

## **Battlefield 371**

### Chapter 371: Devouring Soulflame (Orange) (Part 2)

He never thought he would have such a humbling day, but compared to his life, what did this humiliation matter?

As long as he could leave here alive, everything he suffered today, he would get back tenfold sooner or later—of course, these thoughts were only dared to be hidden deep in his heart, not daring to reveal even a trace in his eyes.

Qin Tian watched him with a cold curve at the corner of his mouth, seeing this pathetic, wagging look.

He stood up slowly, looking down at Yan Song, who was like a stray dog on the ground, his gaze lingering for a moment on the Red Ruby Ring he was wearing.

The wind swept across the plain, picking up a few pieces of withered yellow grass and landing in Yan Song's sweat-drenched hair. He held his breath, staring intently at Qin Tian's toes, his heart pounding as if it would burst from his chest.

At that moment, he suddenly felt the weakness within him recede like a tide, and the spiritual energy returned to his control.

But now, he dared not act rashly. After the previous strike, his body was a tangled mess, with most of his bones broken and muscles torn. Even with the return of spiritual energy, he couldn't contend with Qin Tian.

Right now, the only thing he could count on was the Heaven-Burning Purgatory.

"Heaven Burning, help me kill him, and I'm willing to offer you five thousand high-grade flame spirit stones, no, ten thousand!" Yan Song poured his spiritual power into the ring, urgently communicating.

The ruby on the ring flickered slightly, as if responding.

Hope ignited in Yan Song's eyes as he stared at the ring, anticipating it to transform into the almighty hand cannon and blast Qin Tian into pieces.

However, what happened the next second stunned both Yan Song and Qin Tian.

The Red Ruby Ring suddenly slipped off Yan Song's finger, transformed into a red light, and flew straight toward Qin Tian as if it had a life of its own.

Qin Tian instinctively raised his hand, but the ring slipped perfectly onto his index finger, fitting as if it was meant to be his. The ruby sparkled in the sunlight, radiating a gentle warmth that harmonized perfectly with Qin Tian's presence.

Qin Tian paused for a moment, looking down at the ring on his finger, a hint of surprise flashing in his eyes.

He could clearly sense a pure flame power circulating between the ring and his spiritual veins, as if there was some mysterious connection between the two.

Yan Song was even more dumbfounded, his eyes filled with disbelief. He blinked hard, questioning whether he was hallucinating due to his severe injuries.

That was the Heaven-Burning Purgatory he had "offered" for years, how could it suddenly recognize Qin Tian as its master?

Impossible!

Absolutely impossible!

"No... Heaven-Burning Purgatory, come back!" Yan Song roared, reaching out with a trembling hand to grab the ring back. But as soon as he made a move, he was tormented by severe pain within his body, collapsing to the ground, able only to watch helplessly as his divine weapon shone on another's finger.

Qin Tian returned to his senses, feeling the strange power within the ring, the corner of his mouth lifting into a meaningful smile.

He looked at Yan Song, amusement in his gaze: "It seems even your weapon feels there's no future with you."

Yan Song's face turned ashen in an instant, and a wave of despair surged in his heart. His spiritual energy couldn't support his body, and his only hope had betrayed him, leaving him utterly in despair.

Qin Tian gazed down at Yan Song's pathetic state, chuckling lightly as he suddenly understood why villains in dramas always prattled endlessly when the protagonist was cornered, showing an arrogant and overbearing look, because... it was really satisfying.

Seeing the once insufferable Yan Song now howling in despair like a stray dog before him, that sense of control indeed brought a strange delight bubbling within him.

But he understood the principle that villains die from talking too much.

He gave Yan Song no more chances, his gaze sharp, his right palm gathering faint black energy, and without hesitation, he struck the top of Yan Song's head.

Soul Devourer!

"Pfft—"

Crimson mists of blood spurted from Yan Song's seven orifices, his body convulsed violently, his eyes filled with terror and despair. He wanted to scream but couldn't make a sound, only feeling a powerful force invading his mind, tearing at his soul.

Yan Song's soul was like being gripped by an invisible giant hand, forcibly yanked from his body, and it emitted a silent scream in the air.

The transparent soul body was covered in cracks, being gradually torn into pieces under the effect of Soul Devourer.

The fragments fluttered like snowflakes towards Qin Tian's brow, merging into his mind.

Scenes from Yan Song's memories flashed before Qin Tian: the pampered moments of his childhood within the family, the pride of his first awakening of the Golden Bloodline, the fury from being mocked by clan members in his decline, the scheming for the battlegroup leader position, and the coldness when he considered the First Battalion and the Third Battalion as discards...

These memory fragments merged with Qin Tian's own, giving him a deeper understanding of Yan Song and the Golden Clan.

And Yan Song's vitality, along with his soul being devoured, was rapidly fading.

His skin shriveled and turned ashen at a speed visible to the naked eye, and his chest, which was slightly heaving, completely stopped breathing.

Finally, Yan Song's eyes were wide open, pupils dilated, filled with lingering resentment and despair, staring at the empty sky as if questioning why fate was so unfair.

But he would never receive any answers.

Qin Tian slowly withdrew his palm, looking at the lifeless Yan Song on the ground, his face expressionless.

Soul Devourer not only granted him Yan Song's memories but also absorbed a portion of his soul power, making his spiritual power more refined.

He raised his hand to look at the Heaven-Burning Purgatory on his finger, the ruby on the ring flickering, as if whispering for its former master's demise.

Swoosh

An orange light orb flew toward him, merging into his body.

Qin Tian looked at it; it was the Golden Level bloodline talent of Yan Family—the Scarlet Refining Soul Flame.

A Golden Level talent couldn't be missed.

However, every Golden Level talent has distinct characteristics, easily recognizable by others. Therefore, Qin Tian couldn't directly merge the talent with his body.

He glanced at all the talents in the recycle bin, deciding to pick out dozens of fire-related talents and merge them with the Scarlet Refining Soul Flame.

During the fusion process, the characteristics of most fire talents were hard to retain, but this mixed-up new talent was bound to be unique in the world, perhaps even bringing him new surprises.

With a system prompt, Qin Tian confirmed the fusion.

In the next moment, the orange light orb of the Scarlet Refining Soul Flame floated in the sea of consciousness like a block of orange paint awaiting blending.

Suddenly, dozens of light balls of white, green, blue, and purple surged in, like a spilled palette. Each colored light mass collided into the orange light ball, churning and intertwining.

As the fusion deepened, the variegated color blocks gradually blurred and settled, the fringes of mixed colors slowly being engulfed by the core orange light. When the last trace of purple disappeared, the light ball had transformed into an entirely orange-red sphere.

[Name] Devouring Soul Flame (Orange)

[Type] Composite Talent

[Description] Devouring Soul Flame is refined from dozens of flame-type talents, a pure flame force focused on devouring and soul burning. It can devour flame energy to strengthen itself and burn souls with soul fire, exceedingly aggressive.

1. World Burn Devourer: Can devour all flame-form energies it contacts, whether spiritual fire, foreign fire, or demon flame, they can be forcibly absorbed, enhancing its flame power. During the devouring process, the flame will automatically strip away impurities, retaining only the purest fire essence, which will seep into the user's body, tempering it with fire.

2. Symbiotic Flame Soul: Fuse the soul fire origin settled in the flame into one's own soul, entering a period of "Flame Master" state. In this state, the Flame Master's strength undergoes an explosive increase, physical attributes significantly enhanced, with flame damage increased by 300%.

3. Soul-Devouring Bone Burn: Devouring Soul Flame entwines the target like parasitic vines, continuously inflicting burning damage on the flesh and soul, hard to remove by ordinary means. When the flame burns on the target for more than five seconds, the soul flame will penetrate the soul core, causing irreversible damage to the soul at 1%-5% of its strength per second, potentially sending the target into a "Soul Collapse" state.

Chapter 372: First Battle with Soulflame, Subduing a Tier 6 Soul Master

At the instant the fusion completed, a torrent of scorching heat suddenly surged within Qin Tian's body.

Instinctively, he raised his palm, and surprisingly, a cluster of black flame leaped up from his palm, quietly flickering yet exuding a domineering aura that sought to devour everything, even drawing in the surrounding light.

Meanwhile, in his Sea of Souls, a black fire lotus slowly bloomed.

Its petals layered intricately, each formed purely of condensed black flames, the heart of the flame was a deep void, seemingly capable of devouring souls. The gentle swaying of the fire lotus emitted ripples that caused the entire Sea of Souls to tremble; this was the soul-devouring flame born from the fusion of dozens of fire talents.

Qin Tian focused his mind to savor this newfound power, the temperature of the black flame in his palm wasn't scorching, it felt oddly cool to the touch, yet the pulling sensation at his fingertips was unsettling — it was a terrifying suction that dragged, crushed, and devoured surrounding energy, as though he held a miniature black hole in his palm.

With a slight thought, the black flame suddenly surged half a foot higher, its temperature rapidly escalating to thousands of degrees in a flash, scorching the air until it crackled and exploded, even the stones on the ground began to melt into a glassy state.

Moreover, the soul-devouring flame could absorb all flames between heaven and earth; each time it devoured a high-quality flame, the flame's color deepened, and the void sensation within its heart intensified, harboring limitless growth potential.

When he attempted to mobilize all his spiritual power, the black lotus in the Sea of Souls abruptly spun, black flames instantly enveloped his body, and a flame mark appeared at his brow. The power in the "Flame Master" state surged like a tsunami, wildly escalating his speed, strength, and precision in flame control, as if he had become the king of flames at that moment.

"A very formidable talent."

A flash of satisfaction appeared in Qin Tian's eyes. Although his primary spiritual energy direction was the dark element and thunder element, the awakening of the soul-devouring flame added more diversity to his attack methods.

Especially the spiritual characteristics of the soul-devouring flame, which he particularly valued.

The black fire lotus in the Sea of Souls constantly radiating a warm and resilient ripple, akin to an invisible shield capable of repelling incoming spiritual impacts and soul erosions, even converting them into nourishment for his own soul fire, rendering his defense on the soul level as sturdy as iron.

And when he actively deployed it, the soul flame could transform into an all-penetrating vanguard, following the opponent's spiritual link into the depths of their soul, burning their will and essence. Even those adept in spiritual arts would hesitate in the face of this soul flame.

Qin Tian slowly clenched his fist, the black flame in his palm receding, leaving only a faint warmth. He could sense that this soul-devouring flame, like an unpolished gem, would, upon continued devouring and growth, surely shine even more brilliantly, becoming another trump card in his hand capable of overturning battles.

Yan Song is dead, but through soul devour, Qin Tian knows there are still two good items on him.

His gaze swept over Yan Song's corpse, landing on the dim jade pendant on his neck.

This jade pendant, named the Fire Spirit Jade Pendant, was a specially made protective artifact by the Yan Family.

Usually storing flame energy within, upon a deadly attack, the energy would instantly erupt, transforming into a semi-transparent Flame Shield that envelops the wearer, with flame patterns on the shield offsetting much of the attack.

It was this jade pendant's timely activation that allowed Yan Song to barely survive a charging blow.

Next, his gaze fell on Yan Song's wrist, where a black ring lay quietly, it was the Shadow Concealing Ring.

Crafted from an unknown black metal, its surface engraved with intricate dark patterns, when worn, it almost merged with the skin. By activating specific secret techniques, the ring emanated weak energy ripples capable of simulating the aura of any nearby creature — whether the agility of forest birds, the heaviness of subterranean beasts, or the ferocity of demons, it could mimic vividly, thereby achieving concealment and confusion effects.

Yan Song had previously relied on this Shadow Concealing Ring to infiltrate the Demon Cave multiple times for investigation.

For Qin Tian, the use of the Fire Spirit Jade Pendant might not be significant, given his incredible defense power naturally, and he wore the Qingtan Holy Branch Bracelet capable of resisting Tier Six attacks, which overlapped functionally with the Fire Spirit Jade Pendant.

As his strength continued to grow, both the Fire Spirit Jade Pendant and the Qingtan Holy Branch Bracelet became increasingly lesser in effect. These protective spiritual artifacts could be handed to his subordinates for use.

In contrast, the Shadow Concealing Ring was quite an interesting treasure, allowing him to transform into anyone's appearance, even a demon's. However, achieving a perfect simulation of the aura was usually impossible, but with this ring, that shortcoming was covered.

With both treasures collected, Yan Song's corpse was tossed into the Spirit Space, then Qin Tian opened the Void Gate; he still had to deal with another person, the Tier Six Soul Master beside Yan Song, nicknamed — Old Ghost.

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In the wilderness high above, gale winds whistled as they swept through sand and gravel, two figures darting through the air like arrows loosed from a bowstring.

"Qin Tian, how much longer until we catch up to them?"

Old Ghost's voice was somewhat distorted by the wind, anxiety in his eyes almost overflowing; Yan Song absolutely couldn't die, at least not now — he hadn't yet extracted the whereabouts of that child from him.

"Soon." The "Qin Tian" leading ahead replied deeply. As soon as he finished speaking, his nose subtly twitched, "Their aura is just ahead."

Chapter 373: Soulflame's First Battle, Subduing a Rank 6 Soul Master

As he spoke, the corner of his eye swept over the old ghost behind him, a fleeting hint of something uncanny flickering deep within his pupils. Unfortunately, the old ghost was too anxious, his eyes fixed firmly on the horizon ahead, completely missing this fleeting anomaly.

"Alright!"

The old ghost clenched his fist abruptly, soul power surged into his limbs like a tide, a faint blue aura emanated from his body, and his speed suddenly increased, keeping pace with the "Qin Tian" up ahead.

In less than half a minute, the scenery on the wasteland below became clearly visible.

A demon with silver wings on its back was seen hunched over a body, its sharp claws and fangs deeply embedded in flesh, its throat rolling constantly, and the blood at the corners of its mouth gleamed with a demonic red light in the sunlight.

Hearing the sound of something slicing through the air above, the demon suddenly raised its head, its scarlet vertical pupils shooting out a fierce light.

"Damn beast!"

The old ghost's eyes were about to pop out, and his right arm suddenly lifted, the immense soul power condensed into a pale purple ball of light in his palm and was fiercely launched.

The ball of light shot out like a meteor, striking the silver-winged demon precisely on the back. A piercing screech was heard, and the demon's body flew out like a rag doll struck by a heavy hammer, dissipating into a black mist in mid-air, disappearing without a trace.

What!

Seeing this, the old ghost's pupils contracted; no, this wasn't the silver-winged demon. Realizing this, he urgently spoke, "Qin Tian, little..."

Before he could finish, a heart-wrenching pain suddenly erupted from his chest.

Squish—

An unexpected dark short blade pierced through his chest, the blood dripping from its tip traced an eerie arc through the wind.

The old ghost's body stiffened abruptly, looking down incredulously at the familiar short blade.

The old ghost slowly turned around and saw the owner of the short blade had already retreated hundreds of meters away, the face retreating like molten wax, revealing a stranger's cold and indifferent face.

"You..." The old ghost's voice was hoarse like a broken gong.

Just then, fragmented pieces in his mind suddenly pieced together rapidly—the odd timing of the silver-winged demon's raid, Qin Tian's unexpected assistance, and the disintegration of the silver-winged demon...

A thunderclap exploded in his mind.

The old ghost turned abruptly, seeing "Yan Song" lying on the ground slowly stand up, the wound on his neck healing at a visible speed, the bloodstained face twisting, transforming in the wind, finally settling into Qin Tian's familiar face, watching him with a half-smile.

At this moment, the blood in the old ghost's body seemed to freeze.

It turned out, from beginning to end, it was all a play directed and acted by Qin Tian himself.

He and Yan Song, were just pawns toyed with by this cunning fox.

The old ghost took a deep breath, the excruciating pain in his chest made him groan involuntarily, blood oozed from the corner of his mouth again. He clearly knew it was too late to run now, Qin Tian's speed was definitely far beyond his, not to mention that guy mastered the art of space teleportation.

Fortunately, he was a Soul Master specializing in the soul path, even though his physical body was pierced by the short blade, severely injured, his soul power was not greatly affected.

A hint of ferocity flickered in his eyes, since there's no escaping, then fight to the death!

The old ghost wasted no words, his eyes suddenly lit up with a ghostly purple light, the vast soul power erupted from his body like a tsunami, making the air around seem to thicken.

"Soul Cage!"

With the old ghost's stern shout, countless purple soul silks appeared out of thin air, entwining into a massive cage, instantly enshrouding Qin.

These soul silks looked slender, yet they contained a powerful power of imprisonment. Once entangled, not only would the physical body be bound, but even the soul would find it difficult to move.

Qin Tian's mind flicked, the devouring soul flames around him suddenly erupted, transforming into a massive black fire lotus, encasing him within.

The petals unfolded layer by layer, exuding a devouring aura as the black flame swirled.

When the Soul Cage collided with the fiery lotus, the purple Soul Silk was particularly resilient, contending with the black flame. The Soul Silk continuously attacked the fiery lotus barrier, producing sizzling sounds of burning. The glow of the fiery lotus trembled slightly, demonstrating the undeniable power of this strike.

Qin Tian raised an eyebrow slightly; the old ghost was indeed worthy of being a Tier Six Soul Master, with formidable Soul Power.

"Interesting." Qin Tian's lips curled into a cold smile, and a tuft of black flame rose from his fingertips. With a gentle flick, the flame transformed into a stream of light, shooting towards the old ghost.

Seeing this, a hint of gravity flashed in the old ghost's eyes, yet he remained unfazed. He formed seals with both hands, and with a low shout in his heart, "Soul Barrier, Triple Overlapping!"

Three solid layers of purple Soul Barriers appeared before him, densely engraved with soul patterns. The black flame collided with the first barrier, producing a violent explosion, causing intense shaking without breaking. The flame shattered through two barriers consecutively but halted in front of the third barrier, eventually being completely blocked.

Sensing the devouring power contained within the black flame, the old ghost's gaze grew more solemn as he channeled his Soul Power. Numerous twisted ghostly figures flew from his body, emitting piercing shrieks, charging towards Qin Tian.

A Hundred Ghosts Night Parade!

Qin Tian's gaze sharpened, and the black fiery lotus around him spun dramatically, the edge of the petals turning into sharp flame blades.

As the fiery lotus rotated, the flame blades collided with the ghostly figures, producing ear-piercing sounds.

Ghostly figures were constantly shredded, while the brightness of the flame blades gradually dimmed. In a few moves, although all the ghostly figures were annihilated, Qin Tian's fiery lotus had shrunk a circle, clearly consuming a considerable amount of power.

The two exchanged several blows, the old ghost repeatedly utilizing his superb soul magic to fend off Qin Tian's devouring soul flames. Though Qin Tian wasn't a Soul Master specializing in the soul path, both his Orange Talents [Spiritual Wisdom Divine Authority] and [Devouring Soul Flame] were soul-related.

[Spiritual Wisdom Divine Authority] bestowed him with nearly limitless potential in terms of soul matters. As he tempered and absorbed souls, the strength of his soul rapidly increased beyond imagination. Any soul-type treasures and skills had their enhancement effects boosted by 100%, while soul control and damage skills effects were reduced by 90%.

Furthermore, the protective effect of Devouring Soul Flame made the old ghost's soul magic not only ineffective against him but also helped him constantly enhance mastery over the Devouring Soul Flame during the confrontation.

Therefore, even though he had the ability to quickly wrap up the battle, he was in no rush.

After a few exchanges, the old ghost realized he couldn't take down Qin Tian. Initially, he planned to target another person, forcing Qin Tian to be cautious, but to his surprise, that person had long disappeared, giving him no opportunity at all.

As the old ghost pondered solutions out loud, suddenly, he felt internal turmoil, a strong sense of dizziness struck, making the scene before his eyes blur. The circulation of Soul Power also became sluggish, and his normally smooth spell-sealing became somewhat delayed.

"What's going on..." The old ghost was shocked, a terrifying thought sprang to mind.

He looked down at the short blade in his chest, the blade glinted with an imperceptible bluish glow.

"Poison... There's poison on the short blade..." The old ghost instantly realized the issue, his expression drastically changed.

Once the poison struck, it was like a torrential flood; the old ghost's body began to tremble uncontrollably, his breath became chaotic.

Seeing this, Qin Tian knew it was time to reel in the net. He surged the Devouring Soul Flame, and the black fiery lotus expanded instantly, sweeping towards the old ghost.

The old ghost exerted his last bit of strength to gather Soul Power for defense, but the poison had long spread through his bloodstream into every part of his body. The Soul Power seemed frozen like a stream, motionless.

He watched helplessly as the black fiery lotus surged like a tide, engulfing him completely with a devouring might, his consciousness plunging rapidly into the burning agony, eventually falling into boundless darkness.

Swoosh—

The black flame receded like a tide, revealing the ravaged ground beneath.

The old ghost lay unconscious in the rubble pile; the once intact black robe was burnt to tatters, exposing a wrinkled old face, the short blade still inserted in his chest, though no blood flowed out.

From the distance, the sound of wind breaking came as Li Qi descended slowly, carried by the airflow. Sweeping his gaze over the old ghost on the ground, his lips forming a smile, he turned to Qin Tian and cupped his hands, saying, "Congratulations, boss, you've gained a Tier Six subordinate."

"This time, your contribution is invaluable."

Qin Tian smiled slightly, raised his arm, and the old ghost's body floated up out of thin air. Then, he placed his large hand on the old ghost's forehead, swiftly imprinting a Soul Seal.

Chapter 374: Return to the Battalion Camp

A gust of wind swept across the wasteland, carrying with it a hint of desolate chill.

The Old Ghost's eyelids twitched and he slowly opened his eyes. The blinding sunlight made him squint involuntarily, and at the focus of his gaze, a tall figure stood with his back to him.

He recognized at a glance that it was Qin Tian.

In an instant, Old Ghost's muscles tensed abruptly, and his soul power instinctively wanted to surge, but before he could make any move to resist, a strong sense of submission from the depths of his soul suddenly surged into his heart like a tide, causing a strange numbness throughout his body, rendering even his fingertips immobile.

What's... happening to me?

Old Ghost's pupils constricted sharply, and his soul power unconsciously probed inward, only to discover to his horror that at the center of his Sea of Souls, a dark golden Soul Seal was suspended, the oppressive presence emitted from its flowing patterns firmly locking down the essence of his soul.

As a Tier Six Soul Master, he understood better than anyone what this meant—he had become someone else's Soul Servant.

"Mas... Master!"

Old Ghost staggered as he stood up; the wound on his chest had long since healed but ached subtly with the movement. He looked at that figure, his voice hoarse as if sandpapered, laced with an indescribable complexity.

Qin Tian slowly turned around, his gaze calmly scrutinizing him. From the remnants of Yan Song's memories, he had already pieced together Old Ghost's past, as well as the twisted entanglement between him and Yan Song.

Old Ghost, originally named Zong Xiangui, came from an ordinary family. After becoming an adult, his bloodline suddenly awakened, setting him on the path of cultivation.

Due to the uniqueness of his bloodline, he did not choose the common paths of Martial Artist or Mage. Instead, he became one in a million—a Soul Master capable of directly manipulating soul power for combat.

Relying on this God-given bloodline and far surpassing others in painstaking cultivation, Old Ghost eventually ascended to Tier Six, becoming a powerhouse in his own right.

But his nature was reclusive; he never married, had no children, and was unwilling to join any faction, always a lone wanderer across different planets.

As for why he worked for Yan Song, it all boiled down to Yan Song's despicable scheming.

Yan Song accidentally learned of this Tier Six Soul Master's existence and, seeing his solitary, unattached situation, conceived the idea of subduing him.

He utilized the family intelligence network to thoroughly uncover Old Ghost's background—the seemingly detached Soul Master had only one weakness in his heart, an old confidant from his early years.

Thus, Yan Song set a poison scheme, secretly framing, resulting in the ruin of that confidant's family, leaving only a five-year-old child untraceable.

When Zong Xiangui heard the news, he was anxious beyond measure. At a loss for how to find the child, Yan Song "coincidentally" appeared, offering with a show of "kindness" to employ all Yan Family resources to search for that surviving child, without charge, no conditions mentioned.

When the child was finally found, it turned out he was suffering from a strange illness, with organs failing, having to rely on a special elixir for sustained life.

Even for a Tier Six Powerhouse, acquiring such an elixir with ease was impossible.

It wasn't until this moment that Yan Song showed his fangs. He agreed to cover all the child's treatment costs and even personally arranged for family physicians to take care of him. The condition was—Old Ghost must come under his command and serve him for five years.

To preserve the only remaining bloodline of his friend, Old Ghost gritted his teeth and agreed.

But since then, although Yan Song delivered medicine on time to maintain the child's life, he kept the child hidden so tightly that not to mention seeing him, even the child's whereabouts were never mentioned, only allowing Old Ghost to occasionally video with the child to confirm his safety.

"Jun Jia, that child, is now on Tianyu Star." Qin Tian's voice was calm and unruffled, yet it was like a boulder crashing into Old Ghost's heart lake, "His illness was long cured; Yan Song has been hiding this from you all along. This I dug out from Yan Song's memory, it's undoubtedly true."

Old Ghost shuddered violently as if an invisible hand gripped his heart. The next moment, his taut spine suddenly collapsed, his eyes involuntarily growing warm—the boulder hanging over his heart for years crashed down, and the guilt and anxiety that had stifled him transformed into a bittersweet warmth coursing through his whole body.

Had he not seen through Yan Song's tricks?

The disaster that befell his friend's family, from beginning to end, all because of him.

Yet the child was his friend's only surviving bloodline, even knowing it was a trap, he could only act like a bull led by the nose, working for Yan Song.

For years, he had borne his earth-shattering hatred for Yan Song just to exchange for a thread of hope for that child's life.

Now learning the child was safe, even long since healed, Yan Song's death suddenly became immensely satisfying, years of pent-up resentment surged out of his throat in an almost inaudible sob.

"Thank... thank you, Master." Old Ghost lowered his head, his voice carrying a lingering tremor, but this time the term "Master" was called out much more willingly, less with humiliation and more with a tinge of willingness.

"Hmm."

Qin Tian responded noncommittally, his gaze on the slightly lowered head of Old Ghost. He knew clearly that the obedience of this Tier Six Soul Master was mostly compelled by the Soul Seal's suppression—a lone powerhouse suddenly reduced to another's vassal, such disparity was not something easily digested.

But Qin Tian was not in a hurry, knowing that over time, as Old Ghost witnessed the opportunities he could provide, he would naturally understand that today's reversal of identity was not the beginning of shackles, but the most fortuitous turning point in his life.

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When Qin Tian and Old Ghost returned to the Chijin Battlegroup with Yan Song's corpse, the entire battlegroup's atmosphere turned peculiarly eerie.

"Young Master."

Yan Song's personal guards were the first to surround them. Seeing the ravaged, bloody corpse, the leader of the guards buckled, dropping to his knees with a soft "thud," his face pale, while the other guards had reddened eyes. Though knowing Young Master had an erratic temperament, they had also benefited from him. Now the sudden collapse of their mainstay left them bewildered and at a loss.

Feng Xiaotian and several other battalion commanders bore complex expressions. Yan Song had not treated them poorly ordinarily, sharing credit in battles, a clear ploy to win favor. But to see the once spirited, golden-blooded genius reduced to a mangled corpse still brought a choking sensation to their chests.

After all, they were comrades, and even the superficial camaraderie now transformed into an indescribable melancholy.

But within the battlegroup, another scene unfolded. The grassroots soldiers, having clawed their way up, did not dare openly cheer, yet couldn't hide the long-restrained satisfaction in their eyes.

Who hadn't suffered under Yan Song's tyranny?

This young master only cared for battalion commanders of similar bloodline heritage, being particularly harsh on soldiers of grassroots civilian origin, routinely taking credit and shifting blame.

While he did lead them to some victories, how much of that credit was soaked in the blood of comrades?

Compared to the tiny sweetness he handed out, the humiliation and harm inflicted on everyone had long entwined their hearts like a toxic vine.

Now the toxic vine was finally severed, and though the future was uncertain, at least in this moment, even the wind carried a scent of relief.

Of course, some noticed that Yan Song's mangled corpse also lacked treasures, notably the Red Ruby Ring on his finger.

Was the ring dropped or lost during the demon's tearing, or taken by someone?

Their gazes passed over Qin Tian and Old Ghost—Qin Tian was Yan Song's subordinate, and Old Ghost was his adversary; they could not have colluded.

The two acted together from the start; if one truly intended to pocket the ring, the other would never stand idly by.

Thus, the answer seemed singular—that ring, bearing the Heaven-Burning Purgatory, was likely to vanish from the world once more, who knows how many years before it would reappear again.

#### Chapter 375: Divine Weapon Emperor (Orange)

The news of the Chijin Battlegroup commander's assassination reached the Sixth Battle Zone command post on the second layer of the Demon Abyss immediately.

"Yan Song is dead."

The square-faced Major General tapped his fingertips lightly on the tabletop, a slight frown on his face. He looked at the battle report before him, his tone tinged with surprise: "I remember he just achieved a great success, led his troops to eradicate two major Demon Caves, and even destroyed the Demonic Qi rift. How come less than a day has passed and he's gone?"

The adjutant beside him quickly explained, "According to the frontline report, a Tier Six Silver-winged Demon suddenly attacked the Chijin Battlegroup command center, severely injuring Yan Song and abducting him. I suspect this might be the Demon Race's retaliation for his destruction of the Demon Caves."

"Tier Six Silver-winged Demon?" The Major General raised his eyes, evidently skeptical of this explanation, his frown deepening, "Yan Song, a Tier Six Golden Bloodline descendant, was severely injured and taken from his own command center by a Silver-winged Demon of the same tier? That doesn't make sense."

In the Demon Suppression Abyss, it's not uncommon for Golden Bloodline geniuses to fall, but for a Demon to storm in and abduct a commander, this was a first.

If this incident spreads, it might shake the morale of the troops on the frontline.

"It is indeed puzzling." The adjutant looked confused, "The battle report states that Yan Song was almost incapacitated by a single strike, with no room for resistance. But he is a Golden Bloodline descendant, even against a Peak Tier Six Silver-winged Demon, he shouldn't be this helpless. And given the potential of a Silver-winged Demon, there's no chance for it to advance to the Tier Seven Demon King realm."

The two exchanged a glance, seeing the doubt reflected in each other's eyes. But Yan Song was dead, and the Silver-winged Demon responsible for the crime had vanished without a trace. Pursuing this matter was like looking for a needle in a haystack, and it could only be temporarily set aside.

"The urgent task is to find someone to replace him." The Major General asked solemnly, "Do you have a suitable candidate?"

The adjutant thought for a moment, "There are a few candidates, but according to protocol, after the previous commander dies in the line of duty, candidates should be prioritized from within the battlegroup."

"Does the Chijin Battlegroup have any other Tier Six Spiritualists besides Yan Song?" The Major General asked seriously, "To serve as a commander, Tier Six combat strength is a mandatory requirement."

"There's no other Tier Six Spiritualists," the adjutant changed tact, "but there's one who can slay Tier Six Demons—Qin Tian, a Colonel from the Seventh Bureau, Tier Five Four Stars Spiritualist. He recently arrived at the Demon Suppression Abyss and joined the Chijin Battlegroup. In this action, he consecutively slew two Tier Six Demons, one at range with a Rune Sniper Rifle, and decapitated another in direct confrontation."

"Tier Five Four Stars can kill Tier Six?" The Major General finally revealed surprise, "Which family is he from? I don't recall hearing of the Qin surname in the Golden Clan."

"There is very little information on him," the adjutant appeared troubled, "all that's known is he hails from the Seventh Bureau, his background, experience, interpersonal relations, almost all blank."

The Major General, however, waved his hand indifferently.

He understood that frontline personnel from the Seventh Bureau were always like this. For confidentiality, files were either strictly encrypted or disguised cosmetically, nothing unusual.

"Do you intend for him to take on the commander's role?" The Major General asked.

"I think we could give it a try first," the adjutant analyzed clearly, "Firstly, his combat strength is solid, with genuine achievements in slaying Tier Six Demons; secondly, officers from the Seventh Bureau typically have reliability and capability far exceeding those spoiled sons of the noble families. I believe there's no need to appoint him directly as the commander, let him serve as acting commander initially. If he performs well, leads the team effectively, then we can remove the 'acting' title; if not, it's never too late to bring someone else on board."

"This arrangement sounds reasonable." The Major General thought for a moment, nodding slightly, "Let's do it."

The Demon Caves near the Chijin Battlegroup have been cleared, reducing external pressure significantly, making it an opportune time to boldly try out new recruits.

Compared to those noble family descendants who rely on their bloodline, a Tier Five Four Stars officer who can consecutively slay two Tier Six Demons and hails from the Seventh Bureau is clearly of greater nurturing value—after all, such an officer is truly the direct lineage of the Military Department.

.....

In the brightly lit tent of Battalion Three's encampment, the Red Ruby Ring on Qin Tian's fingertip shone with a gentle red light.

His fingertip lightly stroked the face of the ring, which seemingly ordinary was actually one of the Empire's Ten Great Guns, the Heaven-Burning Purgatory, a thought that felt wondrous.

"Hidden for so long, won't you come out for a meeting?"

Qin Tian's voice echoed in the quiet tent.

As soon as the words fell, the ring suddenly trembled slightly, a fiery red figure streaked out of the gemstone, spun in mid-air, condensing into a fire demon half a man's height.

This creature had two small curved horns above its head, its hooves stepping on flames resembling a calf, yet its face was exquisitely ridiculous, with a certain naive charm akin to a Q version doll.

"You human, you're kind of interesting."

The fire demon sized Qin Tian up and down, its voice youthful yet tinged with an oddly veteran air, "There's a scent on you that makes me feel close, this is the first time I've felt this after changing several partners."

Qin Tian understood in his heart, this intimacy likely came from the [Soul of the Gun God]—that purple talent allowed him to instantly resonate with any firearm, controlling it as if it were second nature, thus making no exception for the Gun Spirit.

"Partner? Do you call all of them that?" Qin Tian's lips curled into a smile, "Do I qualify to be your next partner?"

Upon hearing this, the fire demon petulantly pouted, its small face full of disdain, "You're too weak. By human standards, you're only Tier Five, not yet eligible to borrow my power, wait until you've broken through."

Before the voice even finished, it swooped back into the ring, leaving no room for negotiation.

Qin Tian was not anxious, his fingertip still caressing the gem, a peculiar energy slowly injecting—this was the power from another purple talent, [Master of Arms].

Chapter 376: Divine Weapon Emperor (Orange) (2)

"Uh... so comfortable, don't stop!" In the mind suddenly burst the moan of the fire demon, with a hint of drowsy laziness.

Qin Tian's lips curled, and the energy suddenly halted.

"Why did you stop! How dare you stop!" The fire demon "bang" exploded from the ring, its little face flushed red, and sparks flared on its horns as its hooves anxiously pawed.

Qin Tian spread his hands, looking innocent: "There's nothing I can do, I'm currently only Tier Five, too weak, can't afford it."

This obvious reverse move had the fire demon venting black smoke from its head in fury.

It couldn't see Qin Tian's intention, yet it indeed craved that nourishing power, holding back for a while, snorted: "If you continue to infuse me with this power for three months, I can offer you a hand once."

"Three months for one shot?" Qin Tian suddenly sneered, from Yan Song's memory, he had long "witnessed" the greed of this gun spirit—

Even someone like Yan Song was driven crazy by its demands,

"Only a fool like Yan Song would agree to you."

"What do you know!" The fire demon jumped in a hurry, "The power of my full strike is beyond your imagination! You're getting a great deal!"

"Sorry, my gun might not be inferior to you." Qin Tian said, raising his hand to summon Shadowstrike. As his mind moved, a faint black ghost gun spirit slowly floated from the barrel, its form thin yet exuding a sharp deadly aura.

The fire demon glanced at the ghost gun spirit, snorted fire from its nostrils, disdain almost overflowing: "That? A newly awakened gun spirit daring to show off? Even if you nurtured it with that power for a hundred years, it wouldn't be half as powerful as me!"

Upon hearing, Qin Tian wasn't upset, for the fire demon spoke truth, whether it be the Soul of the Gun God or Master of Arms, the nurturing and enhancement of gun spirits have limits.

And Shadowstrike being inherently deficient, hunting Tier Six was already its limit.

"Short-sighted fellow, consider carefully yourself."

The fire demon drilled into the gem once more, seemingly not to appear again anytime soon.

Such an arrogant gun spirit~

Qin Tian shook his head slightly, from Yan Song's memory, he knew how difficult this little demon was to deal with, sulking and sealing itself off at the slightest disagreement, completely non-communicative, causing Yan Song to feel helpless after a few attempts, ultimately having to be manipulated obediently.

But, I'm not Yan Song

To catch the fish, the bait must be attractive enough.

Thinking of this, Qin Tian's lips slightly raised, he opened the system panel, and invested 4 million Evolution Points into a talent called [Master of Arms].

The purple Talent Light Sphere deepened in color, soon, a new orange talent appeared.

[Name] Divine Weapon Emperor (Orange)

[Type] Active Talent

[Introduction] You have mastered the ultimate key of weapon performance, able to deeply excavate the potential value of any weapon, can temporarily unleash its ultimate combat power, and even achieve permanent performance leap through sustained empowerment, enabling each weapon you handle to break through its original limit.

1. Divine Weapon Blessing: Temporarily strengthens weapons, increasing basic attributes by 200--300% for a period, and temporarily awakens at least three of the seven Enchantment Powers: Sharpness, Blood Sucking, Breaking Demons, Overload, Reversal, Renewal, Spiritual Sucking.
2. Spirit Awakening: Continuously nurtures the weapon with Emperor's Power, permanently enhancing basic attributes by 500%—800%, and achieving optimal evolution, permanently awakens all seven Enchantment Powers, greatly likely enabling the weapon to awaken spirit, thereby acquiring special abilities.
3. Collapse of Ten Thousand Weapons: Actively releases Emperor's Power, forming absolute suppression on the target weapon, breaking its structural stability, causing rapid collapse or direct disintegration into basic material energy. For weapons with spirit, it can forcibly tear apart the spirit and body, causing spirit great damage while converting disintegrated energy into nourishment for your weapon.
4. Ascension of Divine Weapon: Long-term nurturing of the spirit, continuously enhancing spirit spirituality, and with a chance to complete Divine Weapon Ascension.

...

The moment the talent evolution was completed, it felt like a furnace exploded within Qin Tian's body.

The Master of Arms power, originally hidden in the bloodline, suddenly boiled, rushing through the meridians with scorching warmth, every inch of muscle and bone emitted a faint buzzing, as if countless tiny gears were re-engaging, recalibrating.

Subconsciously raising his hand, a wisp of golden stream light rose in his palm, this light was more solid and domineering than the previous Master of Arms power, enveloping the fingertips, causing the air to ripple minutely.

This is the Origin Power of the orange talent [Divine Weapon Emperor]—not merely "potential excavation", but carrying an oppressive majesty of mastering the art of weapons, as if with a raise of the hand, any weapon's life, death, glory, and fall can be decided.

Qin Tian looked down at the Shadowstrike in hand, with a slight mind movement, that golden stream light rushed into the barrel as finding its home.

Buzz——

Shadowstrike suddenly emitted a sharp, clear resonance, louder than any previous synchronization.

The faint black ghost gun spirit violently flipped above the barrel, its thin form solidified somewhat, and a hint of lively agility mixed into the deathly aura around it.

Qin Tian could clearly feel, the gun body was slightly heating up, not with scorching heat, but with a warmth like a living being, held in hand, it seemed to sense its accelerating "heartbeat."

More remarkably, the metallic sheen of the barrel seemed to deepen, the surface patterns subtly emerged amidst the flowing light, weighing heavier than before—evidently the density was quietly increasing, the material was evolving towards greater toughness.

### Chapter 377: Divine Weapon Emperor (Orange) Part 3

"What... what kind of power is this?!"

The red ruby ring suddenly trembled violently, and the fire demon leapt out as if it had been scalded, its usually arrogant little face now filled with shock.

It stared intently at the golden stream of light flowing around the Shadowstrike, its nose twitching rapidly, eyes bursting with unprecedented desire, even the sharp horn on its head glowing red from excitement.

The force was too tempting—it was far superior to the energy Qin Tian had previously "fed" it, with an aura of evolution that could drive all weapon spirits insane, as if just touching a trace of it could instantly break their shackles and achieve their long-desired transformation.

The fire demon's gaze shifted back and forth between Shadowstrike and Qin Tian, a low growl like a whimper coming from its throat, its previous arrogance long gone, leaving only undisguised greed.

The energies it had absorbed in the past were merely basic recharges for itself, akin to filling an empty bottle with water.

But the Emperor's Power now flowing within Qin Tian was different; it was the key that could activate the origin of weapon spirits and allow them to be reborn—the true opportunity for evolution, irresistible even for a weapon spirit as renowned as Heaven-Burning Purgatory.

"Hey, you're called Qin Tian, right."

The fire demon hovered in mid-air, its little face still reflecting the excitement from being enticed by the Emperor's Power, but its tone feigned calmness, striving to maintain a bit of dignity as one of the Ten Great Guns' weapon spirits.

"I've thought about it, let's change the way we cooperate." It paused, lightly stomping its little hoof in the air as if making a firm decision, "As long as you can ensure a sufficient supply of fire-type energy, I can help you without limit. But in exchange, you must pour this golden power into my body every day—no slacking off."

The last four words were spoken quickly and urgently, barely concealing the overwhelming desire in its voice.

Upon hearing this, Qin Tian's lips slowly curled into a knowing smile.

Sure enough, in the face of the temptation of the Divine Weapon's evolution, even the weapon spirit of Heaven-Burning Purgatory had to set aside its arrogance.

Lightly rubbing the gun barrel of Shadowstrike with his fingertips, feeling the joy transmitted by the Ghost Gun Spirit, he responded calmly: "Alright."

With that, he extended his palm, face-up, his smile gentle: "Well then, let's cooperate happily in the future."

The fire demon stared at the broad palm for a moment, its small head tilted slightly as if weighing something.

After a while, it cautiously extended its own small fiery palm—the palm glowed with a warm orange-red light, carrying a real warmth to the touch, unlike the ethereal Ghost Gun Spirit.

At the moment the two palms lightly touched, Qin Tian could clearly feel the scorching heat from the other's palm, the pure origin power of flame, more refined than any fire-type spiritual energy he had ever seen. This sensation further confirmed to him that the quality of this chibi demon far surpassed that of the Ghost Gun Spirit.

"By the way," when Qin Tian withdrew his hand, he suddenly remembered something, his gaze landing on the exquisite little face of the fire demon, "Do you have a name?"

Upon hearing this, the fire demon's little eyes darted around, a distant recollection flickering through its gaze, as if it was seeing a distant past through time.

After a moment of silence, it spoke in a slightly nostalgic tone, its voice softer than before:

"My first collaborator gave me a name—"

It slightly raised its chin, as if declaring something significant, its clear voice echoing in the tent:

"Blaze!"

Chapter 378: Major Equipment Upgrade

"Blaze, what kind of things does Yan Song usually feed you?" Qin Tian asked with keen interest, his fingers unconsciously tapping on his knee.

"Oh, there's plenty!" The Fire Demon puffed up its little chest at these words and started counting on its fingers, "Have you ever heard of Sunfire Jade? Seen Flame Extinguishing Spirit Crystals? And then there's Rock Crystal Essence, Crimson Soul Fire Core... Tsk tsk, now just thinking about it feels so good."

As it spoke, its excitement grew, and its little mouth rattled on like a rapid-fire gun, making the corner of Qin Tian's mouth twitch—this little guy really spoke off the cuff. Rock Crystal Essence was used for advancing from Tier Seven to Tier Eight, and Flame Extinguishing Spirit Crystals were said to be the essence distilled from the heart of a volcano. How could a Tier Six Spiritualist like Yan Song possibly have such extravagant items?

"Stop, stop, stop." Qin Tian raised his hand to interrupt it, a hint of helplessness in his eyes. "You're a Gun Spirit, what's the point of absorbing so many fire resources?"

"What do you mean, no point?" The Fire Demon instantly bristled, its little hooves stomping the ground. "You humans can cultivate and level up, so why can't weapon spirits grow stronger? These treasures can nourish my spirituality and gradually refine the Heaven-Burning Purgatory's materials, enhancing its firepower. Besides, do you even know how much energy it takes to unleash one big move? Neither you nor that last guy could supply the energy in a short time, so I have to stock up in advance, right?"

"I see." Qin Tian nodded thoughtfully, suddenly raising an eyebrow and changing the topic. "So tell me honestly, how much energy did you actually use on Yan Song?"

The Fire Demon lifted its little chin confidently and replied, "Considering the fact that he was generous, I didn't shortchange him too much—it was about... one-twentieth."

One-twentieth?

The veins on Qin Tian's forehead instantly popped. He could almost picture Yan Song, upon hearing this, getting so angry that he'd rise from the grave and throw off the coffin lid.

This little thing is simply a greedy, shameless swindler.

"Why are you asking like this? Are you perhaps a pauper?" The Fire Demon looked suspiciously at Qin Tian.

"Not exactly a pauper. In fact, I'm quite wealthy—at least much wealthier than Yan Song." Qin Tian shrugged.

Though Yan Song was a member of the Golden Clan, first, he had long been demoted to the side branch, causing his resources to plummet. Second, even direct lineage members of the Golden Clan could not surpass him in wealth.

He was now a billionaire, and once the production capacity of the Youth Potion expanded, his personal fortune would soon breach the tens and hundreds of billions mark.

"That's fine then. I don't ask much from you, but the least you could give me are advanced Fire Spirit Stones." The Fire Demon said matter-of-factly.

"Sure, I can guarantee that." Qin Tian nodded. Advanced Fire Spirit Stones are relatively expensive cultivation resources, typically only considered by Tier Five and above Fire Element Spiritualists from large clans for cultivation assistance.

But for him, he could easily afford that cost, and even higher-level resources were within his reach.

"It's settled then."

The Fire Demon nodded in satisfaction and then dived back into the ruby, leaving behind a sentence:

"Don't forget our agreement."

"I remember." Qin Tian chuckled and placed all his weapons and gear around him.

Shadowstrike, Heaven-Burning Purgatory

Black Frost Blade

The Qingtan Holy Branch Bracelet, Fire Spirit Jade Pendant

Black Demon Stellar Armor

Shadow Concealing Ring

Seven pieces of equipment were arranged in a circle around him.

When the Master of Arms upgrades to the Divine Weapon Emperor, these weapons and equipment will undergo epic-level evolution.

For example, The Qingtan Holy Branch Bracelet and Fire Spirit Jade Pendant, these two protective types of equipment, even with reinforcement by the Master of Arms, their defensive limit could hardly exceed Peak Tier Six, and defensive spiritual artifacts find it much harder to awaken spirituality and weapon spirits compared to offensive weapons.

But the power of Divine Weapon Emperor far surpasses that of the Master of Arms. Over time, there's a significant chance for these spiritual artifacts to awaken weapon spirits, and their defensive limit could break through to Tier Seven.

The same goes for Stellar Armor and Shadow Concealing Ring.

Stellar Armor allows Spiritualists below Tier Seven to survive in space and assists in combat. Normally, it sees rare use, showcasing its elegance only during sudden issues or space battles.

This set of Black Demon Armor was one of the trophies he won during the genius battles in the Azure Wood Star Realm. Naturally, products from the Dongfang Family are excellent, but at that time their Spiritual Ability Level wasn't high, so Stellar Armor couldn't be considered top-tier.

Yet, if it receives nurturing from the Divine Weapon Emperor, the overall performance of Black Demon Armor could multiply several times, even if not used for space combat; it could become excellent combat gear.

Moreover, Stellar Armor requires a supporting combat system. If the Black Demon awakens its weapon spirit, could the weapon spirit potentially integrate with intelligent features to become a unique AI creature?

Regarding the Shadow Concealing Ring, it's a tool that imitates other biological auras; its function is quite single-purpose. Even with the nurturing of the Divine Weapon Emperor, breakthroughs in other aspects are hard to achieve, and it's also uncertain if it could awaken a weapon spirit.

Ultimately, whether a weapon spirit can awaken depends on the quality of the weapon itself; a fruit knife couldn't awaken a weapon spirit even after a hundred years of nurturing.

Qin Tian had limited expectations for this tool.

"Let's get to work."

Qin Tian sat cross-legged, and golden energy within him spread out like waves, enveloping the circle of seven equipment with the peculiar fluctuations of the Divine Weapon Emperor.

In an instant, various lights illuminated between the pieces of equipment: the ghostly glow of Shadowstrike, the chill of the Black Frost Blade, the green of The Qingtan Bracelet, the fiery shadow of the Fire Spirit Jade Pendant, the purple pattern of the Black Demon Stellar Armor, along with the fleeting black glimmer of the Shadow Concealing Ring, together creating a swaying sea of light, greedily absorbing the nourishment of the golden energy.

In this harmonious resonance, the Heaven-Burning Purgatory suddenly erupted with a dazzling orange-red flame.

The figure of Blaze appeared above the ring and opened its mouth to release a domineering suction force, forcefully pulling the initially evenly flowing golden energy towards itself—causing the light from other equipment to dim, trembling and humming with obvious sluggishness, evidently having lost most of its energy.

The Fire Demon smugly raised its little face, letting the golden energy churn within the gun, the ruby emitting a scorching and overbearing aura, monopolizing the majority of this energy feast.

Qin Tian watched this scene and helplessly shook his head. The little guy's domineering nature truly hadn't changed.

He took a deep breath and the golden energy inside him suddenly boiled, rushing out like ignited magma.

This time, he intentionally controlled the flow of energy, first channeling a more powerful torrent precisely into the dimly glowing equipment.

Then, he split off another equally massive stream of golden energy, pushing it towards the Heaven-Burning Purgatory.

Feeling the more robust energy, the Fire Demon squinted contentedly, even purring with satisfaction.

It could distinctly feel that this energy was swelling its spiritual body slightly, and over time, it might truly help it step into an unknown and broader realm.

"You're... quite alright."

Blaze muttered under its breath, the sound so faint it resembled a mosquito hum.

Qin Tian didn't respond, only the golden energy he released seemed to surge even more fiercely.

Chapter 379: Acting Commander and the Infernal Demon Sea

Chijin Battlegroup

"Am I to serve as the acting leader?"

Qin Tian looked at the messenger officer standing tall before him, a flicker of surprise in his eyes.

He originally thought the higher-ups would appoint another Tier Six Spiritualist to replace Yan Song in the Chijin Battlegroup, but unexpectedly, he was chosen as the acting leader.

However, this surprise did not last long. He quickly straightened his spine, his shoulders taut and upright.

"Thank you for the trust of the division leadership." Qin Tian raised his hand to accept the order, his fingertips pressing firmly on the paper. His voice was not loud, yet every word was distinct,

"Qin Tian will not disgrace this mission."

The messenger officer saw the undisguised sharpness in his eyes and smiled approvingly.

Although this young man had not been at war for long, he appeared more composed than the records suggested, exuding a confident aura reminiscent of a battlefield general.

"Leader Qin."

The messenger officer's expression turned solemn as his gaze swept over the warriors arrayed on the training field, his voice amplified through the sound array with a penetrating strength:

"In addition to announcing personnel changes, I am here to commend the Chijin Battlegroup's recent performance and convey the division's operational plans for the next phase."

"In recent operations, the Chijin Battlegroup swept through two major Demon Caves with thunderous momentum, slaying a total of over nineteen thousand seven hundred demons, including more than ten Tier Six demons. Moreover, the Chijin Battlegroup successfully destroyed a demonic qi fissure, cutting off a source of demon birth, achieving remarkable battle accomplishments. "

He paused, emphasizing seriousness in his tone: "By resolution of the division committee, the Chijin Battlegroup is awarded a collective second-class merit. Individual merits for outstanding performance in this battle will be gradually issued within seven days, pending verification of the battle results."

As his words ended, an irrepressible shout erupted on the training field.

A collective second-class merit is an extremely high honor for any battlegroup; this commendation acted as a shot of adrenaline, instantly boosting morale.

"Besides the commendation, there's the deployment for the next phase." The messenger officer shifted focus, "The division commands that the Chijin Battlegroup must set off before noon today, advance three hundred kilometers along the Obsidian Corridor, and garrison the eastern side of the 'Broken Blade Line' at the Infernal Demon Sea."

His face was grave: "Recent monitoring detected abnormal fluctuations of demonic qi within the Infernal Demon Sea, indicating a risk of demon riots. Your task is to fortify the defensive structures and closely monitor movements in the Infernal Demon Sea. "

"During your garrison, you are required to maintain communication with the Tiebi Battle Group to the west and the Xingyuan Battle Group to the north, forming a triangular defense. No matter what happens, you must hold the line firmly, ready to receive the next command deployment at any time."

Infernal Demon Sea~

Qin Tian's eyes flickered slightly. The Infernal Demon Sea is the largest demon gathering area within hundreds of kilometers, with numerous and widespread demons, far more dangerous than the Number One and Number Two Demon Caves. "

But this place...

"Do you have any objections?" The messenger officer looked at Qin Tian.

Qin Tian stepped forward, raised his hand in salute: "Chijin Battlegroup accepts the order, guaranteeing the completion of the garrison mission!"

The messenger officer returned the salute, a smile appearing on his face, "The division looks forward to your performance."

After announcing everything, he did not linger too long, exchanging a few words with Qin Tian before returning to the second layer of the Demon Abyss division.

As soon as the messenger officer's figure vanished from sight, the Chijin Battlegroup's encampment rippled like a pond struck by a stone.

"Haha, Old Shen, our Third Battalion's good days are finally here!"

Lu Sheng slung his arm around Shen Juan's shoulder, grinning from ear to ear. If it weren't for the inappropriate occasion, he would have laughed heartily. Previously, their Third Battalion was always targeted, more wretched than a neglected child.

But now, their battalion leader has leaped to the position of group leader, henceforth we can walk proudly through the headquarters.

Shen Juan smiled, his body visibly relaxing, and the other warriors of the Third Battalion cheered as soon as the messenger officer disappeared from sight.

Li Wufeng and the warriors of the First Battalion, infected by the Third Battalion's atmosphere, beamed with smiles. They had fought side by side with Leader Qin and were the first battalion to unswervingly stand behind him. With such camaraderie, they believed Leader Qin would not slight the First Battalion.

Feng Xiaotian, Luo Hu, Zhao Yue, the three former confidant battalion leaders of Yan Song, exchanged a glance, their eyes complicated and tinged with concern and apprehension.

The conflict between Qin Tian and Yan Song was known to all, and they were considered Yan Song's confidants. Now that Qin Tian assumed leadership, would he target us?

The only consolation now was that it was Yan Song who had antagonized Qin Tian. They had not participated in any way; indeed, they hadn't even had the chance to take sides before Yan Song was taken down.

Thus, they had no prior conflict or grudges with Qin Tian and shouldn't be treated differently... or so they hoped.

The other battalion leaders and warriors gladly accepted Qin Tian's ascent as acting leader. Regardless of Qin Tian's capabilities, at least, apart from his Third Battalion and Li Wufeng's First Battalion, the other battalions were equal in the new leader's eyes, without deliberate favoritism towards any one side, a definite improvement over Yan Song's regime.

Currently, only Yan Song's personal guards and direct lineage suffered.

With Yan Song's fall, their backbone was gone, leaving them like lost souls, unsure of what to do next.

Now, with Qin Tian, once opposed to Yan Song, stepping up as acting battalion leader, his people are bound to take over all power in the battlegroup, meaning they will surely be swept out.

Chapter 380: Acting Regiment Commander and Infernal Demon Sea (Part 2)

But luckily, Demon Suppression Abyss has a unique rule.

Within Demon Suppression Abyss, most bloodline family heirs bring a team with them. These deeds are credited to the bloodline heirs, but if they die, the military department does not provide compensation.

The military department only has command over the bloodline heirs themselves, not their subordinate teams.

To sum it up using a phrase often said in the western world: my vassal's vassal is not my vassal.

Now that Yan Song is dead, they can choose to continue fighting or apply to leave the Demon Suppression Abyss.

The military department will not enforce any obstruction in this matter.

The commotion on the martial arts field hadn't completely subsided when Li Wufeng stepped forward first, followed by a few key members of his battalion. He walked up to Qin Tian, raised his hand in a standard military salute, and smiled brightly, "Captain Qin, congratulations! The entire battalion will follow your orders from now on!"

Damn it, you got ahead of us.

The other battalion commanders quickly came over, their voices ringing, "Captain Qin, we'll resolutely follow your commands in the future! Wherever you point, we'll fight there, without question!"

The battalion commanders' voices weren't loud but clearly echoed around them.

Seeing this, the warriors gathered around, in unison gave Qin Tian a military salute, and the atmosphere on the martial arts field became completely lively and united.

Qin Tian looked at these familiar or unfamiliar faces in front of him, raised his hand in return, and his voice was steady and powerful, "I've received your intentions."

He paused, his tone becoming firmer, "From now on, there will be no favorites in the group, only comrades fighting side by side. Holding the line, exterminating demons, making sure everyone can return home alive with military honors—this is what I, Qin Tian, want to do."

"Now, each battalion return immediately for preparation, departure is set for two hours later!"

"Yes!"

The unified response echoed, the sound vibrating slightly in the air.

Under the sunlight, the flag of the Chijin Battlegroup fluttered in the wind, as if cheering and shouting for this troop about to embark on a new journey.

.....

When the Chijin Battlegroup reassembled, Yan Song's men had already left the team.

No one was surprised by this, but there was one person's appearance that was unexpected.

That person was Yan Song's Tier Six Soul Master, Old Ghost.

"Strange, isn't he one of Yan Song's men? Why didn't he leave with the others?"

"Right, I don't get it either."

"Is it possible that he's not entirely Yan Song's man, but rather a master here to fight in Demon Suppression Abyss, just happened to be assigned under Yan Song, giving the impression of being Yan Song's close associate?"

"That makes sense."

The generals speculated and inferred Old Ghost's stance and identity.

The whispers, like fine rain, drifted into Old Ghost's ears, but he didn't even lift his eyelids, just calmly looked ahead, with complexity in his eyes that others couldn't understand.

At this moment, a gentle thought quietly slipped into his mind, carrying Qin Tian's unique steadiness: "The child, I have already sent someone to rescue him, you don't have to worry."

Old Ghost's spine suddenly stiffened, his thin fingers grabbing tightly inside his sleeve, knuckles whitening from the force.

He suddenly lifted his head, looking toward the high platform at Qin Tian—who was looking at the entire lineup, sensing his gaze, and slightly turned his head, giving him a reassuring look before turning back, his thoughts continued:

"Afterwards, I will personally arrange his whereabouts, ensuring he grows up safely. But I don't advise you to meet him, after all... his current situation is inevitably tied to you."

Old Ghost's Adam's apple rolled intensely, a hoarse and sigh-laden thought reverberating in Qin Tian's mind: "I harmed their family... not meeting him is apt."

He paused, his voice tinged with gratitude: "Master... thank you."

Qin Tian's thought carried a slight smile: "I'll accept that thanks. Also, don't call me master in private, just follow others and call me boss."

"Yes, boss."

Old Ghost responded crisply, and even slightly exhaled in relief. Compared to the restrictive title "master," "boss" made him feel more comfortable.

Qin Tian watched Old Ghost's slightly relaxed face, a small smile forming at the corner of his mouth.

Inside Demon Suppression Abyss, no electronic parts function, nor can they connect with the outside world.

Thus, he entrusted Li Fei, a former "turncoat," to leave Demon Suppression Abyss with Yan Song's people, and upon returning, to contact Feng Mochuan, reveal his identity, and request that Feng Mochuan's people save the child.

This task was a piece of cake for the Hurricane Mercenary Corps.

"Attention, everyone—"

Qin Tian's voice abruptly heightened, empowered by spiritual power, sweeping through every corner of the martial arts field, instantly overpowering all murmurs.

He slowly descended from the high platform, sunlight flowing over his shoulders, the sheath of the Black Frost Saber at his waist glinting with cold hardness.

"Each battalion arranged as 'Iron Wall Formation,' supply battalion in the center, First Battalion on the left wing, Second Battalion on the right wing, Third Battalion in the vanguard, Fourth Battalion at the rear, Fifth to Eighth Battalions filling the flank gaps!"

Order sharp as a blade, "Check the energy cores of Spiritual Energy Transport Vehicles, ensure each vehicle's Spiritual Energy Crystal reserves are no less than eighty percent!"

"Yes!"

Hundreds of roars collided, making the air buzz.

The eight battalions, like precision gears, engaged instantaneously, their previously loose formations visually transforming and restructuring: warriors of the First Battalion carrying heavy spiritual cannons, marching neatly toward the left wing, the sound of their metal boots striking the ground forming a dull drumbeat; Second Battalion's Spirit Mage team heading to the right wing, forming a solid screen; Third Battalion's assault troops gripping weapons and spiritual power rifles, forming a sharp arrow formation.

The most attention-grabbing was the central supply battalion—they were not part of the conventional combat sequence but carried an extremely important task.

Thirty Spiritual Energy Transport Vehicles lined up neatly, their bodies engraved with energy patterns glowing pale gold in the sunlight, their compartments piled high with crates of spiritual ammunition, defense structure components, and spare Spiritual Energy Crystals.

Each vehicle had a spiritual energy conduit erected beside the driver's cab, connecting to the core furnace beneath the vehicle—a special transport power of Demon Suppression Abyss, it doesn't use fuel or rely on circuits, solely driven by warriors injecting their spiritual energy. The crystal at the top of the conduit was emitting a warm orange glow, indicating ample energy.

"Supply battalion report: spiritual energy reserves at eighty-six percent, defense barrier activated!"

"First Battalion report: left wing formation solidified, spiritual cannons charged!"

"Third Battalion report: vanguard formation ready, awaiting instruction!"

The battalion's reports echoed one after another, Qin Tian stood at the forefront of the troop, his gaze sweeping over the steel torrent-like array.

Over four thousand warriors, dozens of transport vehicles, countless weapons and armors gleaming coldly, spreading a formation several miles long across the wilderness, like a awakened metal dragon preparing to crawl into the abyss.

"Move out!"

With Qin Tian's command, he took the lead step forward.

In an instant, the engines of the Spiritual Energy Transport Vehicles emitted a deep humming, the energy cores beneath them began to operate, and pale golden light patterns flowed across the vehicle bodies like living veins.

The transport vehicles slowly got underway, the sound of their wheels crushing the ground intertwining with the warriors' footsteps and low hums of spiritual weapons, composing a magnificent battle anthem.

Sunlight filtered through the gaps in the formation, casting crisscrossed shadows on the ground.

The shadows of the front-row warriors extended long, overlapping with the rear-vehicle shadows, as if the land itself was moving.

Occasionally wind blew, tossing up dust from the ground, yet it couldn't penetrate this tight formation—the supply battalion's defense barrier formed a pale golden dome around the convoy, tightly guarding the crucial supplies.

Old Ghost stood behind Qin Tian, gazing at this grand scene, his eyes showing a hint of fluctuation.

He had seen Yan Song lead a troop to battle, but the momentum did not compare to the current Chijin Battlegroup—every warrior's eyes were filled with determination, even the energy waves from the Spiritual Energy Transport Vehicles resonated with orderly rhythm.

Leading the troop, Qin Tian could clearly feel the overwhelming momentum behind him, even the air seemed kindled by this force, becoming hot and heavy.

Ahead, the entrance to the Obsidian Corridor lay hidden in the distant gray mist, like the throat of a giant beast.

But this troop had no hesitation whatsoever, the sharpness of the Iron Wall Formation aimed straight at the haze, the hum of the Spiritual Energy Transport Vehicles shattered the wilderness's silence, the

metal shine and spiritual energy halo spread across the heaven and earth, the battle flag inscribed "Chijin Battlegroup" fluttering in the wind, as the large force swiftly advanced towards the Infernal Demon Sea.