

## The Ages 71

### Chapter 71 - The Future Potentate

“Chief Mentor Mu Wan, it’s Li Tianming. I’m here.”

“Chief mentor, are you there? I’ll be heading over to the sanctum tomorrow, and I’m here to ask you about the various supernal mentors.” Li Tianming continued to knock on the door, but there was no reaction.

However, the candles were lit, suggesting that the owner should be at home. After a moment of waiting without any response, Li Tianming decided to push open the gate and step in. He couldn’t afford to head to the sanctum tomorrow without any intel.

As he walked across the courtyard, he could hear the sound of water flowing from one of the side-chambers. Apparently, Mu Wan was showering — and with that, Li Tianming decided to wait in the courtyard.

It didn’t take long before the door of the side-chamber creaked open, and a slender figure dressed in a flimsy bathrobe walked out. Doused in moonlight, Mu Wan’s rosy skin and wet hair gave off the charm unique to women of her age. Li Tianming wasn’t going to lose to his desires. Hurriedly turning his head away, he asked, “Chief mentor, I’m here to enquire about the supernal mentors.”

“Fire away.” To Li Tianming’s shock, she walked towards him in her bathrobes. He could already smell the faint fragrance before she even reached him.

“Chief mentor, how about I come back later?” Li Tianming said nervously.

“What for? What a coward you are, unlike me. I look at whatever I please.” The little chick had poked its little head out of his chest pocket, its eyes glued to Mu Wan.

“That’s right. Man up, Li Tianming. I’m not gonna eat you.” Mu Wan seated herself beside him and grabbed Ying Huo, fiddling with it.

“Respect me, woman.” Ying Huo held its head up.

A gleam appeared in Mu Wan’s eyes. “What a cute little thing.”

The little chick grinned. “Chief mentor, Li Tianming once mentioned to me that he wanted to ahem with you, it’s just that he doesn’t have the balls to.”

“You twat!” Li Tianming snatched the little chick back from her and stuffed it back into his lifebound space.

“Did you really think that?” Only when he was done with the little chick did Li Tianming realise Mu Wan was staring at him with her eyebrow raised.

“No, I’m a righteous person, and it’s not like me to...” Li Tianming tried to explain.

“Must a righteous person abstain from that?”

“...”

“Alright, I’m done joking. Give me a while.” She stood up and headed towards another room. A while later, she reemerged, properly dressed this time round, and Li Tianming found himself now at ease.

“Those people must be blind, to think that such an innocent, pure boy like you would drug others,” Mu Wan exclaimed. While being called innocent didn’t exactly sound like praise, Mu Wan had at least figured out the truth and was willing to trust him.

“I saw Mu Qingqing’s expression when you became the prime disciple today. She must be really good at acting pure and benevolent, considering how vicious she actually is. How lucky are you to meet a girl like that.” Mu Wan patted his back, sitting beside him with her legs crossed.

“Too bad not enough people know about this side of her,” Li Tianming said.

“That’s why I’m looking forward to the show you intend to put on. Just remember to treasure your own life,” Mu Wan reminded him.

“Thank you, chief mentor.”

“Here is a list of the eighteen supernal mentors. Just take a brief look, because I don’t think any of them will actually be interested in you.” Mu Wan gave him a pitiful look.

“What do you mean, chief mentor?”

“Wei Zikun has been asking around, but he told me that not a single one of them wanted to accept you as their disciple so far. Chances are, things will be awkward for you tomorrow.” Mu Wan smiled. “For the first time in the Flameyellow Scions Institute’s history, a prime disciple will be chased back to the institute because no one from the sanctum will be willing to accept you. Congratulations on making history yet again.”

Li Tianming rolled his eyes. “Then it sucks to be the supernal mentors for losing an unprecedented genius.”

“Confident, hmm?”

“Of course, I’m chief mentor’s disciple after all.” Li Tianming smiled, flipping through the name list.

“If that’s the case, it just means that you are fated to be under me. Let me put it bluntly. If no one is willing to accept you, just come back and be my disciple. I will make sure I give you whatever resources I get, and make sure you enjoy a prime disciple’s treatment. And when I become a supernal mentor two years later, I will bring you into the sanctum with me.” Mu Wan suddenly changed to a more serious tone.

“For real?” Li Tianming looked up at her.

“Do I sound like the joking type?” Mu Wan looked genuinely surprised.

“.....” Definitely, because she was the type who never stopped joking around. But this time, Li Tianming could hear the sincerity in her voice. She valued his talents, and more importantly she wanted to help him fight the injustice he had shouldered.

“Thank you, chief mentor,” Li Tianming said sincerely.

“No problem. After all, I’m interested in that youthful, vigorous body of yours.” Mu Wan licked her bright red lips.

“Is that so? That means I have to end up sacrificing myself unwillingly to my chief mentor in order to cultivate here,” Li Tianming said.

“Quit it, you little fox, hurry up and read the list!” Mu Wan gently pulled his ears and let out a laugh.

Li Tianming took a brief scan at the eighteen names and the short introductions about them.

“Who is Mu Qingqing’s supernal mentor?” Li Tianming asked.

“Liu Xueyao, a shameless old bitch. Makes a perfect duo with Mu Qingqing with her acting.” Mu Wan rolled her eyes with displeasure.

“Why do you dislike her so much? Is she perhaps prettier than you?”

“Bullshit, she can be ten times more beautiful than she already is and she still won’t compare with me,” Mu Wan replied, a proud smile on her face.

Li Tianming just laughed it off and continued reading. As he flipped across the pages, he furrowed his brows and asked, “Chief mentor, is there perhaps someone you have missed out on this list?”

“Impossible. All eighteen of them are on this list. I compiled it carefully for you personally,” Mu Wan said. That was quite evident, from the line scribbled under Liu Xueyao’s name: Ugly old hag, don’t be her disciple.

“But there’s someone that’s not here,” Li Tianming replied.

“Who?”

Li Tianming looked at her. “Mu Yang.”

Mu Wan stared at him for a while, before pinching his face with a grin. “Little idiot, where did you hear that name from?.”

“Chief mentor, what’s that supposed to mean? Is there not a supernal mentor named Mu Yang?”

“Yeah yeah, but my elder brother is the vice-potentate now. In another three years, he will be made Sanctum Potentate. He stopped accepting new disciples a year ago after the current potentate announced him as the next leader of the Sanctum.”

“Mu Yang? Elder brother? Vice-potentate?” Li Tianming couldn’t process the amount of information in the sentence.

“Are you dumb? The whole Flameyellow Scions Institute only has two people with the surname Mu. If he wasn’t my elder brother, then what could he be, my father?” Mu Wan rolled her eyes.

“So chief mentor has such a background, no wonder you dare to be so haughty in the institute...” Li Tianming found out the reason why even Wei Zikun had to be cautious around her when pursuing her — she had such an influential brother. Now that she mentioned it, Li Tianming remembered that Wei Jing seemed to have reacted to Mu Wan’s name as well. Perhaps they knew each other.

“What do you mean, calling the kind and soft-hearted me ‘haughty’?”

“Oops, my tongue slipped,” Li Tianming replied. He reckoned that even Wei Jing didn’t expect this Mu Yang to be appointed as the vice-Potentate, and that he was the next Sanctum Potentate as appointed by his grandfather. Now what?

“Chief mentor, any chance I can still get him to accept me as his disciple? Can you, perhaps do me a favor and beg him or something?”

“Don’t even think about it, I can knock my head onto the ground and he won’t buy that.” Mu Wan shut him down on the spot.

That gave Li Tianming a headache. If he couldn’t be Mu Yang’s disciple, then meeting the Sanctum Potentate would be near impossible, not to mention that Wei Jing was running out of time. If he had no other choices, he might have to admit to Mu Wan that he was Wei Jing’s son, and hope that she would pass this message to Mu Yang.

If he failed to become Mu Yang’s disciple and was abandoned by all the supernal mentors, he could only end up as Mu Wan’s disciple. While that may still carry some hope, the best option was still to get into the sanctum. No matter which supernal mentor accepted him, he could at least move freely in the sanctum. If not, it would be pointless for him to become the prime disciple.

“Forget about my brother, he only has three disciples, and any of them could be the next potentate after him. The requirements to become his disciple is incredibly hard, and he even rejected the chancellor’s son,” Mu Wan added.

“Oh.” Li Tianming figured out how difficult it was. He simply didn’t expect Mu Yang to be doing so well.

“Oh, you probably know his third disciple too.” Mu Wan grinned mischievously.

“Who?”

“Lin Xiaoting.”

Li Tianming had expected that. Ever since he obtained the Saintbeast War-Soul, Lin Xiaoting’s cultivation had rocketed, and it was only normal that he received the future Sanctum Potentate’s attention! He was the brightest star of their generation, and that was only made possible by the Saintbeast War-Soul!

Tomorrow was the day Li Tianming would find a mentor, and he still had no idea how things would turn out.

“I can only give you a few recommendations. If you perform well tomorrow, there’s a chance they might still accept you.” Mu Wan also couldn’t do anything else for him.

Li Tianming remembered those names. It was already dark, and Li Tianming left with the name list.

The next morning, Wei Zikun was already here for him. When he saw Wei Zikun, he had the sudden realisation that his appearance somewhat resembled mother’s...

Wei Zikun... Wei...

A new idea, one so unique that he'd never thought of it before, flashed through his mind. This hall overseer from the Hall of Phoenix could very well be Li Tianming's relative!

## **Chapter 72 - The Four Heavenly Guardians**

The moment they met, Wei Zikun pointed out to Li Tianming, "Mu Wan should have prepared you for the situation that no supernal mentor is willing to accept you, right? Just keep that in mind."

"Got it." Li Tianming was a simple man, if the mentors had no interest in him, then he had no intention to stick around there. He wasn't going to respect people who wouldn't respect him.

"Follow me." Wei Zikun was a man of few words. It was said that he came from the Wei family that resided inside the sanctum, and was one of the elites of his generation from young. As a hall overseer that wasn't yet forty, his name was famous in the capital.

"Overseer, may I ask a question?" Li Tianming followed behind him.

"Speak."

"I heard that the chancellor of the Institute is your elder brother?" Li Tianming asked.

"That's right, any problems with that?" Wei Zikun turned back to glance at him.

"Of course not," Li Tianming answered, a smile on his face.

The chancellor was a man about fifty years old named Wei Tianxiong, and he was one of the leading figures in the entire nation. It was common belief that Wei Tianxiong was the master of the Flameyellow Scions Institute, and had the institute in his control. That was what Li Tianming thought as well, till he learnt that the Sanctum Potentate was the true ruler of this place.

The Potentate had the surname Wei as well, suggesting that he, Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun were of the same family. Since that was the case, it meant their family were the leading faction in the entire institute, perhaps even the true rulers. The only thing Li Tianming couldn't confirm was the relationship between his grandfather, the Potentate, and Wei Tianxiong.

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As they spoke, Wei Zikun brought him across the entire institute. Along the way, many disciples threw envious looks at him, knowing that today was the day Li Tianming was supposed to enter the sanctum.

But how would they know that Li Tianming was about to face eighteen supernal mentors who had no intention of accepting him? If Li Tianming were to become the first ever prime disciple that no mentors accepted, then he would still have to return and cultivate in the institute, where he would be an even greater joke. The result was predictable, since the entrapment three years ago had made him out to be a scumbag who drugged others, an impression that was just too hard to change.

Around fifteen minutes later, after crossing layer after layer of security, they finally reached the gates to the sanctum.

Li Tianming's first step inside told him that this was no doubt the place that controlled the lifeline of the institute. The security in this region was far stricter, and even the walls here were thicker than the ones surrounding the institute.

Those who resided in the sanctum were either the utmost geniuses of the nation or the renowned supernal mentors.

"We shall head over to the Hall of Ancestry first." The Hall of Ancestry was where the supernal mentors took in their new disciples, and every time a student entered the sanctum, he or she would make their first stop at the hall.

"Li Tianming, do you know who else stays within the sanctum other than the supernal mentors?" asked Wei Zikun.

"The smartest disciples in the Institute."

"And on top of the supernal mentors?"

"Uh, the four heavenly guardians, then the vice-Potentate and the potentate himself?" Li Tianming said.

"Correct. The potentate has the highest position in the entire institute, but it is quite impossible for you to meet him in person. Therefore the four guardians are effectively the ones controlling the sanctum. Remember to always pay your respects to them." Wei Zikun reminded him. He didn't want to see Li Tianming provoke one of the guardians by accident.

"The four guardians are the Guardian of Combat, Guardian of Legions, Guardian of Sanctions, and the Guardian of Ancestry. The Guardian of Ancestry runs the Hall of Ancestry, and he will be the one overseeing the process later. Every single disciple that enters the sanctum will go through his eyes first," Wei Zikun explained.

"Yes I understand. But I have a small question."

"Speak."

"Since you are one of the hall overseers, may I ask if your position is higher than that of the guardians?"

"Of course not. An overseer has about as much power as a regular supernal mentor, perhaps a little more." Wei Zikun wasn't offended by being compared with the guardians. For Li Tianming to ask that question, it only suggested his lack of background. Anyone from a powerful family in Ignispolis could tell him that the four guardians were just below the potentate and the vice-potentate.

For Li Tianming, this information shed light to how much power Heaven's Sanctum had. He always thought that the sanctum was part of the institute, but in fact, it was the other way round.

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The Guardian of Ancestry was in charge of the disciples and their conduct. Every single disciple here was an elite that he himself had approved of.

It wasn't long before they arrived at the Hall of Ancestry. The building was covered in black, and it gave off a foreboding aura that could scare any new disciples.

"It's about time the supernal mentors arrive. Just follow me. There's no need to be nervous." Wei Zikun instructed him one last time before stepping in. Li Tianming followed him closely, noting that they had not run into a single person since they entered the sanctum. It was true that only the very few true elites stayed here.

Once they entered the hall, Li Tianming was greeted by some of the most powerful cultivators in the nation. A total of eighteen supernal mentors awaited him, together with the Guardian of Ancestry. They were scrutinizing him, just like how they would scrutinize every other disciple who stepped foot here.

The hall was lit brightly with candles, illustrating the many figures that were within the hall. Yet no one talked, and the atmosphere was so stifling that Li Tianming could feel himself almost suffocating from the pressure.

"Guardian of Ancestry, supernal mentors, I have brought the prime disciple from the Hall of Phoenix, Li Tianming." Wei Zikun's announcement finally broke the silence.

"Disciple Li Tianming greets the guardian and the supernal mentors." He had heard that Heaven's Sanctum's was a solemn place, so Li Tianming respectfully addressed his greetings. His voice was calm, and one couldn't hear any nervousness in his voice.

"Thank you overseer." A hoarse voice came from the end of the hall. By the sounds of it, the speaker must be a formidable old man.

"Prime Disciple Li Tianming, raise your head. Let the mentors and I take a look at you."

"Yes, guardian." Li Tianming's head had been lowered the moment he entered, and he only looked up when he was instructed to. It wasn't because he was scared, but it would be rude of him if he started peeking the moment he entered.

Directly in front of Li Tianming, a hulking elder sat in what looked like a throne at the end of the hall. His hair was white, but the pinkish glow on his face resembled that of a vigorous young man in his thirties. Despite his age, he was still giving off a terrifying aura.

Nine mentors were seated by his left and the other nine his right. The supernal mentors were slightly younger than the guardian himself, but they all ranged from the age of forty to sixty too. They too gave off the aura of warriors, pairs of eyes staring intensely at Li Tianming. Some of them had youngsters standing behind them, their own disciples who had joined in to take a look at that 'famous' Li Tianming.

Li Tianming had never entered the sanctum before today, which meant that he didn't recognise them. But obviously, they were all geniuses that could easily outshine those in the institute, and those who were the same age as Li Tianming were minimally fifth level Spiritsource. The youngsters too looked at Li Tianming with interest, though none of them would dare to speak a word without the seniors' permissions.

"The prime disciple is here, and I assume that the mentors should have heard of him. It was said that he had been a disciple in the institute four years ago, and everyone seated here should have an idea of his talent. Whoever's interested in taking him, just go ahead." The Guardian of Ancestry leaned back on his chair and signaled the supernal mentors to proceed.

The eighteen of them were looking at Li Tianming. They were all cautious people, thus all of them had chosen to watch how things went first. This was unlike past years when they had to fight for the prime disciple.

Li Tianming had seen portraits of the supernal mentors in the name list, so he could recognize the mentors. He could figure out who was Zhao Tianchen, who was Liu Xueyao, and who was Feng Wuguang. The possible candidates that Mu Wan mentioned were there too, but none of them had spoken up.

Things were getting very awkward in the hall, and surely any who heard of this would consider it a joke. Li Tianming was no doubt the most special prime disciple they had ever encountered, and none of the supernal mentors spoke up for a few minutes.

“How about this, Li Tianming. Show the mentors your lifebound beast,” the guardian instructed.

“Yes.” Li Tianming dipped his head.

He had expected things to be difficult today, but this level of awkwardness was... unexpected. The mentors couldn't accept the level of cultivation he had at his age. He must be the first prime disciple in the sanctum's history who couldn't even clear the basic requirement here.

As the little chick appeared on Li Tianming's shoulder, some of the mentors even let slip a laugh or two. That included Liu Xueyao, whom Mu Wan had a strong dislike for. She was Mu Qingqing's mentor, and their temperaments were highly similar. She wore a white long dress, and if it wasn't for her stony expression, she would have been more charming.

“What a joke. There really is a need to fix the rules for the ranking test, I was ready to accept Xiaoxiao as my disciple,” she whispered to the other supernal mentor, Zhao Tianchen, who was seated beside her.

“And look at who we get now.” Zhao Tianchen sighed. He was a handsome middle-aged man, his long hair tied into a bun giving him a scholarly look.

“Anyone interested?”

“Haha.” The supernal mentors glanced at each other, their looks of disinterest obvious from their eyes.

“Twenty years old and he is at most at third level Spiritsource.”

“Unworthy.”

“If Lin Xiaoxiao was here, she might even reach Unity by the time she's twenty.”

“Hmm, the flaws in the ranking test had given us a clown instead of a true prodigy. ”

“Why should we accept someone who provoked the Lightning Manor and has no background at all?”

The supernal mentors were clueless as to what to do too. How could they have expected the prime disciple to be so problematic?

## **Chapter 73 - Wei Guohao**



It was obvious from their mocking laughter that no one intended to accept him. Even if someone had been willing to give Li Tianming a chance, in such an atmosphere, they would drop such a thought.

The Guardian of Ancestry looked around, before turning to Li Tianming. He could only shake his head and say, "How about this, Li Tianming, show us some of your skills. You know full well that your age is almost past the optimal age to train, and it'll be difficult for the supernal mentors to help you."

Li Tianming was used to this kind of behaviour. Mockery occurring here didn't betray his expectations, and hence, he remained calm throughout.

At the start, he had held on to some hope, but now, he was aware that no matter how he performed, none would give him a chance.

It was quite depressing that he had done his best to become the prime disciple, but he hadn't been able to impress even one supernal mentor.

"Bunch of assholes," the little chick cursed by Li Tianming's ear.

"It's not a big deal. They have the authority to do this," Li Tianming said emotionlessly.

The Guardian of Ancestry wanted him to show his skills now, but he had already done so in the ranking battles. Now, what could he show when there wasn't even an opponent?

"One of you go down," said the Guardian of Ancestry, who had noticed the issue.

"I'll do it." A tall and sturdy young man stepped out from behind Supernal Mentor Zhao Tianchen. He was dressed in golden robes, his eyes burning like torches. He was imposing without being angry, and truly had the presence of a person of noble birth. At one glance, he was obviously an elite genius.

He walked forward to Li Tianming, but instead of looking at him, he looked at Wei Zikun instead.

"Second Uncle, let me lend this brother from the Hall of Phoenix a hand."

"If you wish." Wei Zikun could already tell Li Tianming had no chance today. Not wanting to waste time, he took a seat at the side. He was just waiting for the supernal mentor to directly reject Li Tianming so he could bring Li Tianming and leave.

In the end, it didn't matter to him whether or not Li Tianming joined Heaven's Sanctum.

This young man called Wei Zikun Second Uncle and Wei Zikun's elder brother was the Flameyellow Scions Institute chancellor. Did that mean this young man was the chancellor's son?

"You're Li Tianming, right? I'm Wei Guohao, Supernal Mentor Zhao Tianchen's disciple." The young man stood in front of Li Tianming, his gaze seeming to contain blades.

He was definitely the chancellor's son. However, in the institute, they didn't have the custom of using familial relations or who their father was to introduce themselves. Instead, they introduced themselves as their master's disciple.

Li Tianming had heard of Wei Guohao before. Most likely, he had grown up in Heaven's Sanctum. He definitely didn't need to participate in the admission test and ranking battles. However, his aptitude was likely still definitely near the top of Heaven's Sanctum, near to that of Lin Xiaoting's.

“Senior apprentice-brother Wei, how do we do this?”

Li Tianming wasn't sure what Wei Guohao's motive was.

“I'm here to help you. Just attack me however you want, I won't retaliate.” Wei Guohao sounded very heroic, as if he did want to help Li Tianming. However, the natural superiority in his tone was uncomfortable.

“Li Tianming, use this chance well,” the Guardian of Ancestry added.

Li Tianming examined Wei Guohao closely. “Yes, Guardian.”

Wei Guohao had trained from young in Heaven's Sanctum and was roughly Li Tianming's age. With his talent, ten years of training definitely meant he was far beyond Lin Xiaoxiao; someone on the level of Chen Hao and Xing Que.

He was likely at the peak of Spiritsource. Li Tianming was only first level Spiritsource, and it wasn't likely Li Tianming could catch up to someone his age in just a few months even if he had the infernalsource. He could only try his best.

Li Tianming held the Thunderfire Chain in his hand, and a moment later, Ying Huo and him exploded into motion, attacking Wei Guohao. Li Tianming used the Confounding Mirage Walk and Nine Flying Bolts, while the little chick used the Netherfire Ghostclaw.

Their speed was incredible as they charged at Wei Guohao, but their opponent merely maintained a gentle smile.

“Not bad. When his beast ki bursts out, it's nearly the match of fourth level Spiritsource. It's no wonder he could beat Lin Xiaoxiao.”

“Our worst disciple in Heaven's Sanctum at his age is almost at sixth level Spiritsource. And he's not even actually at fourth level.”

Even if Li Tianming showed his best, it would be difficult to make the supernal mentors even raise an eyebrow with his age.

Wei Guohao didn't act polite. He maintained that smile, acting like a senior watching with amusement as a junior threw an unreasonable tantrum.

To him, Li Tianming was no different from a snail.

His smile turned cold when the attacks reached. With lightning-fast speed, he casually flicked his finger, causing a burst of golden light. It crashed into the little chick's claw, sending it tumbling away.

Li Tianming could only laugh at that. If that wasn't retaliating, what was?

Li Tianming had actually expected him to just stand there and receive the attacks.

“Too weak. You can't do it.” Wei Guohao shook his head while chuckling sorrowfully as he casually extended a hand to seize Li Tianming's chain.

The next moment, a terrifying force emanated from the other end of the chain as if a massive beast had captured it with its jaws. Before Li Tianming could pull it back, the Thunderfire Chain shattered into fragments!

And thus, Li Tianming lost his preferred weapon.

“My apologies. I wasn’t expecting your weapon to be so fragile to break at a casual touch,” Wei Guohao said regretfully.

Without the chain, Li Tianming had lost a large portion of his combat prowess.

Li Tianming’s opponent had worn a smile throughout it all. How was this giving him a chance to show his skills and obtain the acknowledgement of the supernal mentor? This was just reinforcing their decision to reject him.

If he held back slightly, Li Tianming would have the chance to put his abilities on full display. However, he had casually used his superior cultivation stage to trounce Li Tianming.

However, Li Tianming couldn’t say much because his strength was real. The strong had the ability to trample his reputation into the mud and destroy his chances of entering Heaven’s Sanctum!

However, this didn’t mean Li Tianming was going to roll over and accept this! In the same moment the chain broke apart, the little chick belched out a fiery phoenix behind Wei Guohao, the Infernal Blaze lighting up the area.

Wei Guohao turned around to see the little chick’s spiritsource ability bearing down on him.

He shook his head dismissively, casually punching out and tearing apart the phoenix. “Disperse.”

Usually, this meant the spiritsource ability had been vanquished.

However, Wei Guohao never expected the phoenix to dissipate into countless sparks that continued at him. He was forced to dodge awkwardly, but a dozen odd sparks still landed on him. But to his shock, his beast ki wasn’t able to extinguish them!

“Li Tianming! You!” Embarrassment quickly turned into anger, and he could only quickly tear out the burning sections of his clothing, finally escaping the Infernal Blaze after a dozen holes were added to his clothing.

Although it hadn’t actually hurt him, his current appearance was definitely humiliating. It was a far cry from his earlier act of being a senior watching a junior.

He had been casually trouncing Li Tianming, but now his hair was in a mess and his clothes were filled with holes.

Those unaware might assume he was the one beaten.

“Big oops, senior apprentice-brother Wei.” Li Tianming chuckled coldly before he stopped moving. That was his one chance to gain an advantage, but otherwise, he admitted the disparity in strength.

He had only been cultivating for a month after all.

This accomplishment he had made was not half bad already.

Li Tianming's smile immediately ruined Wei Guohao's feelings.

Being embarrassed in front of so many supernal mentors would make anyone gloomy.

"No need to be. Continue." Wei Guohao's tone was much colder now. He even advanced, obviously intent on taking revenge.

"There's no need. You broke my weapon and I already showed my strongest ability. I'm out of tricks." Li Tianming smiled. However, his feelings inside were much different.

As the chancellor's son, sure, suppress him. But was there a need to go as far as breaking his weapon? Li Tianming didn't have much money left.

Li Tianming would definitely collect this debt from Wei Guohao.

"Enough. Stand down, Wei Guohao." Just as Wei Guohao was planning to give him a beating, the Guardian of Ancestry spoke out.

Wei Guohao could only glare at Li Tianming and return to Zhao Tianchen.

However, Li Tianming was still confused about how he had offended him.

"Not a bad spirit-source ability." A female supernal mentor, Qin Shi, gave a slight nod of her head. However, she had only ever accepted female disciples.

None of the supernal mentors refuted her.

It was undeniable that Wei Guohao had made a bad showing, something none had expected.

"Li Tianming, your lifebound beast's spirit-source ability is good. Everything else is not worth mentioning," said the Guardian of Ancestry.

"Yes." Li Tianming admitted it was true. It was nothing in Heaven's Sanctum. If he was fifteen, they would definitely fight over him. Alas, he was twenty.

"What do the supernal mentors think?" The Guardian of Ancestry gave the final note.

The supernal mentors all exchanged looks. It did surprise them somewhat that Li Tianming could have such mental fortitude and deal such a blow to Wei Guohao.

However, no supernal mentor made a decision. It seemed they valued their reputations too much. Li Tianming just had too many black marks against him.

"Pass," Liu Xueyao went first. "I have some awareness of what happened to Qingqing that time. What does it show about someone who would accept such an indecent person as a disciple?" She didn't stop at just reject him, but also made it impossible for anyone to accept him.

"Alright then. Let's not waste any more time. Li Tianming, return with me to the Hall of Phoenix." Wei Zikun stood up, annoyed. There was no point to this farce.

The conclusion was already set in stone.

Li Tianming didn't push it. Fate sometimes played a hand in finding a master. What else could he do? Kneel and beg?

However, it was unfortunate. He was the prime disciple after all. Once this spread, it would be another topic to laugh at him for.

Li Tianming followed Wei Zikun away without reluctance.

However, a voice suddenly drifted over from the door. "Seriously? You all are chasing away the prime disciple? Breaking our word like this, what's this supposed to imply about Heaven's Sanctum?"

None of the supernal mentors dared to retort against this voice.

#### **Chapter 74 - Mu Yang**

The supernal mentors all acted as if they were unrelated to the matters at hand, as they kept quiet out of fear.

Despite the supernal mentors' status, just a few words could make the supernal mentors lower their heads. Li Tianming immediately knew whoever had just arrived was a major figure in Heaven's Sanctum, at least a Heavenly Guardian in status.

"Vice-Potentate." Li Tianming heard many people address him as such. He hadn't expected the newcomer to be Heaven's Sanctum future potentate, Mu Yang.

The man who entered was dressed in a blue robe, with a golden belt and black boots. His figure and features were majestic, and were so awe-inspiring it seemed he could take on an army. However, he didn't look like the overbearing sort, and instead had an amiable appearance. When he smiled, he looked like the harmless sort. His words just now seemed angry, but he was still wearing a charming smile.

It reminded Li Tianming of Mu Wan. They looked like the same type of person — as expected of siblings.

As he entered, his gaze swept across Li Tianming, but his expression didn't change much.

All the supernal mentors present rose to their feet when he entered. While the Guardian of Ancestry was of lower status than him, he was still his senior. They were also on good terms, and hence, the Guardian didn't get up.

"Nephew, why have you come to my Hall of Ancestry this day?" The Heavenly Guardian of Ancestry, Jun Yuancang, smiled.

"Uncle Jun, I come here often even without any business to drink with you." Mu Yang smiled back.

However, the other supernal mentors turned more grave.

"Still, ranking battles have been our institute's trademark for a thousand years. We've always upheld fairness and the prime disciple has always had the right to join Heaven's Sanctum. This is something Heaven's Sanctum must uphold. So, I don't quite approve of the supernal mentors sending away the prime disciple today." Mu Yang moved on from exchanging pleasantries to targeting the eighteen supernal mentors.

As his eyes swept past them, they all hurriedly lowered their heads. After all, they were all aware he would be Heaven's Sanctum's new master in a few years.

"I agree. Still, the supernal mentors have their own difficulties. The prime disciple this time is indeed a little substandard." The Guardian of Ancestry explained.

"That won't do. We must uphold our promise to the prime disciple as long as the rules for the ranking battles haven't changed. I ask you, supernal mentors, who is willing to accept him?"

While Mu Yang was still smiling, Li Tianming could tell the authority loaded in his words.

Mu Yang never really looked at Li Tianming. From his perspective, he simply didn't want Heaven's Sanctum to break its promise. However, all the supernal mentors simply shook their heads helplessly.

In the end, Mu Yang couldn't punish all of them no matter how great his authority was. Together, they made the cornerstone of Heaven's Sanctum.

"Fine. Then we'll let the prime disciple choose. What's your name?" Mu Yang finally looked at Li Tianming.

"Li Tianming."

"Li Tianming, choose whoever you want. I guarantee whoever you choose shall be in charge of guiding you. That is the word of Heaven's Sanctum." Every word of Mu Yang was filled with boundless power.

As the future potentate, this man stood at the apex of Vermilion Bird. To Li Tianming, the man wasn't just powerful, but was strong in will and prestige.

He also held a virtue the other supernal mentors lacked: integrity.

"Really, Vice-Potentate? I can choose anyone?" Li Tianming asked.

"Of course."

The supernal mentors weren't very comfortable with this development, but they had no choice. The moment to test their luck had arrived. Surely, they wouldn't be the unlucky one among eighteen people, right?

As the Vice-Potentate had spoken, the roles had swapped. Now, it was up to Li Tianming to choose them and not the other way around.

Li Tianming looked through them all, his gaze finally landing on supernal mentor Liu Xueyao.

"Do you choose Liu Xueyao?" Mu Yang asked.

Liu Xueyao had already noticed Li Tianming looking at her, and her eyes gave Li Tianming a warning gleam. She had thought Li Tianming would never choose her given his relationship with Mu Qingqing.

However, if Mu Yang forced it, she had no choice. Furthermore, if Li Tianming was placed under her charge and she didn't teach him well, Mu Yang would definitely find trouble for her given his personality.

Just as Liu Xueyao was getting worried, Li Tianming smiled. "Vice-Potentate, if I may be frank for a moment. All eighteen supernal mentors look down on me and are worried I'll embarrass them. I'm thankful for the chance, but since we lack the ties of fate, I think I won't force matters." These words were definitely beyond the supernal mentors' expectations, because that was a very dumb choice. Mu Yang had already stood up for him and given him a chance to stay on at Heaven's Sanctum, but he had chosen to give up.

Of course, this was a kind of dumbness pleasing to the supernal mentors. Liu Xueyao in particular heaved a sigh of relief.

"Are you sure?" Mu Yang's mouth curved slightly as he examined Li Tianming closely for the first time, having not done so before to this youth who had some 'incidents' with his third disciple years ago.

"I'm sure."

"Is it worth it? You'll lose the chance to join Heaven's Sanctum." Mu Yang asked curiously.

"That, I won't." Li Tianming said.

"Why?" Mu Yang's curiosity ramped up.

"That's because I don't want to become a supernal mentor's disciple, but rather the Vice-Potentate's." Li Tianming raised his head, meeting Mu Yang's gaze.

Li Tianming was more mature than others his age, which allowed him to deliver his words clearly even before such an important figure.

The words stumped Mu Yang for a moment.

Then, the first snort rang out. It spread, as all of the usually stern supernal mentors were unable to hold back from their derisive chuckles and snorts. They exchanged glances with those sitting besides them and shook their heads.

"The prime disciple this batch really is lacking when you compare him to the previous prime disciple. The gap is vaster than heaven and earth," Liu Xue Yao said helplessly. She had originally been planning to bank on her relationship with Mu Qingqing to accept Lin Xiaoxiao, but it had been ruined by Li Tianming.

Everyone knew Mu Yang was now the vice-potentate. He was no longer a supernal mentor and wouldn't be accepting new disciples. The exception was a new disciple that had the potential to become the future potentate, someone at least on Lin Xiaoxiao's level. Even the chancellor's son and Princess Qing of the Vermilion Bird royal clan weren't qualified to be Mu Yang's disciple.

These words from Li Tianming were no different from a toad wanting to eat swan meat, dreaming beyond their station in life.

No one could understand why this fellow kept acting like a laughing stock. Was this the recklessness of youth, or just plain stupidity?

Several of the younger disciples couldn't hold themselves back, their bodies shaking from their laughter.

“Li Tianming, stop making trouble and seize this opportunity!” Wei Zikun frowned. He had been happy when Mu Yang had given Li Tianming such an opportunity, because he could then answer to Mu Wan.

And yet, with such a golden opportunity, right when he was about to give Li Tianming some suggestions, Li Tianming had destroyed the opportunity within a few words. And when Li Tianming said he wanted to be Mu Yang’s disciple, even he laughed in a mix of fury and exasperation.

He found it embarrassing to have brought Li Tianming here. He distinctly remembered Li Tianming hadn’t been like this in the ranking battles.

Still stunned, Mu Yang asked, “You do know who I am, no?”

“Yes. You are the vice-potentate, and the future potentate.” Li Tianming replied.

“And you still want to be my disciple?” Mu Yang chuckled.

“Am I underqualified?” Li Tianming asked, further stunning Mu Yang.

To be frank, Mu Yang wanted to laugh with the others. However, he could tell Li Tianming wasn’t messing around. He didn’t want to scorn him, so he replied with full seriousness, “It does seem so, from what I see now. Alright then, we’ll do it this way. Since you don’t have any interest in the supernal mentors, and I’ve already declared you won’t be going back to the institute, then from now on, you shall cultivate autonomously in Heaven’s Sanctum! If and when the day arrives I find you qualified, I’ll accept this bond of master-disciple with you.”

This was the best possible result for Li Tianming. He didn’t really want to invite scorn upon himself by studying under those supernal mentors through an act of charity. However, now Mu Yang had shown him respect and a promise, even allowing him to join Heaven’s Sanctum.

It was just that it was lonely not having a master in Heaven’s Sanctum. Still, it wasn’t as if he was friendless here, with Princess Qing and Jiang Feiling here.

However, he still asked, “Then, what do I need to accomplish to be considered qualified by the vice-potentate?”

## **Chapter 75 - The Son of An Old Friend**

“Simple. Just take Wei Guohao for example. He is the same age as you, and I nearly accepted him as my disciple. If you can overcome him, then I’d say you are qualified,” Mu Yang said casually. With Li Tianming’s performance today, it would take nothing short of a miracle for him to defeat Wei Guohao.

“I understand. Thank you, Vice-Potentate.” Surprisingly, Li Tianming did not frown at that challenge, but instead nodded with a smile.

Wei Guohao was at least seventh level Spiritsource, and he was no doubt one of the top among his generation. Li Tianming had lost just too much time, and it would no doubt be difficult for him to catch up. But he was confident of himself and the Primordial Chaos Beasts — it wouldn’t be long before he could overtake Wei Guohao.



Idiot! Wei Zikun could no longer take Li Tianming's stupidity. Since Mu Yang had already made arrangements for Li Tianming, then there was no point in him staying there anymore. After exchanging a few words with Mu Yang and the guardian, he turned around and left the hall.

"Second uncle, wait for me." Wei Guohao chased after Wei Zikun. As he walked past Li Tianming, Wei Guohao couldn't help but snicker. It was almost as if his eyes could talk, telling Li Tianming to keep dreaming about defeating him.

"This key is yours now. Do you have any friends in the sanctum?" At least Mu Yang was quite nice to Li Tianming, handing him the key to his residence in the sanctum as well as a simple map of the area.

"Yes." Li Tianming thought of Princess Qing and Jiang Feiling.

"Then you should pay them a visit as soon as possible. In Heaven's Sanctum, we have our own rules, which are a lot stricter than the ones in the institute. It would be good if you can ask them about it before you settle here."

"No problem, Vice-Potentate," Li Tianming replied.

He realised that both Sage Chen and Mu Yang seemed to be amiable and capable individuals, and they had achieved quite a name for themselves in the capital. Li Yanfeng seemed like such a bad choice in comparison. Why would Wei Jing choose Li Yanfeng instead of these two? Li Tianming felt that his mother was still hiding something from him, but he couldn't figure out what it could be.

"Time to leave." After a few words with the guardian, Mu Yang left the hall as well, and the moment he left was the moment the supernal mentors headed out too. Most of them were still glad that thanks to Li Tianming's stupid decision, none of them would have to become his mentor.

Li Tianming bade farewell to those who were still in the hall and then immediately rushed outside. He didn't want Mu Yang to leave. Even if he did not manage to become Mu Yang's disciple, he felt that he could still make use of their encounter to tell Mu Yang about his mother's situation.

"Vice-Potentate, can I have a moment?" Luckily for him, Mu Yang had yet to leave the vicinity.

"Yes?" Mu Yang answered. He admired the fact that the boy stood his ground and refused the offer to choose any mentor he wanted. But if Li Tianming was to continue bothering him, then he would just treat him as a fool and ignore him too.

"I have some personal matters to discuss with you, and it's rather important as well." Said Li Tianming.

"What personal matters can you have with me?"

After calculating his risks, Li Tianming finally decided that saving his mother took precedence over him accidentally provoking Mu Yang.

"Do you remember an old friend?" Li Tianming glared into his eyes.

"Who?"

"Wei Jing," Li Tianming said.

Mu Yang's body trembled slightly when he heard the name. The look in his eye changed, and he suddenly extended out his hands to press onto Li Tianming's shoulder, putting pressure on the boy.

"Say that again." Mu Yang's voice was a lot lower.

"Her name is Wei Jing."

"Do you know her? Or are you trying to threaten me with that name?" Mu Yang's demeanor was totally different from just now. He looked very emotional, even though he was already trying to contain it.

"Of course I won't dare to." Li Tianming pointed at himself. "I am Wei Jing's son."

When he heard that sentence, Mu Yang released his palms and took a step back, as he stared at Li Tianming with shaking eyes.

A while later, he finally took a deep breath and said, "No wonder I felt something familiar when I saw you. It all makes sense that you are her son..." He knew that Li Tianming was bold, not only rejecting the supernal mentors and even wanted to be his disciple despite all the mockeries. He had only seen such charisma from one person before, and it was none other than that girl!

Mu Yang squinted his eyes and continued, "So what is it that you want to tell me?"

Li Tianming was still dubious about Mu Yang's attitude towards Wei Jing. After some thoughts, he explained, "Vice-Potentate, honestly I'm not sure what my mother went through in the past. I spent so many years cultivating just to enter the sanctum someday, since she told me that the only one who can save her is inside Heaven's Sanctum."

"Save her? What do you mean?" Mu Yang's expression was still unreadable.

"Have you heard of Lifesbane?" Li Tianming asked.

"She has Lifesbane?!" Mu Yang's pupils went out of focus momentarily. Clearly, he knew something about that queer illness.

"That's right."

"When did that happen?"

"She apparently got it when I was born, so that's twenty years ago."

"Impossible..." Mu Yang stared at Li Tianming, his jaws grit together, "She must have returned long ago if she got the Lifesbane twenty years ago. No one in the Wei family could endure that pain for twenty years, you must be lying..."

"And why should I?" Li Tianming replied with a rhetorical question.

"Alright, so she suffered twenty years of Lifesbane. Even then, she wouldn't come back, she wouldn't lower her head..." Mu Yang must have remembered what happened in the past, and even red veins appeared in his eyes. From start to end, Li Tianming had thought Vice-Potentate to be a solemn individual; him being in such a state of panic seemed wholly out of character.

After a moment of silence, Mu Yang looked into his eyes, "So what are you here for?"

“She doesn’t have much time left,” Li Tianming answered.

“Go on...” Mu Yang looked into the distance.

“From young, I have asked her about how to cure that freak illness of hers, and she initially told me that it was incurable. Later on, she told me that she would tell me the way to cure it if I entered Heaven’s Sanctum, perhaps just to encourage me to work more diligently,” Li Tianming explained.

“I made it into the institute, but after certain events I returned home a crippled man. But this time, I brought her to Ignispolis with me and became the prime disciple in front of her eyes. Therefore, she finally agreed for me to find a cure for her. She told me about her past, and she told me to find you, and said that you are the one that can bring me into the Wei Manor.” After he was done, Li Tianming spread his hands, “That’s all I know.”

“She’s back in Ignispolis?” After a while, Mu Yang finally asked.

“Yes”

“Is Li Yanfeng with her?” Mu Yang asked.

“Li Yanfeng? He had abandoned the two of us, and is now a proud member of the Lightning Manor,” Li Tianming sneered.

“Are you serious?” Mu Yang’s eyes suddenly became much colder.

“Of course, ever since I was a kid, the one who took care of me was mother. Li Yanfeng had nothing to do with it.” Li Tianming rolled his eyes.

“That bastard, I will personally see him dead!” This was the first time Mu Yang displayed his emotions in front of Li Tianming, and an incredible pressure fell on his shoulders.

“Vice-Potentate, I just want my mother to stay alive. She’s running out of time, and I need to act now,” Li Tianming explained.

“Bring me to her.” Mu Yang came to a conclusion. Li Tianming was glad that Wei Jing had referred a reliable person to him, since it was clear that Mu Yang was concerned about her. Even if he had grudges against Wei Jing at the start, it had dissolved the moment he heard that she had been suffering from Lifesbane for twenty years.

“Can we head to the Wei Manor first? Mother said that only the Potentate could cure her of the illness.” Li Tianming said.

“...” Mu Yang did not reply.

Only after a while did Mu Yang answer, “To be honest with you, I know what kind of a person the Potentate is. With the fallout he had with Jing’er, and the fact that she had never come back, his grudge has been festerig. He is utterly disappointed in Jing’er, and it’s all but impossible for you to get him to help. Furthermore, her affliction is now deeply rooted in her body; removing it will be a herculean effort through and through.” Mu Yang fell deep into thought.

"I don't understand this. How much grudge could there be between the father and daughter that he could watch her die without any emotions? Even animals won't do that." Li Tianming was displeased, not with Mu Yang but with this mysterious Potentate that Mu Yang had described to him. To make matters more complicated, the Potentate was Mu Yang's mentor.

"You are Li Yanfeng's son, aren't you?" Mu Yang stared at him.

"Yeah?" Li Tianming didn't understand where the question was coming from.

"Does Li Yanfeng care about you?"

"You are telling me that this Potentate is as loathsome as that Li Yanfeng?"

"Of course not."

"Then I will still have my chance. No matter how difficult it is, I have to take a look for myself. What if he agreed straightaway, and we're wasting our time here?" Li Tianming said.

"If only the situation was this optimistic," Mu Yang said.

"You are bringing me there right? Even if the manor is a tiger's den, I will not give up my chance." Li Tianming looked at him, his eyes burning with ardent flames.

"Aren't you scared? The Wei family is huge, and they are the real rulers of the sanctum. Your two uncles, Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun, have yet to forgive Jing'er. If you go there today, chances are you will just get chased out," Mu Yang suggested,

Li Tianming just found out that the chancellor and the overseer were both the Potentate's sons, making them his uncles. That would also make that Wei Guohao his cousin.

"Being chased out from the manor, and saving my mother's life. Which one do you want me to choose?" Li Tianming looked at Mu Yang. It was a question that needed no answering.

"I'm going to the manor today, even if it costs me my life," Li Tianming said. He was smiling, but the ardor in his eyes spoke of his determination.

Mu Yang took a look at him.

"Damn it, you look exactly like your mother back then. If it wasn't for that stubbornness of hers, things would have been much easier," Mu Yang mumbled, but he still made a decision.

He would take Li Tianming to the Wei Manor right now, and nothing could stop them!

## **Chapter 76 - The Hidden Clan**

The Wei family had resided in Heaven's Sanctum for countless generations — most of the Flameyellow Chancellors and the Sanctum Potentate were members of the family. Even most of the top ranking positions were held by the Weis.

As a result, their power and influence covered the entire institute. Yet, many disciples here didn't even know of the Wei Manor. At the very most, they knew that the chancellor Wei Tianxiong was the

Overseer Wei Zikun's brother. But few had ever heard of the Sanctum Potentate's name, and even fewer knew that the Potentate was actually their father!

From this, it was evident that the Wei family kept a very low profile. They would rather not let people think that the Institute was a faction of their family, in order to uphold the integrity of the Institute's purpose of raising the nation's gifted youths. Even for those within the sanctum like Wei Guohao, he would rather address himself as Zhao Tianchen's disciple than as the son of the chancellor.

Such a hidden powerhouse therefore had to place great emphasis on the discipline of its members. If not, they would have abused their power, a surefire way of gaining notoriety.

There were many different factions that controlled the various parts of Ignispolis, with the Vermilion Bird clan considered as the strongest faction. And only those from the most elite factions would learn that the Wei clan of Heaven's Sanctum was actually one of the leading factions in the nation too! While the Wei family fell short in the membership numbers compared to factions like Lightning Manor or the royal clan, they were the cream of the crop! This was also why Wei Jing had connections to some of the most famous people in the nation.

Under the influence of their ancestors, the entire family considered it their duty to maintain a low profile. Therefore, even the Wei Manor hidden within the sanctum looked like nothing more than just an ordinary courtyard. It was no match compared to the luxurious Chen Chateau, or the grandiose imperial palace. Yet, it was this insignificant courtyard that sheltered the most important members of the institute.

Most of the Wei family were gathered here today, making the manor much more crowded than usual. In the main hall, the servants were busy setting up a feast, with dishes and liquor delivered quickly to the dozens of tables scattered across the hall. Clearly, there was some kind of joyous occasion happening in the manor right now.

Seated on the left seat of the biggest table was a middle-aged man dressed in a golden robe. A bulky man, his imposing presence was not any weaker than Mu Yang's. He was none other than the supposedly strongest cultivator of the institute, the chancellor Wei Tianxiong. The man controlled the entire institute, but he rarely appeared in public except for the most important occasions, and even Li Tianming had not seen him before.

Seated across Wei Tianxiong was an elder. The elder had vitality that belied his age, his eyes brimming with golden sword ki. Even his muscles had a golden sheen, as if his torso was made out of metal. This elder was the Guardian of Sanctions, Wei Qing. He was also the Potentate's younger brother and Wei Tianxiong's uncle. Wei Qing was also a legendary character, as the manager of all punishments in the sanctum.

Important positions like the Potentate, the four Heavenly Guardians, the chancellor and the hall overseers were controlled by the Wei family. That made it perfectly valid to say that the sanctum was effectively controlled by the Wei family. Then again, the fact that Mu Yang could triumph over Wei Tianxiong to become the next Potentate suggested that they still encouraged competition.

Other than Wei Tianxiong and Wei Qing, the fifty or so other members were part of the Wei family as well. They were either chief mentors of the institute or disciples of the sanctum, and only very few untalented ones cultivated in the institute.

The reason why so many gathered in the hall today was because today was the birthday party of Wei Tianxiong's youngest daughter, Wei Lingxuan. The daughter that the chancellor cherished had just reached eighteen years old today. Wei Tianxiong himself had three sons, the eldest of them thirty-nine and the second twenty-nine. Both of them were chief mentors in the institute, and were working towards joining the supernal mentors. One of them would probably take on the role of the chancellor in the future. His third son was Wei Guohao, who at twenty years old was one of the most talented disciples in the sanctum,

As for Wei Lingxuan, she was Wei Tianxiong's only daughter and also his youngest child. Naturally, she had been pampered since young — she was essentially the little princess of the manor. As the star of the day, Wei Lingxuan was dressed in a crimson skirt, adorned with all kinds of jewelry and ornaments. As the princess of the family, her disposition fitted her status — her body was honed and full of power.

"Elder sister, you look really good today. All the boys in the sanctum must have been charmed by you." A boy dressed in a green robe said to her. He was Wei Zikun's eldest son, Wei Qingyi, and was a disciple of the sanctum at the age of seventeen.

Surrounding him were his younger siblings. Wei Zikun had two partners, but both of them were his concubines. He had always wanted to keep the position of his wife for Mu Wan, but she had never accepted that offer. That didn't stop him from having five children, however, with the youngest of them only three years old.

"Don't try to be smooth with me, what do you want?" Wei Lingxuan rolled her eyes.

"Come on, we are brothers and sisters. I was just hoping that since sister is in a good mood today, can you perhaps mention this outstanding younger brother of yours in front of Princess Qing? After all, both of you are Supernal Mentor Qin Shi's disciples..."

"Don't bother, we don't exactly see eye to eye with each other. We barely even talk." Wei Lingxuan pursed her lips and shut down Wei Qingyi's idea on the spot.

Having said that, Wei Lingxuan looked at the doorway and continued, "Anyway, why is my third brother still not here? Surely he wouldn't disappoint me on my birthday, right?"

"Elder brother Hao is together with my dad. I heard my dad saying yesterday that he will be bringing a prime disciple to the Hall of Ancestry first before attending the party," Wei Qingyi answered.

"Prime disciple? I watched the ranking test, it's that Li Tianming isn't it? What a clown. He's probably going to be chucked out of the hall by the supernal mentors," Wei Lingxuan scoffed.

"That would indeed make him a clown." Wei Qingyi sounded sulky. "Sis, why do you think Princess Qing is interested in scum like him?"

"What Princess Qing? Looks to me like that Jiang Qingluan is pissed at him too. But Princess Ling's affection towards him is rather intriguing."

"It's queer indeed. Anyway, that prime disciple is probably still thinking of looking for Princess Ling in the sanctum. How would he react if he found out that he can't even make it into the sanctum?" Wei Qingyi sneered, "First Lin Xiaoting's girlfriend, and now the princesses, just how shameless is this guy?"

"Can we not talk about this kind of person on my birthday? It's disgusting," Wei Lingxuan said.

"Haha, my bad sis... Look, my father and brother Hao are back." Wei Qingyi pointed to the gate where two bulky men were walking in..

"Third brother, what have you been doing? We waited so long," Wei Lingxuan grumbled.

"I was preparing a gift for my precious little sister," Wei Guohao laughed.

"And where is it?"

"I'll pass it to you later. Is grandfather not out yet?" Wei Guohao looked at the seat in between Wei Tianxiong and Wei Qing which was still empty.

"We don't know if he's coming out today, let's wait a while more." Wei Lingxuan pouted. It had been a long time since she last saw her grandfather, and she hoped to at least see him on her eighteenth birthday.

"Don't worry, he promised he'd be here today," Wei Tianxiong was drinking with Wei Qing when he overheard her conversation and answered. Wei Zikun had also found his seat and went to send his greetings to Wei Qing.

"I reckon he will be really happy to see Xuan'er reach eighteen." said Wei Zikun.

"Definitely, he adores Xuan'er the most. It's been eighteen years, time really flies." Wei Tianxiong exclaimed.

"Zikun, did any supernal mentor accept that prime disciple?" Wei Qing interrupted at one side.

"Ha, more like they wanted to hide from him."

"That's not appropriate. Rules are rules, and we need to find someone to accept him," said the chancellor, Wei Tianxiong.

"That's what brother Yang said too," Wei Zikun replied.

"Mu Yang was there?"

"Happened to walk pass."

"And?"

"He told Li Tianming to pick one for himself, but that boy was an absolute idiot. He said that he wouldn't force the supernal mentors to pick him, and he ended not picking any of them. Damn it, how am I going to tell Mu Wan about this." Wei Zikun downed a mouthful of liquor.

"Interesting boy." Wei Tianxiong smiled.

"Interesting my ass, he's just dumb," Wei Zikun snapped.

“And how did Mu Yang settle it?”

“He found him a place in the sanctum and told him to cultivate by himself. That boy even said he wanted to be Mu Yang’s disciple, as if he hasn’t shamed himself enough. Shouldn’t have brought him to the Hall of Ancestry in the first place.” Wei Zikun shook his head.

“If he is going to be over-ambitious then no one can help him. Just let him be, and when he fails the examinations he is bound to be expelled from the sanctum,” Wei Tianxiong said.

“It’s his own choice after all. There’s no way he can survive here without the help of a supernal mentor.”

“Forget about this fool. Today’s Xuan’er’s birthday, we should talk about something happier.”

“I’m happy enough just looking at all those youngsters there.”

“Xuan’er told me that she had one wish for her birthday.” Wei Tianxiong glanced at Wei Lingxuan, who was chatting with those around her.

“That is?”

“She wanted to see grandfather.”

“Have you told him?”

“Of course.”

“That old fellow, how could he cooped up inside his own room for years...”

“Zikun, watch what you are saying,” Wei Tianxiong interrupted.

“My bad.”

“Jing’er hurt him too much,” Wei Qing suddenly sighed.

Wei Tianxiong looked at his daughter Wei Lingxuan, and said, “Xuan’er has grown up, and perhaps this can be a new beginning. I will ask Xuan’er to visit him more often, and hopefully he will forget that person.”

Wei Zikun nodded in agreement. “Good idea.”

Just then, the entire hall suddenly plunged into silence. An elderly man had appeared outside of the gates.

## **Chapter 77 - Goldfault Sword**

The old man was dressed in white robes. He was thin, and his posture was slightly hunched. Together with the blotches on his skin, it gave him a very aged appearance. However, appearances could be deceiving. His eyes contained a might within them that surpassed even Wei Tianxiong. A mere glance was enough to silence people with fear.

“Grandfather!” A group of youths all gathered together to welcome the pillar in their heart. The man was the potentate of Heaven’s Sanctum, Wei Tiancang. This was one of the true hidden experts of Vermilion Bird, the true master of Flameyellow Scions Institute.



Wei Qing, Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun all rose to their feet.

“Grandfather, let me support you.” Wei Lingxuan was all smiles as she went forward with Wei Guohao, each taking one of his arms.

However, despite his hunched posture, Wei Tiancang’s steps were still steady. It was just that no one would reject the support of their grandchildren.

“He finally smiled,” Wei Zikun said to Wei Tianxiong.

“Yeah, turns out that he really can smile. I should let the children visit him more often. He chases me away every time I visit,” Wei Tianxiong said helplessly.

However, the two brothers still felt themselves relax when they saw their father smile.

“Sit.” His two grandchildren helped him to the seat of honour. Wei Lingxuan suddenly thought of a great idea and didn’t return to her seat, instead sticking by Wei Tiancang to pour him his drink.

“I still remember when Xuan’er was born. She was only the size of my palm. Now, eighteen years have passed in the blink of an eye and she’s become a little lady already.” Wei Tiancang rubbed her head, his smile widening even more.

“Grandfather, my only hope is for time to pass slower so that you can stay young forever and accompany me.”

“Good child.”

“Grandfather, let me give you a toast. I wish you happiness as immense as the seas and longevity as long as the mountains.”

“Haha, it’s Xuan’er’s birthday today, so why are you giving me the well wishes first?”

Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun exchanged a look and chuckled. It really had to be left to a lively young lady like Wei Lingxuan to cheer up Wei Tiancang,

“Grandfather, where’s my present?”

“Little lass, I’ve already prepared it long ago.” Wei Tiancang produced a golden sword from out of nowhere. It was covered in green heavenly patterns and exuded a fierce aura.

“Grade five beastial weapon, Goldfault Sword!” All the youths let out exclaimed gasps as they showed envious expressions. This sword was famous.

“Thanks grandfather, I love you the most!” Wei Lingxuan accepted the present excitedly.

“Remember, don’t force it before you’re strong enough to use it. Progress is made step by step.” Wei Tiancang exhorted.

“I know! I’m so happy now, Grandfather. It’ll be great if you could come out more often to give me pointers!” She showed a pitiful expression to Wei Tiancang.

“Alright, alright.” Wei Tiancang smiled as he stroked his beard.

“Amazing.” Wei Zikun was full of admiration. Granddaughters really were a cut above the rest. If his two sons had approached him with such a request, they wouldn’t have been given the time of the day. The last time Wei Tiancang had come out, it had been to appoint Mu Yang as the next potentate.

It could be said this birthday party was perfect now. Cheerful conversation flowed non-stop amongst the youths like Wei Lingxuan.

At this moment, a guard discreetly approached and whispered in Wei Tianxiong’s ear, “Chancellor, the vice-potentate is here.”

“Let him in. Did you ask if he has a gift?”

“He brought a young man along with him. He asked me to report in first.”

“Who’s the young man?”

“I don’t recognise him.”

“That’s fine, let him in,” Wei Tianxiong said hurriedly.

“Who is it?” Wei Zikun asked.

“Mu Yang.”

“He could have just come in directly.”

“It seems he brought an outsider along.”

“Oh?” Wei Zikun didn’t take much note of it. Currently, a whole group of youths were around Wei Tiancang. Such happy times were rare for the Wei Clan.

Then, two outsiders entered.

.....

Li Tianming hadn’t expected the Wei Manor to be so lively when he came. Even from afar, the sounds of joy of laughter rang clear and visible.

Li Tianming took a good, long look around, because he knew this was where Wei Jing grew up. She had been wandering around outside for twenty years, and Li Tianming was sure she was homesick.

“Something must be happening, it’s so lively,” Mu Yang said.

“Yes.”

“Don’t say anything later. I’ll handle all the talking later,” Mu Yang ordered.

“Thank you.”

“Master spends almost all his time in his Highcloud Chamber. I’ll talk to Wei Tianxiong later and bring you there directly.” Mu Yang glanced at the youth before bringing him into the noisy courtyard.

As soon as he entered, Mu Yang caught sight of Wei Tiancang. Li Tianming did too, perhaps due to the mysterious connection between blood relatives. Li Tianming had never seen him before, but he immediately knew this old man was the Sanctum Potentate and Wei Jing's father.

And, his grandfather.

The Guardian of Sanctions by Wei Tiancang's side looked even more severe, and he looked old but vigorous. However, Li Tianming didn't even spare him a glance.

"You're out, master..." Mu Yang was surprised.

"Yes, it's Xuan'er's birthday today." It could be seen that Wei Tiancang's attitude towards Mu Yang was even better than Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun.

"I see." Mu Yang laughed. "Xuan'er, sorry, I didn't prepare a gift this time. I'll be sure to make it up to you."

"Thank you, Uncle Yang. Don't be too stingy!"

"Don't talk like that," Wei Tianxiong reproached her.

Mu Yang smiled. "It's alright. I like Xuan'er's frankness."

"Uncle Yang has even better acumen than Mu Yang's dad." Wei Lingxuan made a face at Wei Tianxiong, provoking laughter all around.

"Mu Yang, why did you bring him here?" Wei Zikun had noticed Li Tianming immediately. Mu Yang had never even brought Lin Xiaoting here before.

Wei Guohao found it strange too.

"This young man is...?" Wei Tianxiong asked.

Wei Zikun's words made everyone notice Li Tianming. It was rather strange, as Mu Yang definitely knew what the Wei Clan frowned upon.

"Big brother, he's the prime disciple this year, Li Tianming."

Everyone got even more curious now. Bringing such an unimportant person here didn't seem very appropriate.

As everyone was looking doubtfully at Li Tianming, Li Tianming's eyes met Wei Tiancang's. The old man was looking at him calmly. As they locked gazes, Li Tianming felt a mounting pressure that left him breathless. However, Li Tianming had no choice but to meet this grandfather of his in the eyes. For the sake of his mother, he couldn't lose to him.

"Master, I came to find you for some small matter. However, it was bad timing on my part since today is Xuan'er's birthday. I'll come back in a few days with a present."

"What is it?" Wei Tiancang gave him a glance before closing his eyes. Those present could feel a storm brewing in the air.

Li Tianming got the sensation that the old man had seen through him completely.

“I’ll come back another day.”

“No need. Say it here.” Wei Tiancang’s attitude suddenly changed, his good mood gone.

“Then, perhaps we can take this to your Highcloud Chamber...”

“If you have something to say, say it here. Don’t waste time,” Wei Tiancang spoke indifferently.

Mu Yang could feel a headache coming on. He hadn’t expected today of all days, to be Wei Lingxuan’s birthday. He had originally been planning to speak privately with Wei Tiancang. Now, all the members of the Wei clan were here. While they didn’t have decision making powers, their presence would affect Wei Tiancang’s decision.

“Let me say this, vice-potentate.” Li Tianming didn’t want to make things difficult for Mu Yang. Some things, you had to do yourself.

In the first place, he didn’t find anything wrong to ask his grandfather to help his mother. Even if it wasn’t his grandfather and it was an ordinary relative, he wouldn’t find it embarrassing either.

Li Tianming directly met Wei Tiancang in the eyes and said steadily. “This junior is called Li Tianming. I’m here for the purpose of pleading with the Sanctum Potentate to save my mother.”

Those words sowed even more confusion. Wei Tiancang wasn’t a doctor either, so how could he save someone? Furthermore, this was some unrelated person.

“And what is your mother’s name?” Wei Tiancang’s raspy voice was very unpleasant to the ears, like metal grinding against metal.

“Wei Jing.”

## **Chapter 78 - You Don’t Deserve To Be A Father!**

The entire Wei Manor changed when Li Tianming spoke that name. If it was like a quiet lake previously, then it felt like boiling magma now, ready to erupt any time.

Other than Vice-Potentate Mu Yang, who had known about this earlier, the rest of the Wei Clan was caught by surprise. But everyone knew that it was just the calm before the storm. To them, the name was a taboo topic in front of Wei Tiancang since twenty years ago. And to make things worse, her son, Li Tianming, was right in front of them now!

The mainstays of the Wei Manor, including Wei Tianxiong, Wei Qing and Wei Zikun had turned into statues. Their thoughts froze up, and none of them even dared to look at Wei Tiancang’s expression right now.

That was especially true for Wei Zikun, who felt like he had just heard a fairy tale. Because of the event three years ago, he had already heard of Li Tianming, but he had never in his wildest dream imagined that Li Tianming to be his very own nephew.

As for the younger generations like Wei Guohao and Wei Lingxuan, they had no idea what happened back then. But even then, they had heard the story: they used to have an aunt who was evicted from the clan, and was never heard of since then.

Of course, it would be easy for them to search for Wei Jing's location given their power. But Wei Tiancang had strictly forbade anyone to look for or even contact her, and anyone in the family knew how much Wei Tiancang wanted to avoid that name. It wasn't hard to imagine how much of an impact his fallout with Wei Jing had twenty years ago!

Twenty years had passed, and the one that disappeared two decades ago had never returned. But here and now, a teenager claiming to be her son, had appeared in front of Wei Tiancang's face.

"My mother got the Lifesbane twenty years ago, and she doesn't have much time left. She has returned to Ignispolis with me, and I plead for the Potentate to save her life. If you can save her, I am willing to do anything for the clan," Despite the pressure that the entire Wei Clan was showing him, Li Tianming said earnestly. A teenager facing an entire powerhouse, filled with some of the strongest cultivators in the entire nation like Wei Tianxiong and Wei Qing, and he could still voice out his request calmly. Such an act needed guts, and a whole lot of it!

The moment he said that was the moment the storm within the Wei Manor broke. Earlier on, Wei Tiancang had closed his eyes, and only when Li Tianming spoke his request did he open them. In that moment, Li Tianming felt like the whole world was crushing him, an unimaginable weight falling on his shoulders. He could feel his organs being squeezed, his beast ki and blood flowing wildly in his body. His body was being torn apart!

That Wei Tiancang in front of him was no longer just any elderly old man, but a dreadful beast that loomed over him. In comparison, Li Tianming felt like he was just a tiny ant.

"She had Lifesbane for twenty years?!"

"Yes." Clearly, this was something new to them, even to Wei Tiancang who was still applying pressure in him.

Li Tianming continued to withstand this tremendous stress that Wei Tiancang was causing him, his eyes fixed onto Wei Tiancang's! Even then, he still had the guts to say one more time, "She doesn't have much time left. I beg you to save her, and my life is yours if you do."

Even if Wei Tiancang no longer treated her as his daughter, Li Tianming hoped that Wei Tiancang would still find saving a life a kind act that was worthy of his time. Li Tianming knew that the Wei Manor had no interest in his life, but that was all that he had as he didn't have any other bargaining chips he could use to fight for Wei Jing's survival.

The onlookers observed Wei Tiancang's reactions, and some of the younger ones didn't even dare to raise their head up from the pressure that he was emitting.

"Mu Yang!" Wei Tiancang suddenly roared, shaking the Wei Manor.

"Yes master." Mu Yang threw a pitiful glance at Li Tianming.

"Evict this person from Ignispolis together with his mother, and make sure they never come back again!" Wei Tiancang's voice was hoarse and swelled with rage! No one could even remember when was the last time they saw Wei Tiancang lose his calm like this.

Wei Tiancang had outright rejected Li Tianming, essentially pronouncing Wei Jing's death sentence. Li Tianming was optimistic before this, thinking that any father would not possibly see their own daughter die. But Wei Tiancang's reactions had astounded him. This was the exact feeling Li Tianming had when facing Li Yanfeng! It was no wonder both Wei Jing and Mu Yang, who knew Wei Tiancang well enough, claimed that such a plan was bound to fail.

Was this the true nature of the Potentate of Heaven's Sanctum? Li Tianming was not just saddened, but also resentful, just like how he resented Li Yanfeng.

"So you are just going to watch her die? You don't deserve to be a father!" Li Tianming had tried his best to contain himself. But alas, his care for Wei Jing didn't allow him to just ignore Wei Tiancang's response. He just had to vent out his frustration.

"Silence!"

"How dare you!"

The members of the Wei Clan were filled with indignation. How would they have expected a random boy would dare to cross Wei Tiancang?

"Master, don't mind him. He's just too anxious right now, I will take him out now." Mu Yang reacted immediately, pressing his hands onto Li Tianming's shoulders. For some reason, Li Tianming felt like he could no longer talk when Mu Yang did that.

It was indeed a shame, Mu Yang thought. Today was one of the rare occasions that Wei Tiancang could be happy, but he had screwed things up by bringing Li Tianming here. He dragged Li Tianming along hurriedly, on the brink of leaving the Wei Manor. Even he himself had underestimated Wei Tiancang's reactions, and how hard it was to save Wei Jing.

"No, wait!" But before they could leave, the hoarse voice sounded once again. Mu Yang could only turn to face him together with Li Tianming.

The light emanating from Wei Tiancang's eyes was like a radiant beam of sunlight, scorching Li Tianming's own. Even then, Li Tianming returned the glare without blinking once. He didn't even fear death, so why should he fear a mere Sanctum Potentate?

"Members of the Wei Manor shall not die like wild dogs on the street! If she were to die, she must die in this manor." Wei Tiancang's voice echoed in the hall.

"What's your name?" Wei Tiancang stared at Li Tianming.

"Li Tianming." He gritted his teeth.

"Tianming my ass! You shall spend the rest of your life in the manor too. I will not let you run around claiming yourself as a member of the Wei Clan!" Wei Tiancang was like a tyrant as he made his demands.

"And why should I claim to be part of the clan? Is it supposed to be an honor? Cause I find it a bloody shame," Li Tianming spat back. What did Wei Tiancang want, imprisoning the two of them in Wei Manor forever?

As for Mu Yang, he could feel his head buzzing. Just spoke one line from Li Tianming and the boy managed to offend Wei Tiancang again.

“Tianxiong, clear the Rainforest Pavilion and make it out of bounds. Throw the two inside there, and make sure no one goes in or out from now on.” With that said, Wei Tiancang rose to his feet, and turned to leave the hall without saying another word.

No one dared to make a move until he completely vanished off into the distance. Only when Wei Tiancang left did the tension in the hall ease off a bit.

“Oh, Mu Yang, you really should have told me about this first.” Wei Tianxiong sounded exasperated.

“I didn’t know today was Xuan’er’s birthday, and the master would leave the Highcloud Chamber. I did want to inform you about this before heading to his chamber. How would I know that he figured out this boy’s relationship with Wei Jing at one glance...” Mu Yang was helpless about it too.

Li Tianming found out about that too, given that Wei Tiancang’s expressions changed the moment he saw Li Tianming.

“Now what?” Wei Tianxiong said.

“What else can we do? I will bring Jing’er back first and lock her up in the Rainforest Pavilion, and we will see what we can do.” Wei Tianxiong sighed, but he could only agree with Mu Yang. After all, they could never disobey Wei Tiancang’s orders.

## **Chapter 79 - A Bunch of Drama Queens!**

Wei Tianxiong had already arranged for people to clean up Rainforest Pavilion.

“The Rainforest Pavilion has always been a beautiful place, but no one was allowed to enter for twenty years. And now he’s making people clean it up. Does elder brother intend to save her or not?” Wei Qing couldn’t make heads or tails of it.

“Who knows? However, it was so hard to make him happy for a bit, and now this happened. I expect our coming days to not be so peaceful,” Wei Tianxiong said.

“Did he say second sis has Lifesbane and doesn’t have much longer left?” Wei Zikun said.

“Let’s wait for Mu Yang to bring her back.”

Wei Zikun was slightly gloomy. “Do you think father will forgive her?”

“How could that be? She hasn’t returned for twenty years, returning only when she’s about to die. You saw how he reacted. You think it’s possible?”

“Then, what do you think?” Wei Zikun asked.

“It’ll be good if she doesn’t return.”

“Big brother, I feel the same as you. She can’t be forgiven after what she did to father,” Wei Zikun said.

“Mu Yang, you won’t be happy that I said that, right?” Wei Tianxiong looked at Mu Yang who hadn’t left yet.

“Your thoughts have nothing to do with me. I’ll get Wei Jing first.” Mu Yang left Li Tianming behind for them to escort to Rainforest Pavilion, while he brought Wei Jing back. He had happened to ask Li Tianming about her residence before coming to Wei Manor. Who knew that it would be useful at such a juncture?

Mu Yang turned and left, leaving Li Tianming to face the whole Wei family by himself.

They were all his relatives. Wei Tianxiong and Wei Zikun were his uncles, while Wei Guohao, Wei Lingxuan and the rest were his cousins. Normally, they should have grown up together. He had held out some hope before coming to meet these relatives.

However, now, he knew he had just been indulging in fantasy.

“Guohao, bring them away, lest they embarrass us even further,” Wei Tianxiong said mildly.

“Yes, father.” Wei Guohao nodded, before approaching Li Tianming. “Follow and behave yourself. Don’t think of running away. If you don’t behave, you’ll have no choice but to suffer.”

“Ah, what a party pooper. I only have one birthday a year to make grandfather happy, but some contemptible person just had to ruin it.” Wei Lingxuan came along as well.

Li Tianming followed them.

With the younger generation of Wei Manor led by Wei Guohao, the others followed his lead and joined in.

“Sister Xuan, why did you call him contemptible?”

“Haven’t you heard of the infamous Li Tianming? He was already an institute disciple three years ago. He tried to chase Lin Xiaoting’s girlfriend and failed. So, he tried to drug and violate her. Fortunately, Lin Xiaoting got there in time and executed his lifebound beast,” Wei Lingxuan said disdainfully.

“Disgusting. What a scary person!” Wei Zikun’s eldest, Wei Qingyi said exaggeratedly.

“What an embarrassment for such a person to be related by blood to us.” Wei Guohao gave Li Tianming a cold sneer.

Wei Lingxuan curled her lips. “I bet I can guess why grandfather kicked out his mother. Like mother, like son, they say.”

“Do you believe I’ll smack you until your face swells up and you can’t spew any more nonsense?” Li Tianming suddenly turned around and stared at Wei Lingxuan.

“Ohhh, how scary!” Wei Lingxuan pretended to be flustered as she hid herself in the crowd.

“Sister Xuan! Better hide quickly. This person must be super duper strong to say such words!”

“Perhaps he’s a genius just pretending to be weak. Don’t look at how he’s about third level Spiritsource. If he makes a move, Sister Xuan may be taken down in one hit.”

“At that time, maybe he’ll stun us all. How about we give him a preview of what that’ll be like?”

“Come, altogether now.” They all gathered and looked at Li Tianming, before sighing in praise.



“Wowzers, I did not think Li Tianming was this strong.”

“Ohmigosh, he took one hit, just one hit!”

“My god, he sent Brother Hao flying with one breath!”

Wei Qingyi shook in laughter. If it hadn't been inappropriate, perhaps they would have collapsed to the floor in their laughter.

“I simply can't believe a newly joined disciple is actually so strong. I'm so scared now. I won't dare to do it again!” Wei Lingxuan caused another round of laughter.

All of the drama queens had plastered on exaggerated expressions.

“Why aren't you saying anything, Li Tianming? Are you fantasizing of actually beating us one day?” Wei Guohao smiled at him.

“Whatever you say.” Li Tianming curled his lips.

“Well, at least your imagination is strong. A lot of newly joined people really don't understand the gap between them and us who've been in Heaven's Sanctum since young. Wei Qingyi here is seventeen, three years younger than you. But he's fifth level Spiritsource, and can beat you anytime, anyday. Everyone here is more talented than you,” Wei Guohao continued mockingly.

“Alright, alright sheesh. You all are the bigliest talents, ok?” Li Tianming said indifferently. However to him, since he could return to Ignispolis and become a prime disciple, the day he closed the gap was just a month or two away.

He just had to wait and see.

Even if he was locked away in Wei Manor, it wasn't like he couldn't cultivate and become stronger. Since they had already done a dry run, they could compare notes on the differences with the real thing later on.

At Li Tianming's current rate of improvement, could Wei Manor cage him in?

.....

They reached Rainforest Pavilion that had been deserted for twenty years. Various servants were already cleaning it up, and the guards arranged by Wei Tianxiong were already stationed there. Two people would guard in shifts, not letting Li Tianming and Wei Jing leave,

“Go in. I don't understand why it needed to be cleaned. The filthy Pavilion is a perfect fit for you.” Wei Guohao's face was filled with dislike.

Li Tianming couldn't be bothered with him, as he examined the place that should have been where Wei Jing grew up.

“Xiao Gao, Zhao Jin. Watch him well, he's not to take even one step out. An old one will come soon too, and same for her,” Wei Guohao instructed the two middle-aged men there.

“Yes, young master Guohao. We’ve already received instructions from the chancellor.” The two hurriedly nodded their heads.

“Alright, let’s go. Let’s continue celebrating Xuan’er’s birthday. Let’s not come back here ever again!”

The crowd of youths all left, chortling, their mood a complete opposite to the taciturn Li Tianming.

He saw many reflections of his mother in the layout of the place.

The servants worked quickly, and the place was soon livable. The master bedroom in particular was spruced up well, whether on Wei Tianxiong or Wei Tiancang’s orders.

The servants quickly departed once they finished their work.

Half an hour later, Li Tianming heard footsteps. Mu Yang was lending his mother an arm to support her as she walked in.

“Mother,” Li Tianming called.

Wei Jing smiled at him gently.

“I failed,” Li Tianming said.

“You didn’t,” Wei Jing said gently.

“I really did.”

“Look, isn’t this where I’ve been dreaming of returning to even in my dreams?” Wei Jing looked around, emotions and memories clouding her eyes.

“Tianming, take care of your mother. I’ll go visit master, I feel like there’s some chance,” Mu Yang said.

“What do you mean?”

“You don’t understand. Master isn’t the truly heartless type. Now that Jing’er is back, they’ll have chances to interact. At least, the chances of him saving her are higher than kicking you out of Ignispolis. There would be no chance left if she was kicked out of Ignispolis.”

Li Tianming thought so too. That was why he hadn’t been worried when Wei Jing was sentenced to life imprisonment. What was that in the face of his mother living on?

.....

Highcloud Chamber was not only the best place for cultivation, but also had the biggest fish pond in Wei Manor. Currently, there was an white-haired old man fishing by the pondside. Alas, he wasn’t calm, and his fishing rod kept trembling. If he actually caught something, it would be a minor miracle.

“Elder brother, so are you saving her or not?!” The Heavenly Guardian of Sanctions, Wei Qing, was lazily lying down on a rock and stretching, the severe aura that usually surrounded him now entirely absent.

“When Jing’er was young, you always treated her like your treasure. You spoilt her for twenty years and didn’t let anyone touch her. You couldn’t possibly just watch as she leaves this world in suffering, right? There’s no outsiders or juniors here, so just be frank with your little brother,” Wei Qing jabbered on.

Wei Tiancang threw the fishing rod on the ground loudly, snorting in anger, "How dare she be so obstinate! She's had Lifesbane for twenty years, but still refused to come back. Still, in the end, who's the one who came back to beg for help?"

Wei Qing rolled his eyes. "Well, you were the one who couldn't control your temper and was so fierce, cutting off all her paths with a few vicious words. I wouldn't dare return if I was Jing'er either."

"Nonsense. Was I so fierce?" Wei Tiancang asked doubtfully.

"What do you think? It's been twenty years. We're all old codgers now, so please start moving on. Sure, I do agree Jing'er was partly at fault, but she's suffered from Lifesbane for twenty years. Isn't that enough? Just give me a clear answer so I can relax. Save, or not save?" Wei Qing asked.

These pair of brothers were already in their sixties and seventies. There weren't any outsiders here, so they were as blunt as they wanted to be.

"Of course I will. That's my daughter." Wei Tiancang gritted his teeth.

"Then why all the shouting and bluster?"

"What about my face? She's been gone for twenty years, and if I'm too eager to save her immediately, how embarrassing will that be?"

"Dear brother, you were the one who forbade anyone from looking for her. And a certain someone said she was not to step one foot in Ignispolis ever again."

"..."

Still angry, Wei Tiancang jabbed the fishing rod at the lake before sitting down in exhaustion. "She could last twenty years. She'll last another with Mu Yang. I'll save her when she comes and apologises to me."

"Does she have to in public, say how she was wrong, and shouldn't have been disobedient to her father and chosen Li Yanfeng?"

"Then?"

"Whatever. It's up to you. It's your daughter that's suffering, not mine." Wei Qing shrugged.

"Could you have a daughter as pretty as mine?"

"Is she prettier now? Still boasting?"

"....."

"Still, your two sons seem to hate Jing'er."

"It has nothing to do with them."

"Well Mu Yang is impressive, forgetting old enmities like that."

"Yes, Jing'er and I owe Mu Yang too much," Wei Tiancang said.

"It's all in the past. Mu Yang is enjoying the simple life now, no?" Wei Qing smiled, before remembering the young man from earlier. "How do you find her son, your grandson?"

“What kind of genius could trash like Li Yanfeng raise? He’s joined Heaven’s Sanctum, but his age is high and his stage is low. He’s much worse than Wei Qingyi!” Wei Tiancang said.

“That you’re wrong. You don’t know what happened to him three years ago. I just found out myself.”

“What happened?”

Wei Qing ran through it.

“This is his stage after starting from scratch. Even if he started the year he lost his lifebound beast, it’s been three years at most. Three years to train back to third or fourth level Spiritsource is decent.”

“Not growing up Wei Manor, lacking my personal guidance. He even lost his Four-Winged Goldroc and only has a wildbeast lifebound beast. How far he can go is limited. If he even accomplishes half of Wei Qingyi, it’ll be great already.” Wei Tiancang said with certainty.

“True. But this child also has some integrity issues. That matter three years ago has spread far and wide.” Wei Qing sighed.

“Wrong,” Wei Tiancang said.

“What’s wrong?”

Wei Tiancang frowned. “The child I saw today wasn’t that sort.”

“Sure?”

“Sure. That child had a stubborn look in his eye and was also upright. He’s not the vulgar sort,” Wei Tiancang said.

“Then that’ll be interesting.” Wei Qing said.

“Hmph. That little chickling dared to talk back to me, I’ll have to test him.”

“How?”

“Oh, you’ll see.”

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door. “Master, can I come in?”

“Mu Yang is here. I’ll skedaddle first!” Wei Qing immediately vanished.

## **Chapter 80 - Azure Domain**

Li Tianming helped his mother settle down after Mu Yang left. Since they were already here, they might as well make themselves comfortable.

Wei Jing remained restless. This was the place that she had grown up in, and contained two decades of memories. Although movement was inconvenient for her, she still couldn’t resist touring around.

Ying Huo had also been feeling depressed, cooped up inside the lifebound beast space. As soon as he got out, he began bouncing around the pavilion.

It started drizzling outside.

“Mother, do you think he’ll save you?” Li Tianming asked.

“I don’t want to think about it. However, I do have to thank him for letting me back, as this has indeed been a dream of mine.” Wei Jing wasn’t broken-hearted at all.

“I was a little impulsive today. If I get the chance, I’ll ask him again.” Li Tianming did think he had gone a bit too far today. Still, he couldn’t understand why Wei Tiancang had been so heartless.

“Brother Yang has already gone over. So just wait,” Wei Jing comforted.

“Hmph, that old codger is pretty stubborn. Just wait, I’ll pluck that beard of his. Hair. By. Hair! Oh and then I’ll strip off his underpants and set ‘em on fire!” the little chick said, filled with righteous indignation.

Li Tianming rolled his eyes. “Yeah yeah, keep bragging.”

Mu Yang returned after a while. Although Wei Tiancang had forbidden anyone from entering, Mu Yang flouted those rules. Crossing the curtain for blocking rain, he approached Wei Jing. His eyes trembled somewhat upon seeing Wei Jing’s aged face.

“Any good news?” Wei Jing placed her hands on her knees, lifting her head to look at him. Even with her unnatural aging, she didn’t act any inferior when facing old acquaintances.

“Kind of,” Mu Yang said.

‘What is it?’

“He promised not to imprison Tianming anymore. He can return to Heaven’s Sanctum and also come here to visit you. However, the condition is that he can’t reveal his identity outside. Otherwise, he won’t be allowed out of Rainforest Pavilion again. So, in essence, he’s free,” Mu Yang said.

If so, it meant the aftermath of today wasn’t that bad.

“He’s overthinking things. My son doesn’t care for the identity of Wei Manor.”

“Did he agree to save my mother?” Li Tianming asked anxiously.

“He said it was impossible. He won’t see you again. He also said...” Mu Yang hesitated.

“It’s alright, just convey to me what he said.” Wei Jing said.

“He said let him know when you die. He’ll inter you in the Wei clan’s family tombs.” Mu Yang lowered his head.

Frankly, Li Tianming gnashed his teeth after hearing that. He had assumed Wei Tiancang might have a hard exterior but soft on the inside, but it turned out not to be.

“Then, help me thank him,” Wei Jing said.

“Don’t give up yet, Jing’er. I’ll try my best to convince him. When it’s necessary, I’ll arrange for you to meet him so you can apologise,” Mu Yang said earnestly.

"We'll see." Wei Jing bit her lips. Would she have stayed away for twenty years if apologising was so easy?

"What can I do, Vice-Potentate?" Li Tianming asked. He knew Mu Yang was helping, but it wasn't in his nature to sit by the side and twiddle his thumbs.

"You? We'll see. For the time being, don't worry. I can stop the eruption of her Lifesbane for now. It would help her hold on for a little longer and reduce her suffering. But that's a short term solution. In the long term, an expert with a blood relation is needed to remove it," Mu Yang said seriously.

"Thank you!" Li Tianming felt himself relax.

"No need to be so polite with me. Your mother and I used to be... the best of friends." Mu Yang stumbled on his words half way through.

"Were you two exes?" The little chick had been watching by the side, and finally found an opportunity to cut in.

Mu Yang and Wei Jing weren't young, and easily dismissed the little chick's words with a laugh.

"Tianming, help your mother to her room. I'll help examine her Lifesbane." Mu Yang directed.

Li Tianming nodded.

"You don't need to do so much. I'm good just staying here. It's not very appropriate when you have your own family..." Wei Jing was troubled.

"Jing'er, how is that so?" Mu Yang shook his head, "I don't have my own family yet. I only have a little sister, Wan'er."

Wei Jing trembled slightly. "You're not married yet?"

"Nope."

"..."

Having hit forty without getting married was abnormal, especially given Mu Yang's handsome looks, high talent and future status as Sanctum Potentate.

"Why?"

"There's no specific reason. I just haven't had a fated encounter yet."

"Oh."

"Tianming," Mu Yang turned and called out to Li Tianming.

Li Tianming helped his mother up and to the master bedroom. Mu Yang was powerful and also seemed to have an understanding towards Lifesbane. Letting him look was definitely beneficial.

After they went in, Li Tianming waited outside.

As for the little chick, it was now in a new environment, so it had gone to the pond to catch fish with great gusto...

Half an hour passed before Mu Yang came out, closing the door. "She's asleep."

He let out a deep breath, leaning on the pillar with arms crossed, his gaze on Li Tianming.

"How is it?" Li Tianming asked.

"It's been twenty years. The Lifebane has taken root in her bones. I can't fix it, only master can. And even he will struggle to do so. It'll take great effort and time from him."

"Are there ways to temporarily extend her life and make her more comfortable?" Li Tianming asked.

"That you don't need to worry about. I can suppress its spread. I'll find some spirit herbs tomorrow to do so. It won't be a problem for at least a year."

Before, lasting even a month was difficult with only Li Tianming and his clear spirit grass. However, now, a year was easy with Mu Yang's help. This all pointed to Li Tianming seeking Mu Yang's help to be the correct decision. His help was most likely needed too, if they were to reverse Wei Tiancang's decision.

Li Tianming had already thanked him multiple times, so he didn't say anymore. However, he had already marked him as a benefactor.

"Leave your mother's matter to me. Tianming, I have some things I want to ask about you." Mu Yang's eyes shone.

"Sure."

"You should be aware that my third disciple is Lin Xiaoting of Lightning Manor. I heard you have a grudge with him three years ago. Tell me more," Mu Yang asked.

"Will you believe me and not your disciple?" Li Tianming asked.

"I believe only the truth, the facts," Mu Yang said bluntly.

"Your sister Mu Wan was my chief mentor three years ago as well. She knows the truth. Did she tell you the origin of Lin Xiaoting's Saintbeast War-Soul?" Li Tianming asked.

"She did, but I didn't believe her before. Until I met you."

"And now?"

"Tell me the details," Mu Yang pressed.

Mu Yang was Lin Xiaoting's supernal mentor. If he knew the truth, it would be easier for Li Tianming in the future. Li Tianming pondered for a moment and then spilled the beans.

Afterwards, Mu Yang wordlessly looked at Li Tianming for a long while, eyes narrowed.

"What is it?" Li Tianming asked.

"You could still soldier on even after such a blow?" Mu Yang spoke, praise within his words.

"Well, I have her." Li Tianming looked at Wei Jing's room, before turning back to Mu Yang. "So, do you choose to believe your disciple or me?"

“Where did you find the Saintbeast War-Soul in the Abyssal Battlefield?”

“Why?”

“Just say it.”

“Azure Domain,” Li Tianming replied.

“Then I have my answer.”

“How so?”

“Lin Xiaoting said he had found it in Ginblue Domain. But I’ve stayed there for three years before, and I don’t believe there can be a War-Soul there. However, dangers abound in Azure Domain, so the chances are higher there.” With these words, it was evident that his final choice was to trust Li Tianming.