

## **Battlefield 441**

### Chapter 441: Expanding Connections, End of War (Part 3)

"Hmm, it's time to go back."

Qin Tian nodded.

The purpose of coming to the Demon Suppression Abyss has been achieved, and now it's time to leave.

After months of fierce battles, everyone in the team is physically and mentally exhausted. Especially the demonic qi environment within the Demon Suppression Abyss, which subtly erodes both the body and mind, making people more irritable and angry. This is particularly evident in the Barbarian Warriors.

"Great! We can finally leave this ghostly place!"

The Poisonous Widow was so excited that her fingertips trembled, nearly bringing her to tears.

Only God knows the kind of torment the purgatory-like environment of the Demon Suppression Abyss is for a woman obsessed with beauty.

Not to mention bathing in hot water, even clear water for wiping oneself had to be sparingly used. Every day was filled with sandstorms and bloodstains, and her carefully maintained hair had long become matted, the tips tinged with a dry yellow.

She glanced down at her skirt, stained and dirty, and recalled the radiant image she had in the mirror before the battle, making her more eager to retreat — a few more months here, and she feared she'd become a mud-covered primitive.

"You've indeed had a tough time lately. When we return, I'll give you a three-month vacation. You can enjoy yourself to the fullest," Qin Tian said with a smile.

"Thank you, boss!"

The Poisonous Widow's eyes lit up. To be honest, ever since she joined the boss, she hadn't really had a break. Her life had been even tougher than it was with the Hundred Hunt Star Thieves.

Previously, she was not exactly a combat elite and relied solely on poison to intimidate others. But now, after honing her skills in over a hundred battles, her combat strength had skyrocketed.

This should be something to be happy about, but the process was truly too arduous.

Now, she just wants to hurry back, get a good few nights of sleep, indulge in a month of beauty treatments, and then take her high salary from the boss — and shop till she drops.

Upon learning that the troops were about to retreat from the Demon Suppression Abyss, the Chijin Battlegroup's camp erupted.

Deafening cheers overturned the makeshift tents; members dropped their weapons, embraced each other, and even the usually reserved veterans had tears in their eyes.

Some dug out clean clothes buried at the bottom of their packs, eagerly changing into them; others took out cherished family photos, gently caressing the smiling faces with their rough fingers; there were even a few mischievous new recruits who mimicked the Barbarian Race's war dance, hopping on the scorching ground, drawing kind-hearted laughter.

"We can finally leave this ghostly place!" A tall and thin scout kicked a nearby stone with force, sending shards flying as he grinned, baring his white teeth, "The first thing I'm doing when I get back is sleep for three days and three nights!"

"I'm going to the barbecue place under my building, order ten pounds of beast ribs, and two barrels of ale!"

Excited words surged like a tide, mixing with the clashing of weapons and the thudding of boots, forming a noisy and fervent song.

The pent-up fatigue, fear, and longing of the past few months all transformed into wild joy at this moment, gushing out from everyone's throats, smiles, and glistening eyes.

Qin Tian stood in the center of the camp, watching the lively scene before him, with a slight upward curve on his lips.

He raised his hand to signal everyone to quiet down, his voice tinged with amusement, "Keep up your spirits! Before we head back, check your gear. We're going home in style, and nobody gets left behind!"

"Yes!"

Thousands of voices replied in unison, shaking the molten-lava steam above them.

Sunlight seeped through the gaps in the demonic qi, painting a golden edge on everyone's shoulder and illuminating the hope in their eyes for the future.

The wind and sand of the Demon Suppression Abyss remained fierce, but at this moment, even the wind seemed to carry the scent of home.

Chapter 442: The Second Holy Blood—Immortal Sacred Body

Inside the tent

Qin Tian's fingertips caressed the lone stone necklace in his palm, the surface of the black stone rough and devoid of any glow.

Ever since sealing the space channel, this peculiar stone seemed to have exhausted all its vitality; despite him nurturing it daily with the Celestial Guardian Bloodline, it remained as silent as a dead object, never sending any response.

"Void..." Qin Tian murmured softly, his eyes as deep as an unfathomable cold pool.

He recalled the warning before sealing the passage, that angry and low "Void... enemy" — at that time, it must have sensed the void fluctuations deep within the passage and emerged to suppress them.

Six hundred years ago, the void turmoil almost toppled the entire Empire, and the lone stone was the ultimate weapon that ended that catastrophe.

A thought in his mind became increasingly clear: The appearance of the Demon Suppression Abyss occurred precisely a hundred years after the void turmoil.

Could it be that the remnants of the void forces breached the spatial barrier between the Demon Suppression Abyss and the Cosmos?

Could those regularly opening space channels also be connected to the void?

Countless speculations entwined his mind like vines, yet they were ultimately unproven hypotheses.

Even if the truth is indeed so, what can he change with his strength alone?

The chaos of the Demon Suppression Abyss had long exceeded the realm of individual capacity; it required the unity of all forces within the Azure Wood Star Realm to have any hope of a complete resolution.

As for the void turmoil... it was a disaster that nearly overturned the Empire's foundational rule.

If not for finding the lone stone back then, the Empire would probably have already fallen apart, with even the name "Empire" erased from the annals of history.

Qin Tian gently tightened his grip on the lone stone, the cold touch somewhat grounding his chaotic thoughts.

For now, perhaps there's no need to rush in seeking answers — some mysteries reveal their true outlines only at the right moment.

He shifted his focus to the system panel; the battle to seal the space channel was the most brutal and difficult, yet also the most rewarding, battle since he ventured into the Demon Suppression Abyss.

In the earlier stages, he eliminated demons through the Dark Corpse Control Art, and in the end, he detonated over a thousand explosive iron balls, creating an empty zone spanning dozens of kilometers.

At that time, the concentration of demons was at its peak, and this round of explosions resulted in an uncountable death toll of demons. By the end of this battle, it netted him over 50 million Evolution Points and more than a hundred unique Talents.

With 50 million Evolution Points, he could enhance the Desolate Battle Body to the Holy Blood level, with 20 to 30 million Evolution Points left for allocating to subsequent Talents.

Upon departing the Demon Suppression Abyss and returning to the planet, the commotion from breaking through the Holy Blood level might draw others' attention, hence Qin Tian decided to complete the evolution of his second golden Talent on the first layer of the Demon Abyss.

The Gate of Space opened consecutively.

Qin Tian returned to beneath the magma sea where the lone stone had once been.

This was once a Demon Source, later cleared by the United Army, leaving no trace of the Demon Source or the millions of demons.

In the underground cavern, all that remained was the bubbling sound of flowing magma.

The path was blocked by collapsed rubble, making progress difficult as he stepped over the sharp stones.

Magma seeped through the crevices of the passage, forming winding streams on the ground. The faint red glow illuminated the mottled rock walls, making the scars left by battles look like bleeding wounds.

The air was permeated with a faint demonic Qi, mixed with the smell of sulfur and burning rock, providing a stinging, burning sensation when inhaled.

Occasionally, he saw the remains of some demons embedded in the rock walls, some skeletons only halfway intact, others charred black by the magma, merging with the surrounding rubble, making it impossible to discern their original form.

From deep within the cave, there came the sound of loosening rocks, as a millstone-sized rock fell from above, crashing into the nearby magma stream, splattering scalding droplets that evaporated into white mist mid-air.

This was once the core of the Demon Source and the resting place of the lone stone; now, it was merely a ruined wasteland, with only the lingering demonic Qi to testify to its past as a demon's nest.

"Right here."

Qin Tian was quite satisfied with the environment of the underground cavern. The covert terrain could isolate probing, ensuring that even if a significant commotion occurred during the breakthrough, the troops on the surface would remain oblivious.

Furthermore, this breakthrough of pure physical Talent was indifferent to the density of Spiritual Energy, requiring only a quiet, secluded space.

He approached the previous resting spot of the lone stone; the stone platform still stood tall and imposing.

The magma at his feet flowed slowly like a crimson stream, the steaming heat unable to disturb his mind.

Qin Tian sat cross-legged, taking deep breaths to adjust his state, lightly tracing his fingers in the void, prompting the system panel to appear. Thanks to the nourishment from numerous opportunities and treasures, the Talent color of the Desolate Battle Body had reached a deep orange, just a step away from the orange limit.

Recalling the Evolution Points needed for the Night Emperor bloodline enhancement, his eyes sharpened, and with a sweeping motion of his hand, he directly invested 20 million Evolution Points.

Buzz——

The orange light sphere on the panel suddenly vibrated intensely, its surface cracking finely, as though something was about to break free.

The next moment, a dazzling golden hue erupted from the fissures, swiftly spreading like a wildfire, instantly turning the entire light sphere into a pure gold color.

In the instant the Evolution Points fully infused into the light sphere, it was as if a star which had lain dormant for eons within Qin Tian's body suddenly exploded!

"Roar——!"

A roar, causing the gold to crack and stone to shatter, erupted from his throat, not out of pain, but resonating with the heavens and earth from his Qi and Blood surging to the pinnacle.

The immense Qi and Blood clashed through his meridians like a tidal wave; each circulation bore the might of splitting mountains and cracking stones, condensing into a tangible golden torrent on his body surface, jetting out through his pores!

"Boom!"

The Qi and Blood shot up towards the cavern's dome, piercing through dozens of feet of rock to create a massive hole, turning Qin Tian's whole being into a radiant golden sun, with profound patterns emerging under his skin, glowing like starlight, those traversing golden lines intertwined into a primal chaos pattern of the world's creation, sometimes forming a rampaging giant beast of wilderness, sometimes coalescing into a divine bridge spanning across starry rivers, all eventually sinking back into his flesh, infusing every inch of his skin with a divine metallic luster.

The cracking sounds from his bones were like thunder clashing, not from fracture but undergoing a holy reconstruction.

Beneath the pale golden periosteum, countless golden lines darted like lightning, tempering the original white bones into something akin to immortal divine metal, while his organs exuded a gentle yet vast golden light, each writhing seemingly inhaling the essence of heavens and earth's origin.

His liver soared like a Cyan Dragon, his heart burned like a Vermilion Bird, his spleen lay dormant like a Yellow Qilin, his lungs roared like a White Tiger, and his kidneys breathed like a Mysterious Tortoise, resonating together and sending an unstoppable vitality flooding through his veins, even his bone marrow emitted a golden glow, as if a star was being born and dying within.

The golden light film on his surface rapidly expanded, encompassing the entire cavern, with the scorching magma outside the film transforming into gentle streams, while the suspended fragments of rocks converged into a revolving star ring around him.

His five senses magnified to an unimaginable extent, gaining control over the subtle changes of all things in heaven and earth.

His blood surged like a golden river, each drop containing the power to destroy heavens and earth, and as it flowed through his veins, it cast the virtual image of sun, moon, and stars upon his body surface.

As his blood circulated, an overwhelming majesty beyond all things rose from deep within his marrow, as if all creation would bow before this aura, causing even space to ripple faintly in awe of this newfound might.

No knowing how long passed, as the Qi and Blood within him gradually settled, Qin Tian slowly opened his eyes. A flash of golden light crossed his pupils, with the rotation of sun and moon within, his mere gaze causing the cavern walls to silently spiderweb with cracks.

He lightly clenched his fist, the moment his knuckles exerted force, the surrounding air crackled under the burden, instantly reducing nearby rock fragments to powder, even causing the space itself to ripple.

Feeling the surging power within that seemed capable of tearing heaven and earth asunder, Qin Tian's lips curled into a satisfied smile.

He cast a glance at the system panel, the two golden light spheres stood like twin suns in the sky, proudly towering above the cluster of Talents.

The name of the new Talent prominently displayed before him —

Immortal Sacred Body

Chapter 443: The Might of the Sacred Body

"Immortal Sacred Body..."

Qin Tian slowly clenched his fist, and in the instant his knuckles collided, it was as if billions of volcanoes erupted simultaneously within him.

The overwhelming strength surged like a celestial river, coursing through his muscles and veins ceaselessly, and every inch of his flesh emitted a metallic clamor, while even his breaths produced a sharp whistle that tore through the air.

Lowering his gaze to his palm, a faint golden glow flowed over the surface of his skin. It was not the luster of Spiritual Energy but the divine brilliance of a body refined to its origin.

The scorching heat waves of lava felt like a gentle spring breeze against his face. With a light press of his palm, the hard black iron rock silently sunk into a five-fingered imprint, its edges charred black by the burning Qi and Blood.

The power of his Qi and Blood was even three times more intense than the surging lava around him.

The steaming golden Qi and Blood condensed into a translucent flame over his body. The mere pressure it emitted caused the high-tier demon skeletons in the cave's depths to tremble, with wisps of black smoke seeping through the crevices of the bones—such was the might of the Sacred Body that even the inanimate feared it.

The battle patterns beneath his skin flickered faintly, and each beat of his heart seemed to strike the great bell of heaven and earth, causing the molten rock droplets on the cave ceiling to vaporize into golden mist.

Most astonishing of all was that life force.

Qin Tian lightly scratched his palm with his fingernail, and the moment the blood oozed out, it transformed into golden particles of light, healing the wound in a breath, without even leaving a scar.

He could clearly sense that even if he were crushed into pulp, as long as the immortal origin remained, he could reconstruct his body.

This metamorphosis was a qualitative change from mortal to immortal.

Qin Tian took a deep breath, and the golden Qi and Blood receded like a tide; the flame on his body slowly seeped into his skin, yet the latent mighty power made the surrounding lava more docile, slowing its flow by half a beat.

At this moment, he turned his attention to the system panel to examine this golden talent.

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[Name] Immortal Sacred Body (Gold)

[Type] Composite Talent

[Introduction] Your body is refined into an immortal form, impervious to all methods, indestructible, like an eternal battle armor born from chaos. Containing an immortal origin within, your life force is vast as a Star Sea, with every breath absorbing the essence of heaven and earth. Minor injuries heal instantly, and severe injuries can be restored in the blink of an eye; even if shattered and pulverized, you can be reborn. Your senses transcend mortal limits, sensing every subtle change in the surrounding heavens and earth, with no danger or killing intent escaping detection. Abilities are as follows:

1. Immortal ▪ Transcendence: Under your skin are inscribed immortal battle patterns, forcibly reducing all physical, magical, and soul damage by 60%; when life value falls below 20%, "Immortal Revival" is automatically triggered, instantly restoring 70% life value and all expenditures, eliminating all abnormal states. It can be triggered up to ten times in a short duration, and each activation of "Immortal Revival" temporarily increases all attributes by 20%.

2. Overlord Body ▪ Emperor: Forcefully reduces 90% of all negative effects (curse, control, corrosion), and when actively activated, clears all negative states from oneself, entering the "Emperor's Dominator Physique" state: All attributes increase by 500%, immune to all control and debuff effects, and each received attack reflects 30% damage.

3. Blood Fury ▪ Heaven Burning: The lower your life value, the greater the increase in attack power, speed, and defense power, reaching up to 300%. When causing bleeding damage to a target, you siphon 30% of their Qi and Blood for rapid regeneration, while applying an "Immortal Blood Curse": each bleeding strike deals 5% of maximum life value as true damage, stacking up to 8 layers.

4. Eternal Calamity: Each time you endure damage exceeding 50% of your life value or survive a fatal crisis, your body automatically absorbs the source energy of the damage, permanently increasing 1% defense power and 1% attack power (with no upper limit), and comprehends resistance laws of that type of damage (e.g., through fire damage, you gain a "fire immunity" growth bonus).

5. Immortal Rebirth: Your body and soul are deeply bonded with immortal laws, allowing you to actively extract a portion of immortal origin and imprint it onto a specified object (the object must be nourished by the bearer for more than seven days and cannot coexist with another). When you suffer irreparable devastation (such as complete annihilation of spirit and body), the object harboring the immortal origin will automatically activate, releasing all its source power to reconstruct your form and soul, enabling rebirth on the spot. After rebirth, your strength will fully recover to peak state for a time. If the source token is inadvertently damaged, it requires a 30-day interval before re-imprinting; if rebirth succeeds, the original token dissipates, needing a 30-day cooldown before re-imprinting can occur.

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"The Immortal Sacred Body, this talent is truly monstrous!"

Qin Tian couldn't help but sigh deeply as he looked at the introduction on the system panel.

The Immortal Sacred Body, like the previous Barbaric Dominator Body and Desolate Battle Body, primarily focuses on enhancing the physical body, particularly in strength, defense power, recovery ability, and danger perception, with its major abilities undergoing a comprehensive transformation.

Immortal • Transcendence—damage reduction of 60% from all sources, the number of life-saving revivals reaching ten, and each revival temporarily boosts all attributes. It evokes a sense of the Super Saiyan, growing stronger the more injured one is.

Overlord Body • Emperor—90% forced reduction of all negative status effects, entering the "Emperor's Dominator Physique" state: all attributes increase by 500%, immune to all control and debuffs, with each attack reflecting 30% damage.

The reflective damage effect of the Overlord Body, combined with the protective divine thunder reflective damage of Celestial Punishment Divine Thunder and the reflective damage of Demon Pattern Turtle Shell, could mean the reflected damage inflicted on an enemy might exceed the damage the enemy causes to him.

#### Chapter 444: Power of the Sacred Body (Part 2)

Blood Fury • Heaven Burning—The lower the blood level, the stronger the combat power, and the "Immortal Blood Curse" which deals true damage equal to up to 40% of maximum blood volume, becomes a powerful backing for his level-crossing challenges.

The two newly added abilities are even more powerful.

Immortal—Each time damage exceeding 50% of his own Life Value is endured, or after overcoming a fatal crisis once, permanently enhance attack power, defense power, and resistance in that aspect. This talent can be combined with another purple talent [Shared Life and Destruction].

The effect of [Shared Life and Destruction] is that when you receive a fatal attack causing a sudden drop of more than 40% in Life Value, Life Resonance will be automatically triggered. The injuries you sustain (including physical trauma, energy erosion, and mental shock) will be instantly synchronized and inflicted upon the attacker, regardless of the distance, or whether the opponent has a physical body, they will be forced to bear the effect.

Imagine, when a powerful enemy inflicts a severe blow on him, firstly, this person has to endure the reflective damage effects of multiple talents. Secondly, once his blood volume drops by 50%, the enemy has to endure another round of the same level of damage.

While he himself has multiple talent bonuses, his blood volume can quickly recover, and at the same time, his attack power, defense power, and resistance will be permanently improved. If the enemy knows this, they might just die of anger.

And the last ability, Immortal Rebirth, is indeed the soul of the Sacred Body.

Its effect is similar to a lich's phylactery, allowing rebirth even after death, truly explaining what immortality means.

With this talent, he becomes a monster that cannot be killed in the true sense, as long as he protects the phylactery and hides himself during its cooling period, no one in the world can kill him.

"Having two Holy Bloods within me, in the Empire's thousands of years of existence, I must be the first, right?"

Qin Tian's lips curled into a slight smile. Now, even without breaking through to Tier Six, he still had full confidence in defeating any Tier Six powerhouse, including the top Holy Blood geniuses.

When facing a Tier Seven Spiritualist, even if he cannot win, he at least has the ability to save his life, and can even deal significant damage to the enemy.

"Let's test the power of the Sacred Body first."

Qin Tian opened the Void Gate; the demons within the Infernal Demon Sea were already swept clean. To find a touchstone, he could only go to the neighboring Demon Realm.

Returning to the original starting point, he arrived at the first stop of the Demon Suppression Abyss where he served as the commander of the Third Battalion.

This Demon Realm bordered the Infernal Demon Sea but had no obvious geographical features, and the demon population was a mixed pot of various types, hence it was named the Chaotic Demon Realm.

Qin Tian spread his Spiritual Sense like a spider web, instantly covering a radius of over a hundred kilometers.

The bloody and decaying atmosphere in the air transformed into clear patches in perception, with countless demon presences flickering like candle flames, the densest and most glaring mass of black fog being his target—the Demon Source.

Previously, even with Heaven-Burning Purgatory, one of the Ten Great Guns, in hand, he would not dare to rashly challenge the Demon Source.

After all, over a million demons resided in the Demon Source, with at least a hundred Tier Six demons. Given his power at the time, if he were to expose his identity and get besieged by demons, the only way out would be through Void Blink, and destroying the Demon Source would be nothing but a delusion.

But now, he had broken through to Tier Five Nine Stars, carrying two Holy Bloods, dozens of talents, and Tier Six demons no longer posed any threat to him. As for the weaker demons, he paid them no mind.

The Gate of Space opened, and Qin Tian hovered above a roiling black swamp.

Dark green Demonic Qi constantly surged up from the swamp, with millions of demons entrenched here—there were winged Bonewing Demons, swamp-dwelling Giant Swamp Demons dragging huge pillars, and Shadow Demons flitting through the shadows.

"This is the place."

Qin Tian released his Stealth aura, and the Immortal Sacred Blood in his body suddenly boiled.

In an instant, golden Qi and blood erupted like a volcanic eruption, and the blazing aura caused the surrounding Demonic Qi to sizzle and burn.

"Roar——!!"

Like wolves scenting fresh meat, the entire Demon Source exploded instantly.

Millions of demons simultaneously looked up, their scarlet eyes locking onto the golden figure in mid-air. Greed and brutality intertwined in their roars, with deafening howls forming a turbid flow, almost overturning the sky of this Demon Realm.

Over a hundred powerful presences suddenly surged, the Tier Six demons were the first to react.

Some unfurled shadow-encompassing bone wings, emitting sharp screeches; some transformed into rolling lava torrents, carrying heat waves tainted with sulfur; some gathered shadow-formed giant claws, slicing through the void with a piercing tearing sound—over a hundred Tier Six demons shot into the air, pouncing toward Qin Tian like a dark cloud over the city.

However, Qin Tian stepped forward to meet the net.

He didn't even use any weapon, casually raising his right fist.

There was no Spiritual Energy fluctuation on his fist, only pure physical strength gathering, and under the golden skin, the Immortal Battle Pattern flowed like a living creature, emitting an aura that made heaven and earth tremble.

The leading Tier Six Bone Demon grinned hideously and swung its giant claw, its razor-sharp talons capable of tearing through black iron, fiercely slashing toward Qin Tian's head.

"Bang!"

The fist and claw collided with no earth-shattering crash, only a dull explosive sound.

The Bone Demon's grin instantly froze; it gazed in disbelief at its paw—its proud bone claws shattered inch by inch like glass, and the golden punch slammed unimpeded onto its head.

### Chapter 445: Might of the Sacred Body (Part 3)

"Boom!"

The head of the Tier Six Bone Demon exploded like a watermelon hit by a sledgehammer, with the foul-smelling brain matter mixed with shattered bones erupting outward, and the massive body losing its support, plunging straight into the mire.

The power of a single punch, terrifying indeed!

The pupils of the other Tier Six demons contracted sharply, yet their assault grew even fiercer.

The brutal strikes of the Mire Giant, the Shadow Piercing of the Shadowspawn, the thousand claw shadows of the Claw Demon... all these attacks landed simultaneously on Qin Tian.

"Ding ding dang dang!"

The sharp, metallic clattering rang out densely, as Qin Tian endured all the attacks, his body unmoving, not even a frown on his brow.

"Too weak."

He spoke softly, leaving a lingering shadow in his place.

The next second, he appeared before a Mire Giant, his left fist launching with the force of ten thousand tons.

"Crunch—!"

The demon's body, as tough as steel, collapsed like paper, with the punch's force blasting through, creating a basketball-sized hole in the demon's back, where dark green blood mixed with magma gushed out.

Using the force, Qin Tian flipped, and his right leg swept horizontally, the ensuing gust of wind directly turning two nearby Shadowspawn into black mist.

He rampaged like a tiger among sheep, weaving through the hundred Tier Six demons effortlessly, every punch drawing blood, every kick claiming a demon's life.

As the demons fell one by one, those remaining finally felt fear, emitting whimpering cries from their throats as they turned to flee. But Qin Tian's figure was already ubiquitous, wherever his fists went, bone fragments splintered, and flesh flew amidst muffled sounds.

The last Tier Six demon was a Demon Knight with twin horns, wielding its Demon Sword against Qin Tian, but Qin Tian caught it gently with two fingers.

"Crunch!" The Demon Sword snapped along with the sound.

Despair filled the knight's eyes as Qin Tian's fist magnified before its gazes.

"Boom!"

Once more, there was a deafening explosion, as the Demon Knight's body, saddle, and all, was blasted into a rain of blood across the sky.

From the moment the hundred Tier Six demons charged to their total annihilation, only a few moments passed.

Qin Tian hovered in mid-air, not a single trace of blood staining his skin, only faint energy fluctuations remained on his fists.

Below, the millions of low-level demons had long since been scared out of their wits, some collapsing to the ground in convulsions, others fleeing in panic, while still others exploded under the scattered pressure of the Sacred Body.

He looked down toward the churning dark green vortex at the central mire—that was the Demon Source itself.

The vortex spanned hundreds of meters in diameter, its edge enveloped in twisting dark air, with newly born demon limbs reaching out from the vortex, dripping with viscous liquid as they fell into the mire, writhing briefly before transforming into complete demon forms.

"Blaze, time to work." Qin Tian's voice was calm, yet commanding with authority.

As soon as his voice fell, the ruby bracelet on his wrist suddenly shattered with dazzling red light, the flame patterns on its surface traipsing like living creatures, eventually transforming and elongating into a blazing red fire cannon.

From the cannon's muzzle, a miniature flame demon's phantom emerged—it was the artifact spirit Blaze.

Upon manifesting, Blaze gazed intently at Qin Tian, his usually defiant eyes full of complex disbelief. He had seen many human geniuses with past masters, but none had ever given him such a shock.

In just over a month, this man had undergone earth-shattering transformation, especially his Bloodline Power, which was extraordinarily powerful beyond his understanding.

Within the Human Empire, aside from the Nine Great Holy Bloods, who would have suspected there was such a terrifying bloodline.

"Let's get started."

Spiritual energy surged into the cannon like a tidal wave, Qin Tian lifted his hand aiming at the demonic vortex.

"Alright."

Blaze nodded, transforming into a streak of fire merging into the cannon, the next moment, the cannon rapidly charged, the muzzle condensing a crimson fireball, the surrounding air scorched into distortion, even space rippled faintly.

"Boom—!"

A towering pillar of fire erupted from the muzzle, slamming into the demonic vortex like a furious fire dragon.

At the moment of collision between flame and demonic qi, a deafening boom erupted, the black air at the vortex's edge ignited like oil slick, immediately burning with scarlet flames, producing a sizzling sound.

The giant demonic vortex stalled under the fire column's impact, then shattered like glass hit by a sledgehammer, fractures spreading with a "Crunch."

The central dark green core was penetrated by flames, causing the entire vortex to lose its cohesive strength and begin to fragment outward from its center. Countless black demonic qi fragments were ignited by the flames, transforming into countless burning fire butterflies, before dissipating without a trace.

The flames maintained their momentum, spreading outward from the Demon Source like a tsunami, leaving everything in ashes in their wake.

Qin Tian hovered silently in mid-air, gazing at the hellish scene below, listening to the demons' howls and roars, a slight curve forming at his mouth.

The expedition to the Demon Suppression Abyss concluded smoothly.

Chapter 446: Boarding the Ship and Returning

Inside the starship, gentle white light spread across the metal corridor, and outside the portholes lay the vast starry sky.

The warriors of the Chijin Battlegroup had just stepped through the hatch, their nerves, tense for months, suddenly relaxed.

Someone leaned their heavy armor against the corner of the wall, causing a loud clatter, and sat down on the ground, greedily breathing the air delivered by the circulation system— it was freshness unimaginable in the Demon Suppression Abyss.

"Finally escaped that damned place!" a young warrior glanced out at the porthole, murmuring, "I never realized the stars could look so beautiful."

"Indeed~" the veteran next to him patted his shoulder, with a sense of gratitude for surviving a disaster in his voice, "Only with comparison can you feel happiness, it truly feels good to be alive."

A sudden and full-throated shout came from the end of the corridor: "Where's the wine! Is there wine in the storeroom!"

Lu Sheng strode forward, carrying his nicked battle sword, his voice so loud that it made the metal walls vibrate slightly:

"I've been holding it in for months, tonight I'm definitely going to drink my fill!"

"Count me in!"

"And me too!"

Responses echoed from the crowd.

The Poisonous Widow carried a tactical bag stuffed with clothes, her steps as light as a breeze. She dashed straight toward the living quarters, almost crashing into a sign along the way, muttering to herself: "Bath... I need a bath..."

Her urgency was as if she were a desert traveler seeing a spring.

"I dare say, Scarlett Commander is going to stay in the bathroom for a whole day." Someone joked with a laugh.

"I'd do the same," the warrior next to him agreed wholeheartedly, "Just thinking about the sand from the Demon Suppression Abyss and the demon's pus, even washing ten times doesn't feel enough."

Qin Tian walked at the end of the team, listening to the sound of laughter rising and falling around him, his mouth curled into a smile involuntarily.

The light overhead fell on his face, softening its lines and dispersing the last hint of gloom brought by the Demon Realm.

He watched the warriors with their arms over each other's shoulders as they flooded into the dining hall, watched as someone began to hum an out-of-tune military song, watched the silhouettes of the female soldiers quickly disappear around the corner of the corridor— this noisy bustle was what coming home felt like.

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In the dining hall, holographic lights simulated warm yellow natural light, making the entire space bright and cozy.

A giant alloy dining table stretched along the wall, spanning tens of meters, within a space of over a thousand square meters that could accommodate thousands of warriors without the slightest crowding.

The dishes on the dining table were so lavish they dazzled the eyes— steaming roasted beast ribs piled into mounds, thickly sauced stews exuded enticing aromas, bright green vegetables paired with crystal

fruit platters, along with various exquisite pastries and rich soups, amidst the swirling steam, just the sight was mouthwatering.

The drinks area at the end of the table was especially lively, with all kinds of bottles neatly lined up, from the strongest interstellar spirits to mellow fruit rice wine, a dazzling array.

Warriors, with wine glasses in hand, wove through the crowd, laughing and merrymaking, the clink of glasses and laughter intertwined.

Li Wufeng had long removed his armor, wearing only a black tunic, he was directing several warriors to move barrels of wine onto the main table. Seeing nearly everyone had arrived, he suddenly slapped the table and said aloud: "Everyone quiet down!"

The clamor instantly subsided, and all eyes turned simultaneously toward him.

Li Wufeng grinned, looking at Qin Tian at the head seat, then scanning the crowd: "For us to make it out alive from the Demon Suppression Abyss is all thanks to our leader guiding us well, as I see it, the opening three toasts should be proposed by our leader. What do you all say?"

"Yes!"

The crowd responded in unison, followed by thunderous applause, causing the overhead lights to sway slightly.

In an instant, all eyes were focused on Qin Tian.

In response, Qin Tian nodded slightly, standing up, tonight he wore a simple white shirt, yet his composed demeanor was still prominent.

He raised his hand to signal for everyone to be quiet, his gaze slowly sweeping over each face present, his voice clear and powerful:

"It's not easy to be standing here today."

He picked up the wine glass from the table, personally filled it, and held it high: "I'll propose three toasts first. The first toast, to our fallen comrades."

As his voice subsided, the bustling dining hall fell silent enough that breathing could be heard.

Qin Tian's gaze turned distant, as if penetrating the starship's hull, looking toward the Demon Realm where loyal bones were buried:

"They once walked through the scorched earth of the Demon Realm with us, fought demons deep into the night alongside us, and shouted and charged in absolute despair. Unfortunately, they couldn't join us on our return journey and forever remain in that dark land. Yet they watered the path to victory with their blood, their cries became our horn to advance, they built the barrier to protect the Empire with their lives; this sacrifice, we will never forget."

He paused, his voice carrying a slight rasp: "They are not cold numbers, not records on the casualty list, they are brothers who fought side by side with us, they are the eternal battle souls of the Chijin Battlegroup. This drink is to honor the victory they couldn't witness, to the light they protected with their lives."

"Cheers!" Qin Tian concluded solemnly, downing the drink in his glass in one gulp.

Thousands of people raised their glasses simultaneously, the sound of the drinks going down their throats uniform, filled with indescribable solemnity and respect. Some quietly wiped away tears, even the sound of the clinking glasses was gentler.

Setting his glass down, Qin Tian filled it again and raised the second toast: "The second toast, to everyone present here."

His gaze became firm and fervent once more: "It was everyone's courage that allowed us to not retreat a single step when facing demons; it was everyone's fearlessness that let us dare to battle the Death God even in despair; it was everyone's resilience that enabled us to carve a bloody path straight through hell— thus allowing us to complete the mission smoothly and preserve the Empire's territory."

"This toast, to ourselves!"

"To ourselves!" The warriors shouted in unison, their voices filled with pride and excitement, drinking deeply, many heavily set their glasses down on the table, creating crisp sounds.

Qin Tian filled the third glass, a gentle smile on his face: "The last toast, to our camaraderie, to our Chijin Battlegroup."

"Since stepping into the Demon Suppression Abyss, we have forged bonds of life and death in blood and fire." His voice carried a touch of warmth, "No matter where everyone may be in the future, whether continuing to battle in the field or returning home in glory, regardless of whether the name Chijin Battlegroup will remain, this bond formed in war as we supported each other, this trust built in despair, will be etched in the depths of our souls, never to fade."

"I hope if we meet in the future, everyone can still call me one word—Leader."

"Chijin Battlegroup, aiming for glory, with my flesh and blood, forging my blade! Cheers!"

"Chijin Battlegroup, aiming for glory, with my flesh and blood, forging my blade!!!"

The slogan resounded deafeningly, warriors clinked their glasses together, some with their arms around each other's shoulders, some embraced each other, their eyes glistening with excited tears.

Qin Tian watched the lively scene before him, slowly drinking the third glass of wine, the rich liquid spreading warmth throughout his body.

Outside, the starry sky remained vast, yet the lights and laughter within the dining hall shone brighter than any star.

Chapter 447: Summoned by the Marshal, Demigod

The warriors evacuated from the Demon Suppression Abyss were not disbanded on the spot, but were uniformly settled on Iron Wood Star.

The Military Department needed to tally casualties, settle merits, and make subsequent arrangements here.

Returning to Iron Wood Star, Qin Tian clearly noticed that the atmosphere here was completely different from before the war.

Previously, Iron Wood Star was like a giant war fortress, with warriors patrolling the streets everywhere. Leisure and entertainment were rare, and even the air carried a serious and solemn aura.

But this time, the restaurants on both sides of the streets had already hung up wooden signs saying "Welcome home, heroes," and steam mixed with the smell of meat wafted out from the back kitchens; the banners at the tavern entrances were glaringly red, with the words "Special celebratory spiritual wine" fluttering in the wind; and there were quite a few shops with "Post-war therapy" signs, with ambiguous lights flickering behind glass doors—sharp-eyed folks knew what was going on inside, yet the Military Department turned a blind eye.

The war was too cruel; the pressure and hostility accumulated by the warriors on the edge of life and death needed an outlet for release.

For men, what was the best way to relax?

Of course it's—

"Drink!!!"

Lan Qiancheng's face was flushed red, one arm tightly around Qin Tian's shoulders, and with the other hand he grabbed a glass, downing three large cups of strong liquor.

This liquor wasn't ordinary stuff; it was brewed with spiritual rice mixed with more than a dozen herbs nourishing qi and blood. To ordinary people, it was akin to a poison that corroded the intestines, and even Tier Two and Tier Three Spiritualists would feel dizzy after a few cups.

"Qin Tian, I've finished, now it's your turn." Lan Qiancheng's tongue was starting to twist.

The Golden Bloodline disciples nearby weren't much better off, each with dazed eyes and unnaturally flushed cheeks, clearly having drunk too much.

"Alright!"

Qin Tian grabbed the jug, poured three cups, raised his head and drank, crisp and efficient.

"Amazing!!!"

A burst of cheers erupted around him, and even those with hazy drunk eyes steadied themselves against the table to look at Qin Tian with admiration.

Initially, it was just a peaceful drinking contest, you toast me a cup, I toast you back, the sound of clinking glasses mixed with laughter and bustle, gradually warming the atmosphere.

But as the drinking continued, everyone was stunned to find—Qin Tian seemed to not get drunk at all!

Even Dongfang Yu, the strongest among them, showed signs of drunkenness after a few bottles of spiritual wine, speaking half a beat slower.

In contrast, Qin Tian remained unperturbed, his gaze clear, as though he'd drunk not liquor but regular spring water.

Realizing this, the group changed tactics, taking turns to toast Qin Tian.

It started with only three or four people, but eventually turned into Qin Tian challenging a dozen or more.

Even so, when the whole table of people were slumped over, talking nonsense, Qin Tian only appeared slightly tipsy, still sitting upright.

His capacity for alcohol was like a gluttonous giant beast, making even Dongfang Yu feel inferior, able only to collapse onto his chair, giving Qin Tian a thumbs-up while secretly marveling.

After leaving the Demon Suppression Abyss, he immediately investigated Qin Tian through clan channels, and the results surprised him.

Qin Tian had countless connections with the Dongfang Family.

In the recent Azure Wood Star Realm genius contest, Qin Tian was recommended by the Dongfang Family as an examiner, and when the genius contest was disrupted by the Blood Demon Cult, nearly costing the lives of many finalists, it was Qin Tian who turned the tide, ensuring the safety of the geniuses.

Following the contest, the family's Great Elder personally received Qin Tian, gifting him treasures as a sign of gratitude.

The records showed that the Dongfang Family had tried to recruit Qin Tian, but this was personally rejected by the Great Elder, mainly due to Qin Tian's status as an elite cultivated by the Seventh Bureau.

The Seventh Bureau explicitly stated that with Qin Tian's character and ability, he was bound to enter the Imperial Capital in the future to work under Marshal Lin, and hoped the Dongfang Family would refrain from any futile recruitment attempts.

On account of this, the attempt to recruit Qin Tian was completely abandoned.

However, a few months ago, the Dongfang Family managed to establish a business partnership with Qin Tian.

Qin Tian's company developed a product called "Youth Potion," which had miraculous anti-aging and beauty effects. Qin Tian actively invited the Dongfang Family into this business, resulting in their cooperation.

In just a month, the Youth Potion was officially launched, causing a strong market response, not only in the Azure Wood Star Realm but also attracting attention from other Eight Great Star Realms.

Now, the Youth Potion is in such demand that it's hard to find, with prices soaring, becoming the top revenue-generating product for the Dongfang Family in the past month.

As one of the major shareholders, Qin Tian's profit from this was enviable even to those of the Holy Blood direct lineage.

Now, Dongfang Yu no longer considered recruitment but treated Qin Tian as a genuine friend.

"Qin Tian."

Dongfang Yu, holding a glass of wine, approached Qin Tian with a smile in his voice, his gaze sweeping over the messy spectacle on the table, then turned his words: "I found out we are not only comrades but also business partners."

Qin Tian smiled slightly, raised his glass for a light clink, the crisp "ding" of glass meeting glass: "Then I must ask Young Master Yu to take good care of my business in the future."

He knew in his heart that Dongfang Yu must have investigated him and understood his ties with the Dongfang Family.

"Care is out of the question." Dongfang Yu shook his head, downing the wine in his cup and tilting it upside down, "The Youth Potion is like an inexhaustible gold mine, now a prized possession in the family's eyes. With my current access, I can barely touch its edges."

He paused for a moment and added half-jokingly, "Speaking of which, I'm hoping Mr. Qin can offer me a chance to earn some money to support my family as well."

Although it was said in jest, there was a touch of seriousness hidden within.

Though he was of the direct lineage, there were many peers within the lineage, and the competition never ceased; everyone was racking their brains to vie for resources and authority.

He was sure that countless eyes in the family were already fixed on the Youth Potion business, but not everyone was qualified to have a share of it.

Anyone could see the overwhelming business opportunity concealed within the potion.

In this world, the love of beauty is a woman's nature, and the Youth Potion precisely hits every woman's soft spot.

The Empire covers vast territories and houses a population numbering in the trillions. Behind this is a market of hundreds of quadrillions, even tens of thousands of quadrillions—even getting a small slice of the pie would be enough to make one immensely wealthy.

He was not confident in seizing the opportunity from among the eagle-eyed direct lineage members, but if Qin Tian, the patent holder of the potion, nodded, the situation would be much simpler.

"No problem."

Qin Tian's face broke into a smile: "Honestly, I was worried before that the Dongfang Clan might kick me out halfway. But with Young Master Yu joining, I'm much more assured about this business."

Upon hearing this, a glint appeared in Dongfang Yu's eyes, and he solemnly said, "Qin Tian, rest assured about that. The Dongfang Clan's reputation has stood the test of a millennium; it would never engage in self-destructive actions. But I've noted what you promised me. Don't walk out of here, sleep it off, and forget it all."

"Haha, don't worry, I haven't drunk to the point of blackout yet," Qin Tian laughed heartily.

"Such boldness!"

At this moment, Lan Qiancheng suddenly grabbed Qin Tian's shoulder, his tongue tied and drunkenly shouted, "Qin Tian, I don't believe we can't get you drunk today! Brothers, let's all go at him together!"

"Drink! We'll make sure to get Qin Tian knocked down today!"

"That's right, I don't believe he's made of iron!"

Qin Tian shook his head helplessly, his gaze sweeping over this group of bleary-eyed fellows as he softly said, "It's not that I want to be too blunt—in terms of alcohol tolerance, everyone here... is trash."

The moment the words fell, the scene suddenly quieted, followed by—

"Damn, this guy is too arrogant, get him!"

Someone blurted out a curse, instantly igniting the atmosphere at the drinking table. Countless drinks were raised, with arcs of liquor intertwining in the air, launching a new round of "wheel war."

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On the second morning, as the morning light cast spots on the floor through the window, Poisonous Widow entered Qin Tian's room with a silver dining tray, catching him sitting on the sofa by the window, flipping through documents.

The breakfast on the tray was sumptuous—a golden fried Spirit Beast egg glistening with oil, neatly cut meat steak steaming hot, with a small bowl of sweet porridge adorned with preserved fruit beside it.

She placed the tray on the coffee table, her gaze unconsciously landing on Qin Tian.

He wore a neatly pressed military uniform and leisurely picked up a knife and fork to cut the meat steak. The sunlight outlined the focused profile of his face, and even the chewing conveyed a sense of leisurely poise.

A trace of wistfulness climbed poisonously Widow's gaze, like an inextinguishable haze, the scenes from last night swirling back into her mind again.

While the boss and those Golden Clan heirs were exchanging drinks in the restaurant, she and Old Ghost were waiting by the door.

Watching those highly capable geniuses being carried out drunk, half-dazed and slurring nonsense, unable even to walk steadily, her heart held a secret hope—

Perhaps tonight, in the haze of intoxication, something might happen between her and the boss.

But in the end, when Qin Tian walked out, he merely bore a faint blush on his cheeks, his eyes clear, and even after returning to his room, he practiced cultivation for a while, completely extinguishing her hopes.

"Why are you looking at me like that?"

Qin Tian suddenly lifted his gaze, holding up a small piece of meat steak with his fork, raising his eyebrows slightly, "It looks as if I've done something unworthy to you."

Poisonous Widow bit her inner lip secretly but quickly let out a radiant smile: "Boss, you got it wrong. I wouldn't dare harbor such thoughts."

"Hmm~"

Qin Tian dragged out the sound, using his fork to send the meat steak into his mouth and leisurely chewed a few bites before casually saying, "The smile seems fake, and the expressions stiff. You need to

improve your acting skills a bit. Do you need me to recommend a few online courses from the Empire Drama Academy for you? I tried them; they're pretty good."

Upon hearing this, Poisonous Widow's smile instantly stiffened, followed by a vein barely perceptible on her forehead twitching. Her voice squeezed out through clenched teeth, yet maintaining the last shred of grace:

"No need, thank you for your concern, boss."

Qin Tian chuckled lowly and didn't continue teasing her, focusing on finishing the food on the tray. After eating, he picked up a napkin to wipe his lips and stood up, saying: "Later, I need to see Dongfang Marshal; you and Old Ghost don't need to follow, take a day off, and have fun."

After he finished, he tidied his military uniform and walked straight out, pushing the door open.

With a soft "pa," the door gently closed.

Poisonous Widow's expression instantly collapsed, she kicked at the carpet underfoot, muttering: "Have fun doing what? This place is only filled with taverns and those shops that aren't what they seem, entirely serving you bunch of lousy men."

She paced around the room, finally letting out a light snort to the closed door: "Hmph, clueless man."

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"Dongfang Marshal, General Zhuge."

In the study, Qin Tian stood with a posture as straight as a pine, saluting the two figures before the mahogany desk.

On either side of the mahogany desk, Dongfang Yue and Zhuge Lan were facing each other over the chessboard. Upon hearing the sound, both raised their eyes simultaneously, fixing on Qin Tian.

Dongfang Yue raised his hand to signal him to wait, gently turning the white jade piece between his fingers.

This marshal from the Holy Blood Clan was presently dressed in a black dress uniform edged with gold embroidery, his temples white with frost, his gaze deep like a cold pool. His nose was like knife-carved, lips tightly pressed, carrying an air of battlefield-honed decisiveness, yet when his eyes swept over the chessboard, it held a calculating steadiness.

When he placed the white jade piece on the board, it carried the weight of a mountain collapsing before failing, as if it was not a piece but an order to thousands of troops.

On the opposite side, Zhuge Lan was completely different.

The moon-white robe embroidered with light cyan patterns made his figure look slender as bamboo.

His fingers holding the black piece were long and white, placing the piece with a light pinch yet concealed with an effortless maneuver; as his fingertips brushed the board's surface, a stream seemed to circulate silently following the piece's trajectory.

Qin Tian's gaze unintentionally swept over the chessboard, seeing the black and white pieces lined up in a complex setup on the obsidian board.

The white pieces stood as a valiant army, occupying the central open space, flaunting their prowess; the black pieces slithered like serpents, seemingly scattered yet held a hidden connection, gradually defusing the white's offensive.

Especially in the upper right corner, the black had formed an encirclement, trapping several white pieces, evidently putting Zhuge Lan in the lead.

"Snap."

Dongfang Yue's white jade piece landed on the board edge, a seemingly inconspicuous move that suddenly relieved the critical situation in the upper right corner.

It seemed as though a stream suddenly surged on the chessboard, the previously quiet white pieces shimmering with a faint luminescence, intermingling with the sunlight pouring in through the window.

Zhuge Lan softly uttered a "huh," his fingers hovering over the black's camp for a moment before finally selecting a piece to place down.

The moment the black piece touched the board, several surrounding black pieces lit up together with a ghostly glow, forming an invisible barrier that securely halted the white's counterattack outside.

Seeing this, Dongfang Yue put down the white piece, pointing to the guest seat by the table, his voice carrying a metallic resonance.

"Sit down."

"Yes!"

Qin Tian sat upright, his body straight and scanned across Dongfang Yue and Zhuge Lan's faces.

These two were not only bigwigs of the Military Department but also Tier Nine Spiritualists.

In the realm of Spiritual Energy, Tier Nine Spiritualists have another name—

Demigods!

Chapter 449: Commendation Ceremony

"Qin Tian."

Dongfang Yue's gaze fell on Qin Tian, and that look seemed to carry the weight of a mountain, pressing on him invisibly.

Qin Tian felt a tightness in his chest, his breath suddenly became strained, and the muscles on his back instinctively tensed.

"This time, the smooth sealing of the four spatial passages on the first layer of the Demon Suppression Abyss is greatly credited to you." Dongfang Yue's tone was calm, "However, I want to know, what exactly is the magic stone you used to seal the spatial passage?"

As expected, he asked.

Qin Tian thought to himself.

When he used the unique stone fragment to seal the passage, he knew this matter would not be easily overlooked by the Military Department, but he didn't expect it would be Dongfang Yue and General Zhuge, the two big figures, who would personally inquire.

His fingers at his side slightly curled, yet he maintained his composure on the surface.

"Marshal Dongfang, General Zhuge." Qin Tian raised his eyes to meet the gazes of the two, "This is the magic stone that sealed the passage."

He took the inconspicuous stone out of his pocket and offered it with both hands, "I discovered it inside the Demon Source of the Infernal Demon Sea. Over the past few days, I have researched some materials and speculated that it is likely a...unique stone fragment."

Unique stone!

As soon as the words left his mouth, two sharp gazes shot towards the stone in Qin Tian's hand simultaneously.

The chaos in the void that engulfed the Central Star Realm back then was too tragic, and ultimately, the weapon that suppressed the void was the unique stone.

However, the chaos in the void happened in the Central Star Realm, so why did a fragment of the unique stone appear in the Demon Suppression Abyss of the Azure Wood Star Realm?

Could this newly appeared fourth spatial passage be related to the void?

Dongfang Yue took the unique stone, felt the rough touch with his fingertips, and the stone showed no energy fluctuations, nor any special luster, looking no different from a roadside pebble.

He tentatively injected green Spiritual Energy into it, but the magnificent Power of Holy Blood surged like a river, yet the stone was like a bottomless abyss, unable to stir even a single ripple.

Dongfang Yue's brow furrowed tighter as he handed the stone to General Zhuge, "Qin Tian, tell us in detail how you obtained the unique stone."

"Yes."

Qin Tian responded and began to recount his prepared narrative.

The process of acquiring the unique stone involved some unspeakable details, such as how Blaze had sensed it, and he had transformed into a Silver-winged Demon to kill Yan Song, thus obtaining the Heaven-Burning Purgatory, implicating him in the crime of harming comrades.

Therefore, he merely said that while exploring the Demon Source of the Infernal Demon Sea, he inadvertently witnessed the unique stone absorbing the Power of Earth to nurture the Magma Demon King. So he stealthily took the unique stone using the Power of Space, which then led the Magma Demon King and another Tier Seven Demon, the Black Flame Lord, to kill each other.

The aftermath of the battle between the two Tier Seven Demon Kings destroyed the Demon Source, and ultimately, they both ended up severely injured, allowing him to profit from it.

After listening to Qin Tian's account, Dongfang Yue's gaze was as deep as an abyss, his fingertips gently sliding along the edge of the chessboard, as if contemplating something.

Meanwhile, General Zhuge lightly stroked the rough surface of the unique stone, and after a moment, he raised his hand to return the unique stone to Qin Tian.

Qin Tian received the stone with both hands, feeling a sense of joy in his heart.

He had initially feared that the Military Department would hold onto this fragment for research, given its connection to the secrets of the void and the spatial passages of the Demon Suppression Abyss, but he hadn't expected it to be returned so easily.

"Take good care of the unique stone; it might still be of use in the future." General Zhuge said with a faint smile, his gaze carrying a hint of meaning.

"Yes!"

Qin Tian straightened his back, his voice resonant.

If someone else had said those words, they might have been mere politeness, but coming from a demigod who could peep into the mysteries of the universe like General Zhuge, it inevitably sparked the imagination.

"That's all for today." Dongfang Yue said calmly, "Remember to attend the commendation ceremony this afternoon on time."

"Yes!"

Qin Tian gave a standard military salute and turned to leave the room.

As the door closed, Dongfang Yue immediately turned to General Zhuge and asked, "What do you think?"

General Zhuge gave a faint smile, "He's a sly one."

"Daring to spin lies in front of two demigods—this young man certainly has some guts." Dongfang Yue's fingertips lightly touched the white jade piece on the chessboard, his tone carrying a hint of amusement.

"After all, he's been nurtured by the Seventh Bureau, so his thoughts are naturally more agile than the average soldier." General Zhuge picked up a black piece, about to place it, when his gaze suddenly focused, and his expression darkened, "Did you exchange the pieces?"

"What exchange? What are you talking about?" Dongfang Yue looked "bewildered," as if completely unaware.

"The last white piece was clearly placed here." General Zhuge pointed to a corner of the chessboard with a dark face, his fingertip almost touching the smooth stone surface, "How did it end up over there?"

"Wasn't it always there?" Dongfang Yue raised an eyebrow, sounding confident, "Forget it, this move is contentious and unclear, let's start over."

Before he finished speaking, he quickly swiped his hand across the chessboard, mixing the black and white pieces into a chaotic mess, instantly erasing the original stalemate on the board.

"Dongfang Yue!!!"

The voice of General Zhuge's anger abruptly echoed in the study, causing the window frames to tremble slightly.

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"Phew, it's finally over."

Standing in front of the Military Department's office building, Qin Tian looked at the flowing clouds above, his tense shoulders and back completely relaxed for the first time, and even his breath became much smoother.

The heart that had been gripped by an invisible pressure in the study was now slowly unwinding, as if a massive burden had been lifted from him.

The aura of two demigods was truly overwhelming; even though they hadn't emitted the slightest ripple of Spiritual Energy throughout, just having their gazes sweep over him felt like a cold current climbing up his spine, making his heart involuntarily tremble.

Especially when recounting the origin of the unique stone, even though he had meticulously rehearsed his narrative to be flawless and controlled his breathing rhythm, tightening even the muscles at the corners of his eyes to prevent any hint of panic from showing, there was still an imperceptible sliver of anxiety hidden within him before those two mighty beings.

After all, General Zhuge is a demigod of the Zhuge Family, and with those eyes gazing at him, it felt as if they could pierce through flesh straight to the soul. Qin Tian even suspected that the esteemed general could deduce everything with a mere thought, seeing through his little secrets with absolute clarity.

He shook his head helplessly, his fingers unconsciously rubbing the unique stone in his pocket.

Some things are never meant to be brought to light.

If unspoken, others may suspect some underlying mysteries, but without concrete evidence, they couldn't possibly resort to interrogation means with a newly commended officer.

But if he spoke, while it might gain him a reputation for honesty now, in the future, such matters could very well turn into hidden arrows aimed at him.

Thus, he could only walk a tightrope between truth and lies, wrapping eight parts truth in two parts fiction, making his narrative sound as seamless as possible.

Whether or not others believed it, he had to believe it himself first.

Qin Tian tugged at the corner of his mouth, smiling wryly as he temporarily cast aside his miscellaneous thoughts.

Sunlight glinted on the military emblem, reflecting a dazzling light, and he straightened his collar—the commendation ceremony in the afternoon was the main event.

And he was undoubtedly one of the stars of the show.

Chapter 450: Imperial Glory Medal, Royal Major General

In the grand hall, the crystal chandeliers illuminated the entire space as bright as daylight, with beams of light cascading through the ornate domed ceiling, creating intricate light patterns on the carpet.

The backdrop on the stage was dominated by the Royal Army Flag's black and gold colors, with the eleven gilded letters of "Demon Suppression Abyss Battle Recognition and Award Ceremony" standing out prominently.

The seats below the stage were fully occupied, the solemn black military uniforms mingling with the silvery shine of shoulder rank insignias formed a sea of solemnity.

The officers, dressed in crisp uniforms, the fabric stiff and the collars embroidered with subtle insignias corresponding to their battle groups, their black sword scabbards reflecting a matte finish, tassels hanging motionless.

Everyone was seated in order according to their units; they were leaders stationed on the first level of the Demon Suppression Abyss, with some knowing each other, but many more unfamiliar with those around them.

Qin Tian sat at the front row on the left side, the black uniform fitting his form, with the insignia of the Chijin Battlegroup embroidered on his sleeve, the golden star of a Colonel's rank on his shoulder shining brightly in the light. Although not the highest rank among the commanders, his seating drew many eyes.

The clock on the wall had just ticked past three in the afternoon when Dongfang Yue, dressed in a black marshal's uniform, walked steadily onto the stage, each step resonating with everyone's heartstrings, making the already silent hall even more solemn.

His gaze swept across those below the stage, as if making eye contact with every warrior, his voice resonating throughout, no unnecessary pleasantries, carrying a penetrating power:

"The battle for the Demon Suppression Abyss this time lasted for several months, with every battle group bravely fighting the enemy, using flesh and blood to build barriers, eventually successfully sealing seven spatial passages, keeping the demons at bay."

The image on the background screen suddenly switched, displaying a series of numbers—the rolling list of fallen warriors' names, the number of Demon Sources destroyed, the total number of demons killed...

Each number was heavy and burning, causing many in the audience to straighten their spines, with some brushing sleeves of their uniforms, eyes reflecting remembrance and determination.

"The victory in war is never due to the efforts of one individual, but the result of countless warriors' charges and defenses." Dongfang Yue's tone softened slightly, yet was more solemn,

"But we must not forget those heroes who stepped up in critical moments, resolving crises single-handedly; we must honor those merit-earning individuals who brought pivotal turns to battles with courage and wisdom."

He gestured with a raised hand, two soldiers dressed in black ceremonial uniforms carried a tray covered with red silk onto the stage, various medals laid neatly atop the tray—there was the 'Iron Blood Medal' symbolizing courage and tenacity, its silver medal engraved with a crossed sword and shield, the edges exuding a cold metallic luster;

There was the 'Deep Blue Medal' recognizing strategy, with the blue crystal inlay's patterns precision like star trails, reflecting a profound halo in the light;

In addition, there were the Bauhinia Medal, the Benevolence Medal, among others.

And in the center, was the 'Empire Glory Medal' established for those with distinguished contributions—a rare red-gold crafted medal with a center embedded with an orange-red fire gemstone the size of a pigeon's egg, surrounded by twelve gilt feather patterns, with diamond fragments adorning the feather tips, even in soft lighting, it radiated dazzling brilliance, casting a golden hue onto the tray's red silk, visibly marking it as the Empire's highest honor.

"The theme of today's ceremony has only one focus—"

Dongfang Yue's voice suddenly rose, gaze intense, his hand touching his chest's uniform insignia, as if about to bestow the honor: "To honor the heroes! To bestow glory upon those warriors who fought bloodily in the Demon Suppression Abyss, defending the Empire's peace!"

As his speech concluded, a thunderous applause erupted throughout the audience, the hems of black uniforms swaying gently with movements, forming into a rousing rhythm.

Dongfang Yue's gaze fell on the achievement record book in his hand, fingertips grazing the paper surface, each name he called bearing immense weight: "First War Zone, Baihu Battle group leader, Zhao Lie!"

To the left of the audience, a burly Lieutenant Colonel stood up abruptly, the black uniform accentuating his broad shoulders and back. As he stepped onto the stage, the sound of military boots on carpet resonated clearly, his face carrying a fortitude honed on battlefields.

"In the siege battle at the periphery of the Rotting Swamp, Zhao Lie led the Baihu Battle group in holding the ground for three days, facing a demon charge ten times their number, personally killed seven Tier Six demon commanders, and even with severe injuries, persisted in command until reinforcements arrived."

Dongfang Yue's voice was solemn, raising his hand to pick the 'Iron Blood Medal' from the tray, fingertips feeling the cold of the silver medal, "Such valor warrants the awarding of the 'Iron Blood Medal' to honor his determination!"

Zhao Lie straightened his back, saluting, as the medal was pinned on the left chest of the uniform, the silver sword and shield pattern reflecting with the golden star of his rank, drawing uniform applause from the audience, in tribute to the fearless.

Once Zhao Lie took his seat, Dongfang Yue continued, "Third War Zone, Xuan niao Battle Group leader, Lin Zhou!"

A slender-faced officer stood up, his steps steady as he walked to the stage, differing from Zhao Lie's intensity with the calm demeanor unique to the wise.

"During operations in the Demon Realm mist zone, you uncovered the demons' deceptive 'east-west attack' plot, counter-analysed the demon cave distribution, formulated an ambush strategy, annihilating demon caves with minimal casualties, and subsequently incited a demon internal conflict, ultimately successfully dismantling a Demon Source." Dongfang Yue picked up the 'Deep Blue Medal,' the blue crystal emanating a glow under the light, "Such intelligence warrants the awarding of the 'Deep Blue Medal' to signify his capability!"