on Tianming.

“Are we competing in volume here? Brother Turtle, do your thing!” Ying Huo flew to Lan Huang’s head.

Raising its heads, Lan Huang unleashed a deafening roar at the Burning Starfiend Apes. Its voice formed a violent storm upon being empowered by Primordial Soundwave, swallowing the Burning Starfiend Apes' roars.

"Don't run. Let's play together!" Lan Huang looked at the two apes without fear. Clearly, Lan Huang considered the apes as friends, seeing how they looked like the Soulfriend. Whenever it played with the Soulfriend, the commotion they created wasn't inferior to that of a fight.

With that, a colossal twin-headed dragon collided with the two apes. The two heads were like two miniature beasts, and the apes would make a mistake if they ignored them.

At the same time, a bolt of black lightning flashed out. A black cat charged forth with rumbling lightning, taking on the Regal Chaosfiend form and pouncing on an ape. As the Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape on its body electrocuted its enemy, the Regal Chaosfiend bit the ape's arm.

"Tough!" Meow Meow cursed. But its Myriadfiend Venomfang still managed to dig into the ape's flesh, sending poison into its system. When the poison entered, there was nothing the ape could do to stop it from spreading.

The ape waved its arm and flung Meow Meow away. When it got back to its feet, Ying Huo's attack came. The ape was confused by Ying Huo's Infernal Haze, but it let out a ferocious roar and breathed fire that formed flaming spheres that attacked the clones.

"Are you giving me a shower?" Ying Huo laughed and charged out of the ape's ability, executing Pyros Imperius with its Wings of Agni, along with the Thousand-Demise Sword.

Ying Huo's cultivation of the Invincible Sword Body might be lacking, compared to Tianming, but it still managed to complete the Thousand-Demise Sword. Its achievement even surpassed Li Shenxiao and shocked Weisheng Yunxi.

The ape was suffering from Meow Meow's poison to begin with, so it was already weakened. When Ying Huo's Wings of Agni pierced its abdomen, a bloody hole was left behind. The hole wasn't enormous, but it was deep enough to reach the ape's stomach.

The Burning Starfiend Ape screamed and backed away. Its companion was being held up by Lan Huang, while Sun Xingyu was facing Tianming and Meow Meow. No one could save it. All of a sudden, a blue chain reached over and bound it. The ape was furious and tried to escape, but as it struggled, the chains dug deeper into its flesh.

"Get up!" a roar echoed. The spectators were shocked to see the Burning Starfiend Ape being lifted off the ground and brought smashing back down. When the ape crashed to the stage like a meteor, the ground trembled. The impact from the smash had broken the ape's bones.

"Stop!" Sun Xingyi executed the Firefiend Staff Canon. He charged over to Tianming, trying to stop him from continuing his attack. But before he could even reach Tianming, a chick and cat came at him from both directions, forcing him to defend himself.

Otherwise, even if he could stop Tianming, it would be at the cost of being heavily injured by the two lifebound beasts. Ying Huo's Invincible Sword Ki could even pierce the Burning Starfiend Ape, and Sun Xingyu's physique was nothing in comparison to that.

As a result, everyone watched on as Tianming poured thousands of Invincible Sword Ki strands into the Three-Thousand Starfield. The Burning Starfiend Ape screamed, but it was tightly bound by the chain, no matter how it tried struggling. If it wanted to break free, it would have to snap the Three-Thousand Starfield.

Tianming lifted the ape once more and swung it around before smashing it on the ground again. He repeated it three times, and the final time, he smashed the entangled Burning Starfiend Ape against the other one.

The other ape was fighting Lan Huang. But just when it had managed to break through Lan Huang's Mountainsea World, it was smashed by its brother and dropped to the ground.

Tianming executed the Ninesilver Astral Art—Brilliant Stars. It increased his speed to a whole new level, bringing him before Sun Xingyi in an instant.

Ying Huo and Meow Meow were trying their best to hold Sun Xingyu back. During the fight, Meow Meow had suffered a blow, shattering its Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape. But it had also ignited the cat's ferocity.

The Three-Thousand Starfield dazzled, turning into a stream of stars. The Invincible Sword Ki and astral ki contained in it exploded.

At that moment, Sun Xingyu was facing three opponents at the same time. Among the three, the long-distance attacks from Tianming were the most lethal. In the end, he could only bite the bullet and swing his staff at Tianming's attacks.

#### **Chapter 514 - Die!**

A ferocious collision rocked the stage. The Invincible Sword Ki that broke out from the collision stabbed into Sun Xingyu's hands. He yelled out in pain and released his grip on his Scarlet Flame Staff.

After Sun Xingyu released his grip on his weapon, he couldn't really defend himself. Ying Huo and Meow Meow were just beside him; without his weapon, he could only block Meow Meow's Misty Hellthunder with his fists. But there was nothing he could do about Ying Huo's Invincible Sword Ki. Ying Huo had initially wanted to backstab Sun Xingyu, but after a second thought, it decided to go easy on him and stabbed into his waist instead.

"Argggh!!" Sun Xingyu screamed. His back was covered in blood, having taken a sword ki strand in his kidney.

"I'm sorry about that. I wanted to avoid your fatal spot, but I never thought that I would hit another fatal spot instead," Ying Huo laughed out irresponsibly.

As the chick was laughing, three bolts of lightning descended on Sun Xingyu's head, smashing him to the ground.

"Meow Meow, what the hell is wrong with you? Why'd you zap him when I was trying to apologize here?"

"I want to finish the fight quickly and sleep. I'm exhausted," Meow Meow said listlessly. Their conversation left the spectators dumbfounded and shocked. They had no idea if they should laugh or cry.

There was no doubt that Tianming's lifebound beasts were strong, despite their low cultivation. Furthermore, they were even using unique skills! Sun Xingyu's eyes had already rolled back in his head from the lightning strikes, and one of his apes was out of the fight.

The remaining ape got besieged by Tianming, Lan Huang, and Ying Huo. The Burning Starfiend Ape immediately clamped its legs together and started running away. It had admitted defeat.

"I admit defeat!" Sun Xingyu said with a hoarse voice as he got up to his feet, his face terrifyingly pale. But he only looked to be in a terrible state. Tianming hadn't tried to seriously injure him, and the worst injury to heal would be the Myriadfiend Venom that one of the apes was suffering from.

But the Myriadfiend Venom could be treated with Meow Meow's pee. So anyone who refused to drink Meow Meow's pee would be giving up on their life.

As a result, Meow Meow ran over to the ape and peed in its mouth before running off. Before it returned to Tianming, Meow Meow had already closed its eyes. In a half-asleep state, Meow Meow collapsed to the ground and slid to Tianming across the floor. The ten thousand people who were looking at Meow Meow's performance couldn't help shedding a bead of cold sweat.

"How embarrassing!" Ying Huo said and covered its face.

"Come and play!" On the other hand, Lan Huang turned to the uninjured ape. The scene looked joyful, but Sun Xingyu wasn't feeling happy at all. He didn't know what to say as he stood blankly before Tianming. But at that moment, Tianming's image had changed within everyone's mind.

"Deputy General Sun is sixty this year, and he's slightly weaker than Dongyang Fengchen. Since the general defeated him, that means that he could also defeat Dongyang Fengchen!"

"So you're saying there's a high possibility that the general killed the crown prince!"

"Does anyone still feel that the general was boasting?"

"It would be arrogant if someone else said that. But coming from general, I believe it!" With several chiliarchs leading the conversation, the tension in the surroundings eased up.

At that moment, Deputy General Liu Yuyi spoke out, "General Li is already so capable at the age of twenty. He's even more heaven-defying than his father, Li Muiyang. Like father, like son. I'm fully convinced. In the future, I'll follow his orders."

"It's our honor that he has become our general," said the other deputy, Chen Fang. With the two of them speaking up, they instantly directed the conversation to Tianming's benefit.

When Bai Zijin heard that, she smiled. She stood beside the two of them and said, "The two of you are still tactful. Astral General is just the beginning for Tianming. You guys understand?"

"Please rest assured, Lady Bai. At least I, Chen Fang, swear to follow him," said Chen Fang.

“Me too.”

“Alright.” That was what Bai Zijin wanted. Tianming had gained complete control of the Dark Astral Battalion after this battle. Strength was the easiest method to conquer others. At that moment, even though everyone in the Dark Astral Battalion was older than him, they greeted him with awe.

Everyone then turned their attention to Sun Xingyu. He was the one who had challenged Tianming earlier, so they were curious what he would say. With a pale face, Sun Xingyu walked to Tianming and knelt, “Your strength has won me over, general. I have a straightforward and competitive personality, please don’t hold it against me. After that fight, I’m only filled with admiration for your strength. In the future...”

Sun Xingyu was speaking with his head lowered. But Tianming suddenly noticed changes in Sun Xingyu’s eyes. The admiration in his eyes suddenly turned vicious.

“Watch out!” Ying Huo was just on Tianming’s shoulder. In that instant, it had a bad premonition and immediately flew forth and unleashed the Sixpath Infernal Lotus at Sun Xingyu. But right before that, a fiery ancient book appeared in Sun Xingyu’s hand.

“Go to hell!!” Sun Xingyu roared and dripped his blood on the heavenly pattern tome. Judging from the heavenly pattern tome, it seemed to be a three star tome.

Tianming’s face changed instantly. The first thing he did was grab Ying Huo and retreat. The next moment, flames began flaring from the tome, forming a lump of black flames.

The black flame was clearly a spirit hazard sealed within the tome. In addition to the profundities of heavenly patterns, spirit hazards could instantly unleash lethal force. Only a three star heavenly pattern tome could seal a spirit hazard. That meant that the value of the tome was at least two hundred thousand saint crystals.

Frankly speaking, there was no way Sun Xingyu could afford it. So where did he get a three star heavenly pattern tome? Why did he want to kill Tianming? But that wasn’t important right now—the important thing was for him to survive the ordeal!

The black flames flew toward Tianming, but fortunately, Ying Huo had reacted quickly by breathing out the Sixpath Infernal Lotus, detonating it ahead of time. But even so, the two of them were still caught within the explosion.

“Holy shit! It’s hot!” Ying Huo turned into a black chicken immediately, along with Tianming. The two were blown dozens of meters out.

“Haha! Exchanging my life for the life of a genius. It’s totally worth it!” Sun Xingyu laughed.

Bai Zijin was stunned. She had never expected this would take place. But by the time she reacted, Tianming and Ying Huo were already burnt black.

“That’s the three star heavenly pattern tome, the Burrowing Flame Tome, containing the Bone Burrowing Flame. It’s a flame that can quickly burn bones and burrow into the heart. Is Deputy General Sun insane?”

“Why’d he do that?”

“Wait, where’d he get the saint crystals to buy something like that?”

“He’s a spy from Autarch Yun!” someone yelled out.

At that moment, everyone had figured it out. They immediately went over to surround Sun Xingyu, but it was already too late. From Sun Xingyu’s laughter, everyone could tell that Tianming and Ying Huo were probably dead from the flames. After all, it was a three star heavenly pattern tome. In an instant, everyone was panicking.

“Hurry, look for the astral king!”

“Look for the palace lord, hall master, and hall kings!”

“Holy shit!”

Many people immediately rushed out, and even more came to surround Sun Xingyu. As for Tianming, there was nothing they could do about it. After all, it was a three star heavenly pattern tome.

“It’ll be a great loss if the general dies!”

“Such a shame....”

“Many geniuses have died before they could grow up since ancient times. But I never expected to witness one before my eyes.”

In contrast to Sun Xingyu’s joy, they were basking in sorrow.

“Li Tianming, you’re just a brat with some capability. You’re still too tender to mess with us. Dongyang Fengchen couldn’t kill you, but I did it easily! Genius? Geniuses who can’t grow up to be masters are just garbage! Yet, you want to go against the Theocrats?” Sun Xingyu smiled sinisterly. He was deathsworn, so he wasn’t afraid of death.

“You make sense,” a cold voice rang out from the black flames. Shortly after, a young man and little chick walked out from the flames, leaving everyone dumbfounded.

Part of their skin had turned black, especially Tianming, whose hair had been burned black. But aside from that, they didn’t seem injured at all and there weren’t any changes in their expression.

“General, are you alright?” Everyone rejoiced when they saw that Tianming was fine.

Right at that moment, a gentle voice called out and Tianming found himself in a soft embrace. He could only see white skin before his eyes, and smell a sweet fragrance.

“It’s good that you’re fine!” Bai Zijin choked on her tears. She started examining Tianming all over, which made him embarrassed.

There were three reasons he hadn’t fallen for it. First, Ying Huo had detonated the threat beforehand, so they weren’t in the center of the flames. Secondly, Ying Huo took most of them. And lastly, they both possess the Aeternal Infernal Physique. They had absorbed too many flame-type spirit hazards recently, so the Bone Burrowing Flames could only pose a limited threat to them.

“Big Sister Bai, I’m getting you dirty,” said Tianming.



When Bai Zijin lowered her head, she saw her chest covered in a black smear. She replied, "It's fine. As long as you're alright."

"Okay then. Let's do it once more," said Tianming.

"Me too! Me too!" Ying Huo pounced over.

"You two...." Bai Zijin didn't know whether to laugh or cry when she looked at them. The two had just undergone a life-or-death trial, so what were they trying to pull now?

### **Chapter 515 - Get Out Of The Way, I'm Going To Kill**

Tianming was just joking. What needed dealing with was Sun Xingyu. Staring blankly, Sun Xingyu stumbled three steps backward, his savage smile solidified on his face. There was despair in his eyes.

"You hid yourself well. For so many years, no one realized that you work for Dongyang Yun." Tianming's gaze turned cold.

"How could you still be alive?!" Sun Xingyu's eyes widened.

"Sorry to disappoint you. Get out of the way, I'm going to kill!" shouted Tianming.

The Dark Astral Battalion soldiers quickly dispersed.

"Tianming, shouldn't you let the palace lord handle this? How's your injury?" asked Bai Zijin.

"I'm fine." Turning to Bai Zijin, Tianming's stern eyes softened into a smile. Then he walked toward Sun Xingyu.

"Just make sure he's alive for questioning," said Bai Zijin.

"Alright."

Tianming pulled out Meow Meow, who had returned to sleep in his lifebound space.

"Damn, were you disfigured? You're so ugly!" cried Meow Meow.

Having just closed its eyes, the first thing Meow Meow saw was such a thrilling scene. Throwing it on the ground, Tianming looked at Sun Xingyu, eyes blazing, then turned to the men of the Dark Astral Battalion.

"I know that some of you are risking your lives for Dongyang Yun, just like this man! But it doesn't matter, Dongyang Yun will die sooner or later, and I'll weed you out, one by one. Sun Xingyu is the first. We'll see what happens next."

With that, he drew out the Grand-Orient Sword and attacked with his three lifebound beasts.

On the other end, Ye Lingfeng and the Soulfieud had already slaughtered a Burning Starfied Ape before Tianming could even speak. The heads of the Soulfieud divided the soul of the Burning Starfied Ape into three parts, swallowed them, then roared contentedly.

"There's one more here!" Man and beast attacked at once.

Not even Dongyang Fengchen could stop his attack, let alone Sun Xingyu. After three consecutive moves, Sun Xingyu was defeated once again.

"How daring of the dao palace to collude with the enemy and commit treason. It will definitely be destroyed! Li Tianming, you must die!" roared Sun Xingyu.

Just as the words fell from his lips, Tianming's sword pierced his mouth.

"Agh!" Sun Xingyu's eyes widened at the moment of his death.

"Will you shut up?"

When Tianming withdrew the Grand-Orient Sword, Sun Xingyu's limp body fell softly to the ground. Tianming gave the corpse a kick.

The Soulfier immediately caught it. Since it didn't feed on flesh and blood, it picked out the soul, devoured it in one bite, then threw the corpse aside.

"Dongyang Yun murdered the previous Autarch. He's a treasonous rebel! The ninth prince, Jiang Ling—whom the Dao Palace supports—is the true Primeval Autarch. If you insist on being Dongyang Yun's spy, you can forget about keeping your soul! "

Tianming swept his gaze across his battalion. This was merely temporary; their goal was the entire Theocracy.

"The General is mighty!!" they shouted passionately.

This was a true display of might that penetrated the hearts of the masses. These seniors had truly been convinced. The Dark Astral Battalion stood united.

"Ying Huo, thanks for that earlier!" shouted Tianming.

In a moment of desperation, its first reaction was to stand in front of Tianming, an act that was worth a thousand words.

"You weakling. Did that move you? What's the matter, want to devote yourself to me?" Ying Huo smiled.

"I'm afraid you wouldn't be able to handle it," laughed Tianming.

"Damn... you guys have no restraint!" Ying Huo remained at a respectful distance.

Although it had been an unexpected incident, the threat wasn't too great. For the time being, they cut a sorry figure, but fortunately, they had the Prime Tower so recovery would be quick.

...

The remaining Burning Starfiend Ape was bound with Tianming's Three-Thousand Starfield. The dao palace could investigate from this point and conduct an internal cleanup. Soon after, Weisheng Yunxi, Ye Yi, Bai Mo, and Bai Zijun all came.

"Are you alright?" asked Weisheng Yunxi.

"Yes."

"How coincidental. The Dark Astral Battalion I arranged for you had one of Dongyang Yun's sacrificial soldiers. Fortunately, you're alright," sighed Weisheng Yunxi.

"Are there many of them?"

"There's quite a few of them, but their origins are rather vague so they don't usually make it to Astral General. Due to that, Sun Xingyu was stuck in the position of deputy general for several years. The dao palace can only take in talents from all over, so it's hard to avoid this kind of thing," said Weisheng Yunxi.

"That's not a problem, as long as our own men are the Astral Generals," said Tianming.

Weisheng Yunxi nodded.

"Since Sun Xingyu dared to take action, Autarch Yun must've given the order to avenge Dongyang Fengchen. Based on that alone, we can send troops to support Jiang Ling," said Bai Mo.

"Well, let's inform Jiang Ling so he's ready. On the first day of the next month, when the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation is exhausted, the dao palace will attack the Imperial City with him!" Weisheng Yunxi declared.

Bai Mo nodded. He was in charge of contacting Jiang Ling and left immediately.

We're going to war on the first day of the next month? That's not very far off, Tianming thought.

He knew that the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation in the Imperial City was a six star heavenly pattern formation, one level above the Bloodbane Formation and second only to the seven star Infernal Soul Formation. It was a very terrifying defensive formation that had been reinforced by generations of Theocrat martyrs and passed down to this day.

On the day of the fireworks festival, Jiang Ling's goal was to seize the formation, but he had ultimately failed. After that, the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation remained active. The dao palace wanted to attack by surprise, but there were too many spies on both sides. Any movement in the Divine Capital was no secret. Most of the time, they could only confront each other head-on.

The Sun-Moon Imperial Formation absorbed the power of the sun during the day, and the power of the moon at night. The power of the sun was very stable, while the power of the moon was strongest during the full moon on the fifteenth of each month, and weakest at the beginning of each month. On that night, when the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation was at its weakest, it would drop to a five star formation.

"Tianming, we must be careful on the road between life and death. In war, there's no trusting those who aren't wholehearted. We must guard against them. After all, we checked for heavenly pattern tomes before you entered the tomb, yet you faced deadly battles," said Weisheng Yunxi.

"Palace Lord, I understand." Tianming paused, then asked, "Palace Lord, can we overcome the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation and completely destroy Autarch Yun's descendants when we go to battle next month?"

"Perhaps, perhaps not. Although the dao palace will participate in the war, we need to limit the number of casualties. We can't sacrifice too much. It's best to slowly grind our opponents to death. Although Dongyang Yun has lost hundreds of thousands of troops since the internal strife began, he still has eight hundred thousand people with him, including the Saint Martial Manor, Dazzling Pavilion, and the Jiang clan. Defeating them won't be easy. After all, the battlefield isn't a duel of the martial dao. Sometimes, there's safety in numbers," said Weisheng Yunxi.

"What about Jiang Ling?"

"He's supported by some members of the Jiang clan, the ancient clans, and the nine major sects. He has around six hundred thousand elite troops," Weisheng Yunxi replied.

"Even after their internal strife, they still have so many powerhouses. The Theocrats can really give birth," sighed Tianming.

"That's true."

The Decimo Dao Palace had a million-strong army in the Dark Hall. If their opponent wasn't fighting internally and split into two major factions, they would also have more than a million troops. In contrast, the Dark Hall seemed lacking.

"A lean camel is bigger than a horse. It'll take some time to defeat the brothers. Many will be sacrificed, but... there's no other way," said Weisheng Yunxi.

"Yes!" said Tianming.

"Without the Cyclic Mirror, the Theocrats have recently exercised a little restraint. You've never seen them use the Cyclic Mirror to absorb the cultivation and souls of mortals."

"Retribution is coming," said Tianming.

...

Before the Decimo Dao Palace went to war, the battle in the Divine Capital grew more intense. There was even a dark undercurrent surging within the dao palace.

After taking control of the Dark Astral Battalion, Tianming transferred everything in Courtyard One to the Astral General's official residence. Before leaving, he had to say goodbye to Zhou Yuanyuan.

"How unpredictable the world is. Who would've thought that the Romance River would be affected by the fires of war before I could even take you there? Those wonderful pavilions are now in ruins, and many beauties have died. What a pity! I can't take it, I really can't! The Divine Capital is currently in ruins. If this continues, even the ruins will be gone, leaving only scorched earth behind," Zhou Yuanyuan sighed.

"Don't worry. You'll see the day when the Divine Capital is rebuilt," said Tianming.

"I hope Jiang Ling wins the war. After all, the dao palace supports him," said Zhou Yuanyuan.

"I hope so." Patting him on the shoulder, Tianming left.

...

The Dark Astral Battalion, the Astral General's official residence.

Tianming, Feiling, Ye Lingfeng, and Li Qingyu had all moved here. Lan Huang and the Soulfier had completely let themselves go on the broad grounds, fighting every day and shaking the earth. Lan Huang's "innocent" laughter alone was ear-splitting.

In front of the mirror—

"It's all good now," Feiling said, looking at the white-haired man in the mirror.

"With the Prime Tower, my hair grows fast." Tianming ran his fingers through his hair.

"Big Brother, will the Dark Astral Battalion participate in the attack of the Imperial City next month?" Feiling asked, slightly worried.

"I don't know. We'll do as we're ordered. Hall Master Ye Yi says everything will be carried out according to plan—I'm no special case," said Tianming.

"How about I leave the innate godchild here? When the time comes, I'll attach my spirit to you. You're now an eighth-level earth saint who's able to defeat a fourth-level sky saint. With Spiritual Attachment, it'll be easier for you to deal with a fourth-level sky saint, perhaps even a fifth-level one. Would a fifth-level sky saint be considered one of the top experts in the Divine Capital?" she asked.

"Fifth-level Sky Saints are considered strong. Those stronger than that—for example Astral King Bai Zijun and Hall King Bai Zifeng—are sixth-level Sky Saints. Aside from them, Autarch Yun's eldest son, Dongyang Fen, as well as Exalted Jingyue and Exalted Lingxing of the Ancient Qilin Clan, are also at the sixth level. They're considered top powerhouses of the Divine Capital."

Tianming had inquired about their strength.

"Anyone else? What about powerhouses at seventh, eighth, and ninth-level Sky Saint?" asked Feiling.

For the Sky Saint powerhouses, there was a big gap in strength between every level, and every breakthrough might take them a decade or more. Those seniors had basically reached their cultivation limits. It was almost impossible to progress after the age of a hundred. At that age, just maintaining their cultivation level was considered good.

"The original Hall Kings of the Dao Palace are basically at seventh-level Sky Saint or higher. For example, Jiang Xiao, Jiang Jianying, and Wei Ji, the three Hall Kings Life Hall, the South Hall, and the Sky Hall, as well as the Grand Sky General, Zhao Shenhong, and the exalted Chongyang of the Ancient Qilin Clan. The Death Hall King, Jiang An, the Grand Divine Marshal, Huang Chonghuan, and Autarch Yun are slightly stronger and already eighth-level Sky Saints."

"Then what about Bai Mo and Ye Yi?" Feiling asked curiously.

"They're the pillars of the dao palace, both of them ninth-level Sky Saint powerhouses, comparable to Dongyang Yun and Jiang Ling. Senior Bai Mo and Jiang Ling have just reached ninth-level Sky Saint, while Dongyang Yun and Senior Ye Yi are the strongest under Empyrean Saint," said Tianming.

"They're so powerful!" Feiling was a little surprised.

"That's right. After all, Hall King is just a position, and doesn't necessarily represent their strength. Hall King Bai Mo is now the master of the school."

The newly appointed Hall Kings were only sixth-level Sky Saints, which was a far cry from Bai Mo.

"Big Brother, you haven't answered my question yet. Can I follow you into the battlefield?" asked Feiling.

"Alright. If I say no, you're going to be all naggy again."

"I'm worried about you."

"Just as long as your innate godchild physique doesn't stink!"

"Nonsense!"

"How's your progress so far? "

"I'm at eighth-level Unity, but my progress has slowed down. Cultivation is really difficult, " she sighed.

"You mustn't ease up."

"I got it."

#### **Chapter 516 - The Night Before The Battle**

What happened with Sun Xingyu had frightened Feiling. During moments when she thought about Tianming going to war once more, she was often uneasy, which Tianming could tell. Rather than let her worry at home, it would be better to bring her along. After all, she would be of great help to him.

"Ling'er, I'd like to try to break through to ninth-level Earth Saint before next month. That way, it's unlikely I'll lose my life, especially with your help." Tianming's eyes burned with passion.

"Alright. I'll work hard with you," said Feiling.

"Yes. Right now, I must give you an in-depth examination of your cultivation!" Tianming pulled her into his arms.

"Not bad, it's become bigger," Tianming said in surprise.

"What are you talking about?" Feiling blushed.

"Your spirit source, of course. What else can it be? "

"Get your hands off me! "

...

The training room in the Astral General's residence was huge, and had everything one would need.

I wonder how my father is now. Tianming thought to himself.

There was no news of Li Muyang.

"Now that the Ancient Qilin Clan has taken refuge in Jiang Ling, they're equivalent to an ally. When we meet next time, I'll ask the three exalted ones. I wonder if there's anyone in the imperial family who knows what happened more than forty years ago." Tianming was slightly distracted, although his attention was still focused on the Grand-Orient Sword as he swept his gaze over it with a completely new set of eyes.

"The palace lord said that we mustn't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. What the Theocrats did was insane. Only when all beings are strong can the autarch be strong. Such an imperial will should be the correct path, shouldn't it?"

During this period of time, the chaos in the Divine Capital had made him realize many things. Entire streets had been destroyed, and the prosperous Divine Capital had disappeared in the blink of an eye, proving the illusory nature of the world. Up until now, this country had possessed no dao and no true ruler.

The real imperial dao should create a flourishing nation. And what is that? Perhaps the Divine Capital the palace lord spoke of is the true golden age. Strong common folk and all beings flourishing. This is the truth I seek. Tianming was very clear.

In this world, there were many selfish people who based everything around themselves. They killed entire families, claiming the decisive act of murder as their dao. But in fact, they were murderous madmen on the wrong path.

"Being a good person isn't shameful."

Being a good man, as well as having the means to protect his loved ones—that was his Imperial Will. With the right path, he could be fierce, defeat others, and sacrifice. However, he must also uphold righteousness and have control of the situation. In that way, he wouldn't just be a good man, but also a prosperous and benevolent ruler.

What sort of person should I be? This was very important. A man's will and temperament should be eternally harmonious.

"Uncle Yang says that we must abide by morals and have a clear conscience. Those are the fundamentals. I wonder how Uncle Yang and Mother's travels are going. If they return to Ignispolis, Godfather will definitely take them to the Grand-Orient Sect as soon as possible. Godfather's one-year period is almost up and he'll soon be in the Divine Capital."

Amidst the dark, turbulent tide, he contemplated the will of the Grand-Orient Sword, along with many other things. When he combined the heavenly patterns on both the gold and black gates, he finally reached the peak of Earth Saint.

"Finally, ninth-level Earth Saint."

This was Yuwen Taiji's cultivation level. When Yuwen Taiji had seized the Grand-Orient Sword from him, Tianming had never expected that, a short one year later, he would catch up to his cultivation. At the time, he was still worried he wouldn't be able to reach it in three years! Upon reaching the peak of Earth Saint, Tianming and the three lifebound beasts' saint ki skyrocketed like never before.

"In the Divine Capital, there are fewer and fewer people who can kill me, especially when Ling'er's spirit is attached to me." Tianming narrowed his eyes.

"Next up, we'll have to rely on the gold heavenly patterns on the third gate of the Grand-Orient Sword to reach Sky Saint stage. A breakthrough in stage is fundamentally different from a breakthrough in level—this time, it requires the substantial growth of Heavenly Will, as well as a transformation of the saint ki in the body. The palace lord is right. One might transform their saint ki while cultivating in seclusion, but the growth of Heavenly Will requires forming a strong will and realizing the heavenly laws that govern the mortal world. Perhaps the battle in the Divine Capital will be my opportunity!"

He had risen rapidly; however, Tianming wanted to reach a level that even the Theocrats couldn't touch.

"The people of my generation should walk the dao on behalf of heaven and create our own imperial dao."

Fire raged in his eyes.

"The Nineshades Clan has sinned. Thus, I shall carry on the will of the martyrs. Together with the elders and our friends, we'll overthrow the Theocrats and create a prosperous world!"

Tianming rose to his feet and approached the sword ki pool. It was already the end of the month. Soon, it would be the first day of the new month.

...

When that day arrived, Tianming had already reached three thousand strands of sword ki. With that breakthrough, his efficiency in absorbing the strands had crazily increased. Unfortunately, the torture hadn't decreased at all.

"If this continues, I'll be able to complete the Myriad-Demise Sword within three months. The palace lord has mentioned many times just how much she looks forward to witnessing its power."

Tianming was awaiting that day with anticipation as well.

"Additionally, I've mastered the second stage of the Ninesilver Astral Art, Chaos Galaxy. With Ling'er, would I be able to contend with Hall King Bai Zifeng and Astral King Bai Zijun? At least, I won't be defeated."

Tianming realized that he had indeed climbed to the heights of the Divine Capital's top powerhouses.

"Today is the first day of the new month."

Since it was still daytime, Tianming was waiting for Bai Zijun's military orders. Feiling's body lay on the bed, with Li Qingyu there as guardian; there would be no problems. She immediately attached her spirit to Tianming. Having gone without Spiritual Attachment for some time, he felt the explosive power in his body even more clearly.

"Ling'er, you're such a great beauty it's easy to get excited with you attached to my body. I feel as if I've had a shot of chicken blood," Tianming sighed.



"What chicken blood? Why do you need a shot of chicken blood? How did we provoke you?" shouted Ying Huo.

"Hurry up, Chicken Bro. Give us some blood. I'd like a shot as well," Lan Huang said excitedly.

"You guys set off first. I'm going to take a nap. "

Tianming seemed unaffected by all the noise. Together with Ye Lingfeng and the Soulfierd, he walked out of the Astral General's residence.

"Feng, did you advance?" asked Tianming.

"Yes, I've just broken through to second-level Sky Saint," he replied.

"With the inheritance of the Primordial Demonlord, your cultivation speed has increased once again," Tianming said.

"Yes, I've also had help from the Soulfierd," he added.

"That's amazing! I name you the number two genius in the Theocracy throughout the last hundred thousand years." Tianming smiled.

It was nothing short of a miracle that Ye Lingfeng could catch up to him, let alone surpass him as he had. The rest had fallen behind a long time ago. With the addition of the Soulfierd, Ye Lingfeng's combat power had greatly increased.

"Do you think you can defeat a fourth-level sky saint?" asked Tianming.

"I can give it a try."

"When we go to war tonight, stay by my side. We'll kill the enemy together," Tianming said.

"Alright, big brother!"

Tianming was well aware that the combined lethality of the two of them was stronger than either of them alone.

With that, they arrived at the Dark Astral Battle Stage.

"Assemble!"

At his order, ten thousand Saint stage powerhouses gathered and appeared before Li Tianming in a neat line.

"Tonight we march to fight the traitors! This is a glorious event, and today's battle is bound to be recorded in history. Brothers, quietly await the order. When the time comes, I'll take the lead and join you in tearing our enemy to pieces," said Tianming.

"Yes!" shouted the soldiers.

It seemed Tianming had completely conquered them.

In the blink of an eye, the night approached.

"It may rain tonight. The clouds are dark and heavy, and the moonlight is dim. The power of the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation will fall to its weakest—the heavens are on our side." Tianming looked up to the sky.

"Sir, did the Astral King arrange for our participation?" asked Chen Fang.

He probably assumed that Tianming was there for the fame, but if he were to enter the frontlines, he might not join the Dark Astral Battalion.

"Yes, I've been ordered to lead with the Skycore Legion tonight," said Tianming.

His answer surprised Chen Fang. Were they going to push such a genius to the front lines, instead of protecting him? Had they gone mad?

"Chen Fang, only those who emerge victorious from a life and death situation are qualified to stand in the highest position. I'm not afraid of taking risks, because battle is the meaning of my cultivation," Tianming said solemnly.

"Sir, you are truly admirable! I pledge my life to you!" said Chen Fang.

"We pledge our lives to you!" all ten thousand of them shouted.

"Very well. May the Dark Astral Battalion's name be heard all across the nation!"

"Yes!"

The sound of breathing was audible as they awaited their orders.

"Skycore Legion, assemble!" From the direction of the Skycore Battle Stage came Bai Zijun's voice.

"Follow me!"

Jumping down from the platform, Tianming marched out with the Dark Astral Battalion, their movements shaking the earth. He wore Dark Astral Armor today, his entire body shrouded in darkness and his long white hair fluttering under his helmet. He was every bit strong and unyielding. Even Feiling and Li Qingyu had commented on how handsome he looked when he was putting on his armor. Of course, Ye Lingfeng looked just as good, being his deputy. This Dark Astral Armor suited him well. He stood beside Tianming like a bloody-eyed killer.

All hundred thousand troops of the Skycore Legion marched toward Bai Zijun.

"Hear my order. We will set off immediately and our goal is the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation, Imperial City, and the Grand Sky Gate."

Night had descended, and sure enough, rain began to pitter-patter. The entire sky was plunged into complete darkness, accompanied by the vague sound of wind and thunder. It seemed that the rain would only get heavier.

As the storm raged, the Seven Astral Legions of the Decimo Dao Palace arrived at the Grand Sky Gate.

**Chapter 517 - The Biggest Joke in A Hundred Thousand Years**

The Seven Astral Legions of the Dark Hall had all shown up, demonstrating their determination to assist Jiang Ling to the throne. The Decimo Dao Palace was protected by the Evil Suppression Formation, which meant defense wasn't an issue.

Under the curtain of rain, a million-strong army and more than a million lifebound beasts charged past the empty Divine Capital, which had been destroyed beyond recognition. Most of the citizens had fled, while those remaining had nowhere to go. They could only cower and hope the war wouldn't affect them.

One by one, the gigantic beasts stomped through the ruins. Tianming stood on Lan Huang's back. Arguably the largest beast in the Dark Astral Battalion, it was very conspicuous. It opened up the road in front, and wherever it went, the ground rumbled and the dust flew. Ying Huo and Meow Meow lay atop Lan Huang's two dragon heads. Meow Meow was still napping, making use of every second to catch up on his sleep. It could even sleep peacefully despite the racket caused by Lan Huang's movement.

"We're here!"

Tianming looked up. In the dark night, a six-hundred-thousand-strong army and more than six hundred thousand lifebound beasts had gathered outside the Grand Sky Gate. They gathered together, majestic and imposing as they waited for the arrival of the dao palace's Seven Astral Legions!

Through the smoke and dust, the Seven Astral Legions charged forth, the impact causing the ground beneath Jiang Ling's army to tremble and making their lifebound beasts very uneasy.

"Stop!" At Ye Yi's order, the Seven Astral Legions stopped before the Grand Sky Gate.

With a wave of Tianming's hand, all ten thousand of the Dark Astral Battalion behind him came to a stop without so much as a word, demonstrating strict discipline.

The two armies faced each other head-on.

"Even though they're an allied army and Jiang Ling is the master, he's actually weaker than the Dao Palace. The side with the initiative is actually very important, since it affects morale," said Tianming.

"It makes sense. Although the dao palace is here to help, they're not necessarily inferior. With a higher number, the entire army is able to advance and retreat freely, and won't be suppressed by the majesty of the Theocrats," said Deputy General Chen Fang.

Looking toward the Imperial City, Tianming could vaguely make out the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation. It was rather dim; under the curtain of rain, the six-star formation couldn't exert its true power.

Night had just fallen. With the increase in rainfall, the world would grow darker. Coupled with lightning and thunder, the power of the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation would be even weaker in an hour. That was when the two armies would launch their attack. Before that, there might be some contest between the Seven Astral Legions and Jiang Ling's army.

Both Tianming and Ye Yi knew how daring the dao palace's real goal was. Jiang Ling was their prey. Due to that, any fight between the Seven Astral Legions and Jiang Ling seemed real. The dao palace was the strongest faction, now. There was no way they would cower before Jiang Ling.

This was the reason why the dao palace's million-strong army had charged straight for Jiang Ling's troops and had them breaking out in cold sweat as if they were faced with a majestic enemy.

"Greetings, Ninth Prince. I am the Dark Hall Master of the Dao Palace, Ye Yi, who leads the Dark Hall warriors in your support to defeat the traitor Dongyang Yun!" Ye Yi's voice shook the sky and earth, even overshadowing the thunder. He sat on the Evernight Eagle, flying through the air. After speaking, he descended to the ground.

"It's admirable that the dao palace understands righteousness and considers for the common people. I'm grateful for the Dao Palace's support. Once we remove the traitor, Dongyang Yun, who murdered the previous Autarch, the world will be peaceful once more. All beings shall remember the contribution of the Decimo Dao Palace."

The speaker wore a golden robe, his black hair bundled on his back. He had a short beard, handsome features, and a slender body. With one hand behind him and a faint smile on his face, he appeared very elegant. However, there was no lack of an imperial aura in those fiery, deep eyes.

He was Jiang Ling, the Ninth Prince. His temperament was completely different from Dongyang Yun, who was domineering, strong, impatient, and irritable. Contrary to that, Jiang Ling was upright. At first glance, he had the demeanor of a benevolent ruler that was consistent with everyone's expectations.

Such a man was truly unfathomable.

Beside Jiang Ling were many that were familiar to Tianming. Among the ancient clans, Patriarch Wei Ji of the Ancient Greedwolf Clan had originally been the West Hall King of the Dao Palace. There were also the seven exalted ones of the Ancient Qilin Clan—Chong Yang, Jing Yue, Xiao Xing, Mo Yu, and the rest.

The Ancient Qilin Clan had sent at least a hundred thousand descendants that could fight, like the Qilin King of the Ink Qilin Branch, Qin Dingtian. Tianming hadn't forgotten how he had pulled his hair.

There were more than a dozen ancient clans in total, but the Greedwolves, Taotie, Bifang, and Qilin were the largest ancient clans. The Ancient Qilin Clan was once the number one ancient clan, but now ranked fourth.

On the side of the Decimo Dao Palace, Tianming joined the ranks of the experts—the seven Astral Kings and a hundred Astral Generals headed by Ye Yi.

"Ye Yi, we originally decided to start an hour from now. But judging by the current weather conditions, we plan to begin half an hour earlier," said Jiang Ling after a bout of pleasantries.

"That's not possible. Let's follow the original plan. Our people have just arrived and we still need some time to observe the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation," countered Ye Yi.

Jiang Ling wanted to show his authority in this joint attack. But obviously, the dao palace wouldn't give him the honor.

"There are so many people who would take a mile when you give them an inch. If we compromise on this matter, they'll make other demands. For example, getting the dao palace to take the lead and send ourselves to death's door. Obviously, this is another contest between the Dao Palace and Jiang Ling," Tianming said.

"I think Jiang Ling has his guard up against the Dao Palace. Looks like we'll be scheming against each other. However, the dao palace does have an advantage, and that's our overall strength. Additionally, the palace lord has a card up her sleeve," said Feiling.

"That's right."

Their conjectures were right, after all. Jiang Ling didn't argue after Ye Yi's refusal. It was the people under him who had ugly expressions on their faces. After all, on the surface, members of the dao palace were subjects of the imperial family and required to show respect.

"Father, the dao palace has their noses in the sky. Perhaps they'll always be this arrogant and bold, even after you remove Dongyang Yun and become autarch."

The speaker was Jiang Ling's seventh child, Jiang Liuting. Dressed in red, she was magnificent, as beautiful as a peony, with noble features. Under that red dress, her figure was divine. Her enchanting curves and every move attracted the eyes of many men. However, due to her dignified status and imposing aura, none dared to approach her.

"We have to face reality. And the reality is that the Dao Palace is strong. For a period of time in the future, they may continue showing such arrogance before the imperial family. But it doesn't matter. After this storm, our family will grow stronger. The day will come when they bow their heads to us once again," whispered Jiang Ling.

"Will they decide to deal with us once Dongyang Yun is gone?" asked Jiang Liuting.

"This isn't a question you should ask." Jiang Ling glared at her.

"I understand. You must have your own plans, Father," said Jiang Liuting.

An hour was very short, but at that moment, it seemed very long. With the lifebound beasts of both armies roaring at each other, tensions escalated.

At that moment, people from the Ancient Qilin Clan laid eyes on Tianming, who stood amid the forces of the Dao Palace. Exalted Chong Yang walked up to Jiang Ling and whispered into his ears, and the latter nodded.

"Li Tianming?" Jiang Liuting heard the name.

"So many Theocrats have died at his hands. Although they were all descendants of Dongyang Yun, we all know what he said on the Decimo Dao Battlefield. Moreover, he's Li Muyang's son. The dao palace clearly has little respect for us, to actually take him in," sneered Jiang Liuting.

"What I'm curious about is the fact that they've sent him to the battlefield. Aren't they afraid that he'll die?" Jiang Ling frowned.

"I heard that he killed Dongyang Fengchen some time ago, defeating a fourth-level sky saint. He's supposedly the number one genius in a hundred thousand years. How arrogant. If he dies on the battlefield today, it'd be the biggest joke in a hundred thousand years," said Jiang Liuting.

"How careless of the dao palace. On the battlefield of life and death, even an Astral King may perish, let alone a young man that carries with him numerous treasures and has provoked the hatred of the imperial family," said Jiang Ling.

"Father, the people of the dao palace are just too much! Should I take the opportunity to suppress them? That way, we can restrain them on the battlefield," said Jiang Liuting.

"She's right."

"Do these people really think the imperial family is at a dead end?"

Jiang Ling's other children were unhappy.

"We brought Li Tianming to the Divine Capital."

"When he first arrived, he was merely at eighth or ninth-level Heavenly Will. But now he can defeat a fourth-level sky saint. His progress is simply heaven-defying."

"God knows when he managed to catch up with us elders," several exalted ones of the Ancient Qilin Clan said helplessly.

"The dao palace actually has such a strong disciple. We must kill him if the opportunity arises. Perhaps tonight will be our chance," said Jiang Liuting.

"Not tonight. There must be people protecting him while he practices. But if the scene goes out of control, we may have a chance," said Wei Ji, patriarch of the Ancient Greedwolf Clan.

"It sounds so mysterious. I don't believe it. How strong can a twenty-year-old be?" Jiang Liuting curled her lips.

Folding her arms, she stared at Tianming with a hint of tyranny.

"Sister, would you like to give it a try now? Didn't you just say you'd like to suppress the dao palace? Since they hold Li Tianming up high, all you have to do is beat him and figure out his weaknesses on behalf of Dongyang Yun's men. When he enters the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation, it'll be easy to target him. Even if it fails, it's tantamount to slapping the dao palace in the face. We can't allow a talent like him to continue growing," said Jiang Cheng, Jiang Ling's eldest son.

"That's exactly what I want." Jiang Liuting turned to Jiang Ling.

"Do as you please," said Jiang Ling.

Jiang Liuting's eyes lit up.

Since Jiang Ling had spoken, she could act.

### **Chapter 518 - Divine Capital's Stallion**

Jiang Liuting took several steps forth. Standing between the two armies, she said to Ye Yi, "Senior Ye Yi, I heard that your Decimo Dao Palace's Li Tianming killed the rebel, Dongyang Fengchen, at the age of twenty? Not to mention that he's even been conferred as a Skycore Astral General? I wonder if he's willing to join the battle?"

“Yeah. You’re looking for him?” Ye Yi asked.

“Not really. I’m just curious. Many of us would like to meet him,” said Jiang Liuting.

“Is that so? That fellow has a weird temper. He’ll want to beat someone up if he shows himself, and I’m afraid the situation will spiral out of control. Please return,” Ye Yi smiled.

“Senior Ye Yi, you really know how to joke. I’m no longer a junior. No matter how ordinary I am, I can still hold my footing before a junior. I heard he made rude remarks against the Theocrats in the Decimo Dao Formation? I’d like him to admit his mistake today,” said Jiang Liuting.

“Are you sure about that?”

“Absolutely.”

As they spoke, Deputy General Liu Yuyi introduced Jiang Liuting to Tianming, saying, “This is the strongest descendant under the ninth prince. She’s only in her thirties, but she’s already a fifth-level Sky Saint. As you can see, she’s the female version of the crown prince. She even has a harem with hundreds of men. People call her the Divine Capital’s Stallion.”

“So exciting? Doesn’t Jiang Ling teach his children?” Tianming asked.

“That’s their style. It’s normal for them to be influenced at a young age, but compared to Dongyang Yun, the ninth prince’s descendants are a lot better. Jiang Liuting is just the worst of them,” said Liu Yuyi.

“Big Sister Liu, why are you so clear about that?” Tianming smiled.

“Everyone in the city knows her story. You don’t need to be a gossip to know about it. But I hear that she’s got a conflict with Lady Bai,” said Liu Yuyi. That was women’s nature. Despite saying that they weren’t gossips, they still brought out a whole chunk of gossip.

“Conflict with Big Sister Bai?” Now that was it. That was something Tianming couldn’t accept. He asked, “What conflict?”

“They’re the same age, and Jiang Liuting loves to show off. So she naturally doesn’t find my younger sister pleasing to the eye. Whenever someone tried pursuing my younger sister, she’d snatch that person over. She’s the reason my younger sister is still single.

“One time, she beat up my younger sister and scratched her face. She came home crying after that, and still hasn’t gotten her revenge. After all, she’s indeed more outstanding than Zijin.” Bai Zijun came over and explained.

Bai Zijin had just reached third-level Sky Saint, while Jiang Liuting was fifth-level. That was a gap built over a decade. As Jiang Ling’s daughter with the strongest talent, her sydra having eight heads, she even had a chance at the ninth level of the Sky Saint stage!

“She scratched Big Sister Bai’s face? Is she jealous that Big Sister Bai is better looking?” Tianming raged.

“She’s disfigured hundreds of women,” said Bai Zijun. Even now, he still couldn’t forget about how Bai Zijin was bullied.

Tianming and Jiang Liuting exchanged glances. He could tell that she was a strong woman who wanted everything in her control.

“Tianming, she’s trying to suppress you because of your position in the dao palace. She wants to suppress the dao palace indirectly by dealing with you. I heard that you made a breakthrough recently? Why don’t you teach her a lesson?” Bai Zijun asked.

“To what extent?”

“Just don’t take it too far. We’ll be fighting with Dongyang Yun soon,” said Bai Zijin. He then whispered in Tianming’s ear, “As for my younger sister’s revenge, there will be plenty of opportunities in the future.”

“Understood.”

Bai Zijin hadn’t come today. If she had, she would definitely let Tianming beat Jiang Liuting to death. Right at that moment, Ye Yi called out to Tianming. Riding on Lan Huang, Tianming came forth. Today, he was wearing the Dark Astral Armor, looking gallant with his black and gold eyes glittering in the night.

“Skycore Astral General, Tianming. Hall Master, do you have any orders for me?”

“Jiang Liuting here wants to spar with you. I bet many people have never personally witnessed your strength, so they don’t know you well. Go ahead and show your strength. Then again, don’t overdo it and ruin the harmony.” Ye Yi smiled.

“Roger!” Tianming turned and faced Jiang Liuting. Her arms were crossed and her eyes were narrowed into slits, looking down at Tianming.

Jumping off Lan Huang, Tianming looked towards Jiang Liuting amid the heavy rain and thunder. When he looked up, his face was illuminated by a flash of lightning. He spoke out, “I have three lifebound beasts, and I don’t take advantage of that factor. We’re going to fight Dongyang Yun right away, and since we’re not going to overdo it, what do you think of a battle between beastmasters?”

“Sure.” Jiang Liuting smiled coldly. She examined Tianming and added, “I heard you were brought to the Infernal Soul Formation when you came to the Divine Capital? It was Bai Zijin who personally protected you for a few months, right? You guys spent your days together day and night? She seems pure on the surface, but she has such weird tastes. Li Tianming, did you have fun with your Big Sister Bai’s body?”

Tianming was slightly taken aback, then sneered, “I can’t believe there’s someone with a foul mouth like you in the dignified Ancient Theocrats. Did you think you were beautiful? Please, take a look at yourself in the mirror. With how disgusting you look, you don’t even qualify to carry Big Sister Bai’s shoes. Jiang Liuting, do you know it’s part of human nature to try and prove what you’re lacking? You’re trying to slander her here. Are you doing that because you’re dirty and envious of others?”

Tianming smiled and waved his hand. He had even called the name of the Nineshades Clan aloud, so there was no need for him to be polite, even with Jiang Ling.

Jiang Liuting had never imagined that a youth would be so rude to her. Most importantly, his words had struck her weakness. This ignited her wrath. Her face turned black, and her eyes were cold. She mocked, “What an arrogant bastard. Do you really think you’re invincible?”



“Well, the last person who asked me that was the former crown prince, Dongyang Fengchen. And now he’s dead.” Immediately after Tianming finished speaking, he retrieved the Three-Thousand Starfield. The chain shone brightly amidst the rain, dazzling with ninety-nine saintly heavenly patterns.

Jiang Liuting was still furious, and she wanted to get back at Tianming for insulting her. But she never expected that Tianming would take the initiative and attack her first. She was still hundreds of meters away from Tianming when a brilliant starlight flew over.

She reached out to grab the whip, but was knocked tens of meters back with her hand bloodied. She had managed to block Tianming’s Three-Thousand Starfield with her saint ki, but had still been injured.

She immediately took out her saintly beastial weapons, a saber and shield with eighty saintly heavenly patterns each. It was almost at the level of Dongyang Fengchen’s Nineshades Imperial Sword. The saber, the Eightshades Nether Saber, looked similar to the Nineshades Imperial Sword. It had one fewer eye, but it was sharper and more slender.

The shield was known as the Darknorth Beast Shield. It was a black shield with a vivid hydra engraved on it. When Tianming swung the Three-Thousand Starfield over from afar, Jiang Liuting blocked it with her shield.

“Ling’er, why is Spiritual Attachment so powerful today?” Tianming was already a ninth-level Earth Saint. With Jiang Feiling’s Spiritual Attachment, his strength alone was already approaching the fifth-level of Sky Saint stage.

“Because I’m furious!” Jiang Feiling replied. Well, that made sense. How could she not be furious when Jiang Liuting was trying to smear Tianming and Bai Zijin’s reputations? Now that she was furious, Tianming could feel his strength boosted.

After a few whip strikes, Jiang Liuting could only passively defend against Tianming’s attacks, but couldn’t touch him at all. That made her lose her temper and she shouted, “Die!”

She turned into a black phantom and charged toward Tianming, braving through the Three-Thousand Starfield’s attacks.

“That’s it?” Tianming could clearly sense that both sides had focused their aura on the two of them. From a battle between individuals, it turned into a battle between auras. No one wanted to lose, especially when the two of them held high positions in their respective factions.

Tianming was carrying the Decimo Dao Palace’s will. He could hear millions of people calling out his name.

“Li Tianming! The mandate of heaven! Beat her up!” They were direct with their cheers. Tianming’s fighting spirit was on a whole new level as he executed the Ninesilver Astral Art—Brilliant Stars.

The Three-Thousand Starfield transformed into a brightly-shining galaxy and came crashing down. Before Jiang Liuting could even get near Tianming, she faced his attack from fifty meters away. She immediately lifted the shield in her hand to block, but the Three-Thousand Starfield had ninety-nine saintly heavenly patterns, with three thousand strands of Invincible Sword Ki.

The power behind that blow knocked the Darknorth Beast Shield into her, which sent her flying five hundred meters out while spewing blood from her mouth.

When she came in contact with the ground, she created a trench dozens of meters in length, shattering the blue bricks used to pave the ground.

“How is he so powerful when he’s not even in the Sky Saint stage?!” Jiang Liuting was dumbfounded, but she wasn’t seriously injured. She immediately got up to her feet and rage filled her mind, driving her insane.

Right at that moment, Tianming used the Ninesilver Astral Art—Chaotic Galaxy. The stars in the sky gathered and descended like wild meteors.

Jiang Liuting swung her Eightshades Nether Saber to block the incoming chain. But the Three-Thousand Starfield suddenly wrapped around the saber, dissolving the force behind it. At the same time, the tail of the chain continued on and smacked into Jiang Liuting’s face.

As she let out a scream, her head hit the ground. The spectators watching this scene felt their scalps tingling when they saw Jiang Liuting spitting out white foam.

There was a huge gash on her cheek, and even her cheekbone was shattered. It seemed so painful that everyone took a cold breath. At that moment, the army of six hundred thousand behind Jiang Ling was dumbfounded.

#### **Chapter 519 - The True Ancient Theocrats**

The pool of blood gradually spread out as the rain grew heavier. Jiang Liuting was shrinking on the ground, screaming. She still had the Invincible Sword Ki raging within her body, and her injuries weren’t as simple as they looked.

Looking at Jiang Ling’s most talented daughter suffering such a terrible defeat, everyone inhaled slowly. Worst of all, she hadn’t been able to touch Tianming throughout the battle. Not even a single hair of Tianming’s had been harmed during the entire battle. This caused all six hundred thousand people, those from Jiang Ling’s lineage, the Jiang Clan, Ancient Clans, and sects of the nine realms, to be dumbfounded.

“Li Tianming is only twenty years old....”

“Jiang Liuting is already a top-tier genius in the Divine Capital. But the gap between them is so big?”

“She’s in the fifth level of the Sky Saint stage!”

“Who knows how far that Li Tianming will reach by the age of thirty....”

They had never seen such a terrifying genius. Tianming’s talent could even be described as monstrous. One must know that Jiang Liuting’s cultivation was the same as the Ancient Qilin Clan’s exalted ones. So did that mean that Tianming could also deal with them? Not long ago, they had caught Tianming like a chick and brought him to the Theocracy.

Amid the silence, Jiang Liuting’s screaming merged with the lightning rumbles, which was the greatest irony. When she finally managed to get to her feet, she spat, “I’ve not lost yet!”

She clearly wanted to fight with her lifebound beasts this time.

“Come back,” Jiang Ling said. He couldn’t afford to be embarrassed anymore. Jiang Liuting knew that she had embarrassed herself, but she could only keep her feelings locked in her heart.

Indifferently recalling the Three-Thousand Starfield, Tianming asked, “Ling’er, are you satisfied now?”

“That’s more like it,” said Jiang Feiling.

Tianming didn’t take it any further; after all, they were still allies. The moment he finished the battle, Ye Yi immediately got him to return, saying, “Your Highness, it’s unavoidable for there to be injuries in the fight between youngsters. Tianming was a little heavy with his hands, and I’ll surely educate him later.”

“No worries. My daughter is inferior to him. Speaking of which, this boy has already surpassed his father. I predict that he might even reach the Empyrean stage before the age of thirty. His talent is unprecedented, and I don’t think there will be a second one in the future,” Jiang Ling sighed.

“Yeah. This brat is the dao palace and Theocracy’s treasure,” said Ye Yi.

Jiang Ling smiled and didn’t continue speaking. This battle was just to get rid of the tension between the two factions. After all, they were allies, and would be fighting side by side.

When the rain grew heavier, Tianming could feel that it was almost time.

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Back in the Imperial Palace, the atmosphere was heavy. It was dim inside the hall, and only thunderous booming could be heard. When thunder rumbled, the flash of lightning illuminated everyone’s face.

On the highest seat, Autarch Yun leaned on his chair and didn’t utter a single word. Beside him was a hunchbacked elder. The elder had white hair, but he still looked energetic and had skin as smooth as a child’s. The elder must have a method to keep himself young.

He was the first eunuch in the Theocracy, also known as Lord Virtuous. He was Autarch Qian’s best partner. Standing before Autarch Yun were officials, the Jiang Clan, and his descendants. Among them, Huang Chonghuan, Jiang An, Jiang Jianying, Jiang Xiao, Zhao Shenhong, and the others were standing right at the front. In the second row stood the First Prince, Dongyang Fen; State Eunuch, Wei Xiaotao; Azure Monastery Supervisor, Qin He; the Fourth Prince, Dongyang Liu; and the other princes.

Naturally, the princes were only those that were under Autarch Yun’s lineage. But it wasn’t recognized by everyone. After all, not even Autarch Yun was firmly seated in his position.

“Reporting!” A scout came in from outside.

“Announce it,” said Lord Virtuous.

“Your Majesty, the traitor Jiang Ling has joined forces with the Decimo Dao Palace rebels. They’re now gathered outside the Grand Sky Gate!” the scout reported.

“How many are there?”

“Jiang Ling and the Decimo Dao Palace have sent out their forces. An army of a hundred thousand from the Dark Hall is all here!” the scout continued.

“The Decimo Dao Palace is a bunch of madmen!”

“As the state academy, how can they be in cahoots with the traitors! It’s ruining the dao palace’s legacy!”

“Weisheng Yunxi’s boldness will surely be recorded in the annals of history and condemned for thousands of years to come!”

“That bitch deserves to die!”

The officials began cursing in the imperial court. After tens of thousands of years, people seemed to have forgotten that the Decimo Dao Palace wasn’t initially an academy, nor was it under the Theocrats’ jurisdiction.

“So that’s a total of one million and six hundred thousand. They’ve got twice our numbers, not to mention that today is the night of the new moon. Can the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation defend the Imperial City? Furthermore, it’s even weaker now that it’s raining.”

“We have to protect His Majesty to protect the Theocrats’ proper lineage. Even if we can’t eradicate them, we have to hit them where it hurts!”

“Regardless of whether it’s Jiang Ling or the Decimo Dao Palace, they have to pay the price!” Discussions began sounding out in the imperial court.

“Silence!” Lord Virtuous spoke out.

When everyone became quiet, Jiang An stood up. He was Autarch Yun and Jiang Ling’s younger brother. So, even without his position in the dao palace, he could be ranked among the top three here based on his strength.

“Your Majesty, can the autarch beast fight tonight?” Jiang An asked.

“Lord Virtuous, speak,” said Autarch Yun.

“The autarch beast is weak right now. But as Autarch Qian’s lifebound beast, it can come out to persuade Jiang Ling and the Decimo Dao Palace to stop what they’re doing. With the autarch beast coming out, Jiang Ling’s lies will be exposed. Not everyone under him is willingly working for him. As long as we show our willingness to recruit them, their forces will naturally collapse,” said Lord Virtuous.

“What if Jiang Ling says we threatened the autarch beast?” said Jiang Jianying.

“Those who are smart will naturally figure out the truth. Only the foolish will be brainwashed. Those people die fast, so there’s no need for us to worry about them,” said Lord Virtuous.

“That’s right. Even if the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation is weak, it’ll be enough. Not to mention that we even have eight hundred thousand elites. We’re much stronger than those Ancient Clans’ mash-up army.

“The Decimo Dao Palace’s Seven Astral Armies have never participated in an official war, so there’s a limit to how strong they can be. War is never about individual strength. We have the Imperial City. So what if they have an advantage in numbers? We’ll slaughter them!” said the fourth prince, Dongyang Liu.

He often participated in wars together with Huang Chonghuan, the Grand Divine Marshal. So he had his own understandings when it came to war.

“Fourth brother is right. Jiang Ling will die if he invades the Imperial City. Since the dao palace is looking down on us, we’ll get rid of them while we’re at it. Without their elites, the Decimo Dao Palace will just be an empty shell, even with the Evil Suppression Pillar. There’s too many disobedient people in the Divine Capital. As long as we win this war, we’ll be able to unify our territories,” said the fifth prince, Dongyang Feng.

“Long live His Majesty!” Everyone kowtowed in Autarch Yun’s direction.

“My officials.” Autarch Yun stood up, emanating a domineering aura, like a ferocious tiger. His temperament was completely different, compared to Jiang Ling.

“The Theocrats have suppressed countless people since ancient times, seizing numerous territories. We’ve never had an enemy attack the Imperial City, nor have we ever used the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation, and those people must’ve forgotten the will of the Ancient Theocrats!

“Tonight, we fight for the Ancient Theocrats because our clan has been fighting for our undying will! I’ll let those rebels die in the Imperial City and build a mountain with their corpses. I’ll let them know despair! I will let them know the true Ancient Theocrats!” Autarch Yun’s voice echoed throughout the Imperial City.

“Kill!” Roars sounded through the Imperial City. At this moment, they recalled stories of how their ancestors had come from the south and subdued countless territories.

“The Ancient Theocrats will never perish!”

Their roars echoed throughout the Divine Capital.

.....

The heavy rain poured down, enveloping the entire Divine Capital. Before the war even began, the place was already dyed in blood, flowing throughout the Divine Capital. The water had flooded the Divine Capital’s drainage system, devouring the nearby Romance Pavilions.

Sounds of children crying could be heard, which soon turned into panic. A flash of lightning lit up the entire city.

Outside the Grand Sky Gate, an army’s silhouette was revealed when the lightning lit the city. The legions had disregarded their lives for righteousness and the will to protect. There weren’t any cowards among them.

Right at that moment, a sharp cry came from the Evernight Eagle. It was an order from Ye Yi, “Skycore Legion, face the Imperial City’s southeast and wait for orders!”

The voice of his lifebound beast swept through the battlefield. Everyone clearly heard it. "Skycore Legion, follow me!" Bai Zijun roared and led the army of a hundred thousand to face the Imperial City's southeast.

"Sky Jade Legion, face the northwest!"

"Grandsol Legion, face the east!"

Instructions came from Ye Yi. It had been a long time since the Seven Astral Legions had participated in a formal war, but they'd been making preparations. They had even undergone the trials of many heavenly pattern barriers to train their siege skills. They were even more professional than the Ancient Clans, and the sects of the nine realms.

With that, the Seven Astral Legions surrounded the Imperial City.

### **Chapter 520 - Death**

Jiang Ling made similar arrangements outside the Grand Sky Gate. The Ancient Qilin Clan's army was composed of about a hundred thousand youths, commanded by Chong Yang.

As an Astral General, Tianming's position was equivalent to the exalted ones, and might even be higher than Qilin Kings. As the heavy rain continued pouring down, Tianming glanced at the Ancient Qilin Clan.

He could see complicated expressions written on the faces of everyone from the Ancient Qilin Clan. Chong Yang sighed, "Why is this the outcome for geniuses of my Ancient Qilin Clan? Especially Li Muyang and Li Tianming, this father and son pair...."

"That's just life, don't dwell on it," replied Jing Yue.

"Speaking of which, is there any reaction from the Cyclic Map?"

"Yeah, Li Muyang is gradually approaching the Divine Capital. It looks like he thinks he has nothing to fear after Autarch Qian's death."

"Wait, wasn't he crippled by Autarch Qian? How'd he regain his cultivation? Did he start all over again?"

While they discussed the traitor, their orders finally came. Sitting on his ferocious tiger, Bai Zijun roared, "Skycore Legion, heed my orders! Kill!"

Countless people charged toward the Imperial City from all different directions in an instant. This tactic forced Dongyang Yun's army to disperse in different directions. If they allowed Jiang Ling or the Decimo Dao Palace to break through, it would spell trouble. After all, the vulnerable and elderly were still in the city. With Jiang Ling's banner and the Decimo Dao Palace's principles, none of them would act hostile toward them.

This was something that Autarch Yun didn't have to fear. When the army charged into the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation, the entire Divine Capital was trembling.

"Follow me!" Tianming wasn't anxious at all. Weisheng Yunxi had said that tonight would be a battle of strategy, not the final battle. They would have to act depending on the situation. Their objective was to weaken their enemies. Regardless of Dongyang Yun or Jiang Ling, it would benefit the dao palace if

either of them suffered heavy losses. So there was no need to risk their lives; they just had to put up an act.

“Dark Astral Battalion!” Tianming charged into the formation with the Three-Thousand Starfield in his hand. It enveloped the entire battalion, making sure none of them were spread out. That was extremely important.

The Sun-Moon Imperial Formation was enchanted with the Silverymoon Illusory Formation, a five star heavenly pattern formation. Tianming could negate most of the formation’s illusions with his Insightful Eye, but the Dark Astral Battalion didn’t have that advantage.

“Steady! Steady!” Tianming shouted.

“Understood!”

Tianming paid attention to the position of the other Skycore Legion’s battalions and slowly pressed forth with the Dark Astral Battalion. The Ancient Qilin Clan’s army charged past them. They were ferocious in their advance, as they needed to get on Jiang Ling’s right side.

“In such a hurry to bootlick?” Tianming smiled. Everyone had their own fortunes, so Tianming didn’t want to comment about theirs. It wasn’t easy for them, either. The Skycore Legion couldn’t fall too far behind the Ancient Qilin Clan, or it would seem too fake.

“Our principle is to speed up their losses. Make sure that none of them are defeated.” That was what Weisheng Yunxi had said. It was also the reason why they weren’t taking down Dongyang Yun tonight.

The dao palace disciples increased their speed, speeding up the deaths by following this principle. The fighting had already grown to this extent. But if there weren’t any new factors added to the war, Dongyang Yun and Jiang Ling would slow down their battle to drag the Decimo Dao Palace down.

The moment they had stepped into the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation, it was a three-way gamble.

“This time, killing is second. Our goal is to have the fewest casualties.” Bai Zijun had reinforced that several times. Now that Tianming had become the commander of ten thousand people, he had to be responsible for them.

“But those that should be killed must still be killed!” Tianming pressed forth with his eyes narrowed into slits. He heard the commotion coming from afar, and if things went as he expected, the formation’s spirit hazard should be coming soon.

The next moment, a wild wind blew within the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation. Flames had taken the form of tornados and were charging toward the Imperial City. At the same time, the rain contained saintly heavenly patterns with corrosive ability. But that was only a small part of it.

“Take on the formation and protect each other! Quickly pass through the spirit hazard! Put away all of your lifebound beasts to reduce the number of targets!” There were no eyes on the battlefield, and anything could take place in a blink of an eye. Luckily, they had the Ancient Qilin Clan taking the spirit hazards head-on.

“Charge!” Tianming charged forth, opening the path with Lan Huang. The Dark Astral Battalion was like a hot blade slicing through butter.

“Keep it up!” The Three-Thousand Starfield extended to its full three kilometer length, allowing the people behind to find him within the illusion. Tianming wouldn’t be far away as long as they could see the Three-Thousand Starfield.

“Hold it up!”

“Roger!”

With the lifebound beasts returning to their lifebound spaces, it wasn’t a problem for the Three-Thousand Starfield to lead everyone. Tianming hung the chain from Lan Huang’s tail. With its immense strength, it wouldn’t be a problem to pull ten thousand people along.

Taking out five Oceanspirit Tomes, Tianming threw them out. The tomes immediately released an ocean into the battlefield. Charging into the ocean, Lan Huang was like a fish, surfing through the spirit hazards while dragging ten thousand people behind it. The Dark Astral Battalion was moving faster than the Ancient Qilin Clan, and only suffered a few casualties from the spirit hazards.

“Wait.” Tianming wasn’t in a hurry after arriving in a safe area. Patience was the key to this war today. The spirit hazards were being controlled, and they were directed at places with many people gathered together. So they were much safer, as they only had ten thousand people.

On the contrary, the Ancient Qilin Clan had attracted a large number of spirit hazards and was thrown into chaos. The spirit hazards were as lethal as Invincible Sword Ki, with different elements grinding together.

“General, won’t the Ancient Qilin Clan notice us if we stay here?” Liu Yuyi asked.

“What can they do about it even if they notice us? Are we going to charge in the front for them? It’s already good that we’re not using them as meatshields,” replied Tianming.

“And here I thought the general would charge in the front,” said Chen Fang.

“Haha! Are you mocking me? Be careful, or I’ll beat you up,” said Tianming.

“Please forgive me, general,” Chen Fang replied. Everyone was in a good mood.

They could only admit that Tianming was a decent Astral General. They had such an easy atmosphere while they were in the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation, especially how Tianming had pulled everyone along using the Three-Thousand Starfield, which had greatly decreased their casualties.

With that, everyone was convinced by Tianming’s ability. Honestly speaking, they had been afraid that Tianming would be impulsive, due to his young age. But seeing how he could calm himself down and analyze the overall situation, they felt more at ease listening to his orders. That way, they could fight more efficiently.

“Get ready!” Tianming called out. He swept his glance across the battlefield and saw an allied army coming in their direction. “We’ll be fighting Dongyang Yun under the ravages of the spirit hazards. Keep close to me. I’ll use the Three-Thousand Starfield and fight to our advantage. Don’t jump into the enemy ranks recklessly, understood?”

“Understood!” the Dark Astral Battalion chorused.



“In summary, none of you are allowed to die!” Tianming roared.

“Roger!” Everyone agreed with that command. After all, who wanted to die if they could live?

“General, are you trying to reveal your location with the Three-Thousand Starfield for us to find you? But if that’s the case, enemies will also discover your location and target you. You’re special, and what happens if you attract someone powerful?” Chen Fang sounded his concern.

“Let them come then. They’ll only die!” Tianming squinted his eyes.

“General, please be reassured. We’ll follow you to our death!” Chen Fang said with bloodshot eyes.

“Very well.” Tianming came to Lan Huang’s head. “Summon your lifebound beasts and fight!”

The Dark Astral Battalion immediately transformed from infantry to cavalry. Ye Lingfeng was even riding the Soulfriend. Lan Huang was at the forefront, loudly roaring. Its eyes had already turned bloodshot and it was impatiently smashing its claws on the ground.

Beside Tianming, Ying Huo smirked. With Lan Huang’s protection, it would become a nightmare on the battlefield. As for Meow Meow, it was still sleeping between two of the mountains on Lan Huang’s back. It seemed that Meow Meow wouldn’t wake up anytime soon, unless they were placed in a dangerous situation. Tianming also couldn’t be bothered with the little cat. He had tens of thousands of underlings right now, and one fewer wouldn’t make any difference.

Tens of thousands of lifebound beasts roared. Tianming raised the Grand-Orient Sword and separated it into two, wielding each one in his hands. “Get ready!”

The Three-Thousand Starfield coiled around his arm and body, allowing him to use it to defend himself any time. Wearing his Dark Astral Armor, Tianming’s white hair fluttered in the wind.

“Big brother, you look handsome right now!” Jiang Feiling said in an infatuated tone.

“Are you wet then?”

“I’m ignoring you!”

“What the hell is going through your mind? I’m asking if your eyes are turning wet. What were you thinking about?” Tianming said seriously.

“Go away!”

Tianming laughed. Teasing Ling’er was a joy in his life. Then again, it was time for killing right now. Tianming yelled, “Dark Astral Battalion, listen up! Follow me and kill!”

The ground rumbled as Lan Huang opened a path. With his Insightful Eye, Tianming had already discovered his enemy’s location and roared, “Prepare your long-distance abilities!”

The Ancient Qilin Clan was the first to clash with the enemy, and countless spirit hazards were descending upon them. Tianming’s eyes were cold when he looked at the battlefield. “Attack!!”

Countless abilities shot out, including Lan Huang’s Primordial Soundwave and Ying Huo’s Sixpath Infernal Lotus. The ground was shaking from the collision between abilities.

“What’s with all the noise?” Meow Meow opened its eyes to see countless abilities flying by. It was like a fireworks festival. “Fighting again? Boring! I’d better preserve my strength.”

Meow Meow slid off Lan Huang’s back and fell into the muddy water. It had fallen asleep again.