

Beast T 521

Chapter 521: Mysterious Valley! A Flock of Thousands of Birds!_3

He took a significant look at this little Paperman.

This is Commander Fifth Stage! It's already a mid-level Commander Pet Beast; how far is it from the Elite Peak? Yet, in such a situation, it was slain with a single sword strike? Without even time to react? If it were to advance to Commander Level again, what then? But this is the reality. The old saying still holds true: the Heart of Elements may be the weakest Super-Rank Skill, but it is still a Super-Rank Skill.

The Five Elements Sword, which formed the Five Elements Core, had enhanced the little Paperman's strength to its utmost limit. Although the enhancement focused more on the corresponding Five Elements Energy. However, the Sword of Wind's Gale of Resolute Destruction was merely a conduit; the true lethal strike was the Paperman's own Sword Qi.

That's Metal Attribute!

Su Ping glanced at Dong Muxuan and the others, whose expressions had suddenly turned grave. A slight smile touched his lips.

How satisfying. For me, feigning strength in front of ordinary people is no longer enough. I want these geniuses to know that not only can Su Ping cultivate other Pet Beasts, but my own Pet Beast is also top-notch! You little ones, do you really think I'm just a Breeder? To bring out my own little treasure and it turns out like this? But this is just the beginning. Wait until I have Xiao Qing complete its External Incarnation Cultivation, finish its Evolution, and especially if I can find that Legendary Level resource, Biyao Chunshen, to strengthen its Cultivation further. Let Paperman Qian Yi, in addition to the Five Elements Core, also complete the assembly of the Five Elements generation and restriction cycle on its own body, and then I'll directly create a hundred and eighty Paper Swords for it. By then, we'll see!

Pleased with himself, Su Ping noted that even Da Huang, standing beside him, was now looking at the little one with a new spark of interest.

Su Ping, secretly reveling in his triumph but feigning nonchalance, continued to speak to the Little Crow perched on his shoulder. The Little Crow was gazing at the little Paperman, its eyes filled with envy and delight,

"Okay, no need to be so envious. If you stay at the Heart of Myriad Spirits in the future, you will certainly become strong as well."

"GAGA!"

For the first time, Su Ping saw a glimmer of light sparkle in the Little Crow's eyes.

Is this the light of hope and anticipation? Indeed, I, Master Su Da, have the personal charm to attract these Pet Beasts laden with potential!

Then, Su Ping realized he might be overthinking things.

The Little Crow flapped its wings and went straight to the Iron Feather Golden Eagle, spitting out a black Fireball, then another, and another, and another...

Only after incinerating the Iron Feather Golden Eagle's corpse until it was charred black did the Little Crow return to Su Ping's side, apparently satisfied.

Then, the Little Crow pointed to a large scar on its left wing where feathers had yet to grow back and then pointed at the Iron Feather Golden Eagle.

Su Ping understood. He nodded. Quite a vengeful little fellow, he thought. But it's good to repay kindness with kindness and enmity with retribution.

However, Su Ping still had one last question. He took out a feather of the Darkflame Ancient Raven and held it up for the Little Crow to see, as if comparing them,

"Little guy, where did this feather come from? What's its relation to you?"

A look of sorrow once again filled the Little Crow's eyes. It pointed with its pitch-black wing towards the center of the valley.

"GAGA!"

Su Ping was slightly taken aback. He gazed into the distance, towards the heart of the valley.

It was a protruding cliff face, and within that cliff, there was a sizable cave.

There, several of the most powerful Peak Command avian Pet Beasts stood guard, some perched on branches, others stood beside the cave, yet none seemed to dare enter. Any other bird that dared approach was instantly torn apart by those Peak Command avian Pet Beasts, which were acting rather strangely.

Below the cliffside cave, numerous bird carcasses now lay scattered. Piled together, they created a bloody and barbaric scene.

Su Ping narrowed his eyes. He then looked at the Little Crow in disbelief and asked,

"Little guy, are you saying the body of the Darkflame Ancient Raven is in that cave? Is it a deceased relative or predecessor of yours?"

This question even took the Little Crow aback. After a moment's thought, it nodded, yet a rare hint of embarrassment showed as the wing it had used to point tilted slightly downward.

Then, Su Ping turned his gaze to the pile of corpses.

The shock in his eyes did not diminish in the slightest.

What did that mean? Did that pile of corpses contain the owner of this feather—the Darkflame Ancient Raven, which was supposed to have gone extinct three hundred years ago? But those corpses were killed only recently by those newcomers who took over their nests, right? Does that mean a living Darkflame Ancient Raven was recently killed? The problem is, just as I thought, isn't the Darkflame Ancient Raven recorded as extinct for three hundred years in the Breeder Association's archives? How is this possible?

Su Ping was suddenly overcome with astonishment.

This mutated Flame-Eating Crow... An extinct Darkflame Ancient Raven from three hundred years ago, reemerged in the world only to be already dead, even killed... And so many avian Pet Beasts gathered here... What exactly is going on?

Su Ping blinked and glanced back.

Paperman Qian Yi, Qin Xiaoxue, and the others had already begun to deal with the other avian Pet Beasts that were agitatedly swarming towards them.

Then, he subconsciously wiped his forehead. I seem to be sweating a bit, he realized.

Chapter 522: The Increasingly Hot Valley!

Su Ping's gaze rested on the pile of corpses.

Because it was winter, there were no signs of rot; instead, they seemed to have frozen solid at that very moment.

Due to the preceding extreme cold, the bodies had mostly stiffened.

Some meltwater trickled down the rocky cliffs, creating an indescribable atmosphere of cold and stillness.

This feeling made Su Ping slightly uneasy.

There is something strange about this place!

But he couldn't quite put his finger on what it was.

Su Ping glanced at the others, who were still enthusiastically directing their Pet Beasts in battle. After a moment's thought, he patted Da Huang's body.

"Da Huang, go ahead and take a look. Also, be careful; don't let anything happen," he instructed.

This time, Da Huang nodded solemnly, his demeanor quite different from his previous casual and disdainful manner.

Could this fellow sense something too?

Su Ping didn't know, but he proceeded forward with the Little Crow.

These wild avian Ferocious Beasts were still within the valley.

Although their piercing gazes were fixed on Da Huang, they didn't retreat.

Without needing Su Ping's command, any bird-type Ferocious Beasts daring enough to overestimate their strength and block Da Huang's path were instantly turned into puddles of blood.

This scene, however, only deepened Su Ping's sense of unease.

Even ants cling to life!

Facing the threat of death, fear is the natural instinct of all living creatures, and avoiding danger is undoubtedly a top priority.

However, at this moment, despite the hunting game Qin Xiaoxue and the others were engaged in, and despite the Yellow Dragon's absolute crushing power, few of these small creatures within the valley scattered in panic to leave.

What kind of attraction does this valley, and that soon-to-appear Secret Realm, hold for these bird-type Ferocious Beasts to entice them so?

But what allure could make these wild Pet Beasts disregard even death itself?

That's just not possible, right?

With that thought, Su Ping walked resolutely behind Da Huang, following closely until he reached the very center of the valley.

He arrived before the cliff face piled high with bird corpses.

From a distance, it hadn't seemed like much.

But now, standing right before it, Su Ping truly comprehended the sheer number of bodies present.

The base of the cliff was densely packed with them.

There were all kinds of birds.

Most had been slain by various means, while some had died from falls.

Su Ping looked up at the cave in the cliff face and furrowed his brow.

Meanwhile, the Little Crow had darted among the endless piles of corpses at his feet, quickly rummaging and swiftly finding several Flame-Eating Crow corpses and one particularly mangled body, so bloodstained and torn it was barely recognizable.

That body belonged to the Darkflame Ancient Raven.

"Gaga!"

The Little Crow's cry was filled with sorrow.

Su Ping glanced at it, focusing on the Darkflame Ancient Raven's body. It was exactly as recorded in the Breeder Association's database, without any discrepancy.

Was it really a Darkflame Ancient Raven that had undergone ancestral regression?

But where exactly was the crux of the problem?

What secret lay hidden within this strange valley?

While pondering, Su Ping's gaze shifted towards the top of the cliff.

"SCREECH..."

A sharp cry echoed.

It was a Flame Ribbon Crane, one of the most powerful wild avian Ferocious Beasts in this valley. It possessed Peak Command strength.

At that moment, the crane stood atop the cliff, its gaze fixed on Su Ping and Da Huang beside him.

Of course, its main focus was on Da Huang; its fiery red pupils were filled with both fear and wariness.

Even when facing a Dragon, a Pet Beast from the race standing at the pinnacle of the Pet Beast World, this Flame Ribbon Crane, despite the enormous disparity in strength, showed no intention of backing away.

This situation only intensified Su Ping's curiosity about the valley.

So much so that he momentarily disregarded the Darkflame Ancient Raven's condition and whispered to the Little Crow, "Little one, do you feel something is off here?"

The Little Crow was startled. It suddenly lifted its head, looking confused, but soon seemed to understand. It shook its head, then nodded, and cried out again, "Gaga!"

The meaning of its cry was simple and clear: it wanted to go home!

Its home was inside that cave.

Su Ping was now quite certain that the cave was the location of the impending Secret Realm mentioned by the Zhang Family Brothers.

But what kind of Secret Realm could possess such immense allure?

Nevertheless, Su Ping also noticed that the Little Crow wasn't as severely affected.

Otherwise, the corpse of a mutated Flame-Eating Crow would likely be among these piles as well.

Was it because of its bloodline mutation?

While Su Ping mused, Da Huang's actions didn't pause for a moment.

The Peak Command Flame Ribbon Crane had been flattened into a 'crane pancake.'

Two massive boulders, conjured from the void, had crushed it, turning it into a pool of blood indistinguishable from the other corpses.

To an Earth Dragon, especially a mature one, this Peak Command Flame Ribbon Crane was no different from the other birds.

After speaking to the Little Crow, Su Ping collected the corpses into his Beast Taming Space. Then, with the Little Crow, he slowly ascended towards the cave.

There were still many wild bird-type Ferocious Beasts around the cave.

However, intimidated by Da Huang's recently demonstrated might, none dared to approach. They could only stand on the cliff faces and rocks, continuously flapping their wings to ease their restless agitation.

The cave itself was ordinary, containing a nest made of various dried grasses and other materials, looking no different from any other.

What was slightly different...

Su Ping wiped sweat from his face again.

He wondered if he might have dressed too warmly.

It had been so cold when flying high in the sky just now, and yet now it felt rather hot?

"Breeder Su, this is it!" the Zhang Family Brothers, following Su Ping, said excitedly. "I can feel it, right here. The Secret Realm that is about to manifest is right here."

In their hands was a compass from which beams of light flickered. Its needle pointed firmly and unerringly here—clearly, this was the entrance to the soon-to-emerge Secret Realm.

"How much longer until the Secret Realm appears?" Su Ping asked.

"Within half an hour! The Stilling Space Compass's indications can't be wrong; it's only a matter of moments now!" Da Zhang replied hastily.

Su Ping nodded, no longer feeling rushed.

He sat down at the edge of the cave, overlooking the corpses and the valley below, lost in thought.

Regardless of the anomaly, now that he was here, he wanted to understand the situation clearly before deciding his next move.

Nothing else was urgent.

But the peculiarities here were indeed unreasonably numerous.

First, there was the birth of the Darkflame Ancient Raven and the mutated Little Crow.

Although this had occurred earlier, Su Ping wasn't yet sure if it had any real connection to the potential Secret Realm here.

Second was the situation in the valley.

Why had it attracted so many bird-type Ferocious Beasts?

Moreover, calculating from the first time the Little Crow had come to the Heart of Woods, a month had already passed.

What kind of Secret Realm would show signs a whole month in advance?

Based on information about Secret Realms obtained from the Qintian Monitor, this situation seemed illogical.

No matter how he considered it, it didn't make sense.

Su Ping pursed his lips. Knowing there was still some time, he drew out his phone to begin searching.

Thankfully, with Feifei present, he had a constant wireless signal. Otherwise, in these remote wilds, having network service would be highly doubtful.

Su Ping accessed the Breeder Association's database and started his search.

["Birds," "flying Pet Beasts," "attracts all avian Pet Beasts..."]

Su Ping searched using a myriad of keywords.

His search revealed numerous items known to attract avian Pet Beasts, including various unusual treasures and resources.

However, none of them quite matched the current situation.

Su Ping had limited trust in this so-called Secret Realm.

He had encountered numerous Secret Realms before but had never seen one manifest quite like this. It seemed more plausible that special types of resources were emerging.

However, after an extensive search, he found no relevant information, and Su Ping shook his head.

But one thing was certain: it was getting hotter and hotter.

Su Ping wiped sweat from his forehead. At this moment, voices drifted from outside the cave—Qin Xiaoxue and the others.

"What the hell is this? Is it really winter right now? Why does it feel like summer vacation?"

Indeed, it was so.

Not only Su Ping but also the Zhang Family Brothers were noticeably red-faced, with beads of sweat forming on their foreheads.

"ROAR!"

Da Huang's dragon roar sounded.

Su Ping turned his head sharply. "You're saying the fire-attribute energy in this valley has intensified? And it has increased a lot?"

Da Huang nodded, his golden eyes fixed firmly on the deepest part of the cave from outside.

Then, at that very moment, an abrupt change occurred!

"GAGA..."

"SCREECH..."

"CHIRP... CHIRP..."

A series of strange cries erupted outside the cave.

The myriad avian Pet Beasts within the valley, as if obeying some command, rapidly converged on the cave, paying no heed to Da Huang guarding its entrance.

Da Huang was enraged.

Its massive form stood like a mountain before all the birds.

However, Su Ping could also feel an even more intense heat emanating from behind him.

Su Ping's eyelids twitched rapidly.

And just at that moment, he spun around fiercely, looking into the deepest part of the cave.

At that instant, the space seemed to shatter, and something slowly bloomed forth from within.

Chapter 523: Absorbing New Secret Realm Features! A Hundred Birds Facing the Phoenix!

Qin Xiaoxue, Ye Zhou, and Dong Muxuan were a bit dumbfounded.

They watched as countless birds flocked towards the Yellow Dragon at the cave entrance. They clearly didn't know what had happened. Just moments ago, the valley had been bustling with activity, but now it had suddenly emptied, with everything densely crowded before it. This left the three momentarily at a loss.

However, at this very moment, they weren't the ones most bewildered.

With Da Huang's protection, the birds before the cave entrance couldn't cross the line, so Su Ping focused all his attention behind him.

The traces of the shattered space, the way it had burst open, didn't form a regular spatial vortex.

The leaking spatial rift wasn't pitch-black; instead, it was an intensely fiery red vortex.

It was as if behind this spatial vortex lay a world entirely consumed by raging fire.

But this wasn't the strangest part. After all, the manifestation of spatial vortexes could vary depending on changes within the Mysterious Realm Space.

What he hadn't expected was that, at this very moment, something was slowly floating out from within this fiery red spatial vortex.

That's right, just one thing, emerging from within the spatial vortex all by itself!

How could this be possible?

Creations within a Secret Realm couldn't leave on their own; this was common knowledge.

Unless it was the kind of Space Secret Realm that was extremely unstable.

However, looking at this fiery red vortex, it seemed to fit the criteria?

And the thing that emerged left Su Ping even more dumbfounded.

It wasn't any Living Being. At least, in his view, it didn't seem to be one.

It was a flame, a crimson flame.

Incomparably brilliant.

Yet, it made Su Ping almost instinctively recoil, wanting to evade it.

This wasn't just his reaction.

A sturdy rock wall materialized directly in front of Su Ping, blocking the space between him and this flame.

Indeed, even Da Huang had acted at this moment.

Da Huang's incredibly sacred golden pupils stared at the fist-sized crimson flame with extreme wariness and vigilance.

As if facing a formidable enemy.

In fact, this was indeed the case.

The flame CRACKLED in the air, seeming to scrutinize everything before it.

However, at this moment, Gaga seemed to sense something. It let out a CAW, wanting to approach the flame.

But Su Ping, reacting quickly, immediately pressed it down.

He could feel the terrifying, scorching temperature accompanying the flame's Burning.

A temperature capable of incinerating anything.

This kind of temperature could only be possessed by an existence of at least Monarch Level.

The slightest touch would undoubtedly mean death.

This isn't some resource.

This flame... it's an incredibly special Living Being!

An incredibly strange Pet Beast.

An Elemental Type Pet Beast!

A Fire Elemental Pet Beast.

Currently, this seemed to be the only possibility.

Gaga seemed to want to struggle. Thankfully, the little thing still hadn't lost its reason. It didn't attack Su Ping at this moment. Or perhaps, this was because the Yellow Dragon's consciousness remained on Su Ping.

The flame seemed unconcerned, Burning with that terrifying temperature as it slowly drifted forward.

No one stopped it, and no one dared to—not even Da Huang.

And sure enough, the ultimate goal of these birds was this flame.

The flame slowly drifted out of the cave.

One by one, the birds lunged at it.

Then...

WHOOSH.

The crimson flame instantly engulfed the first bird that drew near, setting it ablaze.

"SCREECH..."

A piercing wail, mingled with what sounded like joyous cheers, echoed through the valley, forming an incredibly unique, reverberating harmony.

Su Ping felt a chill run down his spine as he watched.

It wasn't just him. Qin Xiaoxue and the others in the valley, who hadn't realized what was truly happening, were also stunned as they watched the flame float out.

"ROAR!"

Da Huang's voice rang out. This time, its meaning was clear: Flee!

What did it signify for an adult Emperor Level Dragon Clan member to react like this?

Su Ping didn't dare to dwell on it. But at this moment, he turned his head and glanced at the vortex.

That fiery red vortex... it doesn't seem to be a Secret Realm at all.

Or perhaps, the so-called Secret Realm exists solely to serve this peculiar flame.

At this very moment, the slowly rotating spatial vortex was also beginning to gradually shatter.

But just then, Su Ping suddenly had an idea. If I activate my Space Absorption Trait in this strange and unknown spatial vortex, might there be some additional gains?

Su Ping didn't know, but right now, he wanted to try.

This Space Secret Realm is already beginning to shatter.

Just like the Sword King's Secret Realm that was forcefully crushed back then, and it's shattering even faster this time.

Perhaps in about ten minutes, this Secret Realm will completely disappear.

And the situation outside will probably continue for some time. If I don't try now, I'm afraid I'll never get another chance.

Su Ping gritted his teeth, placed Gaga into the hands of the Zhang Family Brothers, and said directly, "Wait for me for a moment."

The Zhang Family Brothers were on the verge of tears.

Outside the cave, as that peculiar flame drifted out, the sky above was already blanketed in fiery red.

Chapter 524: Absorbing New Secret Realm Features! A Hundred Birds Facing the Phoenix!_2

Countless piercing bird cries erupted at this moment.

Su Ping took a swift stride, arriving in front of the shattered, fiery red Secret Realm.

His palm stretched out. Instantly, the familiar void-like tendrils from within his Mysterious Realm Space penetrated this unknown and strange Secret Realm.

These tendrils extracted the nutrients contained within at an unimaginable speed.

However, at that very instant, Su Ping felt as if his spiritual tendrils were not connected to a Secret Realm, but to fire.

The terrifying and surging Origin energy of the Fire Element, like a volcanic eruption, burst into Su Ping's Beast Taming Space in an instant.

With a sharp CRACK, the edges of Su Ping's Beast Taming Space exploded open.

Fortunately, Xiao Qing hadn't followed this time and was training with the remaining Forest Wolves in the Heart of Woods.

But at this moment, Su Ping felt as though his very soul was ignited by this fire.

Indescribable heat surged skywards.

Yet, this pain was accompanied by joy.

Su Ping's spiritual Origin did not increase, nor did his Spiritual Realm.

This was simply because, at this moment, this so-called Flame Secret Realm seemed not to have been left behind by a Beast Tamer; its composition had little to do with spiritual power.

It was pure Fire Element energy.

Therefore, what Su Ping's Beast Taming Space was absorbing was Fire Element energy!

Following the enhancement of the Talent "Home of All Spirits," the Space Absorption ability finally activated for the first time.

And the subject of its activation was something Su Ping had not expected.

What the heck is this thing? Even Su Ping himself didn't know.

He only knew that this time, he seemed to have truly profited immensely.

Because at this moment, his Beast Taming Space gave Su Ping feedback.

[Space Absorption of Secret Realm, acquired part of the Secret Realm's Origin Traits, forming new Space Characteristics within the Beast Taming Space: Fire Cultivation Realm.]

[Fire Cultivation Realm: Fire Element Resource Type Space Characteristics. Partial changes occur within the space, transforming it into a land of flames. Here, over time, Flame Fruits can grow. Flame Fruits can be ingested by any Fire Type Pet Beast and represent the purest Fire Element special resource.]

(Note 1: The Beast Tamer can consume spiritual power to accelerate the formation speed and level of Flame Fruits.)

(Note 2: The maximum efficacy level of Flame Fruits shall not exceed the Beast Tamer's level.)

(Note 3: Flame Fruits can be kept for up to 10 days, after which the flames dissipate and the effects gradually diminish.)

New Space Characteristics!

This was the first time Su Ping had formed completely new Space Characteristics after absorbing so many Space Secret Realms, and it was such an excellent Resource Type Trait.

It was worth taking such a risk.

But Su Ping knew that this was it.

No more than a minute had elapsed from start to finish.

Yet, in just that one minute, the outside had turned into a fiery red sea of flames.

If it weren't for Da Huang still being around, he would have been baked alive inside by now.

Thinking of this, Su Ping gestured to the Zhang Family Brothers and Da Huang, then climbed directly onto Da Huang's dragon head.

"Let's go!"

The Zhang Family Brothers were quick-witted and nimble, grabbing Da Huang's tail and leaping down from the mountain wall.

「...」

"What in the world is going on?" Dong Muxuan looked up at the fiery red sky, completely baffled.

Qin Xiaoxue and her two companions were already at the edge of the valley, gazing at the terrifying red glow that nearly lit up the entire sky above it.

The little Paperman was also brought along, its two-dimensional eyes observing everything before it.

What exactly is going on?

No one knew, but they all knew that Su Ping was still in the center of that fire.

"Don't worry, with the protection of an Emperor Level Dragon Clan, Su Ping will be fine," Ye Zhou consoled the anxious Qin Xiaoxue beside him.

The valley was now covered in flames.

Fortunately, it was winter. Moreover, the valley's formation was rather unique; its branches and trees weren't overly dense, preventing uncontrollable wildfires from forming at such a time.

But what exactly had happened inside remained their biggest question.

And that question could only be answered by those within.

Yet, they involuntarily retreated further.

It was too hot.

The scorching temperature contrasted sharply with the winter cold.

Just then, from within the enveloping flames, a brownish-yellow, spherical shadow swiftly flew out.

Upon seeing this figure, all three of them couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief.

Encased in an Energy Shield as solid as rock, Su Ping clung to Da Huang.

Each of the Zhang Family Brothers clung to a dragon leg, flying out from the crimson world of flames.

Da Huang reached the trio and then slowly descended.

"Su Ping, are you alright?" Qin Xiaoxue hurriedly asked.

"What exactly happened?" Ye Zhou and Dong Muxuan followed up with questions.

Su Ping shook his head.

Meanwhile, the Zhang Family Brothers recounted what they had witnessed inside the cave.

"A flame flew out from the Secret Realm, is that the flame?"

"Is the flame the culprit? Is it some sort of Elemental Pet Beast?"

"What are these wild birds doing? Isn't this suicide?"

All three had their own questions, but they were all equally astounded and perplexed by the scene unfolding before them.

Even Su Ping didn't know what exactly was going on.

He took the mutated Little Crow from Xiao Zhang's hands and held it.

Chapter 525: Absorbing New Secret Realm Features! A Hundred Birds Facing the Phoenix!_3

This little fellow now stared blankly at what was before it. In its eyes, there was uncertainty—was it longing or fear? Or perhaps a mix of both.

Su Ping gazed ahead, experiencing an indescribable sense of terror. What exactly is that blooming flame? That flame was like an ignited candle, and those frenzied bird-like Pet Beasts were like moths indifferent to life and Death. Indeed, they were moths, blindly chasing the light, only to perish within it, plunging into the sea of fire one after another. Death, it seemed, was not something worth mentioning to them. On the contrary, being burned and ignited by the flames seemed more important than Life itself. But what could be more important than Life itself? Su Ping didn't understand and could hardly imagine. Yet, all of this was unfolding right before his eyes.

The piercing screams echoed through the glow of the fire, making everyone's eyes redden from the scorching heat. At that moment, no one spoke again. They knew that to understand what was happening, they would have to return and investigate thoroughly. So for now, their only option was to record everything.

Eventually, the vast valley was completely engulfed in flames. Everyone stood far off, either in the air or on the mountain, overlooking the situation. After the piercing shrieks were completely swallowed by the flames, there was no more movement. Only the crackling sounds of the burning sea of fire remained, along with the memory of the flame that had long since vanished. The corpses, remaining Pet Beasts, all the plants, and even the mountain rocks and earth were all overwhelmed and scorched by the fire.

The sea of fire seemed as though it would never cease. But eventually, once there was nothing left to burn, it too had to end. The flames finally stopped spreading. In some places, they even began to slowly retract, disappearing from sight.

However, at that very moment, everyone's pupils, including Su Ping's, suddenly contracted. The sea of fire formed by those flames suddenly stirred! Indeed, like a living creature, like that flame which had just autonomously ignited and flown out, it suddenly moved. How unthinkable is this? Yet it happened.

In the very heart of the sea of fire, it seemed as if a mold was propping it up. A silhouette formed by the flames slowly rose into the air. The countless flames rapidly contracted and converged. Merging with the initial flames, they came together to form a figure made purely of fire: It was a bird!

A massive bird composed of flames. Its unfolded wings alone spanned hundreds of meters, like clouds hanging from the sky—albeit crimson clouds of fire. Upon those fiery wings, a delicate and noble head slowly took shape. Then, beneath the mantle of fire, a slender body and long, narrow tail feathers spread down from it.

Noble, majestic, elegant, terrifying.

No words could sufficiently describe the shock of beholding such a Pet Beast. If it could still be considered a Pet Beast, that is.

Within such a massive body, within the ignited flames, lay the lives of countless birds—the fire that consumed myriad spirits. Finally, on the head of this avian entity, that somewhat surreal cranium slowly opened its 'eyes'. The eyes of flame showed no fluctuation, but Su Ping could sense that it seemed to glance at him and the others. This became evident from the sudden shudder that ran through Da Huang's body beside him.

Then, a strange sound emerged from within the giant avian body. Yes, a voice! Not a cry, but a voice with an indecipherable meaning. This voice was very difficult to comprehend. In fact, Su Ping felt that it wasn't any language he knew. Even his Talent for Psychic Communication couldn't decipher the slightest bit of it. But at that moment, Su Ping instinctively exchanged a glance with Ye Zhou. Almost simultaneously, they used their spiritual power to capture and interpret this sound.

As expected, it was Ancient Serpent Script! The oldest of texts, capable of being directly read by spiritual power. Su Ping had previously seen a notebook written in this script. However, writing and copying were one thing; being able to vocalize it was another. After all, copying could be done with spiritual power, but vocalizing it was different. But at that moment, neither of them had the leisure to wonder how this bird made of flames could vocalize Ancient Serpent Script. This was because, after capturing the meaning of this utterance—or rather, this phrase—they were already stunned speechless.

The utterance of this Flame Phoenix was very brief, and its meaning was also very simple. Translated into words they understood, it formed just four simple words: "Hundred Birds Facing Phoenix!"

Is this... 'Hundred Birds Facing Phoenix'? Su Ping looked perplexedly at the valley below, watching the giant Flame Phoenix with its slowly beating wings of fire, already rising into the sky. Is this... a Phoenix? But then, with Dragon Pets already in existence, a Phoenix doesn't seem to be an impossibility, does it? But what about this Phoenix? What is it? Su Ping didn't know, nor did he understand. He had never even heard of a Pet Beast like a Phoenix actually existing, though some subspecies of Pet Beasts borrowed the name. But Su Ping understood that those were nothing like what was before him now.

However, while everyone was still caught in this indescribable shock, the Flame Phoenix that had spread its wings and soared into the heavens let out an incredibly clear, long cry. Then, something they hadn't anticipated occurred. This entity, whose Level Su Ping couldn't even imagine, shattered in the Sky Dome above after that cry!

BOOM!

With a deafening explosion under the clear blue sky, a sea of clouds was blasted into nothingness. Then, its shattering body broke into countless fiery meteors that streaked across the sky. The Flame Phoenix that had been there moments before had completely vanished from sight.

As if everything that had just happened was a dream. But Su Ping knew it was not a dream. The ground, vitrified by burning sand, the surrounding valley dark as night, and those wild avian Pet Beasts, dead beyond any doubt, all proved the reality of what had just occurred. Not to mention, even now, the shout in Ancient Serpent Script still echoed in Su Ping's ears: 'Hundred Birds Facing Phoenix!'

Chapter 526: Mysterious Fire Phoenix! New Year's Eve Arrives!

Fireworks.

These were the most magnificent and shocking fireworks Su Ping had ever seen.

Countless streaks of flame burst in the azure sky, only to disappear from sight.

Even on the return journey, Su Ping's mind kept revisiting all that he had just witnessed.

There were indeed Phoenix Type Pet Beasts on Blue Star, but Su Ping had never seen a Phoenix manifest in that manner before.

He then took out his phone and began to search.

Flame Phoenix, Hundred Birds Facing Phoenix...

Soon, several search results appeared in the back end of the Breeder Association:

[Prairie Fire Phoenix: A Spirit Saint Level Pet Beast, capable of commanding myriad birds...]

[Lihuo Colorful Phoenix: A Spirit Saint Level Pet Beast, famous for attracting other avian Pet Beasts of lower ranks...]

[...]

There were indeed numerous records of Phoenix Type Pet Beasts in the back end of the Breeder Association.

However, after looking through them one by one, Su Ping still didn't find what he was seeking.

The images of the Phoenix Type Pet Beasts in the records were undoubtedly of the highest caliber, all reaching the Spirit Saint Level, but they were still different from the Flame Phoenix he had just seen.

Su Ping furrowed his brows; having looked from start to finish, he found no further records.

The speed of the return journey was naturally much faster than the journey out.

Su Ping stroked Gaga's feathers and was about to comfort the apparently still dazed Little Crow when his eyebrows lifted slightly.

A strikingly bright spark flickered on Gaga's pitch-black tail.

It goes without saying that after what had just happened, Su Ping had become overly cautious, almost instinctually wanting to let go.

"Gaga?"

Gaga looked at Su Ping in confusion, and Su Ping realized his mistake.

He smiled awkwardly and, with a pat of his hand, extinguished the spark on Gaga's tail feathers, which indeed was nothing more than a remnant of Fire Elemental Energy. After he gently patted it twice, it vanished without a trace.

Su Ping finally breathed a sigh of relief and smiled. "Little guy, how about you stay in the Heart of Myriad Spirits from now on?"

"Gaga!"

Gaga's spirits also lifted.

Only then did Su Ping feel at ease as he placed the little creature into the Beast Taming Space, exhaling a long breath.

However, Su Ping had stopped paying attention after placing Gaga into the Beast Taming Space. He obviously didn't see that the small spark he had extinguished on Gaga's tail feathers had reappeared. It looked alive and certainly not like residual Flame Energy.

Collecting his thoughts, Su Ping could finally take this opportunity to observe his own Beast Taming Space.

He had prepared himself for surprises, but he was still taken aback when he looked.

All his attention had previously been on the Flame Phoenix, but now, the changes in his Beast Taming Space were beyond his imagination.

This absorption from the Secret Realm was the first time he had completed the acquisition of new Space Characteristics within his Beast Taming Space, and it was significant!

Compared to the previous space that was the size of a small square, the space itself had expanded by about a third.

What's more important was that the newly expanded third of the Beast Taming Space was a patch of red soil.

It was distinctly different from the previous bright grassland.

Faint traces of flame occasionally flickered above the red soil.

With a thought from Su Ping, spiritual power congealed within his Beast Taming Space, and the next moment, a flower made of flames, as if tangible, sprang from the ground: Flame Fruit, a special resource produced by the Space Characteristics of the Fire Cultivation Realm.

However, this thing didn't have much direct effect on Su Ping. He did have Fire Type Pet Beasts, like Gaga, a Pet Beast mutated with both Fire and Dark Elements.

Also, there was the Flame Morning Glory of the Forest Heart.

Beyond that, there were no other Fire Type Pet Beasts.

Still, it was better than nothing. The emergence of the Fire Cultivation Realm's Space Characteristics indicated the great potential of his own ability to absorb Space Characteristics.

One adjustment he found mildly challenging was dealing with the dryness accompanying the emergence of the Fire Cultivation Realm's space. This was despite the ecological circulation Space Characteristic being in place.

It seemed he needed to find another treasure that could provide Water Element Space Characteristics to ensure the comfort of his Beast Taming Space.

Satisfied, he withdrew his attention.

Da Huang had also brought everyone back to their Heart of Myriad Spirits.

At this very moment, at the entrance of the Heart of Myriad Spirits, Sang Sheng, Master Zhu Hong, Qin Erlong, and others were all standing there. When Da Huang landed, Sang Sheng's brows knitted, and he turned his attention to his junior who had just returned from 'causing trouble'.

"What exactly happened?"

Clearly, on the way back, Qin Xiaoxue had already recounted what had happened in the valley.

Su Ping didn't say much, took out his phone, and led everyone back to the guest room. He then connected to the projector and showed everything that had just happened.

Even just through the video recording, everyone present couldn't help but freeze as they watched what unfolded on the screen.

"Master Zhu, Senior Sang Sheng, have you two ever heard of such a Phoenix species?"

Sang Sheng immediately shook his head. "Yun Sheng has a Colorful Phoenix, which I have seen, and I have a fairly good relationship with her, but I've never heard her mention such a strange species of Phoenix."

However, Master Zhu Hong, who stood beside them, pondered for a moment and then said, "This creature cannot be considered a regular Phoenix Type Pet Beast. Pet Beasts have Race distinctions. Normally, Phoenix Type Pet Beasts are flying avian Living Beings. But as you said, this Phoenix is assembled from flames. If we were to categorize it by Type, it seems more like an Elemental Beast Pet."

Elemental Type? Su Ping thought, recalling the earlier flames. It really did seem to be the case.

Speaking of this, Master Zhu Hong thought for a moment, and then his eyes suddenly lit up. "Now that you mention it, although I have never seen this Fire Phoenix Pet Beast before and do not know its origin, historical records depict some very similar scenes."

With that, Master Zhu Hong quickly started searching through his phone.

Soon, a photo appeared before everyone's eyes.

It was an ancient mural on a rock wall.

It was evident that it had been there for many years.

Amidst the mottled traces, the ancient years flowed past.

On the mural, several painted birds surrounded a mass of flames.

Within the flames appeared a bird-shaped figure, like a Phoenix ready to spread its wings and soar.

It indeed bore some resemblance. Unfortunately, this was the only mural; it left the onlookers feeling somewhat confused and lost.

"Master Zhu, where did you see this?" Su Ping asked.

Master Zhu Hong did not hide anything. "It's on the corridor walls of a ruin in Ximo Province. The ancient city's corridors are said to be over three thousand years old. Most of the rest has deteriorated, but this mural remains relatively clear."

"This..." Su Ping felt somewhat helpless.

"Su Ping, I will report this matter to the higher authorities, so there's no need for you to worry too much," Sang Sheng said from the side. "This matter, after all, is probably not of much relevance to you. If there is any news or developments, I will inform you!"

Obviously, the 'higher authorities' Sang Sheng referred to were none other than the highest echelon within the Dragon Nation.

Su Ping nodded. What Sang Sheng said was true; the matter indeed did not have much to do with him.

That creature, at the very least, would be a Spirit Saint Level Pet Beast. To such an existence, they were as insignificant as ants passing by.

And it was this reason that had prompted Su Ping, who had been somewhat relaxed due to the New Year festivities, to refocus his efforts.

His status had indeed become extraordinary.

His network included Breeding Masters and Spirit Saint Level Beast Tamers.

In Linzhou, and even in Jianghai, his influence was not to be understated.

But when faced with a powerful being like that Phoenix, he still appeared so frail and powerless.

For this reason, Su Ping didn't rush back into his other research over the next few days.

Instead, he began meditation.

It had to be said that the effect of the Heart of Dreams was really good.

In two days, Su Ping felt that his spiritual power had reached a thin membrane, which he could break through with but a slight push, like puncturing a layer of window paper.

So, Su Ping paused.

Not only because the coming day was the last day of the lunar year 224, which was New Year's Eve, but also because there was something he needed to prepare before his breakthrough as a Beast Tamer.

The breakthrough of a Beast Tamer was extremely important to many Beast Tamers, and indeed it was.

The reason was simple. A Beast Tamer's breakthrough, along with the upgrade of the Beast Taming Space, not only yielded new Space Characteristics. It was also the best time to use items for additional Space Characteristics if one desired them.

The Space Characteristic of the Fire Cultivation Realm.

It made the inside of Su Ping's Beast Taming Space unbearably hot.

Thus, he urgently needed a Water Element Space Characteristic to balance it out.

Otherwise, judging from the past few days, many of the 'poisonous-smiling sunflowers' Xiao Qing had painstakingly planted within his Beast Taming Space had withered and died. This indicated significant adverse effects on his space's internal environment.

Therefore, to achieve a breakthrough, he needed a Water Element resource like the Emperor Level 'Stone of Creation' that Qin Xiaoxue had given him before.

But obviously, if it were an ordinary item, with the rewards from the Breeder Competition and the favor of Ghost Saint, Su Ping could have simply asked for it.

And that's what he did.

However, after making two phone calls, the answer he got was negative!

Indeed, any resource treasures usable by Beast Tamers, especially those suitable for Monarch Level or even Emperor-level Beastmasters, had their value increased by a notch in rarity.

They were exceptionally scarce resources.

Moreover, Su Ping's request was quite specific: it had to be of the Water Element.

Consequently, the response from the Breeder Association was to wait a bit longer; they would notify him as soon as they had stock.

What else could Su Ping do? He could only slightly slow down the pace of his meditation and, at the same time, prepare for this upcoming, most special New Year's Eve and Spring Festival.

Chapter 527: New Year's Eve Party at Heart of Woods! New Catalog Lights Up!

"Son, Happy New Year!"

Early in the morning, Su Ping groggily answered the phone, and Su Anyong's voice came through from the other end.

"Mhm, happy."

Su Ping muttered a half-asleep reply.

"Your dad is wishing you New Year's greetings! Get up quickly!"

On the other end of the phone, Su Anyong's voice suddenly erupted.

It completely dispelled Su Ping's muddled sleepiness.

"You little brat! I've been waiting all morning for you to wish me a Happy New Year, and you make *me* call *you* instead?"

Su Ping, somewhat dissatisfied, yawned and then replied, "Su Anyong, I know you feel bad because you can't come back for New Year's this year. But a couple of things: first, New Year's greetings don't start until after New Year's Eve. That means tomorrow, the first day of the New Year, and the days that follow. Secondly, I'm not blaming you for not being able to come back this year. Can't you let me get some proper sleep?"

Su Anyong was taken aback by Su Ping's words, but the darn kid was right.

He scoffed, "Who's the dad here, you or me? I'm reminding you, don't forget after twelve tonight, to offer a stick of incense for your grandpa's and mom's memorial tablets."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, anything else?"

"Nothing more. Damn it, I shouldn't have called you."

After hanging up, Su Ping glanced disdainfully at Su Anyong's contact name on his phone.

If you feel guilty, just admit it. Why beat around the bush?

However, having been awakened by Su Anyong's call, Su Ping no longer felt sleepy.

It was New Year's Eve, and although it was the first time he was spending the holiday alone at home, compared to previous years, Su Anyong's presence or absence didn't seem to make much difference, did it? Perhaps this year might even be a bit livelier?

He jumped up and stretched lazily.

After getting dressed and freshened up, Su Ping finally made his way to the living room.

The living room was empty. Even throughout the Heart of Woods and the entire Heart of Myriad Spirits base, aside from Su Ping, there was no one else around. All the staff had already gone on holiday, including Li Shu, Lao Guan, and Guan Lili.

The three of them hadn't wanted to leave, but Su Ping had shooed them away.

If they didn't leave, how could I carry out my own New Year's plans? Besides, on New Year's Eve, who wouldn't want a proper family reunion?

Su Ping let out a breath. Soon, the first figure appeared in the empty living room.

"Old Sha!"

"ROAR!"

Old Sha, who had already received Su Ping's command, immediately perked up his ears.

"Send out the word! All Pet Beasts of the Heart of Myriad Spirits are to gather in the Heart of Woods and prepare for assignments! Today's our New Year celebration! This is the New Year I'm spending with these little ones, and it's worth celebrating and commemorating!"

"ROAR!"

Old Sha acknowledged with a howl and quickly ran out of the Heart of Woods to convey Su Ping's orders.

At the same time, Su Ping began his preparations.

The most important task, undoubtedly, was hanging the New Year's couplets.

However, things had been too hectic recently, so Su Ping hadn't bought any. Guan Qianshan had purchased some earlier, but Su Ping had no intention of using them.

This was Su Ping's first New Year alone, and also his first year as a Beast Tamer.

Its significance was extraordinary. So, with a decisive wave of his hand, Su Ping decided to write them himself!

Qian Yi, the little Paperman skilled in this craft, had expertly cut two sheets of red paper, which now lay ready.

Qian Yi and Feifei, the two little ones, stood behind him, eagerly anticipating Su Ping's next move.

Feifei twirled, displaying various couplets for Su Ping to compare and appreciate.

Su Ping hummed. He had, after all, made thorough preparations for this day.

Just as he picked up the ink brush and was about to write, he paused, freezing on the spot.

Just an ordinary couplet seems a little uninteresting. Though this is mostly for good luck, a tradition, I've never been one to stick to conventions, have I?

Thus, chewing on the end of his brush, Su Ping began to ponder.

Then, the voice of that mysterious Fire Phoenix echoed in his mind.

Those four words, 'Hundred Birds Facing Phoenix,' were formed in ancient Serpentine Script and could be directly perceived by the mind.

Couplets like that would suit my idea perfectly!

He set to work without delay!

Copying Serpentine Script was troublesome, but after diligently studying the Five Elements manual for some time, Su Ping's mastery of the script had noticeably improved.

This was a special kind of writing, where characters were formed by infusing spiritual power into the brushstrokes. It was also a manifestation of spiritual power.

The only drawback was that Su Ping was only familiar with the Serpentine Script characters found in that manual. So, he had to search among those thousand-odd characters.

After mulling over the phrasing for a moment (and glancing at Feifei's displayed suggestions), Su Ping began.

His brush, saturated with ink and imbued with his spiritual power—not overwhelming, but quite pure—moved slowly across the red paper.

'Peace through the seasons, Heavenly Wolf howls.'

He wrote it in one go.

Just those seven characters consumed nearly half of Su Ping's spiritual power. The difficulty of writing in Serpentine Script was evident.

However, this kind of work valued momentum. Su Ping didn't waste time; he channeled his spiritual power again and began writing the second line on another sheet of red paper:

'Jiuzhou splendid, Divine Dragon flies.'

The couplets were barely passable but still neat. Su Ping looked at Qian Yi with pride, "Well? How is it?"

"WOW!?"

Qian Yi: [_ _ ?]

Then, the little guy's two-dimensional face suddenly changed:

[??????]

Su Ping gave the little thing a disdainful glance.

Chapter 528: New Year's Eve Party at Heart of Woods! New Catalog Lights Up!_2

An illiterate Paperman, that's all. How could it possibly understand the calligraphic and literary achievements of a great talent like me, Su Da? Even though I 'borrowed' a tiny bit from the internet, that doesn't diminish my brilliance and style as Great Breeder Su Da.

Utterly satisfied, Su Ping nodded. He once again waved to Xiao Qing at his side.

"Come on, let's go hang the couplets!"

"AWOO!"

"WUWAH!"

Rarely choosing to ride Xiao Qing, Su Ping arrived at the main gate of the Heart of Myriad Spirits. The little Paperman spat out two mouthfuls of paper pulp paste onto either side of the gate. Only then did Su Ping carefully affix the couplets.

At first glance, they looked like scribbles.

But if anyone questioned them, I could tell them that the couplets were written in ancient Serpentine Script. That would sound quite impressive!

Thinking of this, Su Ping smiled contentedly and nodded.

After confirming everything was secure, Su Ping, pleased, led the two little fellows back to the Heart of Woods.

At this moment, both little fellows had reached the Elite Tenth Stage.

During this period, Xiao Qing had been continuously absorbing both Wood Element and Poison System resources. Its strength had increased alongside the Paperman's, not falling behind in the slightest. It was estimated that, after a while more, breaking their race limit and reaching the Commander Level wouldn't be out of the question.

When they returned to the Heart of Woods, it was clear Old Sha's efficiency was commendable. In just a short while, Forest Wolves of all sizes were already waiting in the clearing within the Heart of Woods.

Meanwhile, over at the Forest Heart, the Life Ancient Tree, accompanied by the other Plant-based Pet Beasts, large and small, also emerged. Of course, only the Commander-Level Plant-based Pet Beasts were present. As for the remaining Ordinary and Elite Level ones, they were simply too numerous, and moving them all would have been inconvenient.

"AWOO!"

Old Sha sat at the edge of the forest in the Heart of Woods, his tail wagging as he awaited Su Ping's instructions. The others, including the many Plant-based Pet Beasts, did likewise, clueless as to what Su Ping had up his sleeve.

A smile touched Su Ping's lips as he looked at these Pet Beasts.

Fifty Forest Wolves, eleven Plant-based Pet Beasts, Old Sha, numerous Papermen, the Little Crow—a recent addition—flying above, and the little Sea Core Spirit Turtle whose presence was barely felt. These were all the Pet Beasts currently in the Heart of Myriad Spirits. They were the true Pet Beasts that genuinely belonged to the Heart of Myriad Spirits, possessing true loyalty and intelligence—not like those fish being raised in the Heart of Water. Of course, this also included the other Plant-based Pet Beasts and some of the ordinary Papermen who hadn't been moved and thus hadn't come.

The number of Pet Beasts before him wasn't large, but it certainly wasn't small either! However, for Su Ping's goals, this was clearly not enough. He had only been in charge of the Heart of Myriad Spirits for half a year; to have come this far in such a short time was quite an achievement. Su Ping believed that a year later, when New Year came again, this number would be even greater!

However, he kept these grand ambitions to himself. He simply smiled at all the 'little guys' before him and finally stated his purpose:

"Today is New Year's Eve, the last day of the year. This is the first time you've joined the big family of the Heart of Woods, but since it's a big family, I suppose you don't know much about each other yet, right? To promote harmony and mutual understanding, and since it's the Spring Festival, every Pet Beast must put on a performance! You can perform solo or as a group. But you must put your heart into it! Afterward, I will give you rewards. After the midnight bells chime, we will hold a New Year's red packet lottery!"

"AWOO!"

"WUWAH?"

"RUSTLE RUSTLE..."

"CAW?"

"AROO?"

A variety of questioning sounds arose.

But Su Ping left no room for negotiation.

"Anyway, if you don't perform, you won't be eligible for tonight's lottery! But you can take your time to think about it. I'm going to prepare our Heart of Myriad Spirits' New Year's Eve dinner now! The performances will officially start at six o'clock tonight!"

Su Ping's words immediately threw all the Pet Beasts present into a commotion.

A performance? What kind of performance? What could Pet Beasts like us possibly perform?

However, at this moment, a small fellow whom everyone had previously overlooked finally perked up.

Its chubby body spinning rapidly on the table, Feifei communicated with words formed by spiritual power:

"Comrades, if there's anything you don't understand, you can come to me. Although I don't know how to choreograph your performances, I can search online. There are all sorts of acts involving pets performing together! However, if you want my help, you'll need to let me inspect your bodies, okay?"

Feifei's enticing voice rang out.

This 'body inspection' wasn't anything improper. It was purely to obtain firsthand data on the actual Pet Beasts within the Heart of Dreams, to perfect its records on the growth and cultivation of the corresponding Pet Beasts.

As soon as these words were spoken, some Pet Beasts that understood Feifei's meaning, Old Sha included, quickly gathered around the mechanical orb.

While arrangements were busily underway over there, Su Ping went to the kitchen, not staying idle either. On a day like New Year's Eve, preparing the reunion dinner was undoubtedly quite an interesting endeavor. However, the New Year's Eve dinner he was making wasn't for himself, a human, to eat. It was for the various Pet Beasts.

First, there was food for the Forest Wolves. For the ordinary Forest Wolves of the pack, Su Ping's main dish was, naturally, tree fruit salad.

Chapter 529: New Year's Eve Party at Heart of Woods! New Catalog Lights Up!_3

After a year of hard work and training, they deserved some good food for the New Year, right?

So, Su Ping requested a considerable number of tree fruits from the orchards of Peach Blossom and Heart of Fruit. At the same time, he purchased more than ten Commander Level tree fruits, and even one Monarch Level tree fruit, to serve as a special addition to their meal.

Besides these, there was also meat from fish caught in the Heart of Water, such as the Blue Pattern Snow Lance Fish, a favorite of both Su Ping and the Sea Core Spirit Turtle, and the Yellow Spotted Electric Carp, whose flesh had a slightly numbing quality. The Snow Lance Fish could be enjoyed directly as sashimi, while the others required some preparation.

The Forest Wolf was also a meat-eating Pet Beast. Processing the fish meat didn't need to be overly complex; a simple fish paste with some supplementary side dishes and ingredients would suffice. It seemed simple, but there were so many wolves! Su Ping had prepared plenty of ingredients, but getting everything ready certainly took a while.

Apart from the Forest Wolf, Su Ping also took great care with the Little Crow's food. After all, the Little Crow had only recently joined the Heart of Myriad Spirits, and Su Ping planned to build a habitat for avian creatures there in the future. From the name Flame-Eating Crow, one could guess what it fed on. So, the most direct food was the Flame Fruit produced in Su Ping's Beast Taming Space.

But what left Su Ping speechless was that, during this period, he had also accumulated a good amount of Flame Fruits in the Beast Taming Space. However, he didn't know if it was because the Flame Fruits were within the Beast Taming Space, but they would dissipate and vanish if stored there for more than a day. This baffled Su Ping. Ultimately, he could only surmise that the spatial characteristics of the Fire Cultivation Realm might have an absorptive property for Fire Element items, leading to the disappearance of the Flame Fruits. Fortunately, after he removed the fully condensed Flame Fruits from the space, they no longer vanished.

Besides the Flame Platter composed of Flame Fruits, there were also grains and meats specifically for the Little Crow.

The Sea Core Spirit Turtle, which had a low-key presence and had also only joined the Heart of Myriad Spirits a month ago, was easier to cater to. There were plenty of fish and shrimp caught from the Heart of Water; Su Ping looked up some cooking methods and prepared them according to the Sea Core Spirit Turtle's tastes and preferences. Fortunately, Su Ping had an unreliable father. Over the years, apart from eating takeout, he had actually prepared most of his own meals. He had become quite proficient at it by now.

The trickier part was the Plant System Pet Beasts. Plant System Pet Beasts were different from other animal-type Pet Beasts. Plant System Pet Beasts couldn't share most of those foods. The 'food' for Plant System Pet Beasts, aside from sunlight and air, primarily consisted of Spirit Water and Spiritual Soil! So, Su Ping put some extra effort into this area. The 'New Year's Eve dinners,' made from various kinds of Spirit Water mixed with Spiritual Soil resources, were finally ready. As for the Paperman, there wasn't much to say—various paper resources would do.

He was busy for the better part of a day. Finally, day turned from dawn to dusk.

When six o'clock arrived, Su Ping appeared punctually in the clearing before the forest. From the tree branches and the Sky-reaching Vine in front of the house, large, fiery red lanterns illuminated the already darkened night sky.

"Dinner time!"

There were no tables or chairs, no bowls or chopsticks. Su Ping sat directly on the mats that had been spread out earlier on the vast lawn. The Pet Beasts, who had been waiting anxiously nearby, finally approached. However, at this moment, they were hardly tempted by the delicacies Su Ping had laid out on the large mats.

Well, some were still tempted. For instance, the little Paperman Qian Yi was squatting nearby, its eyes fixed on the various paper resources soaked in the Five Elements, a trickle of drool escaping its lips.

Su Ping glanced at this little fellow. "Have you thought about what performance you're going to do?"

The little fellow immediately straightened up, thumped its chest, and cried, "WOAH!" It exuded utter confidence. From the little guy's cartoonishly determined expression, Su Ping understood its conviction.

And indeed, that was the case. With countless Pet Beasts, including the Life Ancient Tree, looking on with solemn expressions, the first-ever, uniquely original Heart of Myriad Spirits Pet Beast Performance Gala officially began!

And the first to take the stage was none other than the supremely confident little Paperman Qian Yi. Qian Yi walked to the front of all the Pet Beasts, onto the stage temporarily built from wood.

Su Ping commented from the side, "This is my Soul Contracted Pet Beast, Paperman Qian Yi. Elite Tenth Stage!"

The purpose of the gala was to allow the Pet Beasts of the Heart of Myriad Spirits to deepen their bonds and mutual understanding. This segment was quite necessary.

Qian Yi let out another "WOAH!" and then directly drew the sword made of papermen from behind its back. It was a fiery red Fire Sword. At that instant, the very air seemed to grow hotter with the sword's appearance.

Su Ping was momentarily stunned. Then, before he could even react, Qian Yi's face instantly changed to show the Ace of Diamonds! The next moment, what sounded like the cry of a phoenix echoed! The Fire Sword, its dazzling energy transforming into a phoenix spreading its wings as if to take flight, soared out in unison with Qian Yi's own movement.

This sword strike was of indescribable splendor and beauty. However, it also contained terrifying heat and danger.

Is this the Paperman's new swordsmanship? Like a Fire Phoenix engulfing the plains, like a white rainbow piercing the sun.

The next moment, the Fire Sword was sheathed, and the little Paperman let out a long breath, "WOAH... A fire, fleeting yet unextinguishable—this is my sword..."

"WOAH... This sword technique, let's call it the Qian Yi Fire Sword..."

Su Ping opened his mouth, but before he could speak, the name of this sword technique was set. It was clearly a swordsmanship the little fellow had comprehended long ago. He couldn't be blamed for this; how could he have known that Qian Yi would comprehend a Fire Element swordsmanship technique after seeing that Fire Phoenix? So, in the end, following the 'Qian Yi Whirlwind,' another swordsmanship technique named by Qian Yi itself was added: the 'Qian Yi Fire Sword.'

But it had to be said, Qian Yi had set an excellent precedent for all the Pet Beasts.

Inspired by Qian Yi's performance, the Pet Beasts took to the stage one by one. They displayed the performances they had prepared. Some were comical, some amusing, others imposing—like Xiao Qing's special planting skills, or Old Sha's self-propelled luminescence, and so on.

Particularly noteworthy was the Sea Core Spirit Turtle. The little fellow was young and clearly didn't quite understand what a talent show entailed. So, it performed a specialty it had recently mastered. It wasn't a Skill, but rather a special ability. The Sea Core Spirit Turtle lay down on the stage and then performed a kip-up followed by a backflip. You see, a turtle righting itself after being flipped over has always been a challenge. And now, the Sea Core Spirit Turtle's performance truly left Su Ping not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

Besides these, there was the Little Crow. The special talent displayed by the Little Crow also surprised Su Ping.

Bathing in fire. This was the Little Crow's special trick. At this moment, the Little Crow, amidst a blazing fire, seemed as comfortable and content as if it were taking a bath. It wasn't exceptionally remarkable, but it intrigued many of the other Pet Beasts. Even the Flame Morning Glory actively twined around it, and the crow and the flower 'conversed' quite happily.

At that moment, the wisp of sorrow that had shrouded the Little Crow completely vanished. It finally felt a complete sense of belonging towards the Heart of Myriad Spirits.

This place is my new home!

Everyone here is family!

And at that very instant, on the Myriad Spirit Beast Atlas within Su Ping's soul, a Catalog he had never seen before slowly lit up. It was none other than the rather ordinary Flame-Eating Crow.

[Catalog 'Flame-Eating Crow' lit up. Current Catalog Level: 1. Origin Reward: Levitation Skill!]

It had finally lit up! He finally had his first avian Pet Beast's Catalog activated! Su Ping was overjoyed. Just as he was about to examine the Levitation Skill's ability, he was suddenly taken aback. Because in the next moment, another Catalog in the Myriad Spirit Beast Atlas also lit up.

And this time, it was the Sea Core Spirit Turtle.

[Catalog 'Sea Core Spirit Turtle' lit up. Current Catalog Level: 1. Origin Reward: Underwater Breathing!]

Chapter 530: New Year's Eve Gift Package! Three Wishes for the New Year!

Su Ping hadn't expected it.

This year's New Year's Eve celebration actually brought him such a big surprise.

Over the past few days, the Sea Core Spirit Turtle and Little Crow had both been in the Heart of Woods, but their intimacy had never met the standard. Now, they finally met the condition.

Two new Pet Beast Compendiums were directly lit up, granting him two brand-new Talents.

Moreover, just by their names, these two new Talents seemed quite different from the previous ones.

The next moment, the specific information of these two Talents appeared in the depths of Su Ping's mind:

"[Floating: Utilize spiritual power to make oneself float slightly and glide.]"

"[Underwater Breathing: Move and breathe freely underwater, with underwater vision enhanced to a certain degree.]"

The clearly defined Talents filled Su Ping's eyes with joy.

These two Talents represented the sky and underwater.

One thing Su Ping had wanted to do for a long time was to enter the area beneath the Heart of Water and make closer contact with the Rainbow Coral Worm behind the water element barrier.

Such a rare and special Water Element Pet Beast, serving as the pillar of Su Ping's own Heart of Water, probably didn't even realize it was essentially working for Su Ping.

However, if such a rare and magical Pet Beast could have its Illustrated Handbook lit up and be further understood, identifying its magical aspects, and even evolving it completely, the benefits it could provide the Heart of Water would be beyond measure.

But before, Su Ping had an inherent resistance to going underwater, even more so than his aversion to the sky.

Now, with the ability to breathe underwater, he could perhaps give it a try.

Excitement bubbled up in his heart, and he gave a round of applause for the performances of these two little ones.

Subsequently, the crowd of 'little ones' expressed high praise for the New Year's Eve feast.

Only the Little Crow and the Flame Morning Glory seemed somewhat peckish and unsatiated.

The reason was simple: the Flame Fruits were really popular.

However, what confused Su Ping was that he distinctly remembered having ten Flame Fruits formed in the Beast Taming Space over this period. He had the same count when he was preparing the New Year's Eve feast. But, in such a short time, after taking them out from the Beast Taming Space, there were only eight left. This led to some suspicion and confusion in Su Ping.

Regardless, this special New Year's Eve had quietly passed in such an environment and process.

With the midnight bells ringing, the last day of the lunar calendar concluded, and time finally approached the early morning, on the verge of welcoming a brand-new year.

"New Year's here! The bell has rung! Everyone, come gather!" Su Ping shouted.

The little ones, satiated from the New Year's Eve feast, also gathered in front of him, eagerly anticipating as Su Ping took out a stack of red envelopes from the Beast Taming Space.

Of course, they didn't know what red envelopes were or even what the celebration of New Year's Eve meant. They understood very little. They just knew that it was a very nice, interesting day, and wished that New Year's could be celebrated every day.

And these red envelopes were their rewards for just having performed.

Thus, they looked forward to this part of the event with anticipation.

"Now, each little one come forth and draw your red envelope! Inside, there are various New Year gifts, and what you get is entirely down to luck! There are three major prizes!"

"AWOO!"

"WAAH!"

"GAGA!"

"..."

"Good, now line up and come get your red envelopes. The highest scoring ones from the performance get to go first, in order!"

The first one was none other than Qian Yi, the little Paperman, who had demonstrated the swordsmanship it had newly grasped, thus securing first place at the Heart of Woods' New Year's Eve celebration.

The little one excitedly stood at the very front, looking at the myriad red envelopes spread out like a bloom, and eagerly rubbed its hands together.

Then, it closed its eyes, only to be immediately scolded by Su Ping, "No using Abilities to sense!"

"WAAH!"

Qian Yi looked somewhat aggrieved, but still, after pondering for a while, chose a red envelope and couldn't wait to open it under the watchful eyes of all the little ones.

It was a piece of paper, and written on it in black against white were a few big characters:

"[A piece of resource of corresponding level!]"

Su Ping clarified with a smile, and Qian Yi's eyes suddenly lit up.

More resources!?

Su Ping certainly didn't deceive it, taking out a prepared resource from the Beast Taming Space:

Elite Level Dark Proclamation Paper.

Qian Yi excitedly received it, showing off triumphantly to the other little ones still queued up, only to doubt life itself the next second.

The next to go, among all the Pet Beasts, was the rather low-profile Laurel Tree.

The Laurel Tree's earlier performance was simulating moonlight. It imitated the moon's rays on this New Year's Eve, appearing as if a full moon hung high, magnificent and splendid. This won the unanimous praise of the other participants and the sole judge, Su Ping.

As a result, it secured second place.

The content of the Laurel Tree's red envelope was similar to Qian Yi's, also a resource reward.

However, unlike Qian Yi's, the Laurel Tree's read:

"[A resource one level higher than oneself!]"

The Laurel Tree's Level was Commander Level.

Therefore, a resource one level higher...

Qian Yi stared wide-eyed as the cool and detached Laurel Tree took away a Monarch Level resource, suddenly rendering the Dark Proclamation Paper in its grasp a lot less enticing.

How did this happen? Why had it turned out this way?

Qian Yi couldn't understand. Quite confused indeed. But that was the fact.

And, as one after another, the little ones continued to claim their red envelopes, it was proven that what Qian Yi had drawn was, in fact, the least valuable of the lot!

How could this be? Is this reasonable?

The little Paperman thought it was unfair.

But as Xiao Qing claimed a prize that was not only a level higher than its own but also consisted of two resources, Qian Yi, the little Paperman, began to doubt its life.

Was its luck really that bad?

Indeed, it was, because soon the Second Prize Su Ping had spoken of appeared!

And the winner of this Second Prize was none other than a very ordinary Forest Wolf.

However, Su Ping was quite familiar with it.

And the Second Prize was:

"[Little One, the Forest Wolf, you have won the Second Prize in this lottery draw and will receive a Skill Cultivation suited for yourself!]"

Skill Cultivation!

Qian Yi, the little Paperman, with tears in its eyes, looked at Little One, the Forest Wolf, and then at the Dark Proclamation Paper in its hand, speechless and choked for a moment.

Little One shook its head and wagged its tail. This little fellow, who had grown up with Xiao Qing, had now become an Elite Sixth Rank Forest Wolf in just half a year.

About a few moments later, the First Prize was hotly announced.

And, to everyone's surprise, the winner of the First Prize was also an inconspicuous little fellow from the Forest Heart:

"[Mist Pine, you have won the First Prize in this lottery draw and received the privilege of being prioritized for Cultivation and Evolution!]"

Priority for Cultivation and Evolution!

All the little creatures present were stunned, especially Mist Pine. The usually cool and detached little fellow was now exhaling wisps of chilly mist—clearly excited upon hearing about the prize.

Su Ping offered a faint smile; he was quite fond of this little one.

He was particularly fond of it when it stayed by the water bridge connecting the Forest Heart and the Heart of Water. The misty water bridge it created was a beautiful scene. Moreover, the cool mist it emitted was extremely refreshing and could potentially serve as a divine artifact to stave off the summer heat.

However, just when all the little ones thought that with the First, Second, and Third Prizes announced, the grand prizes were all gone, the Little Crow, who was towards the back, pulled a big surprise.

"Congratulations to the Little Crow for winning the Special Prize of this lottery draw! The Special Prize allows you to make any request! I and everyone at the Heart of Myriad Spirits will do our best to help you fulfill it!"

Upon these words, the whole group of Pet Beasts seemed to boil over.

A cluster of Pet Beasts looked enviously at the Flame-Eating Crow.

The Little Crow also realized then that it had hit the jackpot.

"GAGA GAGA?!!!"

Seeing Su Ping's confirming nod, the Little Crow flapped its wings excitedly and soared in circles around the sky.

It seemed this was the only way to express its elation.

"Alright, hurry up and think of your request. We won't wait forever!" Su Ping said with a smile.

He honestly hadn't rigged the draw; the Little Crow simply had good luck, having hit the nearly one percent chance.

He was also somewhat eager to see what the little one would request.

Unexpectedly, after circling twice under the envious, jealous, and resentful gazes of the other Pet Beasts, the Little Crow pondered for a moment and finally let out a sound:

"GAGA (My home... I wish for it to be safe...)"

Su Ping was taken aback, while the other Pet Beasts didn't quite understand, waiting for Su Ping's response.

Then Su Ping replied with a smile, "Little fellow, there's no need to wish for that. Everyone at the Heart of Myriad Spirits will be together already, so that condition doesn't count. Think of something else."

The Little Crow blinked and flapped its wings before falling into thought again. Then quickly, it finally stated a new condition:

"GAGA (I want... a name...)"

A name? Su Ping paused for a moment, then fell into contemplation. In a way, this request wasn't asking for much, but to him, it was indeed not an easy task. For a name... Hmm, how about Toothy?

"GAGA!"

Judging by Little Crow Toothy's jubilant reaction, the little fellow seemed quite satisfied with the name.

As for Su Ping, he felt somewhat guilty for appeasing such an easily contented little creature with such simplicity. But since the Little Crow asked for it, what else could he say?

With that thought, Su Ping took a long breath and, looking up at the huge red lanterns in the dark night sky, finally suggested, "Come on, let's set off fireworks!"

"GAGA!"

"AWOO!"

"..."

Amidst the sharp noises and the ignition provided by the Flame Morning Glory, streams of fireworks shot towards the sky from the open space of the Heart of Woods.

The dark night sky was completely lit up, the colorful lights reflecting on Su Ping's cheeks, equally radiant.

New Year's Eve night, as the fireworks illuminated the dark sky, finally came to an end.

At last, Su Ping stood in a shrine room within the Heart of Woods, a place not many people had visited.

After respectfully washing up, he lit several sticks of sandalwood with care.

He placed them before the two central spirit tablets.

On these two tablets, one, needless to say, bore the name 'Spirit Tablet of the Late Father Su Zhongguang.'

And the other, a name Su Ping barely remembered, 'Beloved Wife Chun'er's Spirit Tablet.'

The blue smoke of incense drifted gently into the air. In contrast to the previous clamor, the place was now particularly quiet and solemn.

Su Ping took a deep breath, inserted the incense sticks into the incense burners in front, neatly arranged the prepared offerings, and knelt on the cushion below.

"Su Ping and his father Su Anyong pay New Year's respects to Mom and Grandpa! May your spirits rest in peace in heaven, and please bless us."

Su Ping bowed his head and enunciated his words, "On New Year's night, your descendants greedily make three wishes:

First, may Jiuzhou prosper forever, the nation thrive in peace;

Second, may the family be harmonious, the father prosper, friends and relatives healthy;

Third, may I have longevity, and my martial fortunes soar."