

## The Ages 521

### Chapter 521 - Monster of the Divine Capital

A gigantic beast came running past, stomping Meow Meow deeper into the muddy puddle. However, it seemed to not have noticed it and merely rolled around in its sleep.

The warriors of the Dark Astral Battalion were able to survive the spirit hazards of the formation. With Tianming in their midst and Lan Huang acting as the vanguard, they pierced straight through to Dongyang Yun's camp, tearing open a rather large gap.

Lan Huang's ability, Terra Swamp, swept the ground ahead of them, turning it into a muddy swamp that trapped many a foe within. With Tianming's current powers, none of the earth saints ahead of them could resist Lan Huang's charge. Despite having many lifebound beasts unleashing their abilities at the same time, they were scarcely able to sway the eighty-four-star Lan Huang. It was basically a tank and steamroller at the same time as it mowed through the dense crowd.

Tianming and Ying Huo's strands of Invincible Sword Ki were the most chaotic spirit hazards as he used the Grand-Orient Sword to directly open up a path. Now, they weren't fighting one-on-one among geniuses. This was a matter of life and death, so he no longer had the luxury to avoid bloodshed. If he showed mercy, he would no doubt be killed.

His Grand-Orient Sword tore through bodies of man and beast alike. None of them were able to resist his strike. With only Ten-Demise Sword, normal earth saints of the Theocrat troops could already do nothing about it but fall. Ying Huo's Infernal Blaze clones were all over the place, sending Infernal Blaze down like rain, inducing many screams of abject horror.

The Dark Astral Battalion numbered ten thousand and had charged their way into the midst of the enemy camp without allowing their formation to scatter. This proved to be a rather taxing affair, as they not only had to defeat enemy combatants, but also had to evade and block spirit hazards coming from the formation.

While Tianming was still not a sky saint yet, he could zip around through the air at high speeds using Celestial Wings. His aerial superiority not only ensured his survival, but also allowed him to kill his enemies at the same time.

"Ling'er, did your Temporal Field's range grow?" Tianming asked, surprised.

"Yeah, by four or five times. At its widest, it can envelop five thousand people around us. I can also use fifty Spatial Walls now," she said. Currently, she was using Spatial Walls to help the battalion defend against the Origin Heavytoxin spirit hazard.

"Amazing. It looks like the acquired godchild physique is impressive indeed."

"That's right!" While she was attached to Tianming, she didn't need to mind her own location and could easily focus on the bigger picture.

"Let's continue with the killing!"

Many people began to notice it was him.

"See that? That's Li Tianming!"

"He's the one who killed the crown prince!"

"If we take his head we'll be made nobles, right?"

"Obviously! We'll live without want for anything. Even our descendants will get to enjoy it!"

"Quick, let's report to our superiors!"

The chaos Tianming unleashed when he was discovered spread throughout the battlefield. Half the combatants there were Theocrats. They glared at him with furious fervor, filled with killing intent.

"This kid actually dares to mess with us Theocrats. We'll show him his rightful place!"

"He actually dared to step on the battlefield? He's dead for sure!"

"Let's surround him first. Everyone, come with me to kill Li Tianming!"

Tianming had become the star of the show. The situation on the battlefield had drastically changed. Many people gave up on the people they were fighting and charged toward Tianming instead.

"Protect him!" Chen Fang yelled, calling his comrades to his aid.

"There's no need." Tianming snickered, holding the Grand-Orient Swords in hand. With a shake of his Celestial Wings, he flew over the Theocrats and unleashed his Invincible Sword Ki. He now had around three thousand strands of them. Each time he struck, hundreds of strands of sword ki blasted outward. Even sky saints were unable to stop the sword ki from piercing them.

The black and gold swords danced around the battlefield, gracefully firing beams of sword light all over the place that pierced through countless bodies. Tianming left a wake of corpses in his path, men and beasts alike falling dead with but a single strike.

"They're dead!" "They're all dead! Don't approach! He's too strong!"

"Is this really a twenty-year-old? Has there ever been a monster like this in the history of the Theocracy?"

The Theocrats paled as the shock hit them. What was more terrifying was that there was a three-headed, six-armed, fanged monster crawling amidst the corpses, sucking souls in the form of white smoke into its stomach like it was feeding. They could hear the desperate cries of the souls before their demise.

"Run!"

"We can't hold on! Ugh—"

They knew that this was a soulfiend, the very same one Ye Lingfeng had brought out of the Tomb of the Ancients. Who wouldn't fear a soul-eating monster?

The soulfiend felt like it was in paradise. It didn't even have to work hard to be able to get free food, all it could possibly eat. It would digest the souls and make them its own power.

"Feng, is it growing stronger?" Tianming asked.

"That's right. It's now much stronger than before, but it's almost full. All of this will take it some time to digest," Ye Lingfeng said.

"Alright. Make sure to not lose control of it."

"No worries."

As the soulfier's growth also meant Ye Lingfeng's growth, it was a matter to be happy about. They continued onward with their bout of slaughter and fought for survival.

The whole battlefield was messy beyond all measure, with blood and corpses strewn all over. The three battalions were now in the climax of their battle. Tianming's Dark Astral Battalion had Feiling's Spatial Wall and Temporal Field as support, allowing them to achieve magnificent results. Even though the members of the Ancient Qilin Clan slaughtered away rampantly—even suicidally—their ten thousand men didn't manage to kill nearly as many as Tianming's battalion did.

"Keep pushing!"

Tianming's eyes were bloodshot. Countless souls had fallen to his sword. Having undergone the baptism of bloody battle, there were many insights for him to ponder. He would have to find himself as he continued progressing.

At that moment, a group of people suddenly came charging from his flank. Based on their attire, they were Dongyang Clan members, not Jiang Imperials, nor those of the Saint Martial Manor or the Theocrats' army.

They wore long black and gold robes, symbolizing their grandness and pride, and had come with the resolve to kill. Their group numbered only a dozen or so, and were all sky saints. They homed in on Tianming's location by relying on Three-Thousand Starfield's flashy trails.

"Kill him!"

"Anyone who kills Li Tianming will be awarded five million saint crystals and an empyrean manna! Their lifebound beast will be able to evolve into an empyrean beast!"

That cry caused their blood to boil before they charged towards him like raving madmen. Thankfully, the battalion was still holding their formation.

"Switch to defense!" Tianming calmly ordered. Given that they far outnumbered the approaching group, going defensive would render their charge useless unless they came from above. Even if earth saints had lifebound beasts that could fly, they wouldn't dare approach from the air and risk being shot down to certain death. Sky saints, however, could fly, allowing them to attack and retreat at their leisure. They all zeroed in on Tianming with a blind, murderous urge.

"Sir, the two leading them are the fourth and fifth imperial princes. They're called Dongyang Liu and Dongyang Feng, respectively. They've served in the Shenwu Legion and have been following Marshall Shenwu since their childhood in the campaign to conquer the northwestern barbarians. They have rich battle experience," Chen Fang said.

"How powerful are they?"

"They're in their fifties and should be on Jiang Liuting's level," Liu Yuyi said.

"Good. We'll start with those two, then. We'll pave our way by taking their heads!"

The two princes that were even older than Li Wudi came flying in with Tianming in their sights and a dozen other sky saints accompanying them.

"You, block the rest! Leave those two to me!" Tianming said, rallying the twenty or so sky saints in his battalion.

"Sir, do you need us to take one more for you?" Chen Fang asked worryingly.

"No need. Work with Feng and kill the rest as quickly as you can before more reinforcements show up."

"Understood!"

With Tianming leading them, the twenty or so sky saints flew into the skies with their lifebound beasts to clash with the approaching group. Tianming's targets were the two princes, but he didn't need to worry about them not coming for him. They even fought each other to be the first to kill Tianming for credit.

They were both twin beastmasters whose lifebound beasts had seven heads, just like Dongyang Zhuo's. While this level of talent wasn't the utmost best the Theocrats had to offer, they were older, and far more experienced. Killing was second nature to them. The two of them, and their four lifebound beasts, were far stronger than a single Jiang Liuting.

Dongyang Liu's lifebound beasts were Goldmont Aegis Hydras. Both were seventh-order lifebound beasts with seventy-nine stars. Now matured, their bodies were incredibly huge and seemed to be covered in metallic gold armor, making them look like two mountains of gold. Their seven unique heads could bind together to form a huge golden shield.

Hydras were ferocious lifebound beasts, and the Divine Capital was their home turf. The two beasts came slamming downward at Tianming, but before they landed, Lan Huang charged in with its huge draconic body to intercept them. It unleashed Primordial Soundwave and slashed with its Annihilation Godsword. The battle was nothing but a display of brute force.

The fifth prince, Dongyang Feng, sent out his two lifebound beasts to attack from another direction. They both had seventy-seven stars and were covered in black spikes, looking a little like Dongyang Fengchen's lifebound beasts. However, they weren't fire or lightning-type beasts, but were pure poison type. They were called Ebonic Toxicspike Hydras.

While these two hydras were considered to be of inferior bloodline, compared to Nethersea Regalfiend Hydras, they were much older and larger, so they were unquestionably more powerful. Each of them would be able to easily defeat Dongyang Fengchen's lifebound beasts.

"Where's Meow Meow?" Tianming asked.

"Asleep somewhere, I bet," said Ying Huo.

"Then let's ignore it. Ying Huo, take on the two of them yourself."

"That's beyond me man! What if I get hurt?"

"Just go!"

Tianming shoved him toward the black hydras. The next instant, the two princes were right in front of Tianming, both fervently desiring his life.

## **Chapter 522: All Shall Die**

"So you're the son of that bastard Li Muyang? You think you can challenge us Ancient Theocrats just because you're a little talented? Since you have a deathwish, we'll grant it!" Dongyang Liu said.

"Have I challenged you before?" Tianming chuckled. "Oh, you're talking about the Nineshades Clan? I wasn't wrong, you know. You can't accept it because you're weak. What's the point in calling yourselves Theocrats and forgetting your origins? The Nineshades Clan will forever remain the Nineshades Clan. Your dirty origins will never change, and you'll never be true rulers even after tens of thousands of years!"

Tianming charged in with Grand-Orient Sword in hand. He would fight the two princes himself. The moment their weapons clashed, sparks flew.

"Insolence!" Dongyang Liu angrily slashed downward, leaving a trail of golden light in the wake of his blade.

"The only thing I'm 'in' is your mother!" Tianming's body surged with power as he gathered three thousand strands of Invincible Sword Ki and activated the Imperealm Sword Formation. His surroundings were filled with both Imperial and Realm Sword Ki, which his foes had to deflect before they could get to him.

His formation continued expanding and soon reached twenty meters; this was the fruit of his labor after breaking through. He managed to get even more sword ki from the Grand-Orient Sword to further reinforce the formation. It was definitely a nightmare for his enemies.

"Die!" Tianming gathered all of his strands of Invincible Sword Ki, as well as the ones from the Imperealm Sword Formation, then used the explosive fourth strike of the Shenxiao Sword Art. Coupled with the boost Feiling afforded him, he was so powerful he could destroy the heavens and the earth.

The Grand-Orient Sword came sweeping past, immediately crushing Dongyang Liu's weapon. When the sword ki followed, something terrifying happened. Dongyang Liu widened his eyes as he remained still in mid-air. He looked down and found that every part beneath his neck had been engulfed by Tianming's sword ki and instantly vaporized. It was as if he had been decapitated—no, it was more accurate to say that his head was all that remained of his body.

"Ugh..." Dongyang Liu saw his life flashing past.

"Still dare to be so arrogant? What kind of Theocrat are you? Why do you think you're inherently better than others? We are all the same in the face of death. You'll die one day as well. Don't shoot me that look of disbelief, I'm already sick of it. So what if I kill you?"

Tianming gave him a slap on the face, causing him to widen his eyes before he stopped breathing. Tianming then grabbed his hair and yelled, "The traitorous fourth son of Dongyang Yun, Dongyang Liu, is dead! Who's next?!"

"Our boss is truly badass!" the warriors of his battalion cheered as their morale soared.

Tianming turned back and saw that the fifth prince had been frightened away by the utter slaughter of his elder brother. He even abandoned his lifebound beast to its fate.

"You think I'll let you escape?!" Tianming put his sword away and gave the Three-Thousand Starfield a swing. The whip rapidly extended three hundred meters and landed on Dongyang Feng's head.

"Agh!" Feeling the threat coming, he immediately turned back and took out his spear. He thought that once Tianming caught up to him, he could deliver a counterattack. But the moment he took out his spear, he knew it was over for him.

Tianming was still three hundred meters away. With a loud clang, the whip sent his spear flying. Tianming then lashed out with the Ninesilver Astral Art—Brilliant Stars. The whip sparkled in the dark once more, becoming a shining night sky as it rapidly wrapped around Dongyang Feng's neck a few times.

"Go away!" Dongyang Feng attempted to tear the whip apart, but to no avail. The blue rings of the whip were as sharp as blades and could even cut other weapons apart, let alone his neck.

When Tianming gave the whip a pull, Dongyang Feng's head came with it and his body landed on the ground, kicking up quite a lot of dust. Just like that, Tianming had gotten another head. The head stared at him with terrified, bloodshot eyes.

"You truly are a coward. I thought your lot committed suicide after you lost, yet you tried to run. Are you really a Theocrat? Hahaha..." Tianming mocked him mercilessly, filling Dongyang Feng's last moments with unbearable suffering and humiliation.

This time around, everyone had clearly seen what happened. The fourth and fifth princes had perished by Tianming's hand in the most horrible way possible. His merciless and brutish way of fighting was exciting to watch. The two he had just killed were core members of the Theocrats and executors of the Primeval Autarch's will, yet Tianming had not only killed them, but also made sure to utterly crush their spirits, something the Theocrats would never tolerate. They were an unyielding clan. Even if they lost, their firm wills wouldn't perish. They would even kill themselves to be rid of the humiliation of their mistakes, yet Dongyang Feng had run away because of fear. There was nothing more embarrassing than that.

"An unyielding clan? No, you're just as fearful of death as everyone!"

The Theocrats' millennia of oppression came at the price of countless mountains of corpses. They had long earned the ire of many. If it weren't for their hate of the Theocrats, many beastmasters wouldn't have joined the Decimo Dao Palace to avoid serving them. When they saw Tianming's awesome performance, they were filled with righteous fervor.

"Li Tianming, frankly speaking, you're nothing but a brat to me. I'm old enough to be your grandfather. However, you've earned this old one's respect! Look, brothers, these so-called Theocrats are afraid of dying too! Let's make sure to give them a good fright before killing them!"

Every one of them was instantly pumped to the max. They were filled with motivation to cull every last Theocrat from the battlefield and scare them into retreating. The ten or so sky saints were all dealt with by Tianming's subordinates, Ye Lingfeng, and the soulfier. They then joined up with Ying Huo and Lan Huang to kill the four hydras.

"Lan Huang, take this," Tianming said as he tossed Dongyang Liu and Dongyang Feng's heads to his back. He would be taking them back with him as proof. Now that he had killed two princes, he was quite deep into the enemy camp. He decided to retreat a little with his battalion.

"I wonder how the others are doing. At least my battalion didn't suffer many casualties and got good results. Our mission is mostly accomplished."

That was the reason Tianming toned it down a bit. The Decimo Dao Palace had only come as reinforcements. Since Jiang Ling's men hadn't broken through the defense line yet, those from the dao palace wouldn't jump into the fray and get themselves killed.

At that moment, something really abrupt occurred. Tianming received Bai Zijun's urgent order for all of them to retreat from the formation.

"It's gonna end right now? Are we not going to continue the attack?" Though Tianming was really doubtful about it, he didn't hesitate and ordered, "Dark Astral Battalion, fall back!"

"Understood!"

Discipline was paramount in the military, and orders were to be obeyed no matter what doubts one had. All of them rapidly retreated, even though they had spared no effort to get where they were.

Even as they retreated, they had to weather the spirit hazards, as well as the pursuit of the enemies, which ended in some casualties. Tianming had done his best to protect his men, finding the safest route for them to travel and immediately saving those who were heavily injured.

"Fall back! Fall back!"

As they retreated, Tianming also noticed the Ancient Qilin Clan retreating. "Looks like something must've happened to break the rhythm of the two attacking armies."

Not long after the retreat, he ran into Bai Zijun, who was getting the entire Skycore Legion to retreat. "What's going on, Astral King?" Tianming and a few other generals asked.

"Dongyang Yun has activated the defensive formation in the Abyssal Battlefield. They lured a lot of wildbeasts and are planning to send them into the Divine Capital through the abyss in the Imperial City right ahead of us. They were really secretive, this time around, and we were completely unaware of their plans. Fortunately, the beasts were quite loud and impossible to hide. When the palace lord received word of it, she immediately had us retreat from the battlefield to prevent us from clashing with the wildbeasts."

"Has Dongyang Yun gone mad? The wildbeasts are mindless creatures that kill all! Even though the Divine Capital has fallen, many are still standing guard there. If Dongyang Yun opens up the path through the Abyssal Battlefield to lead the wildbeasts in, wouldn't the whole Divine Capital be overrun by those monsters?"

"The spiritual energy in the Divine Capital is really attractive to the wildbeasts. Leaving the pathway open will cause more and more wildbeasts to gather. It won't just cause trouble for us, Dongyang Yun will have to deal with a huge mess too!"

"The Divine Capital will truly have no hope of being rebuilt if the beasts are allowed in."

The generals all sounded rather angry.

Bai Zijun said, "He no longer cares. By letting the beasts through, he'll be able to give us a crippling blow. Fortunately, we received word of it early and managed to retreat in time."

"Then what happens next? What's his fallback plan? He'll be attacked by the wildbeasts himself!"

"He'll probably wait until daytime, when the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation's power will be charged by the sun. The wildbeasts will be marked by the formation. As long as they block off the pathway to the Abyssal Battlefield, they'll be able to stop the wildbeasts from coming through."

"Wouldn't the wildbeasts leave the range of the formation to avoid its attacks and cause havoc in the Divine Capital?!"

"He doesn't care about the capital at all. All he values is his position on the throne. This is a desperate move from him. At the very least, he's forced us to retreat. He knows that we want to preserve our forces as best as we can."

"Then what do we do next?" the rest asked.

"Rest up for now. We might need to send someone to attack the Abyssal Battlefield to cut off the flow of wildbeasts. Once we gain control of the passage there, we'll be able to attack the Imperial City from within the formation. However, we might lose our opportunity tonight. The next window for us to act will be next month," Bai Zijun said.

"Understood!"

"Don't worry, time is on our side. Now, let's head back with our comrades."

"Yes!"

This was supposed to be a reconnaissance mission to begin with. Not killing Autarch Yun didn't disappoint Tianming at all. The Decimo Dao Palace had to take care of their own men; there was no need for them to die in the fight between Dongyang Ling and Dongyang Yun.

"By the time we return next month, I'll only have grown stronger. By then, even fewer will be able to stop me," Tianming said. He could already hear the sound of the wildbeasts coming through.

"Looks like information is indeed important in warfare. The wildbeasts attacked as part of Dongyang Yun's plan, and it's likely that not even Dongyang Ling received word of it. Thankfully, we heard them



coming and managed to retreat in time and escaped the fate of being overrun by them. Dongyang Yun is ruthless. With this, the Divine Capital will be ruined for good."

Tianming had believed that it would be really hard to defeat the two Theocrat brothers to begin with, and this was all within expectations. He looked up and saw the edge of the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation. Once he sent them out, he would've succeeded in his mission. However...

"Dammit! Where the heck is Meow Meow?!" He felt like his head was about to explode.

### **Chapter 523: Saving Meow Meow**

As the battle was about to begin, Meow Meow wasn't in the lifebound space, but on Lan Huang's back instead. However, it had ended up slacking off and slept through the battle.

"Cat Bro isn't on my back! It's still inside the formation!" Lan Huang said in a panic.

"Darn it! If I knew it was that lazy, I'd have left it in the lifebound space instead!" Tianming was going insane. He tried to telepathically locate Meow Meow's rough location. It was still in the center of the formation. How could it still sleep despite all the noise and commotion?

"Darn it. I'll definitely give its balls a harsh squeeze!" Ying Huo spat.

"What do we do? Cat Bro is going to die, waa!" Lan Huang cried.

"He won't die, you fool. We'll go back and fetch him. This is my fault for forgetting him," Tianming said. It was an accident, and there was nothing else to be said. They were all brothers, and everyone made mistakes. Meow Meow wouldn't be itself if it didn't slack off.

"Chen Fang, Liu Yuyi, take them out of here. I'll be away for a minute."

"Sir, where are you going? We're heading out immediately! We can't dally!" Chen Fang said.

"One of my lifebound beasts was left behind. I'll come back immediately. Go see the Astral King or Hall Lord Ye Yi and tell them what happened," Tianming said.

"Left inside?" Chen Fang and Liu Yuyi gave each other a look of dumbfoundment. What kind of lifebound beast would actually get left behind? Not to mention, wildbeasts were roaming the area now and would attack indiscriminately, even other wildbeasts. The situation inside the formation was now pure chaos.

When Tianming finished saying what he wanted, he had Ying Huo and Lan Huang enter his lifebound space and shot away with Celestial Wings.

"Brother Tianming, let me come with you," Ye Lingfeng said.

"The soulfliend is too huge. You must leave it outside the formation."

"No need." Ye Lingfeng called out and caused the soulfliend to morph into a black twister that wrapped around him. Its body had disappeared, and it helped boost Ye Lingfeng's speed. Tianming had seen it morph in the tomb before; it was a shockingly terrifying ability.

"The soulfliend had quite a lot of souls to eat today and grew much stronger. It can help us when we're in danger, too."

"Alright, let's go!"

The two of them, both clad in Dark Astral Armor, charged stealthily into the fray toward Meow Meow.

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"Old Fifth!"

A middle-aged man clad in a fiery-red robe with a grim expression took a headless corpse out of the mouth of a third-order empyrean wildbeast, a Twinhead Fiendwolf. He, Dongyang Fen, recognized the corpse to be Dongyang Feng based on his clothes.

He was Autarch Yun's eldest son, and close to seventy years in age. Though he still looked middle-aged, he was at the peak of his strength.

"The cut is too straight. It looks like he was killed by a person rather than a wildbeast. Fourth and Fifth went to kill Li Tianming, so did they die by his hand?"

He squinted in doubt.

"I heard Li Tianming managed to defeat Jiang Liuting at the Grand Sky Gate. After he came in, he defeated my two fifth-level sky saint younger brothers...."

His eyes burned with killing intent.

"Your Highness, the wildbeasts are growing in number. Why don't we go back first? His Majesty will be chasing the wildbeasts out of the formation to let his foes deal with them," said an attendant beside him.

"You guys should return first. I'll keep looking for Fourth. He might still be alive. We've only found the corpse of his lifebound beast for now, so he isn't necessarily dead yet."

"We'd better stay to defend Your Highness then."

"Leave! Why would I need defending by the likes of you?" he roared angrily. The two brothers with whom he got along had just been killed, pushing him to a breaking point.

"We, the Ancient Theocrats, have reigned unrivaled for millennia. How did we end up like this? Now, everyone, their mothers, and their pets are trying to topple us!"

His angry steps shook the ground, causing many wildbeasts to notice him. However, the fearsome beasts didn't dare approach him.

Suddenly, a muddy cat turned up beneath his feet. It stared angrily at Dongyang Fen and said, "What the heck?! Why are you yelling about the crummy Theo-whatevers? I'm trying to get some sleep here! Buzz off, you mother's spawn.... Go, now!" Meow Meow cursed without even seeing clearly who it was. It turned around again and went back to sleep.

Dongyang Fen was stupefied. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. "Li Tianming's lifebound beast?" His voice was both filled with wonder and crazy doubt.

"What the hell?! Are you trying to annoy me or something?! You think I'm weak cause I'm not beating you up?!" Meow Meow was feeling annoyed to the extreme. With a few shakes, black lightning covered its body and cleaned it up completely.

"Hahaha!" Dongyang Fen clutched his face tight and couldn't resist laughing. He looked around and made certain Tianming wasn't around. Perhaps he had left the area entirely.

"Why does your ugly mug look so familiar?" the cat asked.

"I've seen you before. You're Li Tianming's lifebound beast, and you must be really precious to him. If I bring you back to the Imperial City, I'll have his weakness. He's gonna die for sure."

"Who are you? You sound so arrogant."

"I'm Dongyang Fen, the first prince of the Theocracy."

"Hahahaha..." Meow Meow was clutching its stomach with laughter.

"What's so funny?"

"Well... it's just...." Before it finished, it turned to run. "Darn it! I slept up big time! Darn it! Boss Tianming! Chicken Bro, Tortoise Bro, save meeeeeee!"

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Tianming rushed as fast as he could. "It's fighting someone, but I don't know who!" he said to Ye Lingfeng. Feiling was fully occupied using Temporal Field to increase his speed.

"Will Meow Meow be fine?" Feiling asked anxiously. She had named it herself, so how could she not be nervous?

"It will. It's lazy, not stupid. However, anyone who dares to harm it will die for sure!"

Tianming could see a few intense lightning bolts falling ahead of them. Meow Meow began heading toward him after sensing his presence. Whenever any wildbeasts targeted Tianming, he would immediately slay them. He was now filled with killing intent.

He even burst straight through a spirit hazard of the formation. Soon, the lightning bolts had spread to where Tianming was. He destroyed a dilapidated building and finally saw a bloodied Regal Chaosfiend who was unable to escape. A few wounds were so deep that they showed bone. Even its black fur was charred by flames. It looked to be in really bad shape. Tianming and the others were filled with rage at the sight.

"Meow Meow!" Tianming swung his whip hundreds of meters across and pierced it into the ground near it. Meow Meow immediately shrank and allowed the whip to grab it.

"Return!" Tianming withdrew the whip rapidly, avoiding the attacks that came Meow Meow's way before finally drawing it into his bosom. He picked it up by the skin on the back of its neck. While it was quite bloody, it wasn't too badly injured. It was just a little blacker than before, thanks to the charring.

"You sure took your time! I've been waiting forever!" Its big, blue eyes were shimmering, making it look really pitiful.

"You still dare to say that? Have you learned your lesson?" Tianming asked as he lifted it closer.

"I did...."

"What did you learn?"

"I'll just sleep in the lifebound space from now on."

"Can't you just sleep a little less?!"

"No... I'm too tired.... Can't muster... energy...."

Tianming gave up. "So, can you still fight? Want to get back at him?"

"Of course. That fellow actually dared mess with me... I'm angrier than I've ever been!" Its blue eyes turned crimson again as its ferocious aura seeped out.

"Then deal with it yourself."

"You're not helping?"

"Oh, I will. Imagine tossing the first prince's head to Autarch Yun. I don't know if it can get more badass than that. I've already killed a bunch of his children anyway, so killing his eldest is perfect icing for the cake. I'll make sure to ask him whether he can father children faster than he's losing them to me!"

Tianming then turned to Dongyang Fen, who had caught up and surrounded them as they spoke. Tianming couldn't escape even if he wanted to. Thankfully, he was their sole pursuer.

"You're alone now," Tianming said.

"Hehehe...." Before he even spoke, two of Tianming's lifebound beasts appeared next to him. The moment Meow Meow saw Ying Huo, it instinctively clutched its family jewels.

"I'll teach you a lesson when we get back," Ying Huo said.

"Chicken Bro, have mercy. I've decided to change by sleeping half an hour less per day!"

"Your balls are as good as gone unless you kill this first prince today."

Meow Meow despaired. "It's all that stupid first prince's fault! He must die!"

The Chaos Genesis Thunderfiend was finally getting serious. There was only one choice for them: kill their opponent. Running wasn't an option at all.

### **Chapter 524 - A Hundred Thousand Souls**

"Feng, Dongyang Fen is a sixth level sky saint. He's on the same level as Astral Kings and the Ancient Qilin Clan's exalted ones, and has two lifebound beasts! See if you and the Soulfiend can deal with one of them. Kill it, then support Lan Huang and Ying Huo." Tianming immediately made arrangements.

"Got it!" Ye Lingfeng nodded. There were no other arrangements to be made. Since Lan Huang and Ying Huo were in a group, Tianming naturally paired up with Meow Meow.

Their opponent was powerful, and Tianming could only count on Ye Lingfeng to break the balance with the powerful Soulfierd. Tianming just had to ensure that the battle came to a stalemate.

“Let’s go!” The six of them immediately divided into three groups and ganged up on their enemies. Tianming and Meow Meow faced Dongyang Fen, Ye Lingfeng and the Soulfierd would face one Darkflame Hydra, while Ying Huo and Lan Huang faced the other.

The Darkflame Hydras had eight heads and were eighth-order empyrean beasts with eighty stars. Other than the Nethersea Regalfierd Hydra, they were the second and third eighth-order empyrean beasts Tianming had faced.

The two hydras had already reached adulthood, and their size was roughly similar to Lan Huang. Furthermore, their cultivation surpassed Tianming’s group as well. The gap was enormous, and it hadn’t been easy for Meow Meow to survive.

“Kill!” Ying Huo and Lan Huang charged at a Darkflame Hydra. On the other side, the Soulfierd was riding on the Darkflame Hydra and hammering its six fists down at the eight heads.

Among the three opponents, Dongyang Fen was the strongest. At the same time, Tianming, Meow Meow, and Feiling were also the strongest combination. The two beastmasters briefly stood in confrontation before Tianming charged forth with the Grand-Orient Sword.

“What an insignificant attack. You’re disregarding me?” Dongyang Fen snorted.

“Your siblings and your son died while sharing the same thoughts as you,” Tianming sneered.

Dongyang Fen couldn’t laugh anymore. At this point, only one of them would walk out of this battle alive. “Li Tianming, I won’t let you die today. I’ll make sure that we expend all your value to bring down the Decimo Dao Palace. Young man, don’t get too full of yourself. You’re nothing before the Ancient Theocrats!”

Dongyang Fen took out a Darkflame Sword, a longsword with eighty-two saintly heavenly patterns on it. It was a crimson sword covered in bloody patterns with flames burning on them.

“Don’t you think you’re a little too full of crap for someone who’s about to die? Whatever, you can run your mouth however you like. You won’t be able to say anything even if you want to when I take your head shortly. At that time, you’ll only be able to stare with your eyes open, like your brothers!”

Tianming charged with Meow Meow at his side. There was no need to communicate with their rapport.

Before they even clashed, the two Darkflame Hydras had already executed their abilities, the Flame Purgatory and Magmavenom Sea; the two flames and venoms were tough to handle. Fortunately, Ying Huo and Lan Huang had their shields, but they were having a tough time without Feiling’s assistance. Even so, they had no choice but to bear with it.

“Boss, I was wrong.” Meow Meow’s eyes turned red, seeing so many people putting themselves in danger.

“It’s fine. Who doesn’t have interests and hobbies? Don’t dwell on, we’ll just fuck them up!” Tianming replied through their connection. While they talked, they had already charged over to Dongyang Fen, creating sparks from their collision.

“Not bad. You have some ability after all,” Dongyang Fen sneered.

Tianming held the Grand-Orient Sword, with Invincible Sword Ki surging through the blade as he executed the Shenxiao Sword Art’s fourth move.

When he swung his sword, the fourth move’s fusion brought the Invincible Sword Ki to a whole new level. On the other hand, the Darkflame Sword in Dongyang Fen’s hand was enveloped in green flames, releasing ghastly cries.

“I’ve slain a hundred thousand people, and you’ll just be an insignificant one among them. There are no differences between souls. So don’t think you can do anything you want just because you’re a genius. Even if you were a god, you’d still die when I want you to!” Dongyang Fen brandished his sword, executing the Purgatory Sword Art—Purgatory Incineration.

His sword created an entire world—a purgatory. He had defeated many people with this move, but it was a pity that it was used against the flame-resistant Tianming.

When the two swords clashed, Tianming’s attack released an explosion under Feiling’s Spiritual Attachment. But Dongyang Fen was a sixth-level sky saint, an existence comparable to exalted ones and Astral Kings.

Tianming was covered in blood, wounded by Dongyang Fen’s attack, but he came even more ferociously at him with the Grand-Orient Sword’s sword ki and his own strands of Invincible Sword Ki. His attacks managed to drill several holes into Dongyang Fen’s body.

Tianming was holding the upper hand in that clash. After all, he had brought out all his prowess. Right at that moment, the Regal Chaosfiend appeared and bit Dongyang Fen’s head.

Letting out a scream, Dongyang Fen stabbed his sword into Meow Meow’s neck and tore a huge gash. “Die!!”

“No, you die!!” Meow Meow exploded with lightning. Countless bolts of black lightning pierced through Dongyang Fen’s saint ki. At the same time, Meow Meow’s fangs dug into his neck.

“You’re not afraid of death?” Dongyang Fen sneered and swung his sword at Meow Meow’s head. In the crucial moment, the Three-Thousand Starfield coiled around the Darkflame Sword right before it could stab into the little black cat’s head.

Meow Meow had already lost its mind from the fight. It bit Dongyang Fen once more as Tianming held the struggling Theocrat. It dug its Myriadfiend Venomfang into Dongyang Fen’s chest and unleashed the Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape.

“Get lost!” Dongyang Fen pulled on the Three-Thousand Starfield and swung his sword at Meow Meow. But he missed his attack once more due to Tianming’s hindrance and his sword only managed to stab into Meow Meow’s foreleg.

Meow Meow swung its paw down, smashing onto Dongyang Fen. Taking the huge blow, Dongyang Fen’s body was dyed in his own blood.

“You want to see who’s braver and more ruthless between us?!” Dongyang Fen roared and swung his fist at Meow Meow, sending it rolling on the ground several times. But just when Dongyang Fen managed to get back to his feet, nine lightning bolts struck his head.

“Why not?” An indifferent voice sounded behind Dongyang Fen. Three thousand strands of Invincible Sword Ki combined with the Impereal Sword Formation and stabbed forth.

“Get lost!” Dongyang Fen turned around and swung his sword. It shone brightly in the darkness as he executed the Purgatory Sword Art—Streaking Meteor.

“You’re dead!” Dongyang Fen sneered. But right at that moment, Meow Meow knocked into him from behind, sending him toward Tianming.

Tianming’s sword avoided clashing with the Darkflame Sword and stabbed into Dongyang Fen’s saint palace, exploding it. Spiritual energy started gushing out of Dongyang Fen’s saint palace and dissipating into the air.

“How about that?” Tianming pulled out the Grand-Orient Sword, splitting it apart and chopping Dongyang Fen’s limbs off.

Dongyang Fen fell screaming to the ground with his eyes wide open and his mind blank. When he lowered his head and saw his saint palace destroyed, he knew he was finished. He was like a spiritual energy fountain, gushing out his saint ki.

Bloody tears began rolling down from his cheeks as he watched Meow Meow reduce his amputated limbs to ashes. He couldn’t accept this fact.

“Dongyang Fen, do you still think that you can’t be killed? I’ll kill you now, so watch closely!” Tianming slapped Dongyang Fen’s face, smashing him onto the ground with half of his face caved in.

Dongyang Fen was too confident in himself. He thought he could control the situation, but he never expected Meow Meow would go insane. He was a madman himself, but he was alone, while Meow Meow had Tianming.

And now, he was finished.

“Li Tianming, your outcome will be a hundred thousand times worse than mine!” Dongyang Fen said while crying blood.

“Stop screaming like a madman. Didn’t you think yourself capable? Who are you trying to show your bloody tears to?” Tianming stepped forward.

“It’s just a fluk—”

Dongyang Fen was beheaded before he could even finish his words.

“Enough crap out of you,” Tianming commented. Dongyang Fen stared at Tianming with his eyes wide open, but could no longer speak.

“Even I can’t bear to beat up my cat, but you dare to beat it up? What a piece of trash. So what if you killed a hundred thousand people?” Tianming said and kicked Dongyang Fen’s corpse in the Imperial

City's direction before placing his head together with Dongyang Liu and Dongyang Feng's heads on Lan Huang's back.

"Boss, I didn't embarrass you, right?" Meow Meow looked at Tianming, covered in its own blood. It needed an answer.

"You and your nonsense. Go back and heal up! I'll reward you with ten days of sleep." Tianming grabbed Meow Meow by its neck and tossed it into the lifebound space.

"Yay! Long live the boss!" Meow Meow was madly happy.

How naive. Tianming smiled inwardly. This brat was rejoicing too early. Ten days of sleep? Tianming would drag it out two days from now and force it to cultivate.

As time was pressing, Tianming immediately went to help the others. When he raised his head, he saw Ye Lingfeng and the Soulfiernd slaying a Darkflame Hydra. As for Lan Huang and Ying Huo, they were barely holding on due to the difference in cultivation.

Ye Lingfeng had only managed to kill the hydra by relying on the Soulfiernd and his advantage in the soul, while Tianming had Feiling's Spiritual Attachment. After seeing Dongyang Fen's tragic death, the remaining hydra turned around and immediately ran away.

"Come back, don't bother chasing it," Tianming called out to Lan Huang and Ying Huo, sending them back to the lifebound space. This place was dangerous, and he couldn't risk it. Furthermore, Meow Meow's injuries were severe, and they needed to return immediately to heal up beside the Prime Tower.

Tianming met up with Ye Lingfeng and started running with an army chasing them.

"Who killed my son?!" Autarch Yun's roar echoed out.

"I'm the one who killed your son. Don't feel sad about it—can't you just produce more of them? Go home and immediately start making more children. Who knows, you might be able to bring up a group of pigs eighteen years from now. Hahaha! I'll let you produce more children. Let's see which is faster: your ability to produce children, or mine to kill them!" Tianming's laughter echoed out in the darkness.

In the next second, the Imperial City trembled from Autarch Yun's rage.

## **Chapter 525 - Losing Streak?**

"Tianming."

A black Evernight Eagle flew over. Tianming immediately grabbed onto Ye Lingfeng and jumped onto the eagle. Autarch Yun's men were still chasing behind, but Tianming was calm. Ye Yi's strength was among the top three in the Divine Capital, so Tianming could sit back and relax with him around.

When Ye Yi listened to the movements, he immediately instructed the Evernight Eagle to turn around and fly out of the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation's range. Earlier, Tianming had heard the Evernight Eagle's cry when he killed Dongyang Fen. He even got Lan Huang to use its Primordial Soundwave to provide his position to Ye Yi.



After Lan Huang returned to the lifebound space, the heads placed on its back returned to Tianming's hands. Wrapping them in the Three-Thousand Starfield, Tianming left the battlefield with them hanging down.

"Dongyang Fen?" Ye Yi was stunned.

"Yeah."

"How did he die?" Ye Yi asked in a hoarse voice.

"Feng and I killed him," replied Tianming.

"It seems the Soulfend has grown a lot stronger after consuming so many souls," said Ye Yi.

"We only killed a lifebound beast. Dongyang Fen died in Big Brother Tianming's hands," Ye Lingfeng replied honestly.

"Oh, got it." Ye Yi patted Tianming's shoulder and laughed, "Now that's funny. We were all waiting for your foster father to finish the year of rapid improvement in his cultivation. But unexpectedly, you caught up to him and managed to kill Dongyang Fen while at the earth saint stage. You've given me a huge surprise. The decabane physique is truly heaven-defying."

"I was lucky. It was a tough fight, and my lifebound beast was nearly killed," said Tianming. He had a feeling that he might not be Dongyang Fen's opponent even with three lifebound beasts. That was even taking into account that Feiling was also around. Normally, his strength would be similar to that of Dongyang Liu.

"But you survived, and that's the truth," said Ye Yi. He had rushed over immediately when he heard the news of Tianming staying behind, hoping that he would still be alive when he got there

"You've reached ninth-level earth saint, right? Do you have any confidence in reaching the sky saint stage? It's an evolution, and you'll undergo a transformation if you succeed," said Ye Yi.

"I'll give it a try after we return."

"Good! I'm looking forward to you becoming a sky saint." Ye Yi smiled.

"I won't disappoint you." Tianming paused briefly, then asked, "So, we failed this time?"

"Not exactly. It was part of our plan to force Autarch Yun to use his wildbeasts, so he won't be able to use them next time. According to the plan, Dongyang Yun will only be able to hold on for another month. After that, he'll be finished," said Ye Yi.

It seemed like the elders were pretty confident in their plan. Despite his curiosity, Tianming didn't ask more about it. Right at that moment, a large number of beastmasters and lifebound beasts appeared. They were separated into two factions, Jiang Ling and the Decimo Dao Palace.

It appeared that they had left the battlefield the moment they got news of the wildbeasts. Ye Yi was the commander of Decimo Dao Palace's faction. When the Evernight Eagle descended, Bai Zijun walked over.

Upon seeing Tianming unharmed, he felt relieved and whispered in Ye Yi's ears, "Jiang Ling's underlings, Wei Ji, Chong Yang, and the others are all pressuring us. They feel that the Decimo Dao Palace hasn't done our best, which resulted in their immense loss."

"We've not done our best?" Ye Yi sneered and called out to Tianming. When the other party saw Ye Yi coming over, they gradually calmed down.

"What did you guys say?" Ye Yi asked.

"Brother Ye, please don't misunderstand. They're just complaining among themselves. After all, they were depressed that we gained nothing from this attack." Jiang Ling smiled.

The 'they' he was talking about were naturally his children, the Ancient Clans, and the sects of the nine realms. For example, the Ancient Greedwolf Clan's Wei Ji looked unhappy at this moment and even suggested putting pressure on the Decimo Dao Palace. When Ye Yi wasn't around earlier, they had been looking at Bai Zijun gloomily.

"Gained nothing? Tianming, show the ninth prince your trophies," said Ye Yi.

"Yes!" Tianming shook the Three-Thousand Starfield, tossing the heads wrapped in it before Jiang Ling. All three of them were staring at him with their eyes wide open. "Here's my gift to Your Highness. If you include Dongyang Fengchen's head, you now have two pairs. They were Dongyang Yun's most talented sons, and you can examine them to confirm it."

When everyone looked at the heads, all of them fell into silence. The Ancient Qilin Clan's Jing Yue couldn't help exclaiming, "Dongyang Liu, Dongyang Feng, and Dongyang Fen!"

It was natural that he couldn't help feeling nervous. After all, his strength was only equivalent to Dongyang Fen. Since Dongyang Fen was killed, did that mean that Tianming could also kill him?

"Who would've thought that the brat we casually captured would be so...." The three exalted ones exchanged a look, their eyes trembling. They were already old, and their cultivation was slowly declining. So, looking at Tianming, who was rising in the sky, they couldn't help but feel fear and despair.

Everyone else who saw the three heads fell into a long silence. Suddenly, Jiang Ling asked, "You killed Dongyang Fen?"

"I guess so. I killed him together with my brothers," replied Tianming.

"Not bad. Not bad," said Jiang Ling. As for Wei Ji, Chong Yang, and the others, they kept their mouths shut.

"Who knows if you're lying?" Jiang Liuting mocked.

Tianming merely responded with a smile. There was no need for him to explain, since he didn't need Jiang Ling to reward him.

"Hall Master, I'll head back first," said Tianming.

"Okay." Ye Yi waved his hand.

After Tianming left, Jiang Ling dispersed everyone around him, leaving behind only his core members. Ye Yi spoke out in a grave tone, "Your Highness, it's good enough that we managed to sever Dongyang Yun's lineage today. I don't want to say it clearly, but do keep in mind that the Decimo Dao Palace doesn't need to support you."

"How dare you!" Wei Ji glared.

"Shut up," Jiang Ling rebuked, and Wei Ji could only gnash his teeth and suck it up.

"Brother Ye, I can feel the dao palace's sincerity in how straightforward you are with your words. For today's matter, I apologize to the dao palace on behalf of everyone," said Jiang Ling.

"That's not necessary. We just don't want to sacrifice our lives or tolerate the gossip of others," said Ye Yi.

"Never again," replied Jiang Ling. He was very tolerant. The Decimo Dao Palace was a double-edged sword to him, but he didn't have a choice. If he didn't use them, someone else would. If it wasn't for the enormous losses in the internal conflict between lions, how would he be so courteous to a cheetah?

"We'll have to wait until next month to destroy Dongyang Yun. But there's two problems that we have to solve before that. First, the wildbeasts in the Divine Capital must be cleaned up. Second, we have to conquer Dongyang Yun's territory in the Abyssal Battlefield. The Decimo Dao Palace is willing to solve one of the two for you," said Ye Yi.

"Since that's the case, the Decimo Dao Palace can handle the wildbeasts. We'll turn our focus to the Abyssal Battlefield and seal off the passage. Dongyang Yun's men will only be able to hole up in the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation. If they don't dare to step out, taking down the Abyssal Battlefield will be easy," replied Jiang Ling.

His subordinates had some comments of their own, but none of them dared to speak out. After all, it was easier to clear out the wildbeasts wrecking havoc in the Divine Capital.

"Sure. The Decimo Dao Palace will clean up the wildbeasts for you. As long as Your Highness conquers the Abyssal Battlefield, Autarch Yun won't be able to use this tactic again. And next month, he can only wait for his death to arrive," said Ye Yi.

"Then I'll express my gratitude to the dao palace on behalf of the Ancient Theocrats beforehand," said Jiang Ling.

"There's no need to thank us. Now that the world is in chaos, we're responsible for helping out as part of the Divine Capital," replied Ye Yi.

"I'll definitely live up to the hopes of my friends from the Decimo Dao Palace. The Theocracy of the Ancients will only get better in the future," Jiang Ling said seriously.

"Peace and prosperity is the common aspiration of everyone in the world. Dongyang Yun is oppressive and inhumane, so everyone is naturally together with you to take him down." Exchanging a glance, the two of them smiled.

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The Imperial Palace had been reduced to ruins, thanks to Autarch Yun. Amidst the cloud of dust, the officials stood outside with their heads down, too afraid to speak. At most, they only dared to whisper among themselves.

“The enemies must’ve known about the wildbeasts beforehand. That’s to be expected, but I never thought that the three princes would die...” Zhao Shenhong said to Huang Yanhuan, the Grand Divine Marshal.

“Some of His Majesty’s heirs died in the Tomb of the Ancients, and he lost another three in today’s battle. All of His Majesty’s capable heirs are dead. Even if he tries producing more now, who knows when we’ll hear the good news. After all, His Majesty is almost a hundred years old,” Huang Chonghuan sighed.

The situation had started collapsing with Dongyang Fengchen’s death. Now that the Imperial Palace was destroyed, did that mean something? Zhao Shenhong and Huang Chonghuan exchanged a glance. They could see the complicated emotions in each other’s eyes.

“I bet the princes were all killed by Li Tianming. His Majesty didn’t get rid of the threat early, and now....”

“It’s not that he didn’t want to get rid of the threat, but the dao palace protected him too well,” said Huang Chonghuan.

“Why does it seem like we’re on a losing streak?” Zhao Shenhong whispered through his teeth.

“Don’t talk nonsense!” Huang Chonghuan glared at him. Right at that moment, a man with bloodshot eyes walked out of the Imperial Palace. He looked terrifying, and many people took a step back.

“My condolences, Your Majesty!” Everyone dropped to their knees.

“Listen up!” Autarch Yun swept them with his gaze and said, “Anyone who manages to kill Li Tianming will be conferred the State Prime Minister!”

Everyone was thrilled when they heard that; even Huang Chonghuan was tempted by the position. He immediately said, “Please be assured, Your Majesty. Since the dao palace was bold enough to send that brat out, we’ll destroy him no matter what!”

## **Chapter 526 - Nightmare Oceanfiend**

After Jiang Ling’s faction left, the Seven Astral Legions still surrounded the Imperial City, sealing it off. Soon, the wildbeasts from the Abyssal Battlefield charged out of the Sun-Moon Imperial Formation. The behemoths seemed excited when they looked at the ruins; the spiritual energy here was more comfortable than the Abyssal Battlefield.

Tens of thousands of wildbeasts had appeared. If the Decimo Dao Palace did nothing to stop them, they would wreak havoc in the Divine Capital. There were still a few citizens in the city, and if these wildbeasts were let loose, they could tear the capital apart.

“Dark Astral Battalion, take care of the Bluelaw District in the southeast,” Bai Zijun gave out an order.

“Roger!” Tianming immediately headed there with his battalion and settled into a defensive formation. It didn’t take long for the wildbeasts to appear before them. They became even more violent when they saw humans—there were at least a thousand of them coming after Tianming alone.

“Big Brother, will Autarch Yun send someone together with the wildbeasts to come after you?” Jiang Feiling asked.

“That’s a possibility, but you don’t have to worry about it. Hall Master Ye Yi is nearby.” Tianming smiled.

“Why can’t I see him?”

“That’s because he’s in the dark. What do you think? Am I not awesome?”

“Super....” Feiling couldn’t take Tianming’s bragging anymore and went along with it.

“It’s good that you know I’m ‘super.’” Tianming said with an ambiguous smile. He swung out the Three-Thousand Starfield, hitting a wildbeast’s leg three thousand meters away. The gigantic beast immediately collapsed to the ground with its leg broken.

“Prepare to move out!”

“Fire the abilities!”

The wildbeasts wouldn’t pose any threat to the Dark Astral Battalion, due to their low intelligence. It would be trouble if they encountered the wildbeasts within the formation, but since they were just defending, it was only a matter of time before they cleared out the wildbeasts. Lan Huang and Ying Huo joined the fight, and Meow Meow was recovering from its injuries.

It’s been some time since I’ve gone to the Abyssal Battlefield. Let’s see if there are any suitable abilities to stimulate their bloodline shackles, Tianming pondered inwardly. Together with Ying Huo, he charged into the wildbeast horde.

These were all demon beasts, and their awakened abilities were equivalent to Saintbeast War-Souls. In the past, there was a high chance of a Saintbeast War-Soul awakening abilities for Tianming’s lifebound beasts. But as they gradually unlocked their abilities, their chances to unlock more decreased.

Tianming killed dozens of wildbeasts and refined them into Saintbeast War-Souls, but Ying Huo and Lan Huang couldn’t use them. Ying Huo had too many abilities, while Lan Huang was probably a lifebound beast without many abilities.

An hour later, wildbeasts corpses littered the ground. The battalion was ganging up on the wildbeasts. When they encountered a powerful demon beast, they would even increase their advantage to thirty or forty to one to prevent casualties.

Everyone stood their ground as they hadn’t received any orders to retreat. At the moment, the wildbeasts were only coming out in small numbers. But all of a sudden, Tianming heard a woman singing.

When Tianming raised his head, he saw that the ground had turned into an ocean.

“The ground turned into an ocean?” Tianming was stunned.

“What’s this?” Liu Yuyi squinted his eyes into slits.

“It should be the ability of a wildbeast. It’s likely to be from a sixth-order demon beast!” Chen Fang suddenly became nervous.

“Sixth-order demon beast?” Tianming knew that it belonged to a high-tier demon beast, but weren’t there only a few of them in the Theocracy’s Abyssal Battlefield? So how would one appear here?

A wildbeast of that level was comparable to a seventh-level sky saint. But Tianming wasn’t too worried with Ye Yi nearby. When the ocean spread over him, the singing became clearer. Many warriors of the Dark Astral Battalion were drawn into the music. Some of them had fury on their faces, while some of them had sorrow—someone was manipulating them!

“What a terrifying ability,” Tianming sighed.

All of a sudden, the surface of the water rippled. A fog enveloped the battalion and nine beauties appeared from the ocean. All of them looked beautiful and perfect, and had bare chests.

They possessed an innate charm, bewitching others with their every action. Many warriors were blankly staring at them. They were fully submerged in the singing and got manipulated, walking toward the ocean with a dull face.

“Roar!” Tianming suddenly instructed Lan Huang.

Lan Huang stretched out its necks and unleashed a roar, drowning out the singing with its deafening roar.

“What’s going on?” Many people woke up from being bewitched.

“Everyone, take a close look at them. Do you still think they’re beauties?” Tianming asked.

When everyone woke up, they looked down at the ocean and saw a black python. The python didn’t have any snake heads, but the nine beauties that they had just seen. It was a nine-headed snake, but the heads were nine half-naked women. Just what kind of wildbeast was this?

“I know it! It’s the sixth-order demon beast, a Nightmare Oceanfiend! It’s proficient in illusion and water!” Chen Fang yelled. When everyone heard it was a sixth-order demon beast, many of them panicked and backed off.

“It’s fine. This one still hasn’t reached adulthood. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be able to resist its illusion. It’s still a youngling, with a strength roughly equivalent to a fifth-order demon beast. General, we should be able to deal with it,” Chen Fang smiled.

“Let me try.” Tianming could sense that the other party’s aura was slightly weaker than the legendary sixth-order demon beasts. Its strength should be equivalent to a fifth-level Sky saints.

“The Nightmare Oceanfiend’s ability is terrifying. Please be careful,” said Chen Fang.

“That’s exactly what I’m after!” Tianming charged over with the Grand-Orient Sword. Ying Huo and Lan Huang also rushed out at the same time.

The Nightmare Oceanfiend had turned the ground into an ocean. It was even better than an Oceanspirit Tome, and was Lan Huang's home ground. Tianming summoned the Celestial Wings and flew into the sky.

"Kill it!" The Nightmare Oceanfiend was already filled with resentment when Lan Huang broke its ability. The nine beauties' eyes quickly turned red as fangs grew out of their mouths, and the snake charged at Lan Huang.

It probably considered Lan Huang as its enemy. But when it fought with the two-headed Lan Huang, it realized that Tianming was the real nightmare. Three thousand strands of Invincible Sword Ki and the Impereal Sword Formation empowered the Shenxiao Sword Art's fourth move. His sword pierced directly through the ocean and stabbed into the Nightmare Oceanfiend.

Tianming started cutting off its heads. This demon beast was powerful, but it was still too young and hadn't reached maturity. The growth of top-tier wildbeasts was filled with dangers. Not only did they have to comprehend Heavenly Will, but they also needed time to grow stronger.

Therefore, most top-tier wildbeasts would choose to hide when they were still young. This Nightmare Oceanfiend was just a little too rash.

"Wooooooo...." The Nightmare Oceanfiend cried just before it died. Its abilities might be useful against others, but it was nothing to Lan Huang, who had a loud voice.

"Lan Huang, try that War-Soul!" Tianming immediately refined the Saintbeast War-Soul and handed it to Lan Huang. The terrain hadn't changed back to normal, even after the Nightmare Oceanfiend's death.

It seemed that the Nightmare Oceanfiend's ability had a permanent effect on the terrain. Rumor had it that the Nightmare Oceanfiend usually feasted upon humans by transforming the landscape around it into a stretch of ocean.

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In the Dazzling City located to the north, Meng Tingyu came and reported on the situation with a concerned tone, "Your Majesty, has Gusu Li reported the current situation in the Divine Capital to you?"

Due to the white veil she wore to cover her face, her anxiety couldn't be seen.

"Yeah." A gentle snort came from behind the doors.

"I heard that Dongyang Yun destroyed the Imperial Palace," said Meng Tingyu.

"That fits his personality," an elderly voice replied. Meng Tingyu could tell that the old man didn't sound angry, which made her feel somewhat relieved.

"Your Majesty, I've gotten Gusu Li to make arrangements for the remaining three hundred thousand fishes. She'll personally head to the Earthorigin Realm to screen them herself. And unless absolutely necessary, she won't create any commotion," said Meng Tingyu.

"Very well."

"One more thing. I've gathered some information about Li Tianming's birth."

"Speak."

"He comes from a small kingdom in the Grand-Orient Realm. His mother is weak, and he has the remote bloodline of the Li Saint Clan. He also has an adoptive father who's crippled. Surprisingly, no one knows about his real father. But I have a very strange piece of information about him."

"Carry on."

"Li Tianming has an elder who's the childhood sweetheart of his mother. But they disappeared half a year ago. I heard they went to travel around," said Meng Tingyu.

"Is there anything particularly strange about that?"

"Yeah. The name of Li Tianming's mother is Wei Jing, and that elder of his is named Mu Yang."

Suddenly, sounds of something being smashed could be heard. The door opened, and the old man said, "Go to the Grand-Orient Realm."

### **Chapter 527: Letter from Li Muyang**

Along their way to the Grand-Orient Realm, Meng Tingyu's long white dress and hair fluttered in the wind. "Your Majesty, that small country is called Vermillion Bird. However, anyone related to Li Tianming is now within the Grand-Orient Sect's Bloodbane Formation. Even the king of that small country was made an elder of the sect."

The old man beside her was dressed in dirty, tattered robes and had unkempt hair. He looked just like a beggar. The auras the two of them gave off were vastly different. It was hard to imagine why Meng Tingyu would do the bidding of someone like him.

"This Li Wudi is truly careful," said the old man.

"That's right. Dongyang Yun used all sorts of methods to try luring them out of the Bloodbane Formation, but to no avail. With the help of the Decimo Dao Palace, any troops sent to attack them ended up killed."

"For someone to be able to thread the line between life and death for fourteen years is no small feat. It's a shame that while he was born in my Theocracy, he won't be of good use to me." The old man sighed.

"Your Majesty's grand plan will soon come to fruition. By then, Your Majesty can act in a personal capacity. As long as Weisheng Yunxi falls, both Li Wudi and Li Tianming will be lambs you can dispose of at any time. Your Majesty has picked an opportune time; these two would only be even harder to deal with in a few more years."

"Are you certain that Li Wudi isn't Li Tianming's biological father?"

"I'm not too sure. These matters are obscured by too many rumors and half truths, so certainty is hard to come by. All we know is that his biological father is a mysterious figure."

"Your mission is to infiltrate the Grand-Orient Sect and draw out all crucial personages of Vermillion Bird, especially Wei Jing's father. Perhaps he knows something."



"Understood! In fact, this person is Mu Yang's master; it was he who took him in. Does Your Majesty suspect Mu Yang to be related to Li Muyang in some way?"

"Impossible. I personally killed Li Muyang. His corpse has been sealed up by me for more than four decades, and is now reduced to dust! However, the name can't be just a coincidence. There must be more to it." Though the old man looked a little ragged and tired, his brows were deeply furrowed in thought. It was apparent that such developments were far beyond the limits of his imagination. All of a sudden, he opened his eyes wide.

"The exalted ones of the Ancient Qilin Clan said that they found Li Muyang and the Cyclic Mirror in the Grand-Orient Realm. I wonder if the Li Muyang they mentioned is related to this Mu Yang?"

"I'm not aware. After all, Mu Yang can't possibly possess the Cyclic Mirror, right?"

"Once we return, send someone to get in touch with the Ancient Qilin Clan and ask them all about the details of this matter."

"Understood!"

.....

They had arrived at the Grand-Orient Realm. Before them stood the Bloodbane Formation that spanned a mountain range. Outsiders could scarcely see through it.

"My dear Yu, you managed to become an eighth-level sky saint at such a young age. You possess far more talent than my own kin, and stand a chance at becoming an empyrean saint. As I still can't act, I'll leave this to you. I trust that with your capabilities as a four star patternscribe, you'll easily be able to catch a nameless nobody, right?"

"The Bloodbane Formation is a five-star heavenly pattern formation. While I'm not too familiar with those, I'll give it a try."

"'Try' isn't good enough. Do it."

"Definitely!"

"Now go," he said with a hint of love. "If only Jing'er were as obedient as you are...."

"The Skyfate Princess knows not the true extent of your love for her. It's such a shame."

"Such is life, it always has its ups and downs. An old man like me would know. Now go. Get me Wei Tiancang. I'll use my secret art to search through his memories."

"Okay!"

Wei Jing had told Wei Tiancang about Li Muyang and Eastgod Mountain before. If he ended up captured, the old man would find out about it.

.....

Meng Tingyu was covered in white fog like an ethereal illusion as she floated gently into the Bloodbane Formation. The old man waited outside, leaning against a tree with his eyes closed to rest.

Suddenly, savage laughter came from within the formation. "Where'd this beauty come from? Someone as pretty as you should know that our sect master is maintaining his celibacy! Don't force me to do something nasty to you! Well, since you're already here, you might as well stay and enjoy our hospitality! We have the finest wines here, so do take a sip before you leave! What? You don't intend to humor me? Then kneel and enjoy my touching performance!"

All of a sudden, sounds of battle rang out from beyond the formation. The old man gave it a slightly pained glance.

"Save me!" Meng Tingyu cried in desperation, then the battle stopped. An hour later, nothing could be heard. The old man's gaze didn't waver one bit. By the time he turned around, boundless killing intent gathered around him, causing the greenery in a thousand-meter radius around him to wilt.

.....

The Seven Astral Legions spent a day to sweep the Divine Capital of wildbeasts, almost wiping them all out. When it was over, news came from Jiang Ling that the area of the Second Divine Capital at the Abyssal Battlefield had been occupied. In the coming days, their patternscribes would construct new heavenly pattern formations to seal up the path through to the underside, stopping Dongyang Yun from using the wildbeasts. Currently, Dongyang Yun could do naught but wait for his reckoning within the Imperial City.

Tianming's Dark Astral Battalion had returned to the Decimo Dao Palace. Before that, Lan Huang refined the Nightmare Oceanfiend's soul, managing to break some bloodline shackles and awakening a new ability called Azure Oceanic Purgatory.

It was an ability that allowed it to turn muddy surfaces into water like the Nightmare Oceanfiend could. At its peak, it could even turn a landmass into an ocean, and that effect was irreversible.

This ability couldn't be used just anywhere, though—for instance, the tomb. But when it could be, it would be able to unleash even more power than an Oceanspirit Tome.

The Nightmare Oceanfiend had two abilities, the other one a kind of mesmerizing skill. It was a shame that Lan Huang hadn't managed to inherit it. After all, its voice was so loud that fine tunes like that were unsuited to it.

Lan Huang was a mountain and water-type beast. Tianming figured that it had another ability to make land out of water, but it hadn't unlocked it yet. With that ability, Lan Huang could basically carry around a battlefield most suited for it wherever it went, and that would render the Oceanspirit Tome obsolete.

.....

"Tianming, the palace lord wants to see you about your father, Li Muyang," said Bai Zijin, who had been waiting for his return. "Hall Lord, Astral Kings, the Palace Lord also wants the rest of you to follow."

"Alright, lets go."

Tianming, Ye Yi, and the seven Astral Kings sped toward the ten sacred halls while the legionnaires returned to their posts.

"We're here, Palace Lord," Ye Yi said.

"Come in."

When they entered, they saw Bai Mo and the other Hall Kings there.

"Tianming," Weisheng Yunxi said as she waved at him.

"Is there news about my father?" he anxiously asked.

"Someone sent a message and signed it in the name of Li Muyang. Look." She handed him a strip of paper, which read 'Palace Lord Weisheng, I didn't take the Cyclic Mirror back then. The Theocrats still have it. Please investigate the missing people in the last four decades in the Theocracy. —Li Muyang.'

When Tianming finished reading the letter, he handed it to Ye Yi and the rest. Their expressions were grim after they read it.

"So if the Cyclic Mirror is still with the Theocrats, why'd they blame Li Muyang for its theft? What's their aim?" Ye Yi asked.

"Perhaps they're trying to look like they're no longer using the mirror to boost their cultivation when they're actually still doing it in secret," Weisheng Yunxi said.

Initially, they had thought that the Theocrats would weaken after losing the mirror. It would only be exacerbated by the internal strife between Dongyang Yun and Jiang Ling. However, that didn't seem to be the case now.

"Then, is it now with Dongyang Yun or Jiang Ling?" Ye Yi asked. Everyone shook their heads.

"My guess would be Jiang Ling. That might be the reason Dongyang Yun is trying to have him killed. It might also explain why Jiang Ling dared to accept our help," Bai Mo reasoned.

"We can't be sure of that. It could be that Dongyang Yun has it, since he's more powerful, probably as a result of using the mirror for his cultivation," Ye Yi said.

"There's no point in guessing blind. Let's investigate the missing people within the Theocracy as Li Muyang suggested. Something as large as the Cyclic Mirror is hard to hide. We have to see who did the deed. Only then will we have some answers. The Cyclic Mirror is an incredibly troublesome thing. We have to prepare ourselves to face it."

"Understood!"

"Wait," Tianming said when he got the slip back. "Why does the handwriting look similar to Uncle Yang's?"

Back then, he had gotten a paper slip that came with the box Archfiend was kept in. He took it out and compared it—it was identical.

Who is Uncle Yang?

Tianming then explained it to them.

"He's Li Muyang, your father!" Bai Mo said agitatedly.

"It can't be. Uncle Yang is only at Heavenly Will. Not to mention, he was raised by my grandfather. That much is certain," Tianming said.

"How could it be?"

"I'm sure of it. He's my mother's childhood friend."

"What's your mother called?"

"Wei Jing."

Everyone exchanged confused glances.

"What in the world is going on?"

"The cycle of reincarnation? Does it really exist? It can't be," Ye Yi pondered.

"We'll discuss this later. Let's find the missing people, first," Weisheng Yunxi ordered. "Get to it."

"Understood!"

Tianming firmly refused to believe that Li Muyang and Mu Yang were related in any capacity. However, he suddenly recalled what Wei Jing had told him. 'The next time you meet, he'll be your father....'

"Don't tell me it really is him... Now that Autarch Qian has died, nobody in the Divine Capital will be able to subdue him. So why didn't he just come straight to see me?" Tianming wanted to see him too, regardless of whether he was Mu Yang or Li Muyang. "Palace Lord, please tell me anything you hear about my father."

"Will do. I've already sent people to seek him out near the Divine Capital. Perhaps there's a reason why he can't just show up now. Don't worry too much about it."

"What about the mirror? Will it be troublesome to deal with?"

"It's fine. I still have a method I can use."

Hearing that relieved Tianming. He returned to his residence and began breaking through to the sky saint stage.

### **Chapter 528: Mirror Lake Fish Soup**

Moonseeker Pavillion was entirely illuminated at night, save for the topmost floor. There was a woman wearing a fierce expression in the darkness, slowly ascending the stairs till she reached the top floor.

She stood in front of the door for a moment, then said, "Pavillion Lord, it's Gu Suli. I have finished tending to the matter you asked me to handle. The three hundred thousand people of the Earthorigin Sect have arrived in utmost secrecy. Nobody is aware of their presence."

The top floor was really quiet without a single word to be heard, but Gu Suli knew that there were others within.

"Since that's the case, I'll return to the Divine Capital. The battle has been rather chaotic lately, and Dazzling Pavillion hasn't been doing too well either. Too many business connections have been cut off,"

Gu Suli continued. Even after that, there was no response from the top floor, which she thought to be rather fishy. This was Meng Tingyu's turf, so why wasn't she answering her?

"Pavillion Lord, are you there?" she asked. Still, no response.

"Perhaps something happened. I'm coming in to take a look. Forgive my intrusion."

After she said that, she knocked the door, pushed it open, and entered with her guard up. In the darkness, she saw an old man dressed in tattered rags sitting by the window and looking at the Divine Capital in the distance.

"Who are you?!" she snapped. While she was speaking, she armed herself and summoned her lifebound beast.

The old man didn't say anything, just gradually turned to her.

"Au—Autarch Qian! Your Majesty!" Her eyes were wide with her mouth agape. She wasn't aware that Autarch Qian was still alive. The reason Meng Tingyu had her seek out three hundred thousand people suddenly dawned on her. Meng Tingyu had been doing Autarch Qian's bidding the whole time.

"Gu Suli, come here," he said with a wave.

"Yes!" She shivered as she tried to feign an expression of delight. "So Your Majesty is still healthy and well! I'm happy for Your Majesty!"

All kinds of thoughts flashed through her head as she began to feel the presence of a grand conspiracy.

"Oh, are you really?" Autarch Qian smiled. Gu Suli was now right in front of him.

"I pay my respects to Your Majesty!" she said, prostrating herself before him and not daring to raise her head.

"Very well. It's a shame. It would've been fine if you had just finished your job, but you had to come in."

"Your Majesty?"

Wham! The old man struck her head as fast as lightning. She fell to the ground with her brains spilling out and eyes open in confusion.

A butterfly lifebound beast went charging out of the room, only to be torn apart by a few other beasts at the entrance. It didn't even manage to shriek from the pain before it died. Blood was spilled all over the place.

"I'm sorry. It's a crucial moment and I can't trust you." He tore the curtain apart, wiped his hands, and left after stepping over Gu Suli's corpse. At the entrance was the gigantic beast in the darkness that had eaten the butterfly. It had nine huge heads, all of which were still chewing on dead butterfly.

"Yu really had it hard over the years, hiding the matter of the Cyclic Mirror. She even managed to send hundreds of thousands of little fish here without drawing any attention. It's truly impressive," said the beast.

"She did well. Back then, her mother was the one who helped me do it, but now, it was her turn. It's too bad that she won't be able to escape this catastrophe either. I just hope that she'll at least survive after all this. Without her around, I won't be able to enjoy my little fish without anyone noticing any longer. Back then, I'd always be cursed by those do-gooders. It seems that using Dazzling Pavillion's trade connections to hide this paid off well," the old man said.

"Won't she expose your plan?" asked the beast.

"No. She knows that some things can't be revealed, even in the face of death. Otherwise, their family and everything in Dazzling Pavilion will no longer exist," said the old man.

"What if she does reveal the secrets then?"

"It won't matter. My little fish are already here. It's time for the final act, so a little more fanfare isn't unwelcome either. Even if she doesn't reveal it, I'll still lure Weisheng Yunxi out to see this. I'll show her my culinary magnum opus, the Mirror Fish Soup."

"Let's begin!"

"Sure."

The man and beast descended to the nearby lake. It was perfectly circular, and resembled a mirror when viewed from above. However, the sky tonight was especially dark, causing the lake itself to look rather gloomy too.

The gigantic beast landed on the surface of the lake. Even though it looked so huge, it had an angelic singing voice that was incredibly charming and dreamlike. The whole area now felt as serene as Romance River; it had some quality that seemed to resonate with the soul.

As its singing spread out, people started coming out of a nearby fog bank. Their faces were adorned with ecstatic smiles. They held their lovers, relatives, and siblings and came without stopping.

They were mostly young adults and children. The children were just as happy as the rest. They didn't know they were being lulled by the song. They danced merrily and played catch along the way to the lake.

There were so many people that it filled one's vision. The smiles remained on their faces the entire time. When the first person stepped into the lake, it was as if the rest weren't able to see it and continued forward.

"My fishies, get into the pot," the old man said with a joyous smile that allowed him to blend in well with the blissful crowd. The water level of the lake started off low, but it grew deeper and deeper. As the people advanced, they were eventually fully submerged, but that didn't stop them from pressing onward. They all had some beast ki in them that allowed them to stay submerged for some time. Some of them even intentionally tried to go deeper to make space for the others to come.

"Don't hurry, take your time. Everyone here has their place. Each little fish will be able to take part in the honorable contribution to the longevity and prosperity of the Theocracy. This old man is but a humble guide who'll show you the way," the old man said.

After two hours, the lake was filled with people. They were like packed dumplings that were swelling slightly from the water. Many of them were submerged underneath, with only some tens of heads poking out from the surface. It went without saying that the experience was bound to be unpleasant, yet the smiles still hadn't vanished from the ones submerged at the very bottom of the lake.

"Fishies, you really are so vigorous and filled with energy," the old man said as he levitated in mid air. "Have you cleaned up the lifebound beasts? I can't afford any impurities in my fish soup."

"Don't worry, they've been dealt with," said one of the nine heads of the beast, the other eight still chewing away.

"Even though this isn't the first time, it won't be the last either. I'm feeling a little pumped... It must've been too long since I've had a chance to sate my appetite. Even though this can't compare to the Divine Capital's Cyclic Mirror Lake, it's still better, thanks to the privacy it affords. Nobody will be able to disrupt my cooking.

"There's always those who go on and on about righteousness and justice, but they don't know what those really mean when it really comes to it. Cultivation is the act of fighting the heavens and the earth. There's too many mortals in this world, and they're nothing but meaningless numbers. There's no reason someone exceptional shouldn't be worth more than ten million mundane people. Nor is there any such thing as right apart from the things you're able to do in this world. If this isn't righteous, why would the gods create the Cyclic Mirror Lake? It can't just be a whimsical decoration, right?" He shook his head and clicked his tongue.

"You seem talkative today. Feeling hesitant?" the beast asked.

"Oh, no, you're wrong. This isn't hesitation. My will to do this has never wavered. However, I just feel a little tired explaining this to everyone that asks. So, keeping it in has made me feel rather lonely."

"Solace is the only way through which one can take back their destiny from the heavens. Even if one becomes an empyrean saint, they'll only be able to live for five hundred years. At our age, all that remains is deterioration, suffering, and aging. I don't want this. I don't let my thoughts wander that deep like you. All I'm doing is trying to survive. That's all there is," said the beast.

"That's right. Five hundred years is far too short. Back in the day, we were young and powerful. It felt like we could rule the world. Yet in the blink of an eye, we're at the edge of our life. It hurts.... It really does. The way of the heavens is merciless. We've been forced to do this by the heavens. In fact, the way I see it, the heavens give birth to too many people. It would be better to consider some of them fish... I shall eat the fish and drink the soup. It's only reasonable.

"In the future, when there are fewer humans and more fish, humans will be able to live longer lives. Imagine living for millennia without worry. Now that's life. Even though I'm the autarch of my own Theocracy, I can only live for five hundred years, yet these fish can't even live up to a hundred. How am I any different from these puny fish? That won't do... Did I do something wrong to deserve this? That can't be. We Theocrats have flourished from ancient times until now, using this very method without any so-called punishment from the heavens. That means that what we're doing is right. What is right is what is permitted."

"Alright, let's begin."

"Great. Let's start cooking the soup!" The old man wiped away his tears and looked joyful once more. "Come to me, my dear!" He opened his arms wide.

At that moment, the bottom of the lake glowed white, causing the water to suddenly shimmer. From up high, it looked like there was another moon in the reflection of the lake. The lake water turned milky white, and the people within bubbled and steamed as if they were being boiled in soup.

"Now, time to up the heat. Once they're smoking a little, slide the fish in and flip it after some time. Add a few pieces of garlic and some water, as well as chopped onions. For seasoning, use half a spoonful of vinegar and sugar. Then, let it simmer. Half an hour later, the soup will turn white. Continue simmering under high heat. In the end, add some garnish and it's ready to serve! Wow, it smells fragrant indeed!"

The old man watched as the people in the lake began melting into a white substance. Their smiles of bliss persisted even as they melted. Countless white souls gathered together and sank into the depths of the lake, forming a mirror within.

"It's done! Perfect!"

### **Chapter 529 - Prime Tower Opens**

"Let's enjoy the feast, my brother!" The old man stretched out his hand, causing the mirror to surface from the bottom of the lake and fall into his hand. It was a completely smooth mirror the size of his palm that pulsed with a soft glow from time to time. Within it, countless smiling faces could be seen. Conversely, the lake had darkened and nothing could be seen within any longer.

"How fatty," the old man said with resignation. After that, he cultivated at the lakeside with the gigantic beast. By the time day broke, the old man stood straighter than he could before; the flush of youth had returned to his face and all of his white hair had turned black. He also had fewer wrinkles than before.

Now he only looked to be in his fifties, much younger and more vigorous than he used to be. The beast was similarly rejuvenated. As they stood side by side, the sun rose from the east and illuminated the realm.

"It's beautiful..." the old man said.

"Are you going to be all melancholic again like you were yesterday?" The beast's scales sparkled in the sunlight.

"I can't help it. The little fishies really were too pitiful. I hope they don't blame me for it. I was forced to do this. It's not like I wanted to be forced to fight the heavens for my own fate. It isn't an easy feat at all. From now on, I'll rule over this boundless realm. I'll improve it and make sure their sacrifice was worth it. That way, the fish's sacrifice will be the best thing that ever could've happened to them! I will have become them!" The old man laughed with the innocence of a child, almost maniacally.

"You're sick in the mind. Ever since Jiang Lingjing died, you started going raving mad. She was just an adoptive daughter, did you really have to go so far for her?"

"What do you know? I raised her myself and taught her everything she knew, including how to talk! I watched her grow up! There's attachment there, you know!" "What about those sons of yours? How do you explain the lack of attachment?"



"Well, when you get too many children it stops being fresh."

"What about those fishies? Do they not have feelings too?"

"Old friend, we don't call those feelings. They're merely impulses."

.....

Within Tianming's residence in the Decimo Dao Palace was a wide training room. Tianming had been cooped up within for his breakthrough to Sky Saint for a few days now.

"The sky saint stage will cause my flesh and blood to transform once more. My earth saint ki will also become sky saint ki, which will allow my body to levitate. This transformation will cause my body to lighten. The chains of the earth will no longer bind me."

That was the main change of the sky saint stage. Once one was liberated from earth's bindings, they would be able to soar through the skies and see the wider world. That was fundamentally different from Tianming's usual flight using Celestial Wings.

However, that wasn't the only perk of being a Sky Saint. Instead, becoming one meant gaining the right to continue making progress toward the empyrean saint stage. Being in the sky was the first prerequisite for that.

Tianming held the Grand-Orient Sword in hand and peered into it using his black and gold eyes. His black arm was touching the heavenly patterns on the dark gold door. After obtaining the Primordial God-Emperor's legacy, he had become the true wielder of the sword and could better understand its intricacies.

His Imperial Will had also grown. This was the harder part of becoming a Sky Saint. The other part was the transformation of his body itself, which Tianming was well prepared for. As long as he cultivated using the codexes of Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Lan Huang, he would be able to achieve it. He had a feeling that, given his current state, it would take around twenty days for the transformation to be complete. He instead needed to focus on the growth of his Heavenly Will.

By cultivating the Imperial Will, he got a shortcut. Throughout his battles with the Theocrats, he had a lot of questions, and all of the answers could be found within the Grand-Orient Sword. His Imperial Will was, in essence, the accumulation of his own experiences and the arcane mysteries within the Grand-Orient Sword.

"The laws of nature apply to all of existence. Since there are laws, they must be like the laws of humans. While they're strict, there'll definitely be loopholes. Those who cheat the system using those loopholes may think they've achieved greatness, but they can't lie to themselves. The true imperial path is to fix the loopholes of the natural laws. Those that attempt to cheat the system shall be killed. Through this benevolence, the realm shall be awed.

"If the realm grows prosperous, its ruler shall naturally ascend and be able to stand tall while doing so. The Theocrats think that they managed to cheat the world and reap it for their own benefit. They're nothing but parasites. Even nature has its laws. Robbing others of what they have is lawless. They aren't lawful denizens of the world, but rather a ghostly blight!"

As his heavenly will grew, he found a point in the arcane from which he would begin to pave and forge his own path and identity. He thought back to the words Mu Yang had left him.

Tianming, one doesn't yearn for life on the path of cultivation, but rather mastery over their arts, not doing anything against their conscience, and repaying favors and grudges. From now on, you must be staunch and resolute; you can't just do as you like. A righteous man will eradicate all the evils in the world in pursuit of his personal justice! Only those who walk the right path will gain endless strength.

The righteous man, the imperial ruler, and the realm.

"Only by uplifting the masses can I truly rise. The righteous elevation of others is the true and lawful path!"

Tianming's eyes burned with passion. He had finally found himself after rising up the stairs of his growth. His Imperial Will would continue growing, one day reaching the requirements to break through to the empyrean saint stage.

The Grand-Orient Sword in his sea of consciousness became even tougher and sharper, symbolizing his unshakeable will. Will was something intangible, yet it was the key difference in both cultivation and battle. This was what defined Tianming, apart from his talent.

There were two people who mainly helped shape his will to what it was now. The first was Li Wudi, who, after fourteen years of suffering from his predicament, broke through and experienced a meteoric rise before felling his enemies. That was the will of the Li Saint Clan, which Tianming had witnessed for himself. The sheer unyielding determination, coupled with the blood of his ancestors that flowed within him, was almost terrifying.

The second was Mu Yang, whose righteous and responsible demeanor allowed him to walk a path of no regrets. It wasn't nearly as grand as the will of the Li Saint Clan, but it was really effective in setting his inner state of mind straight. This marked the stark difference between Tianming and Li Wudi.

He had absorbed the ruthlessness Li Wudi possessed, but also had something he lacked. That was the reason he was able to use the Grand-Orient Sword. Li Wudi's path was one of vengeance while Tianming's was one of absolute domination.

He began understanding himself better with each step, knowing where he should go from there. As time passed, he continued channeling the techniques of the three codexes. When his Imperial Will finally grew to a point, his earth saint ki turned into sky saint ki. The saint springs in his saint palace continued unleashing new energy without letting up, filling his whole body with it. Once sky saint ki permeated every corner of his body, his physical body began undergoing a fundamental metamorphosis.

At that moment, his Imperial Will, saint ki, and body transformed as he reached the first level of Sky Saint. Having overcome the main bottleneck with a firm Heavenly Will foundation, his growth as a Sky Saint would be unhindered. He had endless potential, which was what made him stand out amidst everyone in the Divine Capital.

"The grandvoid body of a Sky Saint...." His expression grew solemn as he carefully channeled his sky saint ki. His body felt as light as a feather as he began levitating. As he soared through the skies, he felt like a fish in water and gained a completely new understanding of the world.

Before, the world had felt like a flat plane to him, with everyone firmly rooted to the ground. But now he perceived an extra sense of verticality.

"The world now seems even more boundless than before," he exclaimed.

"Stop messing around. Something's happening with the Prime Tower," Ying Huo said.

"Huh?" Tianming noticed that once he had become a Sky Saint, he seemed to have formed a connection with the Prime Tower. "What is this sensation?"

He tried to feel it and stretched out his hand, only to see the Prime Tower manifest on his palm. It appeared he could now directly utilize it to some extent. When he willed it, the Prime Tower returned to his lifebound space without a single hitch.

Come out. Unsurprisingly, it manifested again without issue, and even faster than before.

Enlarge? As he thought that, Prime Tower suddenly grew a few times larger. Its tip had reached the roof of the training room, which was five meters in height. The Prime Tower had three floors, and Tianming saw the entrance of the first floor open up.

"This door used to be closed. But once we reached the sky saint stage, it suddenly opened," Ying Huo said.

The bottom floor of the tower was two meters tall, and the doorway was about the same height. Tianming could easily enter it with his own body.

"Wanna go in and check it out?"

"It's already opened its doors for us, so why not," Tianming said. At the very least, he could be sure that the Prime Tower wouldn't harm him.

As he came to it and placed his hand on the white door, it felt cold to the touch, much like the sensation of touching the Grand-Orient Sword.

He gave it a light push and walked into the foggy entrance. From the outside, the Prime Tower was only large enough to accommodate around three people, but on the inside, Tianming saw that the ceiling was easily ten times as high, making it much bigger than the training room. Even Lan Huang would be able to fit inside. Unsurprisingly, the spiritual energy contained within was so dense that it formed a white fog. Each breath he took felt like pure nourishment.

### **Chapter 530 - The Purple Tower and the Soul Tower**

Using his Insightful Eye, Tianming stared at the wall inside the Prime Tower. He suddenly discovered white heavenly patterns on the walls, ceiling and floor. They weren't saintly heavenly patterns, but were similar to the dark gold heavenly patterns on the Grand-Orient Sword, and beyond the scope of his understanding.

They were incomparably mysterious. Tianming stretched out his left arm and gently felt the patterns. They seemed to contain a lot of information. Although it wasn't Imperial Will, it seemed beneficial to him. For more details, he would have to explore further.

For the time being, there were other things in the Prime Tower that had attracted his attention. Two of them were located in the center of the first layer. To be precise, they were two identical Prime Towers—one purple and one red. Except for the difference in color, the two towers were exactly the same as the Prime Tower in all aspects.

One was on the left, and the other on the right. Aside from the wondrous white heavenly patterns, they were the only thing on the first layer.

Tianming walked up to them. But before he approached them, there were changes in the two towers and they slammed right into his body.

The purple one moved downward into the location of his dantian and saint palace, sweeping through him and providing a sense of complete protection. The red tower disappeared. When it reappeared in Tianming's consciousness, it seemed to completely blend with it, protecting his soul and Imperial Will. That was how he knew what they were called.

The purple one that protected his saint palace was called the Purple Tower, while the red one that protected his sea of consciousness was called the Soul Tower. Obviously, they were both part of the Prime Tower.

"What a bargain!" Tianming couldn't help but laugh. He felt that both his saint palace and sea of consciousness had become extremely strong.

"The consciousness is the foundation of the soul, and the Soul Tower is part of this divine artifact. Since it guards my consciousness, it'll certainly be able to block any attacks on my soul. My saint palace is the foundation of my cultivation. With this Purple Tower, perhaps no one will be able to destroy my saint palace."

He wasn't sure how strong the two towers were. This was good fortune he had obtained after opening the first layer of the Prime Tower, so it was safe to assume they were both powerful items, wasn't it?

"I'll ask Feng to help test the power of the Soul Tower."

The Prime Tower had once protected Tianming against Ye Lingfeng's lethality. That effect was likely to have originated from the Soul Tower.

"As long as I confirm the power of the Soul Tower, I'll know how strong the Purple Tower is. Killing me will be easier than destroying my saint palace."

This was undoubtedly a huge surprise for Tianming. The white heavenly patterns on the Prime Tower could be slowly studied in the future.

Once he was done searching the tower's first floor, he left. The first thing he saw was Feiling standing outside, staring at him bewilderedly.

"Big Brother, is that the Prime Tower?" she asked blankly.

"Yes"

"Did you just take control of it?"

"Perhaps it's due to breaking through to Sky Saint."

"That's amazing. I wanted to enter, but I couldn't," said Feiling.

"Really? Try attaching your spirit to me."

"Ok."

Feiling's acquired godchild separated and merged with Tianming.

They were successful when Tianming tried entering the tower in the state of Spiritual Attachment, but Feiling's innate godchild had to remain outside.

"That's strange. I'm guessing only my lifebound beasts and I can enter the tower," said Tianming.

"Doesn't that prove that you're the master of the Prime Tower?"

"Most likely. After all, I've managed to open the first level. There's two more levels that may open in the future. I wonder what's inside." Tianming looked forward to finding out.

He found Ye Lingfeng and asked him to attack with all his might. But no matter how he attacked, Tianming's consciousness was impregnable and indestructible.

"This means your sea of consciousness is off-limits and no one can enter," said Ye Lingfeng.

"That's great!"

That proved that the Purple Tower was powerful as well.

Over the next few days, Tianming continued contemplating the last move of the Ninesilver Astral Art—Nine Stardust. At the same time, he accelerated his integration of Invincible Sword Ki. After achieving a sky saint physique, Tianming discovered he could bear more strands of Invincible Sword Ki. Even his Invincible Sword Body was stronger.

"The first is coming. I'm afraid that'll be the day of the decisive battle. Before that, I must become stronger so I can control the overall situation."

Time was of the essence, and Tianming would never ease off.

...

Dazzling City.

It was the end of the month and the night was murky, lit only by the crescent moon in the sky. The Moonseeker Pavilion was completely silent, devoid of light. In the dark, a tall man wearing red imperial robes descended upon the upper floor of the Moonseeker Pavilion.

"Autarch Beast, why have you called me here so late at night? Now that the Imperial City is threatened by rebels, I can't leave. Speak, if you have something to say." The man in red seemed rather dissatisfied.

"Open the door and go in," said the giant beast laying in front of the door.

"Go in?" Startled, the man in red narrowed his eyes and said, "Autarch Beast, it seems you've grown in ki and blood."

"Enough with the nonsense," said the gigantic beast.

As if aware of something, the man's eyes turned blood red. He took one step at a time, walking with much difficulty, as if it took him a lot of effort. Then, gently pushing open the door, he walked in.

By the window stood a man in gold and black robes, staring into the distance. The faint moonlight illuminated him.

The man in red fell to his knees and kowtowed repeatedly. He didn't stop until the man by the window spoke.

"That's enough," he said.

"Father!" The man in red lowered his voice, concealing the complex emotions and fear within.

"Are you upset that I'm still alive?" he asked.

"Father, I rejoiced upon becoming autarch. Only now that my rule has proved so dismal have I realized my lack of ability. What I see today is the greatest joy in my life! All the frustrations in my heart are gone," cried the man in red.

"You're right. Not everyone can sit in this position; neither the twelve brothers before you, nor the many brothers after you. Among all your descendants, only Fengchen was qualified. Unfortunately, Fengchen died in an accident," he said.

"Father, I deserve to die for failing to protect him!" said the man.

"Let's not talk about the past. Life and death is fated. Since his life was short, he wasn't meant to be the Autarch."

"My child, I ask you this: do you understand why I put on such an act, deceiving you and your ninth brother and allowing the imperial family to destroy itself, even allowing you to go so far as to destroy the Divine Capital created by our ancestors?" The man's voice was as sharp as a blade.

"I had my doubts before, but I finally understand. It turns out that the Cyclic Mirror is still your hands, and Li MUYANG has long been dead! Father's act was to completely remove the malignant tumor in the Divine Capital. If you didn't feign your death, the malignant tumor wouldn't stir. When it's ready to move and leave its lair, that'll be the day the Theocrats completely remove it! Father, you're a hero for the ages. I truly admire you! For tens of thousands of years, the Theocrats have failed to remove the Decimo Dao Palace. But now, the crucial moment is here." The man's eyes burned with fervor.

"You're right, the time is now. But you're required to take that last step. I'm afraid there's a risk of death. Can you do it?" he asked.

"For the foundation of the Theocrats and for Father's great cause, I'm willing to die a hundred thousand times! My children are dead and gone. I must see the Decimo Dao Palace come to a tragic end. The Divine Capital will be the place they descend into hell!" roared the man in red.

"Yes. I'll draw out the Dao Palace. When the time comes, you must play along with me."

"Yes!"

The older man walked up to the man in red and caressed his head.

"My child, I understand your pain. Our inheritance cannot come to an end. This is an endless nightmare for the autarch. From the time I turned two hundred, the thing I feared most was death, followed by the destruction of our nation. Once our malignant tumor is removed, the Theocrats will continue ruling for generations to come!"

...

In the blink of an eye, it was the last day of the month. Tianming had merged six thousand strands of Invincible Sword Ki, and wasn't far from the Myriad-Demise Sword that Weisheng Yunxi had mentioned. Apparently, with the Myriad-Demise Sword, his strength would take a qualitative leap. It was a miracle that no one had ever accomplished.

At the same time, Tianming had basically mastered the last move of the Ninesilver Astral Art. On this day, he was ready to attack the Imperial City and completely destroy Dongyang Yun's descendants.

"Big Brother, Dad has arrived at the dao palace. I think he's in the Decimo Sacred Hall. Let's go!" Qingyu walked over excitedly.

"So he couldn't wait any longer and came to the Divine Capital to show off?" Tianming laughed.

For the Decimo Dao Palace, Li Wudi's arrival was good news. Without another word, Tianming headed to the Decimo Sacred Hall with Qingyu.

"Father hasn't come to see me. It looks like there's an urgent matter, so he rushed to the Dark Hall," said Qingyu.

"Did something happen? "

Filled with doubt, Tianming entered the Decimo Dao Palace. Since it wasn't convenient for Qingyu to enter the palace, he went in alone. As soon as he stepped through the door, he laid eyes upon a red-haired man standing before Weisheng Yunxi. Beside him was a tightly-bound woman in a cage.

"Palace Lord, here's the result of what you asked me to investigate," Li Wudi said solemnly.

Weisheng Yunxi rose to her feet.

"We must head to Dazzling City now! "

Following her were the ten Hall Kings and seven Astral Kings of the Decimo Dao Palace, plus Li Wudi.

"I'm coming as well," said Tianming.

"Alright." Weisheng Yunxi nodded.

They urgently set off. Before Qingyu could ask anything, they disappeared before her eyes.

"What the hell happened?" Qingyu was confused.

...

On the way there—

"You reached Sky Saint?" Li Wudi patted Tianming's chest.

"Yes." Tianming looked at the man. Although he hadn't seen Li Wudi for some time, the latter was still the same, his eyes domineering and lawless.

"How dare you hide the fact you have ten bane-rings from me? When we get back, I must give you a whooping!" Li Wudi glared at him.

"Godfather, what on earth happened?" Seeing how serious everyone was, Tianming's mind was fixated on the matter.

"A few days ago, I caught the pavilion lord of the Dazzling Pavilion, Meng Tingyu, who suddenly appeared at the Bloodbane Formation. Just after that, the palace lord asked me to help investigate the disappearance of people within the Theocracy. Thus, I took her on my investigation and questioned her purpose for entering the Grand-Orient Realm. After two weeks, I discovered that three hundred thousand people had recently gone missing in the Earthorigin Realm, and the sect master of the Earthorigin Sect was involved in the matter. I captured the sect master and tortured him. At first, I couldn't determine who he was in contact with, because the other party was very careful.

"However, just a few days ago, upon seeing Meng Tingyu, the Earthorigin Sect Master could no longer bear the torture and confessed that she was the one who'd forced him into trafficking humans. Thus, I quickly brought her back to the Divine Capital. Unfortunately, Meng Tingyu is one tough cookie. She won't speak a word, regardless of how badly she's tortured. If it weren't for the Earthorigin Sect Master, no one would know she was behind this!" Li Wudi said.

"So three hundred thousand people were transported to Dazzling City, and the Cyclic Mirror is most likely there?" Tianming's voice was hoarse.

"That's right."