

The Ages 301

Chapter 301 - Cloudmist Sword School, Sikong Tianchen

Curious about a pentabane, Weisheng Qingluan asked Tianming questions about lifesbane.

"The first ancestor of the Li Saint Clan was also our ancestor. His story is recorded in the genealogical records of the Weisheng clan."

Except for Tianming and Weisheng Qingluan, the others at the table kept to themselves. Shangguan Yunfeng tried striking up a conversation, but upon noticing the cold looks from Bai Taijun and Xi Menglin, he fell silent. The forced alliance was merely an agreement between Weisheng Tianlan and the Grand-Orient Sect, and didn't necessarily represent the wishes of the entire Southsky Sect. To a certain extent, it was wishful thinking.

Tianming had nothing to say about the matter. He appreciated Weisheng Qingluan's character. Now that he was somewhat familiar with the latter, he didn't mind extending a helping hand if Weisheng Qingluan were to find himself in trouble on the Throughpath tomorrow. As for the other two disciples of the Southsky Sect, they could forget about it. The two men had their arms folded and expressed their dissatisfaction with their sect master's arrangement through looks of indifference and unwillingness to touch the food and wine. However, they didn't dare utter a word of displeasure.

"Sister Ruosu, I've heard your mother can get in touch with the people from Cloudmist Sword School. After all, she was born there and is a collateral relative of the Sikong clan," said Bai Taijun. He was tall and thin, with a long face and narrow eyes.

"In fact, I think we should use your mother's identity to build a relationship with the Cloudmist Sword School. When the time comes, even if we're defeated by them on the Throughpath, they'll at least spare us," added Xi Menglin, a wide shouldered young man with a strong built and powerful arms.

"That's enough." Weisheng Ruosu cast a grim look at them.

For them to speak about allying with the Cloudmist Sword School at a banquet Weisheng Tianlan attended was really inappropriate.

"Isn't the Cloudmist Sword School just a running dog of Heaven's Elysium? Is the Southsky Sect ready to become their running dog as well?" interjected Zhao Lingzhou.

He was truly straightforward. Though his words were spoken quietly, everyone present could hear him, especially the angry first Elder of the Southsky Sect, Gu Qiuyu.

However, just as he was about to lose his temper, a woman entered the hall. Though she was youthfully dressed and looked about thirty, she was a master at the Saint stage, so her real age was obviously much older. Judging by her appearance, she was a rare beauty, similar to Weisheng Ruosu but with an understated appeal and maturity. However, the expression on her face was rather ugly. As soon as her eyes locked on to Weisheng Tianlan, she looked displeased.

"Lingyu, over here," waved a smiling Weisheng Tianlan.

Tianming immediately recognized this was Weisheng Tianlan's wife. Born in the Cloudmist Sword School, which ranked fourth in the Grand-Orient Realm, Sikong Lingyu was a collateral relative of the Sikong clan and the mother of Weisheng Ruosu and Weisheng Qingluan.

"I've been looking all over for you. Didn't I tell you to get ready for the banquet?" Weisheng Tianlan smiled.

"I went to see Sikong Jiansheng of the Cloudmist Sword School," she said. Sitting down, Sikong Lingyu looked coldly at Huangfu Fengyun and the others.

Sikong Jiansheng was the sect master of Cloudmist Sword School, so Weisheng Tianlan turned stiff at the mention of his name.

"Stop fooling around and go back now."

They were here to form an alliance, yet his wife had run off to look for the sect master of the Cloudmist Sword School. What on earth was going on? Weisheng Tianlan found it difficult to explain himself to Ye Shaoqing and the others. Arguably, when Sikong Lingyu married into the Southsky Sect, she shouldn't have had anything more to do with the Cloudmist Sword School. After all, the relationship between the two sects was rather poor. Obviously, a great contradiction existed between husband and wife as to whether or not they should approach Heaven's Elysium. This much Tianming could see.

Both the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School were headed by Heaven's Elysium, which put them at odds with the Grand-Orient Sect. The Southsky Sect was currently in an awkward position; not only were the elders in disagreement with Weisheng Tianlan, but so was his wife. Therefore, the best thing to do would be to get Sikong Lingyu to leave the banquet first.

"The Cloudmist Sword School has three Cloudmist disciples. Among them, the eldest grandson of Sikong Jiansheng, Sikong Tianchen, has reached Heavenly Will like Ruosu. They agreed to form an alliance with us, so I invited them."

"Nonsense!" The good-tempered Weisheng Tianlan immediately stood and stared grimly at Sikong Lingyu.

"I'm doing this for you, for Southsky Sect!" Sikong Lingyu retorted.

"Sect Master, please calm down." Gu Qiuyu and the elders of Southsky Sect played peacemakers. It seemed that out of the twenty elders, at least ten of them supported Sikong Lingyu's decision. The contradiction among them, as well as their public confrontation, was truly unexpected.

"How embarrassing, I do apologize." Weisheng Tianlan guiltily turned to Huangfu Fengyun.

The elders of the Grand-Orient Sect were obviously offended. Although Weisheng Tianlan wanted to form an alliance, those under him despised the Grand-Orient Sect, including his wife. The banquet was a disaster.

"It's fine, as long as the young ones get along." Ye Shaoqing pointed to Weisheng Qingluan and Tianming.

After all, their so-called alliance wasn't between sects, but the young talents participating in the Throughpath battle tomorrow. Although the situation was evident now, they couldn't make a big deal out of it. Ye Shaoqing's words managed to put Weisheng Tianlan at ease.

But just then, a group of people barged into the hall, led by a white-haired, eagle-eyed old man. There was a knifelike sharpness to him, and even the slightest gesture he made possessed a surging sword ki.

"It looks rather lively. Southsky Sect Master, have we come at the wrong time?"

With one glance, Tianming knew that the speaker was Sikong Jiansheng, the sect master of the Cloudmist Sword School. He belonged to the same generation as Weisheng Tianlan's parents and had remained sect master for a long time.

The Cloudmist Sword School practiced domineering sword arts. Not only did Sikong Jiansheng resemble a drawn sword, the accompanying elders and Cloudmist disciples all possessed the same aura. Their cold, sharp eyes could send goosebumps prickling all over onlookers' skin. Sikong Jiansheng stood there as if surrounded by ten thousand swords, his long, narrow eyes as deep as two lakes. Tianming felt as if he had a sword pointed at his back.

Because of their different specializations, the disciples of each sect had contrasting temperaments. The Southsky Sect was located on Southsky Island, amidst the blue ocean, so their disciples were mellow and open. The sword-wielding beastmasters were from Cloudmist Mountain in the north, amidst the boundless heavens and earth, and were knifelike. No matter where they went, one look was enough to scare the masses into moving aside.

Sikong Jiansheng didn't bother with niceties, ignoring those from the Grand-Orient Sect and speaking only to Weisheng Tianlan.

"I'm speaking to my old friends from the Grand-Orient Sect. Although you've come uninvited, you're a guest after all. If you don't mind, would you like to stay for a chat?"

His well-spoken words couldn't conceal his true thoughts, which were revealed in the word "uninvited."

"No thank you. I certainly can't afford to stay for the Grand-Orient Sect's banquet," sneered Sikong Jiansheng, his cold eyes staring at Huangfu Fengyun and the other elders. "However, you've made a mistake," he added. "We didn't come uninvited. Your wife extended an invitation. But it seems that the Southsky Sect doesn't welcome us. We'll see you in Heaven's Elysium, then."

Naturally, they were upset to have been invited here, only to witness those from the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect together.

"Tianlan, for the sake of Ruosu and Qingluan, you must think this through. It's not too late to apologize to the Cloudmist Sword School and sever ties with the Grand-Orient Sect!" Sikong Lingyu abruptly rose to her feet. The opportunity she had so desperately struggled for was wasted by Weisheng Tianlan.

"Go back now." Weisheng Tianlan's gaze was stained with an icy chill. Then, turning to the Cloudmist Sword School, he said, "Goodbye."

"Southsky Sect Master, just wait and see," Sikong Jiansheng retorted.

In fact, the purpose of his visit wasn't merely to discuss the alliance between the younger generation, but also the cooperation between the major powers of the Grand-Orient Realm. But obviously, Weishang Tianlan was a tough one.

In fact, Weisheng Tianlan was his junior. He understood the ins and outs of today's farce. His wife had wanted nothing more than to protect her children, so she'd attempted to get help from the Cloudmist Sword School. However, the present situation of the Grand-Orient Realm wasn't as simple as the woman thought.

Once the Southsky Sect fell, the Grand-Orient Sect would be in jeopardy. If the Grand-Orient Sect didn't exist, the Southsky Sect would certainly obey Heaven's Elysium to survive. But that also meant zero possibility of growth, or perhaps even annexation. The day the Onyx Sect surrendered, the balance within the Grand-Orient Realm was broken.

There were also discordant voices within the Southsky Sect, including their council of elders, calling for capitulation to Heaven's Elysium. However, there were still people who persisted. Drawing a clear line between them and the Cloudmist Sword School was a clear indication of Weisheng Tianlan's intention. The visitors from the Cloudmist Sword School left the banquet hall rather unpleasantly.

Just as they were about to leave, a young man dressed in blue suddenly darted out. Though he wasn't exactly handsome, he resembled Sikong Jiansheng with his piercing, sharp-edged demeanor.

Tianming had previously read up about him. Sikong Tianchen, the first disciple of Cloudmist Sword School, was a master of the sword at Heavenly Will stage. He was a twin beastmaster with two fourth-order saint beasts, both of whom were phoenixes: the Blueflame Phoenix and Crimsonflame Phoenix.

To have two matching phoenixes was truly rare. In terms of talent, Sikong Tianchen was probably in the top five among the younger generation of the Grand-Orient Realm.

In truth, he didn't seem like a vile character. Tempering his sword intent made him a straightforward man who was both fearless and decisive.

"Ruosu, I have a small gift for you." His eyes were filled with sincerity as he stood before Weisheng Ruosu.

Chapter 302 - Heaven's Elysium Arrives

In the palm of Sikong Tianchen's hand was a magnificent gem with saintly heavenly patterns which would make a beautiful pendant. Naturally, the saintly heavenly patterns made it extremely valuable.

"No, thank you," said Weisheng Ruosu.

"Alright, I'll prepare something else next time. I hope you'll accept it then," Sikong Tianchen earnestly replied.

"There's no need for that. Stop sending me gifts."

"As you wish." Sikong Tianchen nodded, put away the gift, and said his goodbyes. Then he ran up to the Cloudmist Sword School team and left the banquet hall.

"What's the hurry? She'll be yours sooner or later," glared Sikong Jiansheng.

"Yes, Grandfather." Sikong Tianchen kept his head lowered, the sharp edge of a sword dancing in his eyes.

"Senior Brother...."

There was a young beauty beside him, dressed in plain robes. Though she was graceful, her appearance was incomparable to Weisheng Ruosu. She was Jing Xuan, the second disciple of the Cloudmist Sword School.

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With the uninvited guests gone, the remaining parties sat in awkwardness.

"Brother Weisheng, we'll leave now. I'll speak to you privately later," Ye Shaoqing said.

"My apologies."

Since Weisheng Tianlan had family affairs to deal with, he left with the Southsky Sect team. After saying his goodbyes, Weisheng Qingluan left with them as well.

"The alliance stays. We'll leave for the Throughpath tomorrow. Make your final preparations when we return," said Huangfu Fengyun.

"Why are we still going along with it? I'm afraid we'll be stabbed in the back," sneered Zhao Lingzhou.

"Idiot! You talk too much."

Zhao Zhiyuan slapped Zhao Lingzhou on the back of the head, almost causing him to stumble. The situation in the Grand-Orient Realm was turbulent, even more so than the internal struggle of the sect. He had a foreboding feeling that major developments were about to ensue. Today's banquet was a clear indication of that.

Although the Southsky Sect Master had his own plans, there were discordant voices within the sect, even within their family of four. The Li Saint Clan was walking on a tightrope. It seemed moving away from the edge of life and death wouldn't be easy.

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Upon leaving the banquet hall, Weisheng Tianlan returned to Heaven Inn, accompanied by the elders and his family.

"Tianlan, anyone with a discerning eye can see that the Grand-Orient Sect has completely given up on the Realm Wars, sending three wastes just to put up a show. They have no qualms about embarrassing themselves, yet you choose to offend Heaven's Elysium by forming an alliance with them? Didn't we agree to renounce any involvement with Yuwen Taiji before coming here?" Sikong Lingyu blurted as soon as they entered the secret room.

"Yuwen Taiji wasn't here today." Weisheng Tianlan took a seat, his eyes calm as a lake.

"What's the difference? Whether it's Yuwen Taiji or Huangfu Fengyun, they represent the Grand-Orient Sect!" shouted Sikong Lingyu.

"Lingyu, you took the liberty to seek out the Cloudmist Sword Sect today and I haven't even dealt with you for causing such an embarrassment. Just stand aside and say no more." Within Weisheng Tianlan's deep eyes was a shocking ferocity.

"I-I did it for Ruosu and Qingluan."

"Even the Onyx Sect surrendered. Heaven's Elysium is left with us and the Grand-Orient Sect to use as objects of humiliation. With my identity, if we lower ourselves before the Cloudmist Sword School and get them to speak to Heaven's Elysium on our behalf, Ruosu and Qingyi won't be targeted. We can keep a low profile. Why should we mingle with those Grand-Orient Sect wastes?" Her voice was filled with distress, her pale face capable of evoking pity so it was hard for others to lose their temper.

"Don't you know that once we give in, there's no way of raising our heads in the future?" asked Weisheng Tianlan.

"I know—"

"You can see that Sikong Tianchen is pursuing Ruosu. She's our hope for the future of the Southsky Sect. Do you want her to marry into the Cloudmist Sword School and become one of them?" added Weisheng Tianlan.

"It's just an alliance, not—"

"No, if we take this step, there's no turning back," said Weisheng Tianlan.

Generally speaking, among the five major sects, the top disciples wouldn't marry outside the sect.

"Alas, if I'd known, I wouldn't have allowed them to become southsky disciples. Then they wouldn't have to fight," cried Sikong Lingyu.

"Is that so? But if they don't experience the rain and storms, how can they make something of themselves? Pampering isn't going to turn anyone into a peerless powerhouse."

With a complicated expression on her face, Sikong Lingyu bowed her head.

"Elders, what do you think?" Weisheng Tianlan turned to them, his eyes sweeping across the room.

"We'll do as the Sect Master intends," replied Gu Qiuyu.

"Then stop acting up in front of me."

"Don't worry, Sect Master. We only want the best for the Southsky Sect," assured the other elders.

"However, once we return, we must have the sect at combat readiness. I can't imagine how many will perish. The Onyx Sect insisted on resistance and had to suffer countless deaths because of it. If it weren't for that, how could they show such obedience now?" Gu Qiuyu added.

"Big Sister, what do you think?" asked Weisheng Qingluan.

They stood in the corner, watching their parents argue.

"What's there to think of? We're not allowed to make our own decision. But..."

"But what?"

"I'm not afraid of death and I refuse to live as a coward." Weisheng Ruosu looked out of the window at the bustling Heaven City below. Despite how flourishing it was, Southsky Island was more beautiful, with the glimmering sea mirroring the cloudless sky.

"Big Sister, you're not a man, so you can't be a coward. You can only be a 'cowardess'," laughed Weisheng Qingluan.

"Oh, you chatty thing...." Rolling her eyes at Weisheng Qingluan, she walked out of the room.

"Where are you going?"

"To cultivate."

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At night, Heaven City was brightly lit. Tianming sat by the window, stroking Ling'er's Love in his hand, his eyes distant.

"You old pervert, have you had enough of touching the necklace? Why do I feel as if you're taking advantage of Ling'er?" Ying Huo hung upside down by the window, a smirk rising on its beak.

"You talk too much. Be careful or I'll seal that beak of yours," snapped Tianming. The idiot had a wild imagination. "However, what you say sounds reasonable. It feels pretty good," he added.

At that exact moment, the necklace shook, suggesting that Ling'er had heard everything. Damn it, what kind of deep sleep was this? He couldn't keep any secrets to himself.

"Hahaha...." The little chick rolled around, pounding the ground with laughter.

After throwing the little chick into his lifebound space, Tianming ordered, "Wake Meow Meow for cultivation now!"

"Didn't you agree to give him a day off?"

"Bullshit."

It had been half a month since Tianming had broken through to sixth-level Unity. During this time, most of the energy was focused on practicing the Voidgod Sword Intent and Trivita Fiendfist. However, Tianming hadn't slacked off on cultivating, either. He had a premonition he was about to advance to seventh-level Unity in the next two days.

In fact, ever since his bloodline transformation, Tianming had sensed he could sprint to ninth-level Unity without any problem. The road to the peak of Unity was all too clear. All he had to do was focus on his cultivation techniques and push himself to the extreme. His original plan was to take a breather and continue cultivating after the Throughpath battle, but today's banquet had stoked a fire in his heart. Perhaps if he pushed on, today was the opportunity for a breakthrough.

"Without Ling'er's spiritual attachment, my strength is slightly below those at Heavenly Will. I'm afraid more effort will be required to face my opponents in the Throughpath."

Having experienced a life-and-death battle with Yuwen Shendu, Tianming didn't want to face the same thing again; that wasn't his style. He didn't want to be a loser who was constantly trying to keep up with his opponent and defeated at the slightest threat.

He was running out of time. In every battle of life and death, he had lost to time and to himself. It was time he picked up the pace and surpassed himself. Only then could he strategize, secure victory, and be qualified to protect his clan and regain their dignity!

"Let's go! Throughpath, the Realm Wars, the five major sects! For dignity, honor, and the Grand-Orient Sword!" His heart was overflowing with desires. "And to defeat Yueling Long!"

At this moment, Tianming's heart was burning with the flames of battle. After a month's worth of preparation and a night's desperate diligence, he reached his goal at dawn.

"Seventh-level Unity!"

Half a month after reaching sixth-level Unity, he had reached seventh-level Unity. The higher up he went, the harder it was to advance. Otherwise, with the transformation of his bloodline, it would have taken him less time. With his breakthrough, the two beast kins reined in majesty, having been upgraded once more. In his infernal source and thundersource, the power of fire and thunder resembled a boundless ocean.

"I'm only two levels away from Bai Taijun, Weisheng Qingluan, and Su Wuyou. Advancing to ninth-level Unity won't be difficult, but it'll take time."

Tianming stood by the window, staring in the direction of Heaven's Elysium, his eyes surging with emotion.

"She still doesn't know I'm here."

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Soon after, Tianming followed the Grand-Orient team downstairs. The four sects had all accepted Heaven Elysum's hospitality and lodged at Heaven Inn. Today was the day the Throughpath opened. The representatives of Heaven's Elysium would be here to welcome them, and the elders of the four sects would be escorted to Heaven's Elysium to watch the battle in the Throughpath.

Aside from the Southsky Sect and Cloudmist Sword School, there was already a group of people standing at the entrance. They were dressed in black or grey, enveloped in black fog, and surging with valor. Countless poisonous insects crawled all over them. Obviously, they were from the Onyx Sect, ranked second in the Grand-Orient Realm and stronger than the Southsky Sect and Cloudmist Sword School, with a total of eighty-eight elders.

By the time Tianming had left the inn, the disciples of the Onyx Sect had joined the Cloudmist Sword School and were laughing and chatting. Occasionally, one or two cold glances came from their direction.

Just then, the roars of beasts sounded in the distance. Tianming looked up and saw several beasts stampeding from Heaven's Elysium to Heaven City.

The delegates of Heaven's Elysium had arrived.

Chapter 303 - A Bloody Path

Tianming was drawn to the Golden Dragon made entirely of gold. The hardness of its metallic body seemed comparable to saintly bestial weapons, making it seem immortal.

In every sense, this was a real dragon, with deer-like horns, a camel's head, rabbit eyes, a snake-like body, a shen belly, fish scales, eagle claws, tiger palms, and cow ears. Compared to the Blizzard Spirit Dragon and Purplewing Batdrake, it was obviously of superior pedigree.

Of all the dragons that Tianming had seen, the only one that could be compared to this Golden Dragon was Ye Shaoqing's fifth-order saint beast, the Azureflame Dragon. Comparatively speaking, this Golden Dragon was larger in size and more regal in appearance. Obviously, its beastmaster was a powerful man.

When the Golden Dragon descended, the powerhouses from Heaven's Elysium appeared one after another, led by a man in golden robes who was both tall and powerful, with skin and hair that possessed a golden luster.

His eyes resembled golden divine rays, so few dared look him in the eye. He was Jun Dongyao. Since Tianming had perused the information on Heaven's Elysium, he recognized him.

Heaven's Elysium was led by the Elysium Emperor, Jun Shengxiao, who was considered a supreme existence and wielded great power within the Grand-Orient Realm. Beneath the Elysium Emperor were two hundred elders, as well as the Four Cardinal Kings.

The Four Cardinal Kings were in charge of the halls in the north, south, east, and west of Heaven's Elysium. Among them, the East Cardinal King, who controlled the East Hall, was Jun Dongyao. Besides being the East Cardinal King, Jun Dongyao was also the firstborn son of the Elysium Emperor. Among his descendants, only Jun Dongyao had become one of the Four Cardinal Kings.

Jun Dongyao was peers with Ye Shaoqing, Yuwen Taiji, and Weisheng Tianlan. In their younger days, they were all geniuses among geniuses and had participated in the Realm Wars. Naturally, Jun Donyao had emerged victorious.

Now that Heaven's Elysium dominated the Grand-Orient Realm, this was more of a show of power than a welcome. After all, they came with guns blazing.

"Dear friends from the four great sects, welcome to Heaven's Elysium. May your top talents have an interesting and wonderful experience." Jun Dongyao's voice reverberated through the street. Several elysium elders couldn't help laughing.

Once every ten years, these so-called geniuses would suffer a mental breakdown under the hands of their elysium children and crawl back to where they came from. Seize the Grand-Orient Sword? Dream on. However, this time was different. Now that one more sect had surrendered, there was less excitement to the Realm Wars.

When Jun Dongyao finished speaking, those from the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School greeted him, talking and laughing. However, Weisheng Tianlan didn't join them. It was obvious the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School were bootlicking, something he couldn't bring himself to do. Outsiders understood it as resistance on his part.

"Onyx Emperor, Onyx Empress, and Brother Sikong, please come along." After a brief conversation, Jun Dongyao set foot on his Golden Dragon and began leading the way.

"Thank you, East Cardinal King." Sikong Jiansheng and the Onyx Sect Masters quickly caught up with him.

"Let's go." Behind Onyx and Cloudmist Sword School, Huangfu Fengyun and Weisheng Tianlan prepared to leave for Heaven's Elysium.

Unexpectedly, the East Cardinal King looked at them in confusion with a hint of mockery. "Weisheng Tianlan, Huangfu Fengyun, you're not invited. Why would you follow us? You're a bit shameless, aren't you?"

The people from Heaven's Elysium, Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School roared with laughter, in particular the elders of Cloudmist Sword School. If the Grand-Orient Sect and Southsky Sect had been polite and bowed their heads last night, they wouldn't suffer such humiliation.

Since the first Realm Wars, the teams from the four sects would gather at Heaven City before being greeted by Heaven's Elysium's representatives. If there were a large number of young talents participating in them, the Throughpath battle would be held. But even so, the juniors were sent to the Throughpath, while elders like Weisheng Tianlan would stand at the top of Heaven's Elysium to watch the battle, since it made a good vantage point. This had always been the unspoken rule of the Realm Wars. Shouldn't Heaven's Elysium show the bare minimum in terms of etiquette?

"What do you mean by this?" Weisheng Tianlan frowned.

"I don't mean anything. There's no space for you in Heaven's Elysium," laughed Jun Dongyao.

Their arrogant, contemptuous laughter poked at Weisheng Tianlan's dignity.

"How low of Heaven's Elysium! We come from afar, yet you lack even the most basic etiquette. What's the difference between you and a third-rate sect?" scoffed Weisheng Tianlan.

Everyone present today were men of dignity. The contention within the Grand-Orient Realm was based on true strength. For a great sect like Heaven's Elysium to behave so evoked disdain. Even Weisheng Tianlan would compete openly instead of engaging in these meaningless underhanded tactics.

"Us, a third-rate sect? Hahaha, aren't you embarrassed to bring that up? You send a few losers to participate in the grand Realm Wars, and they're not going to make it up Throughpath anyway, so there's no point wasting seats. Southsky Sect, Grand-Orient Sect, you might as well circle the foot of the mountain a few times, consider your task completed, and leave."

A gentleman like Weisheng Tianlan had no way of dealing with Jun Dongyao, a true scoundrel with no notion of dignity. It was humiliating for a sect master to be mocked by the Cardinal King in front of the other elders and his disciples. However, the Realm Wars were originally held to challenge Heaven's Elysium for control over Grand-Orient Realm, so such treatment was only to be expected.

Before, they would only humiliate the juniors, but today, Heaven's Elysium had disgraced Weisheng Tianlan and the Grand-Orient Sect before the battle had even begun. In fact, this was sort of an indication. After dealing with the Onyx Sect, Heaven's Elysium now wielded unprecedented power.

Sooner or later, the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect would have to surrender. With Heaven's Elysium's current power, they had no plans to compete with the other four major sects. Their ambitions were obvious—what they wanted was to dominate the entire Grand-Orient Realm and make the other four sects their vassals.

Onlookers laughed as Jun Dongyao and the others left without the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect.

"Jun Dongyao has become more and more shameless. It's no wonder he no longer possesses the same heaven-defying talent he had in his younger days. Have you caught up to him yet?" asked Ye Shaoqing.

"So what if I have? He humiliated me in the past and has now left me with no dignity to speak of," said Weisheng Tianlan. Now that he was a sect master, his status was different. Being laughed at meant disgrace for the entire sect.

"But what can we do? We can only hope the young ones recover the dignity we've lost by having their elysium children beg for mercy," laughed Ye Shaoqing.

They all rolled their eyes at him.

"Ye Shaoqing, take a good look at the three disciples behind you. You should recognize reality and stop dreaming," scoffed Southsky Sect's first elder Gu Qiuyu.

"Elder Gu, you seem to have a lot to say. Unfortunately, speaking on your knees must be painful," Ye Shaoqing shrugged.

"Who's kneeling!" fumed Gu Qiuyu.

"Oh, stop quarreling. Since they don't welcome us, we'll send our seven disciples directly to the Throughpath and wait below," said Weisheng Tianlan.

"It seems we've been left with no other option," sighed Huangfu Fengyun.

There was no way they would leave without participating in the Realm Wars. Both teams steered their lifebound beasts towards the foot of the Throughpath.

On the Aircloud Godcrane, Ye Shaoqing asked, "Are you upset to have been humiliated before the battle has even begun?"

"I'm so angry I can't wait!" Tianming caught sight of Heaven's Elysium, sitting on the plateau like a holy shrine: towering and commanding like a city of gods built on clouds. He wasn't as calm as he appeared.

Why could Jun Dongyao direct such sarcasm towards Weisheng Tianlan and Ye Shaoqing? It was all because generations of Grand-Orient prime disciples and southsky disciples had been humiliated, crawling back home in the most miserable state. The Grand-Orient Sect never recaptured the Grand-Orient Sword, which had once belonged to the Li Saint Clan, in tens of thousands of years. Just the thought had him burning with passion.

"Lao Ye, won't it be unfair if we manage to pass through the Throughpath and participate in Realm Wars while the elders stay below?" asked Tianming.

"Don't worry. As long as any one of you obtains a place among the seven participants, they'll have to come down and pick us up," sneered Ye Shaoqing.

"Why?"

"The Throughpath screens participants for the Realm Wars, but in fact, this was designed by Heaven's Elysium and not considered part of the Realm Wars. That's why they dare fool around. However, once you're a participant in the Realm Wars, the Theocracy of the Ancients requires that each major sect has someone monitoring, otherwise the battle can't begin. Since Heaven's Elysium is in possession of the Grand-Orient Sword, they must hold the Realm Wars on time. Delay, and the Theocracy of Ancients might cause trouble. Although there's a possibility that one from the Theocracy of Ancients is present, they still strike fear into the hearts of the entire Grand-Orient Realm. Do you understand?"

"I see. In that case, just wait for them to come down and meet you," Tianming smiled.

"Tianming, today has been very upsetting, so go out there and do us justice." Ye Shaoqing patted him on the shoulder.

"I'll try my best," said Tianming.

"There's one thing I'd like your help with."

"Just tell me what to do."

"Weisheng Tianlan is my friend, so as long as his children are participating, please take care of them and do your best to ensure their safety, regardless of whether it's the Throughpath or Realm Wars."

"You have my word. If I bump into them, I won't stand idly by," Tianming nodded.

With Tianming's word given, Ye Shaoqing was relieved.

"Very well then. If you want to consolidate your position in the Grand-Orient Realm, Weisheng Tianlan is our only ally, so you must earn his appreciation. Got it?"

"Yes!"

The road ahead was sure to be bumpy. However, what Tianming wanted was to bulldoze his way through, turning the narrow, winding path into a broad, open road. He would fight and create a future for himself.

Chapter 304 - The Throughgate

The Throughpath was the only path that led to the huge compound of Heaven's Elysium. At the end of the path was a grand stone door, the Throughgate, that had been forged from spirit ore and wasn't too different from a bestial weapon. And the Throughgate was the only entrance into the compound that everyone from the sect had to use to enter or leave.

The path stretched from the door, with many twists and turns. It was able to prevent a large influx of people from making it to Heaven's Elysium through the path alone, let alone mentioning the wildbeasts, barriers, and other obstacles there.

Usually, the path was used as a testing ground for prospective disciples of the sect. But today, it was used to test the top disciples of the four great sects, so the difficulty of traversing it was ten times higher than usual. Most of the wildbeasts were just recently caught in the Abyssal Battlefield, so they were still mostly undomesticated.

"The battle of the Throughpath is definitely going to attract quite a lot of viewers."

There were many new seats constructed next to the Throughgate, where Heaven's Elysium's guests would be hosted by the East Cardinal King, Jun Dongyao. The members of the Onyx Sect and Cloudmist Sword School were assigned seats to the left and right side of the Heaven's Elysium members. Even people on the level of sect masters, like the Onyx Emperor and Empress, and the Cloudmist Sword School's Sect master Sikong Jiansheng, were subordinate to the Elysian King. Even higher than the Elysian King, however, was the Elysian Emperor, his father.

"This battle will be entertaining for sure. Forget the Grand-Orient Sect, since they always lose horribly anyway. We originally gave the Southsky Sect a chance, but that fool Weisheng Tianlan didn't appreciate it. Let's make sure the southsky disciples taste such a crushing defeat that they'll never be able to stand tall again," Sikong Jiansheng said.

"The young ones should be allowed to play. After all, their seniors from the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect won't be there to see it," said a girl in a black veil. She had an incredibly shapely body that one wouldn't forget after only a single glance. The charming gaze she had under the veil shone through strongly. Nobody would expect someone like her to be so old that she could be the grandmother of the current generation of the Onyx disciples. She was the wife of the Onyx Emperor, the Onyx Empress. The Onyx Sect has always been ruled by a husband-wife couple. It was the sect that treated both genders the most fairly across the whole realm.

"How do you intend to let them play, Sect Master Sikong?" said a white-clad man seated behind the Onyx Empress. He looked like an impeccably just person with a pair of sharp eyes. He seemed no older than thirty, but he had actually been cultivating for more than eighty years. He was none other than the previous Onyx Emperor.

"I feel like we have to give the Southsky Sect a strong impression right at the start. Forget the Grand-Orient Sect, they're already on their last breath. The Southsky Sect actually dared defy the formation of our grand alliance all because of that puny Weisheng Tianlan. Let's see if he'll piss himself if we give him a scare," Sikong Jiansheng said.

"Sounds impressive, Sect Master," the Onyx Empress said seductively. Nobody would dare admit to themselves that she was a granny in her eighties already.

"Haha, you truly flatter me."

The white-clad Onyx Emperor added, "I heard that among the Cloudmist Disciples is Sect Master Sikong's Heavenly Will grandson. He has amazing mastery of the sword, right? It's said that he managed to kill three first-level Heavenly Will cultivators at the same time. Looks like we're in for a great show."

"Tianchen is still immature. Though, I hear that the Onyx Emperor's two grandsons are at Heavenly Will. They are the truly terrifying ones. The two of them are great at coordinating their battle arts and tacitly know how the other fights. If they work together, it's as if their lifebound beasts can also telepathically

communicate with one another. It wouldn't be hard for them to take on four or five people at once," Sikong Jiansheng humbly praised.

"That's enough flattery from you. How could our youths possibly compete with the Elysian Children? Those seven are the true pride of our realm. Their future is limitless," the Onyx Empress said.

"That's true."

"The empress speaks sense."

Hearing them say that, the Elysian children standing behind the Elysian King seemed much more comfortable. Before that, their expressions were a little tense from hearing the three sect masters praising each other's disciples.

"You don't have to put them on a pedestal. Only Long'er and Tianyi can be considered capable among those seven," the East Cardinal King said as he glanced at the six youths behind him, only one of whom had his head still raised while the others looked down.

He was dressed in a golden robe, and even his hair had a golden sheen. His eyes were sharp and spirited, making him look really handsome. Despite his youth, he had the countenance of an emperor and the authority that accompanied it. In fact, he almost looked like the East Cardinal King's brother.

"Elysian Yi has truly inherited the natural talent of the Elysian King. He's doubtless the top genius of the entire Grand-Orient Realm, given that he was able to reach the second level of Heavenly Will at the age of sixteen!" Sikong Jiansheng praised. People could even tell that he wasn't spouting flattery, but rather his true feelings. Elysian Yi, or Jun Tianyi, was the eldest grandson of the Elysian Emperor and the first son of the East Cardinal King, Jun Dongyao.

"Sect Master Sikong, your praise for me is unwarranted. I don't deserve the title of top genius," Jun Tianyi hurriedly said.

"How humble," the Onyx Empress said with a chuckle.

"It's not humility. It's just a fact that Tianyi has been surpassed," Jun Dongyao plainly said.

"So that was true after all?" mused the Onyx Emperor.

"That's right. Yueling Long is indeed superior to him."

Yueling Long was also a genius of their sect, and she had surpassed Jun Dongyao's son. As such, Sikong Jiansheng and the rest quickly moved on to another subject.

"Look at the time. The fifteen disciples are about to step on the Throughpath. Where's Long'er?" Jun Dongyao asked.

"Father, she went out to have fun with Uncle. They said they'd definitely come back before the Realm Wars," Jun Tianyi said.

"That Jun Niancang... he's always messing around. Isn't your grandfather worried he'll hold back Long'er's cultivation?"

"Dad, given Uncle's talent and cultivation, Sis Long will only get better. Uncle's the most terrifying person our sect has produced in the past thousand years, right?"

"That's true," Jun Dongyao mused.

"Don't worry, Dad. Even if she doesn't come back, these people from the four sects won't even get a chance to glance at the Grand-Orient Sword. I can be sure they'll no doubt have a lot to 'gain' before they return to their sects."

"Alright."

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Near the Throughgate was quite a few others from Heaven's Elysium who were there to watch the show. They were curious about the so-called top disciples of the four other sects. Three people stood among them in a corner, their leader a slender, mysterious old man clad in black, behind which stood a man and woman.

"Elysian Long's improvement is truly shocking. Within three or four short months, she made such impressive strides. The three of us really did luck out after helping her deal with some trouble," said Ling Yichen.

"That's right. Otherwise, given my and Yixue's status, there's no way we'd be able to enter Heaven's Elysium that easily," said Jin Yixuan.

Song Yixue chuckled; she was working really hard to protect the Yueling Clan.

"I heard she and some elite in the Jun Clan are lovers now," Ling Yichen added.

"Is that true? I thought it was just some rumor. That's impressive. I heard that even though the East Cardinal King contributed a lot to the sect, the Elysian Emperor actually intends for his young son that just returned from the theocracy to be his heir!" Song Yixue said.

"If that's the case, Elysian Long will definitely soar even higher."

"That's right. If she manages to make her way to the theocracy, she's definitely capable of fulfilling her dreams of dominating the entire Grand-Orient Realm. After all, she'll join the Jun Clan soon enough. It really is impressive how someone her age can reach such a height," Ling Yichen said as he looked down at the Throughpath.

There were fifteen disciples from the four other sects on the path. Ling Yichen couldn't help but say, "What do you think? Do any of these geniuses deserve to be compared to her? They even came here to take the Grand-Orient Sword. They really don't know what's best for their own lives. I heard that Elysian Yi intends to give the Realm Wars an interesting twist. We will definitely be looking forward to it."

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The fifteen disciples embarked on the Throughpath from different directions. The path stretched wider the lower it was, so the disciples wouldn't see the others at the start. But as long as they continued upward, they would eventually gather at the same spot.

Ye Shaoqing and the rest waited beneath the path. After Tianming entered, he saw a dense forest before him, and the tall and majestic Heaven's Elysium up on the mountain above.

"Four months ago, I chose not to join Heaven's Elysium. I didn't think I'd end up here all the same."

He could already feel the pressure coming from the sect. It was only now that he truly knew how much disparity existed between Heaven's Elysium and the Grand-Orient Sect. Even so, he was now part of the sect that belonged to his clan.

"Let's go!"

Once he got on the path, he sped through the forest up the mountain. The terrain on the Throughpath was rather dangerous. If it weren't for him being able to see the sect above, he would've easily lost his way. If he had a flying lifebound beast, he would be able to fly up high for a better vantage point, were that not forbidden by the rules, which stated that flying lifebound beasts were restricted to low altitude flights on the Throughpath. Even then, normal disciples wouldn't dare risk flying, lest they attract the attention of the wildbeasts on the path.

"It's said that the wildbeasts here are at least sixth- or seventh-order." Seventh-order wildbeasts would be hard to deal with even for Heavenly Will disciples. Thankfully, they only numbered three at most on the path.

Chapter 305 - Astral Crab, Trihead Gale Condor

Tianming continued onward at full speed. Ying Huo flew through the forest even faster than him, like a fiery beam that blinked from one point to another. It was now at the seventh level of Unity and had undone a lot of its bloodline shackles. Not to mention, it now had a top-tier ability, Infernal Haze.

Back during the fight against Yuwen Shendu, Meow Meow and Ying Huo had been oppressed, thanks to their low level. They had survived by relying on nothing but their will. Now, they had finally gotten a chance to grow. Funnily enough, some people thought that Tianming easily won the fight, not knowing about his near-death struggles in the least; not to mention his lifebound beasts, who would still be injured if it weren't for the Prime Tower's powers.

Yuwen Shendu was only killed due to his own carelessness. Otherwise, Tianming wouldn't have stood a chance even if he had mastered Myriad's Only. While one's survival relied mostly on their own abilities, the slightest variable could completely change the results. But if they fought again now, without taking the Spiritburn Tome and Feiling into account, Tianming would stand a real chance.

"There's someone on our flank," Ying Huo suddenly said.

"Xi Menglin, huh...." Tianming looked in Ying Huo's direction and saw a man, who also met his gaze. He was a southsky disciple Tianming had met at the inn the day before. He figured Xi Menglin was an ally. Tianming recalled that he didn't particularly seem willing to ally with him, so he decided to go his own way. Ye Shaoqing said that helping the Weisheng siblings was enough, after all. What he didn't think was that Xi Menglin would speedily come toward him as he was trying to move away. In fact, he jumped onto a green rock ahead of Tianming with his arms crossed, looking down on him.

"Go your own way. I wish to be alone," Tianming said, then turned away.

"Who said I was going to travel with you?" he said before he blocked Tianming's way again and checked him out.

"What's your deal?" Tianming was getting irritated. Due to the history between their sects, Tianming would never go out of his way to cause trouble for them. They weren't worth his time anyway.

"First Elder Gu Qiuyu is my maternal grandfather. He asked me to check out your bane-rings if I see you. Li Tianming, my guess is that you're only making things up, and backed yourself into a corner when you were asked to show your bane-rings. You got exposed," he mocked. Most people in the Grand-Orient Realm knew about the legendary pentabanes, so they all wanted to see the bane-rings for themselves. Seeing was believing, after all.

"What if I don't want to show you?"

"Then I can only press you down and strip your sleeve for a look. You really know how to boast. Even our sect master believes you, but I don't. I'll prove it to them."

"Sure. I'll let you see all you like." Initially, he didn't want to trouble them on account of Weisheng Tianlan. He might even help them out. But now, Xi Menglin was blocking his way and wasting his time. He might not make it as one of the first seven as a result. So, he decided to let his fists do the talking.

He would show him how powerful he was now. Xi Menglin was planning to 'expose' him to let his sect master learn of his mistake. Since time was short, he summoned his lifebound beast from his lifebound space. With a bright flash, a gigantic black beast appeared beneath him and charged toward Tianming.

The Southsky Sect was situated near the sea, so the lifebound beasts of their members were usually aquatic. That didn't mean they weren't hardy at all. The beast was a giant crab, even larger than the Bloodfiend Taotie. Its black shell was at least ten centimeters thick and as hard as steel. Worst of all were its razor-sharp, saw-toothed pincers that looked like they could easily tear flesh apart. Each of its long legs looked like blades, and its back shone conspicuously in five or six colors. While the beast itself was ugly, the lighting effects made it quite good looking. It was a third-order saint beast, an Astral Crab.

Tianming didn't know where this beast's eyes were, but he could feel danger emanating from it. If that beast was allowed to develop to the saint stage, it would definitely reign supreme on the high seas. That was probably why Xi Menglin was so confident.

"Li Tianming, there's no point in being stubborn. It's all the same for me to defeat you and get a look at your bane-rings even if you don't want to show me!" he said as he charged with his beast. Despite the beast's size, it was blindingly fast. Its sharp legs came chopping down like many kitchen knives.

Just as Tianming was about to fight back, the surroundings abruptly changed. A third person was heading toward them, thanks to the summoning of the crab. He was a youth carrying a heavy greatsword on his back that was taller than most people, marking him as a member of the Cloudmist Sword School. They had sent three representatives in total, and this one was named Fan Wutian. As Tianming had gotten a glance of them during the night of the banquet, he had a rough recollection of them.

As for Fan Wutian, his first reaction was to run. As far as he was concerned, the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect were their enemies. It would be troublesome for him to be attacked by both of them at once. Little did he expect that Xi Menglin didn't care about him and instead charged toward Tianming.

"This is interesting. To think that they'd fight among themselves... they truly are bumpkins." Fan Wutian gladly hid himself to watch their fight. He wasn't pressured to win at all, since his sect hadn't come for the Grand-Orient Sword. Their mission was only to humiliate the disciples of the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect. Little did he know, Tianming had immediately noticed him.

"Want to reap the benefits after we duke it out, huh? Then I'll deal with you both at once. Ying Huo, Meow Meow, end it quickly."

"Hey, I'm the boss of you, not the other way round! You don't get to order me around!" Ying Huo snapped, flapping its wings as it charged toward Fan Wutian.

Meow Meow seemed a little drowsy, but snapped out of it, since Tianming said it would be able to relax after the Realm Wars when his position as junior sect master was secure.

Fan Wutian thought of the two cute animals as pets, rather than lifebound beasts. He didn't know better, since not even Heaven's Elysium had bothered to research the candidates the Grand-Orient Sect would be sending, since they had fallen from grace, to say no more about Cloudmist Sword School. While Tianming's killing of Yuwen Shendu was a big deal in his sect, nobody else in the realm cared about it.

"I thought Yuwen Shendu broke through to Heavenly Will. Why isn't he here? Why did they send three rookies here to die?"

"Too bad those Elysian Children and Senior Brother Tianchen won't even have anyone to mess with. We're more than enough to deal with small fries like this." Fan Wutian immediately felt like the battle was getting boring. He didn't even bother to draw his greatsword as the two critters charged toward him, yet he didn't think the little chick would appear before him with terrifying speed.

Given its infernal source at the seventh level of Unity, Skyscorch Featherblast caused thousands of fiery needles to explode outward, much to Fan Wutian's dismay. He immediately sent out his ninth-level Unity lifebound beast to block the needles using its feathers.

Yet not even this third-order saint beast, a Trihead Gale Condor, could resist the Skyscorch Featherblast after the little chick's bloodline powers had been further unlocked. The three-headed bird shrieked in pain as its wings began burning, but that was only the start!

"You're so dead!" Fan Wutian screamed. His lifebound beast was gravely injured, thanks to him underestimating his opponent, and he was all the madder for it. Just as he was about to draw his sword, a thundercloud formed above him and sent nine lightning serpents swirling down toward him. Meow Meow had used Chaos Disaster as Ying Huo took on the condor.

The poor condor was once more ordered to take the hits and was grounded by the lightning. Just as it was about to get up again, a gigantic black beast of thunderous fury pressed it back down on the ground. Meow Meow's red claws pierced its feathers and flesh. All twenty of its toxic claws sank into the

bird, causing it to struggle and shriek despite it being more massive than Meow Meow in its Regal Chaosfiend form.

With the toxin entering its bloodstream, it would no doubt be taken out soon. They weren't nearly as powerful as Ying Huo and Meow Meow to begin with, yet they dared underestimate their enemies, only to be humiliated like Su Yiran. Before Fan Wutian could understand how his condor was defeated, he yelled and came charging at Meow Meow with his greatsword, intent on taking its head.

"Hey, look here when I'm teaching you what it really means to use a sword," said a voice all of a sudden.

Fan Wutian would never forget what he saw when he turned back. The little chick's wings were like two flaming golden swords radiating sword ki. With a snide smile, it struck with the Voidgod Sword Intent, Countercurrent.

"Impossible!" He could immediately tell it was a battle art above heavenly rank.

Chapter 306 - Still Want to See the Bane-rings?

Fan Wutian had been struggling to learn a heavenly-ranked sword art the whole time. Yet while he was still struggling, he saw a little chick use such a sword art before him. It was definitely not a mere unity-ranked sword art! He could do nothing but counter with a supreme unity-ranked battle art, the Gale Greatsword Art.

"I don't believe it!"

He must have been seeing things. What followed was him crossing bouts twice with Ying Huo. The first move by the little chick was Countercurrent; the instant their swords clashed, Fan Wutian haggardly dodged as his greatsword was about to bite into his own hands. He slammed into a tree, crushing it into small splinters.

Ying Huo followed up with Starfall, prompting Fan Wutian to roar and push himself to the limits as he used the only heavenly-ranked sword art he had decent comprehension of, the first move of the Gale Greatsword Art. His strike caused strong winds to blow at the splintered tree, reducing it to even smaller pieces. That strike was infused with a little heavenly will.

However, it was far from comparison with Ying Huo's Starfall. While he was two levels higher than Ying Huo in terms of beast ki, his thirty-six spiritsources paled in comparison to Ying Huo's infernalsource that was equivalent to more than sixty spiritsources, not to mention the quality of his beast ki.

Starfall slammed the greatsword out of Fan Wutian's hands and cut through his wrist with a single slash. He cried out in pain as he was sent flying, breaking through a few trees before landing on the dying Trihead Gale Condor. Like brothers, beastmaster and beast were suffering alike.

Looking up, they saw the two terrifying little critters looking down on them and felt unimaginable fear. Fan Wutian's swordsmanship that he trained so hard on had easily been crushed by a mere little chick.

The little chick knocked on his head and tossed him his severed hand. "Young man, don't mess around if you have no business being here. Go back home and have your parents reconnect your hand."

As one of the three most powerful Cloudmist disciples, Fan Wutian was terrified to the point his face paled. He endured the pain and scrambled like a madman. Nobody had managed to crush his will so utterly before this.

Ying Huo shook its head and said, "Young people these days really can't take any stress...." The little chick had easily pushed Fan Wutian to his limits without even trying.

If that wasn't already bad enough, Fan Wutian felt another shock and tripped when he saw Tianming again. He rolled on the ground before he got up, then picked up his hand and shuddered.

"Did the Grand-Orient Sect send a demon?" There hasn't been someone of Tianming's caliber for a hundred generations of prime disciples, and this was only the start. Yet that wouldn't stop Tianming from giving his all. A seventh-level Unity beastmaster like him had actually managed to deal with the ninth-level Unity Xi Menglin without breaking a sweat.

The beast ki in his infernalsource and lightningsource really put him far above his opponent. At the very beginning of the fight, Tianming had turned into a shadow as he charged in, executing the first fist of the Trivita Fiendfist, Skyshaker, using his black arm. Xi Menglin could only catch a flash of a dark color.

"Buzz off!" He opened his hands and used a supreme unity-ranked battle art, the Oceanspan Palm, manifesting a sea in front of him and using his beast ki to reduce his opponent's attacks to nothing. At the same time, the Astral Crab he was seated on struck with its two pincers in an attempt to intercept Tianming.

Even then, he wasn't able to block that punch that could shatter even the skies, let alone the ocean. The merciless fist broke through the barrier like bamboo and instantly caused an explosion.

Right as the Oceanspan Palm was neutralized, the two beast kis surged and sent the punch digging into Xi Menglin's abdomen, turning his face bloody red. His innards were probably reduced to powder from the punch and he was blown back from the sheer force, then crashed into a boulder. The shock shook his body and caused him to spit out blood before he collapsed, unmoving.

Right at that moment, the crab's pincers were about to pierce through Tianming. Even though he had tried to dodge, they managed to grab onto his left arm. The crab was going to snap Tianming's left arm in half, only for it to use too much force and crush its own pincers instead. They should've been tough enough to crush even bestial weapons!

Tianming pulled his arm out and saw the cracks on the pincers, then punched the crab on the back, creating a spider web fracture across its carapace. The crab spit out white foam as it crashed to the ground. It struggled to get up, despite how sharp its legs and pincers were.

The battle had ended almost too easily. Tianming clapped his hands and looked to the side, seeing Fan Wutian piss himself as he scrambled away after being beaten by Ying Huo.

"Even though Ling'er's asleep now, we really did make a lot of progress this past half month, far more than others imagine." This time around, disciples on the level of Fan Wutian and Xi Menglin weren't his targets. If they blocked his way, he would take care of them. However, he still went to Xi Menglin and held him by his chin. Xi Menglin shuddered again, but couldn't run even if he wanted to.

"Mmmmwffh...." He couldn't even speak with how his mouth was gripped. Nothing but terror could be seen in his eyes, and his arrogant demeanor was nowhere to be seen.

"Still want to see the bane-rings?" Tianming asked.

"Mmmwff!" He struggled to shake his head, then spat out another mouthful of blood.

"So now do you believe that I took Yuwen Shendu's place here?"

"Mmmff...." He nodded as he shed tears of pain.

"Then remember how badly you ended up today. Tell your grandfather, Gu Qiuyu, that the bane-rings are merely symptoms. If he really wants to see if I'm a pentabane, just have him watch me perform."

"Mmmff!" He nodded more earnestly this time.

Tianming stood up and said, "Though, you got me to think through one thing. Geniuses are meant to compete with each other. You must be pretty impressive in the Southsky Sect, for you to see yourself so highly. But the moment you meet someone who can completely dominate you, your fear and terror are completely identical to a normal person's."

This was a warning for Xi Menglin, as well as for himself. He should never be satisfied just because people called him a genius; nothing but power could ensure his security at any moment. There was always a chance he could be defeated, too. There was no saying when he would end up like Xi Menglin.

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"Who's this fellow? He fought one against two and defeated two ninth-level Unity beastmasters from the Southsky Sect and Cloudmist Sword School!"

Near the Throughgate, the battles on the path could clearly be seen. Many people were battling seventh-order wildbeasts, so not many people had paid attention to Tianming's fight.

"White hair?" Song Yixue seemed to recall someone like that.

"Those two lifebound beasts are... a chick and a cat. However, the cat turned bigger..." said Ling Yichen, his voice rough.

The three of them watched in shock as they looked at each other in disbelief.

"It must be a coincidence! That can't be him!" Song Yixue cried as her voice broke from sheer shock.

"What was his name again? Jiang Tianming?" Jin Yixuan said as he recalled Vermillion Bird.

"No, it's Li Tianming," Song Yixue corrected. For Jin Yixuan to forget his surname meant that they really hadn't thought much of Tianming back then. However, they still remembered the fight involving the white-haired youth and his cat and chick three to four months ago at Heaven's Sanctum.

"Are you sure it's him?" Ling Yichen said with a shaky voice. He had lived a long time and he'd never seen something like that before.

"Let me see what he looks like!" Jin Yixuan said as he stretched his head out. It was a little too far off, but that youth happened to turn to him at that moment. He was so taken aback his face paled. "That's Li Tianming! His left arm has bestial metamorphosis! It's definitely him!"

"What in the world..." Song Yixue said in a shaky voice.

Ling Yichen gasped and said, "Lin Xiaoting was first-level Unity, right? Back then, Li Tianming was about at that level too. But now, he had just defeated someone at the ninth level. He could even hold his own against Heavenly Will! That means he broke through a whole stage within three or four months!"

"Nobody in the Grand-Orient Realm is supposed to be capable of that!" Jin Yixuan cried.

As for Song Yixue, she merely stared blankly at Tianming, completely unlike the dignified invigilator from back then.

"That's right. It's impossible. Even Elysian Long took three years to go through Unity. And compared to most other Elysian Children, who started cultivating at three years old, Elysian Long started relatively late. Even Elysian Yi took five or six years to go through Unity, right?"

Ling Yichen's brows were furrowed so deep they were going to remain wrinkles. They felt a chill as they discussed the matter further.

"What kind of growth did he have back at Vermillion Bird?" Ling Yichen asked.

"We don't know, but we can be sure that he broke through two levels from the time he went to the Abyssal Battlefield to his battle with Lin Xiaoting. I heard Li Jingyu say he's the illegitimate son of Li Wudi, so he's definitely a true descendant of the Li Saint Clan. Don't tell me his cultivation shot up when he returned to his clan?"

Their worlds were falling apart as they spoke.

"Perhaps he awakened many bane-rings, three or four even," Song Yixue said. While they were quite detached from the matter, they were still rather familiar with Tianming.

"Boss, this won't do. There's definitely something wrong with him. We have to inform the elysian king and elysian elders about this immediately!" Song Yixue warned.

"They won't give us an audience. We should go to Elysian Long instead!" Ling Yichen said. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that they would be treated like madmen if they bothered reporting this. "Let's not be hasty and take a few more looks to be sure."

"Alright!"

Even if that were the case, they found it hard to believe something like this. Was that youth from back then really as terrifying as he seemed? If so, Jin Yixuan and Song Yixue shuddered, as Tianming's current prowess was rather close to their own, now.

Chapter 307 - Crimsonblood Fiendbat, Stillocean Godwhale

Around an hour later, Tianming estimated himself to be at the halfway point of the mountain. He still had to climb at least half of the path before he would arrive at his goal. Having dealt with Xi Menglin and Fan Wutian, he encountered two more sixth-order wildbeasts that weren't too much of a threat to him.

"Hey, run faster!" The moment Tianming said that, Meow Meow and Ying Huo raced, one frantically flapping its wings and the other jumping about the terrain. All of a sudden, they disappeared.

"It's definitely a heavenly pattern barrier!"

Within it, anything could happen. While barriers weren't really visible on the surface, it would be hard to step out once trapped within, not to mention all the weird goings on within. Heavenly pattern barriers were one of the trials of the Throughpath, and there was little he could do but face it when he entered one.

While Ying Huo and Meow Meow had gone in, their telepathic connection with him was still there. As he wasn't willing to let them face danger alone, he decided to go in with them. The moment he stepped onto where they were last seen, he felt as if he had passed through a thin membrane, then the world changed.

In an instant, the dense forest around him turned into a world filled with bloody mist, not unlike how it seemed within the Bloodbane Barrier. While the density of the mist was far from compare to that legendary barrier, it was still enough to obscure his view. Not to mention, if he breathed the mist into his body, he would feel slightly intoxicated, confused, and drowsy, though he noticed that, for some reason, those effects didn't apply to him, thanks to the Prime Tower.

"Guess it's just a matter of walking out then." He immediately spotted his lifebound beasts using his third eye.

"What in the world is this?" Ying Huo asked, stumbling around in confusion.

"We're within a heavenly pattern barrier. Don't just move around aimlessly. I can see much further, so follow behind me," Tianming instructed.

The quickest way to leave the barrier was to progress through it. As the mist greatly impeded one's sight, it would make it really hard to traverse, but Tianming could at least ensure he was moving up the mountain path with his third eye.

"There's someone fighting up ahead." All of them heard some noise not far away.

"Do we get involved?" Ying Huo asked.

"Let's go and see. If it's the Weisheng siblings, we'll give them a hand."

"Ah... I see," Ying Huo said with a chuckle.

"Hehe..." Meow Meow snickered, too.

"Don't even begin. I'm just doing what Master asked me to."

"As a fellow man, I understand. No need to bother explaining it," Ying Huo teased.

"Don't worry. Once Ling'er wakes up, I'll definitely keep my mouth shut about you flirting around. But mess with this cat's sleep and you'll know what's coming," the black cat said, finally finding something he could use.

"Say whatever you want. I have nothing to be sorry for."

Soon, they had passed through a forest and a ravine, arriving at a river covered in bloody mist. He could see it from higher ground. This was the Throughpath River, a river that flowed downward from Heaven's Elysium. If he followed it, he would arrive near the Throughgate.

The four southsky disciples would have an easier time traversing the river. Right now, a battle was taking place in it, though it was less 'fair fight' and more 'being ganged up on'. A group of wildbeasts were attacking a beastmaster and their lifebound beast.

The beastmaster was clad in a white dress that fluttered in the breeze as she stood atop the river, her eyes completely tranquil despite the situation she was in. The lifebound beast within the river was a large, white whale. It was much bigger than most mature lifebound beasts, to the point that the river could barely hold it. The whale was as large as its beastmaster was beautiful. Tianming had read in some files that this beautiful white whale was a fourth-order saint beast called a Stillocean Godwhale.

It was a terrifying water-type lifebound beast, easily able to control the currents whenever it was in water, making it the ruler of the sea. In contrast, it was slightly weaker on land, though that didn't stop it from utilizing most of its potential in rivers.

Usually, beastmasters with water-type lifebound beasts were considered to have unstable capabilities, for it could span a wide range depending on the terrain they were fighting on. Though, that wasn't without merit, for it made defending the Southsky Sect an easy matter. With the raging ocean surrounding it, most of the sect's members had lifebound beasts that could roam in the seas. As such, it would be much harder for Heaven's Elysium to swallow them, compared to the Onyx Sect.

As they were operating within a relatively limited river, their combat capabilities were slightly hampered, causing them to have a slightly harder time fending off the sixth-order wildbeasts. Tianming noted that the wildbeasts were all blood-colored bats, around twenty in total. They were ugly, but huge, with many threatening spikes all over their bodies. Their savage air made them contrast quite significantly from the ivory-like whale that truly fit well with a beauty like Weisheng Ruosu. Even so, she seemed a little haggard, having to fend off the bats' attacks at the same time.

"What are those wildbeasts called?" Tianming calmly asked as he suddenly showed up before her.

"Crimsonblood Fiendbats. They have two awakened abilities, Confounding Screech and Crimsonblood Miasma," she said, glancing at him as she put up her guard against the attacks. She leaned against her whale most of the time and was faring quite well, but the same couldn't be said for the lone whale; there were traces of blood on it.

Tianming noted that the bats would often gather together and let out an ear-piercing screech that could easily confuse and stagger people. Not to mention, they spat out the bloody mist nonstop, filling the area within the barrier. If Weisheng Ruosu didn't leave soon, she would be in trouble.

"Need help?"

"You think?" She rolled her eyes at him.

Ying Huo laughed and patted Tianming's head. "Now, my little bro, go save the damsel like a hero."

"You do it then!" Tianming said, taking the chance to fling the little chick toward the bats. "Here's a snack for you!"

Ying Huo rammed straight into the head of a bat, only to get up and see the bat glaring back at it.

"What are you looking at?" it snapped.

Just as the Crimsonblood Fiendbat was about to erupt, Ying Huo spat out Infernal Flame at its face. Almost instantly, the bat was set aflame as it spiraled down into the water that didn't help extinguish the flames one bit.

"The way you use your whale is too restricted. It should be fighting at its best in the ocean. Leave this here to me," Tianming said as he took out Archfiend. This bloody weapon was the most effective one to use against the bats.

As for Meow Meow, it was still testing out the capabilities of its poisonous claws. They were dealing quite a bit of damage to the bats. After morphing into a Regal Chaosfiend, Meow Meow jumped up and latched onto a bat with its teeth before tearing its chest apart with its toxic claws.

Ying Huo, on the other hand, used both battle arts and abilities, decimating a wide area despite its small size.

As for Tianming, he remained pretty still, only flicking his wrist to lash out with Archfiend using Soul Hook, easily piercing the heads of the bats. The three of them ushered in a complete bloodbath. With Weisheng Ruosu helping them out, the bats were soon eradicated, with the remnants escaping with their lives.

"Done deal," Tianming said, calling his critters back to him.

Weisheng Ruosu carefully tended to her whale's injuries by applying some spirit herbs on its wounds before letting it into her lifebound space to recuperate. Turning back to Tianming, she said, "Thank you so much, really."

"It's no big deal. Let's go," Tianming said.

"Do you want to travel with me?"

"I do. My master asked me to look after you."

"Who is your master?"

"Ye Shaoqing."

"Oh, my father's friend," she said with a smile. She then tagged along with Tianming as he scanned for the path with his third eye.

"Seeing your performance just now, I believe you're a pentabane and that you defeated Yuwen Shendu," she said, looking ever so alluring, like a ruby clouded in bloody mist. However, Tianming didn't

dare ogle her, for Feiling was literally resting on his chest. He felt a slight pang of guilt the more he looked at her unnecessarily. As for Ying Huo, it kept snickering the whole way before Tianming stuffed it into his lifebound space.

"So you didn't believe me before?"

"I did."

"Why is that?"

"I trust my dad's judgment, not to mention you didn't seem like someone who would claim to do more than you actually could." She looked at him as if he was some interesting specimen.

"Well, you're not wrong. I'm pretty low key myself." He was freaking out over the assignment his master had given him. Initially, he felt fine about it, but after the little chick's teasing, he now felt like he was doing something wrong. It didn't help that her lifebound beast was a freaking whale.

What was even worse was, with how large the heavenly pattern barrier was, it was easy for him to lose his way even with his third eye. That sapped quite a lot of time from him and he felt he might not be able to make it. All he could do was hurry up along the way without chatting too much.

Weisheng Ruosu treated him rather well. If it were any other Heavenly Will disciple, they would die laughing right after hearing that Tianming was sent to protect them.

"I'm going to speed up. Can you keep up?"

"Yes."

Tianming then went all out, and much to her dismay, she found herself having a little trouble keeping up as she wondered if he was truly only at Unity. It was one thing for him to be able to kill Yuwen Shendu; perhaps the latter's cultivation at Heavenly Will hadn't been stabilized yet. Not to mention, battles to the death were hard to predict by nature.

As for killing the Crimsonblood Fiendbats, it could be that his techniques were uniquely suited for the task. But for his speed to be even higher than hers, something had to be amiss. All she could do was push herself to keep up, forcing her to drop any notion of keeping up appearances as the Heavenly Will disciple among the two.

With their rate of ascent, they would soon reach the Throughgate. Tianming was already at the foot of the door, just about to head in. Right then, he saw around six people nearby. If all of them entered the door, there would only be one place left. Thankfully, they hadn't done so yet. The barrier had delayed all of them quite a lot after all.

However, what were they doing standing outside instead of going in? Tianming immediately recognized the leader of the six as the Cloudmist Sword School's Sikong Tianchen. From their encounter yesterday, he could tell that he was rather powerful, with his sword intent in particular being rather sharp.

Kneeling in front of Sikong Tianchen was a youth clad in green and covered in sword cuts, bloodied all over. He was Weisheng Qingluan. Sikong Tianchen had a sword to his ear and would be able to take it whenever he pleased. Though, he wasn't looking at Weisheng Qingluan, but rather in the direction of the path. He soon spotted Tianming and Weisheng Ruosu.

Chapter 308 - Playing Games

They had reached the end of the Throughpath. Instead of exiting immediately, the Onyx and Cloudmist disciples had remained there. Tianming knew exactly what their purpose was—they were waiting for the disciples of the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect.

This was an event in every Realm War. It used to be Heaven's Elysium and Cloudmist Sword School jointly hunting disciples of the Onyx Sect, Southsky Sect, and Grand-Orient Sect. But now that there was less prey and more hunters, the prey became precious.

There were seven places, so only that many from the Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect could participate in the Realm Wars. Weisheng Qingluan, Zhao Lingzhou, and the other Unity stage disciples were the main prey targeted by Sikong Tianchen and the other hunters. As for Weisheng Ruosu, they would leave her for the Realm Wars.

Tianming swept his gaze across the group. Aside from Weisheng Qingluan, there were five others—two disciples from the Cloudmist Sword School, one man and one woman; and three from Onyx Sect, two men and one woman.

There are a total of five onyx disciples, two of whom are twin brothers at Heavenly Will. The remaining three are at ninth-level Unity. Since the twin brothers weren't present, they had most likely made it out of the Throughpath.

Sikong Tianchen and four ninth-level Unity disciples had made Weisheng Qingluan kneel while waiting for other Southsky Sect and Grand-Orient Sect disciples to show up. After all, the battle on the Throughpath was still ongoing. Their prey would eventually reach the Throughgate and welcome humiliation!

At this moment, fiery gazes from both sides instantly collided.

"Big Sister, save me!" Weisheng Qingluan shouted.

"Shut up!" Sikong Tianchen glanced at him with cold, gloomy eyes that eventually boiled as they swept over Tianming.

"Let him go," said Weisheng Ruosu. She had been prepared for Onyx Sect and the Cloudmist Sword School to attack them, but she never expected it would be Sikong Tianchen. This man had just tried giving her a gift yesterday!

"That's impossible. The Southsky Sect doesn't know what's good for you and can't see the situation clearly. As Weisheng Tianlan's son, he has to crawl his way out of here!" said Sikong Tianchen.

"Would I need to do that as well?" asked a cold-eyed Weisheng Ruosu.

"Of course. Who do you think you are? Brother Tianchen presented you with a gift, yet you behaved all lofty. You chose the hard way! What's the point in us waiting here, if not to humiliate you?"

The speaker was the charming, pretty young woman next to Sikong Tianchen, the second Cloudmist disciple, Jing Xuan. Unhappy to see Weisheng Ruosu and Tianming journey together, Sikong Tianchen didn't refute her words.

"If that's the case, there's nothing left to say. If you're a man, let Qingluan go. You and I will fight," Tianming interjected.

Although most of Qingluan's injuries were surface wounds, he was in a miserable state. How was he to explain this to Ye Shaoqing? Unfortunately, looking for Weisheng Qingluan on the Throughpath wasn't easy.

"Who do you think you are? Do you think you're worthy to fight Sikong Tianchen?" scoffed one of the Onyx Sect disciples.

Prior to this, they were prey, but now it was their turn to vent countless generations of humbling on others. The three onyx disciples appeared strange and gloomy, one with dark skin, the other pale and bloodless, and the last tinged with blood.

At a glance, they could tell Tianming was still at Unity. Although they were uncertain as to which level, as long as he wasn't at Heavenly Will, he would come to a miserable end.

"My Snow Silkworm has just taken a dump. Shall we get these three to enjoy it together? Why, Sikong Tianchen, have you been so mesmerized by the beauty that you're afraid to hurt her?" mocked another onyx disciple.

Glaring at her in reply, Sikong Tianchen kicked Weisheng Qingluan toward Jing Xuan. "Watch him. I'll deal with Weisheng Ruosu. As for this nobody, I'm curious to see how you onyx disciples play with him."

The onyx disciples roared with laughter.

"Sikong Tianchen, is he your rival in love? We won't go easy on him then! We've prepared a lot of interesting games. If you hadn't taken the lead, we would've tried it on this young man first. Come on then, let's give the Grand-Orient Sect's prime disciple a taste of our methods. Our poisonous insects will bore into his body and suck on his bone marrow. Their larvae will flood from his bloodstream into his head and feast on his brain matter. It's finally our turn to have some fun."

The Elysian Children used to give them all hard times. After all, the Realm Wars were no ordinary confrontations. Humiliation and torture was par for the course, since the Theocracy of Ancients didn't care. Why did generations of prime disciples return shrouded in so much fear they never awoke from their nightmares?

This was something Weisheng Ruosu understood. Fortunately, the one they faced was Sikong Tianchen, otherwise it wouldn't be as simple as a few bruises. But would Sikong Tianchen really show mercy? Of course not.

"Ruosu, you can head directly to the Throughgate, but not Weisheng Qingluan. This Grand-Orient Sect trash stays as well." Pointing his sword at Weisheng Ruosu, Sikong Tianchen handed Tianming over to the Onyx Sect disciples in a show of contempt and resentment.

"I choose to fight a hypocrite like you!" Her eyes were glazed with frost.

"Very well!" Sikong Tianchen smiled.

He had given her chances time and again, yet Weisheng Ruosu showed no appreciation and had even joined another man. How could he bear this? Every rejection was seared into his heart. The moment he

pointed his sword at Weisheng Ruosu, he'd already made his decision. Just as his grandfather said, there's no point being sentimental. Patiently practice the sword and the results would be apparent.

A storm had been brewing in the Grand-Orient Realm since the submission of the Onyx Sect.

"Ruosu, we've always been neck and neck with each other. However, we've been fighting on Southsky Island, your home ground. This time, I have the advantage." Sikong Tianchen glanced at the barren hills nearby. After crossing the river, there wasn't a drop of water in sight.

Weisheng Ruosu simply ignored him. Fortunately, Weisheng Qingluan suffered no further injuries from Jing Xuan.

Smiling insidiously, the three onyx disciples approached Tianming and quickly surrounded him. Weisheng Qingluan was the first prey to step into their trap, but had been taken away by Sikong Tianchen. Right now, Tianming made the perfect subject to test out their many interesting games. Everyone watching couldn't wait to see how Tianming crumbled.

"You'd better not cry too early. We won't kill you, just play with you until the end of the Throughpath battle. You'll have all the time you need to slowly enjoy this."

All three of them were at ninth-level Unity. Their purpose wasn't to defeat Tianming, but to torture and humiliate him. Therefore, they didn't care that it was three on one.

As they spoke, their lifebound beasts crept out from the jungle behind them—all third-order saint beasts! The first was a Nonapoisson Lizard, a huge, rough-skinned lizard with nine different toxins and colorful poisonous bumps all over its skin.

The second beast had thousands of fiery legs from head to toe—a Thousand-Legged Flame Centipede.

And the third was a Snow Silkworm, enveloped in a dreadful chill that froze its surroundings. These lifebound beasts were of the poisonous insect variety.

The northwest, where the Onyx Hole was located, was a place that poisonous insects and snakes abounded. The three onyx disciples and their lifebound beasts surrounded Tianming, staring down on him with pity.

"You'll be the first pathetic bug to experience our gifts," they laughed. It came as no surprise that their elders above the Throughgate were laughing along with them.

Sikong Tianchen flashed a sinister grin. "You should thank me, or the first one to be tortured would've been your brother."

"So you wounded him with your sword?"

"That's nothing," scoffed Sikong Tianchen.

"I never imagined you were such a lowlife."

"Lowlife? You've truly misunderstood me. But then again, you're too naive," replied Sikong Tianchen.

Her younger brother was being held captive while she had to confront Sikong Tianchen in the most unfavorable environment. Additionally, Tianming faced certain peril. The only thing that reassured her

was Tianming's wordless calm. His expression revealed no fear or awe, but... ease? She believed Sikong Tianchen had noticed it as well.

"I thought you had a good eye but to think you'd fall for such pompous, shallow trash who even dyed his hair white," laughed Sikong Tianchen.

Weisheng Ruosu couldn't be bothered to explain the misunderstanding.

His right hand holding Archfiend and left hand clenched into a fist, Tianming stood firm, his two lifebound beasts on his shoulder. Their tiny appearances drew laughter from the crowd.

"Get him!" The three onyx disciples swarmed.

At that moment, Archfiend shook.

"Each person to a team. The fastest wins!" Ying Huo had been obsessed with competing lately.

"You got it!"

The two lifebound beasts darted out, leaving afterimages in their wake.

Tianming was delighted to compete. Would he lose?

Since Ying Huo and Meow Meow had chosen their targets, Tianming directly locked on to the third onyx disciple, whose name didn't matter. His lifebound beast was the Thousand-Legged Flame Centipede. Tianming took a step forward and the whip in his hand flew out at a dazzling speed.

Soul Hook! Death Requisition! Transcendence!

Three lashes in a row. The first shattered the beastmaster's weapon. Then Death Requisition Hook was unleashed upon the man, leaving a bloody trail as the beastmaster was tossed thousands of meters away, his figure disappearing in the distance. Transcendence accurately hit the centipede, causing a resounding click. With that single move, the centipede was almost torn in two, its halves only connected by a bit of flesh.

Chapter 309 - Sword Duel, Cloudmist Celestial Sword

Everything had happened in the blink of an eye. The silent, white-haired young man was actually ten times more brutal than the onyx disciple who was famous for their ferocity!

One whip to destroy his weapon, a second to send him flying thousands of meters away, leaving him foaming at the mouth. And a third whip to nearly tear his lifebound beast into two.

Was a Unity disciple capable of such a feat?

However, this was only part of the shock. On the other two sides, the scene had the onlookers prickling in goosebumps. A thunder-type beast shaped like a lion, tiger, and leopard fought hand-to-hand with the Nonapoisson Lizard. Unafraid of the latter's virulence, it even confronted the lizard with its blood-red claws!

Who would fall first?

Even after being poisoned, the thunder beast remained in high spirits, while the lizard lay belly-up on the ground, vomiting black blood. The results were shocking indeed.

Which was the real poisonous beast?

Not only was it poisonous, its thunder was menacing. The thunder beast's tail struck the onyx disciple, piercing his lower abdomen as Chaos Disaster rained down from the sky. In an instant, the onyx disciple was turned into a charred mess on the ground. Although the beast was slightly slower than Tianming, everything had still happened in a split second.

Before anyone knew what was happening, the beastmaster's body was scorched by lightning while the Nonapoint Lizard vomited black blood, appearing as if it had been poisoned! Who could have imagined such a scene?

Needless to say, the little chick's brilliant display of sword arts, combined with its abilities, was equally shocking. It alternated between the Voidgod Sword Intent and Life-Death WhipArt, dissolving its opponent's icy attack with its Infernal Armor and leaving them riddled with holes from its Skyscorch Featherblast.

"Die!"

Filled with passion, the little chick exploded with tremendous strength, easily restraining its opponent. Burnt to a crisp, the Snow Silkworm was instantly defeated while the beastmaster received a sword through her chest.

"Beautiful, I heard you wanted to play with me. What kind of games did you have in mind?" Ying Huo stepped all over her forehead in a show of arrogance and condescension.

Having suffered such a mental blow, the onyx disciple's injuries were so severe she vomited blood and fainted.

"Honey, it looks like you're not as strong as you think you are. You can forget about playing with this chicken," Ying Huo smiled sarcastically. By the time he flew over, Tianming had already dealt with his opponent.

"Dammit, that makes me second!"

Tianming was the fastest, followed by Ying Huo and Meow Meow. In fact, the time difference between the three was only a matter of seconds. After the evolution of their bloodlines, Tianming's lifebound beasts had soared in strength. They would no longer have to suffer degradation.

Their real threat now was the Heavenly Will opponent. Those at Unity deserved only to be crushed. And to think they had wanted to play games with Tianming!

The instant defeat, as well as the sorry state of the onyx disciples and their lifebound beasts, made quite a visual impact. This time, when the three onyx disciples looked at Tianming, their eyes were filled with fear.

When Tianming looked up, he found Weisheng Ruoso staring blankly at him. Such a short period of time wasn't enough for her battle with Sikong Tianchen to even begin.

Oh no, looks like another predictable tale of poser saves the damsel in distress. Upon meeting those astonished eyes, Tianming knew he had walked into yet another bloody cliché.

"I must compose myself. If I do this, Ling'er will strangle me the moment she awakens."

The suggestive looks coming from Ying Huo made him even more embarrassed.

"If I were you, I'd either leave her alone or give it my all. Once you kill Sikong Tianchen, you can embrace the beauty," Ying Huo snickered.

"Nonsense, I'm not that kind of man!" Tianming retorted.

He swept his gaze past Sikong Tianchen, only to discover the surging sword ki within the man's eyes was now directed towards himself.

"What's your name?" demanded Sikong Tianchen.

In truth, his views had been subverted in the short span of ten breaths. Never had he seen anyone at Unity defeat three disciples at ninth-level Unity at the same time. And these were outstanding disciples from Onyx Sect! Even he might not have been able to achieve that with such speed.

Though he was astonished, it wasn't enough to unsettle his mind. Instead, a terrifying sword intent rose within him.

"He's Sikong Jiansheng. Hurry up and call him Granddaddy." As if scorning the calm scene, Ying Huo answered in lieu of Tianming.

"How dare you!" Sikong Tianchen immediately drew his grade-eight bestial weapon, the Cloudmist Celestial Sword.

"No, how dare you! So you have a crush on the sister, but you bully the younger brother. You're a coward without a backbone, and to top it off, you're one ugly bastard. Are you worthy of the little beauty? Come, take a good look at your granddaddy, Sikong Jiansheng. That's what handsome looks like; that's a real show of strength! You should give up and call little Miss Weisheng here grandmammy!" Ying Huo's taunting immediately drew the sword cultivator's ire.

"Mind your lifebound beast! Or else... "

"Or else what? Coward, if you're thinking of screwing your granddaddy, then get to it. Enough with your longwindedness and ogling at your grandmammy! If I were as cowardly as you, I would've castrated myself instead of showing up and embarrassing myself!"

The mouthful of saliva Ying Huo spat towards Sikong Tianchen flickered forth like the flash of a sword. Sikong Tianchen dodged, his eyes spewing flames.

"Since you want so badly to die, I shall fulfill your wish!" roared Sikong Tianchen. On top of having his love snatched away, he had been humiliated by a little chick. The raging sword intent converged in Tianming's direction.

Dumbfounded, Tianming wished he could sew Ying Huo's mouth shut. Clearly the little chick wanted to watch Feiling go berserk on him, hence the continuous provocation. Without even a word from him, Ying Huo had managed to infuriate Sikong Tianchen all on its own.

"You misunderstand—"

Before he could finish his sentence, Sikong Tianchen's two fourth-order saint beasts appeared. With the Cloudmist Celestial Sword in hand and his lifebound beasts by his side, Sikong Tianchen's sword ki raged, revealing his sharp edge. Without a doubt, he was a strong opponent.

This was the first time Tianming had come across twin phoenix lifebound beasts comparable to real dragons and qilins. Although Ying Huo was an Aeternal Infernal Phoenix, equivalent to the phoenix's ancestor, it still looked like a chicken.

The two phoenixes before him were true divine birds, one blue and the other crimson. Their magnificent feathers, slender figures, gigantic wings, gorgeous tail feathers, and elegant claws looked so perfect together. Their lofty, contemptuous temperaments reflected the nobility of their blood. Compared to them, Ying Huo seemed like a poor beggar before a prince and princess—not only pathetic, but tiny.

The Blueflame Phoenix was male, while the Crimsonflame Phoenix was female. Sikong Tianchen stood between them, his fierce gaze completely locked on to Tianming.

"Sikong Tianchen, leave him alone. Our grievances will be solved on our own!" said Weisheng Ruosu.

"Get out!" With only Tianming in his eyes, Sikong Tianchen didn't spare her a glance.

"You should save your brother," said Tianming.

"Alright, be careful," warned Weisheng Ruosu.

"Don't worry, all you have to do is devote your entire life to him," Ying Huo chimed in.

Tianming had no time to shut the chick up, since Sikong Tianchen was directly charging toward him with sword drawn.

"Heavenly Will!" Tianming narrowed his eyes. In fact, this was the opponent he desired. Sikong Tianchen had been at Heavenly Will longer than Yuwen Shendu. Even the late Yuwen scion might not have been his opponent. Additionally, Sikong Tianchen was a twin beastmaster with a pair of Phoenix lifebound beasts. Judging from the wave of his grade-eight bestial weapon, he had most likely mastered a heavenly-ranked battle art.

The Cloudmist Sword School specifically cultivated the sword, so his understanding must be profound. Having inherited the will of the previous generations, Sikong Tianchen was perhaps the most difficult opponent among all the sword cultivators Tianming had come across.

Majestic sword intent descended from the clouds.

This was an evenly matched opponent, capable of igniting Tianming's hot-bloodedness. Although the life and death battle with Yuwen Shendu was extraordinary, it was of no actual significance. This time, Tianming could test whether his real combat power could defeat a genius at Heavenly Will.

Putting away Archfiend, he drew the Onyx Dragon. At the same time, Ying Huo flew into the air and Meow Meow jumped off his shoulder, transforming into a Regal Chaosfiend. It was wrapped in endless thunder, its blood-red eyes staring at its opponent amidst the monstrous aura.

"You're not worthy of the sword," sneered Sikong Tianchen.

His words upset Tianming. Did he mean no one outside the Cloudmist Sword School could practice the sword? He had inherited the sword and all of its principles from Mu Yang—the road of righteousness and honor. It was the true path in Tianming's heart, the way of the chivalrous. Who said it was exclusive to the Cloudmist Sword School alone?

"You should use something else. Using the sword against me is like a child trying to display their skill before a master. Pick up your chain so you don't look like a fool," mocked Sikong Tianchen.

The smile on Tianming's face could hardly conceal the fire in his heart. There was no need to defend himself right now; his sword would do the talking. Tianming exchanged a meaningful glance with Ying Huo and Meow Meow.

"Fight!"

In fact, competing in the Realm Wars was a great opportunity to learn and experience battle with different styles that originated from the five major sects.

At this moment, Weisheng Ruosu began attacking. At Heavenly Will, Weisheng Ruosu required little effort to defeat Jing Xuan and save her brother.

"Big Sister, help him defeat Sikong Tianchen!" shouted Weisheng Qingluan.

"Slow down. Take a good look..." she replied.

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Alright, no more questions. Let's deal with your wounds first."

"You seem to have confidence in him," Weisheng Qingluan winked.

"Stop indulging in fantasies."

"But I can't help it!"

At this point, Tianming and Sikong Tianchen's swords came to a clash. One look and anyone could tell this wasn't a battle between Unity and Heavenly Will, but one between equals.

Chapter 310 - Three Thousand Cloudmist Swords

Facing such a powerful enemy, Tianming couldn't be more pumped, especially since his foe was also a twin beastmaster. It was going to be a chaotic group battle. In almost an instant, the Blueflame Phoenix used its spiritsource ability, Azureflame Twister, causing countless bluish flames to descend from the sky like a tornado. Seven of them came spinning toward Tianming.

In the next instant, Ying Huo used Infernal Armor, covering Tianming within it. Had he been a little late, Tianming would no doubt be in bad shape from the sheer heat alone. The fire resistance he shared with Ying Huo gave him quite an edge this time.

However, just because he had resistance didn't mean he was immune to all attacks. The foe's beast ki was so powerful that he couldn't just take the attack head on.

"Azuremetal Wing!" Sikong Tianchen yelled, causing his phoenix's wings to start to burn and harden like metal. Meow Meow could do nothing but dodge the wing swipes.

"You dare touch my brother? I'll show you!" Ying Huo snapped at the phoenix before it charged toward the Crimsonflame Phoenix.

"Hey pretty, look here! I'll show you what a real man should be like. That big blue chicken isn't your match."

"Buzz off!" Sikong Tianchen yelled in a rage. His lifebound beast was being harassed, and he struck back with his flaming sword ki.

"Haha!" The little chick used his Goldflame Featherblades to execute Starfall. It actually managed to infuse so much sword ki that it forced Sikong Tianchen back somewhat, much to his dismay.

How could a mere chicken use a heavenly-ranked battle art? Had he known that it was in fact a simplified saint-ranked battle art, he would have coughed out blood on the spot.

The status quo of the battle fluctuated nonstop. While Sikong Tianchen was still stupefied, Tianming and Meow Meow ganged up on the Blueflame Phoenix, with the former directly ramming it down from the sky. Even then, its wings were so hard that it caused Meow Meow to suffer some cuts, not to mention its fur started burning when it came into contact with the flames.

However, Tianming came striking right at that moment with Countercurrent. This strike of his was far more terrifying than before. Seeing that Tianming was about to take the wing off his phoenix, Sikong Tianchen finally reacted.

"You and your pesky tricks!" He used his heavenly-ranked sword art, Three Thousand Cloudmist Swords.

Having seen it in the files before, Tianming knew what the technique was. It would manifest three thousand cloudmist swords, each radiating a thousand strands of sword ki. The first strike was called Cloudtoss. The moment it was executed, the thousand strands of sword ki soared to the skies, dispersing the clouds above, then charged straight down. Beastmasters at Heavenly Will were truly formidable.

Tianming redirected his Countercurrent to neutralize at least eight hundred strands of sword ki, but the remaining two hundred struck his armor and many left some wounds on him.

"Amazing!" As expected of someone at Heavenly Will. That strike alone was far stronger than anything Yuwen Shendu could have performed.

"But of course. Why else would I say you shouldn't use swords before me?" Sikong Tianchen smirked and followed up with the next strike.

Three Thousand Cloudmist Swords, Windbreak!

This was a piercing strike that focused the thousand sword ki strands into one razor sharp strand. He sent it piercing toward Tianming's chest.

"Die!" Sikong Tianchen wasn't holding back. He knew he couldn't kill on the Throughpath, so he could simply hold back if he deemed it necessary. With his mastery over this move, he could redirect his sword intent at the last moment with ease.

Tianming closed his eyes and remained rooted to the ground. He intended to take that strike with Onyx Dragon. Initially, Ying Huo had wanted to come to his aid, having dealt with the Blueflame Phoenix, but Tianming told it to stop; he wanted to experience the sword intent of the Cloudmist Sword School first hand.

Voidgod Sword Intent, Starfall!

He stood his ground and slashed with both hands. This second clash of theirs put their sword intents on full display. Tianming had finally managed to crush all thousand strands of the opponent's sword ki, but the blowback from the strike still numbed his hands.

"Amazing!" he praised again.

"There's more to come!" Sikong Tianchen smirked again, deciding to go even harder.

Three Thousand Cloudmist Swords, Skyrush!

This was the true core of his sword intent, containing the will to rush to the skies and clouds above, breaking the celestial barrier and charging toward the heavens with one sword strike.

"Die!" Combined with his killing intent, this strike fully embodied the Heavenly Will stage's power.

All three of Sikong Tianchen's strikes had been unleashed within a span of ten breaths. They were as quick as they were ruthless—it was already impressive enough for Tianming to take two of them, but he would surely be crushed with the third!

However, what he saw was Tianming standing rooted like a mountain. He seemed to be using a similar sword stance as before, but the strength of his sword intent immediately soared to a few times what it used to be.

Voidgod Sword Intent, Cosmic Break!

Tianming had used this move to defeat Yuwen Shendu. It was fast, accurate and ruthless, embodying the will of denying the whole world. The two strikes clashed once more, causing shockwaves of rampaging sword ki to devastate the surrounding environment. Trees were uprooted, boulders were crushed, and the ground was turned to swiss cheese.

This time around, the one to be knocked away was Sikong Tianchen, his sword knocked flying and embedding itself into the ground.

"What the?!" He widened his eyes, looking at his hands in disbelief. The skin between his thumbs and index fingers had been ripped. Though it wasn't a significant injury, he didn't understand how he managed to lose out in the last clash.

His sword strike was stronger than mine! For a no-name disciple that didn't belong to the Cloudmist Sword School to have even better swordsmanship at Unity was a huge blow to him, even more than having his precious Weisheng Ruosu taken from him.

I've trained since I was three, and it took me fourteen years to comprehend our ancestral technique! That's what it took for me to learn Skyrush, yet I lost in terms of sword intent! His mind was empty but for that thought alone. This was no longer a matter of him being hurt; Tianming had actually bested him at the sword, even if only by a bit.

Even Tianming was shocked at the result. Sikong Tianchen was indeed a strong foe, given how Cosmic Break only gave him a slight edge. However, he wouldn't let up just because his opponent was dumbstruck and grounded.

He didn't charge toward Sikong Tianchen, but Ying Huo instead. He still didn't want to reveal all of his trump cards, after all. He felt it was enough for him to best Sikong Tianchen in swordsmanship. What mattered to him was victory, and it wouldn't do him much good to face off against Sikong Tianchen alone like a dumb fool.

By now, Ying Huo was fighting the Blueflame Phoenix. Right as the two were caught up in a messy brawl, Tianming came charging in. Despite the phoenix's fierce shriek, it wasn't able to take the pair's joint attack. Tianming didn't hold back and punched out with his left hand, executing Skyslayer. The punch landed on the phoenix's wing, immediately tearing it open and almost breaking its bones. Ying Huo immediately picked up on his intentions and unleashed three consecutive sword strikes at the phoenix's lower abdomen, causing it to cry out in agony. The balance was immediately tipped.

"Shameless!" Sikong Tianchen watched dumbfoundedly; he thought it was supposed to be a one-on-one, yet Tianming helped Ying Huo dominate his enemy instead.

"Childish." Tianming didn't bother with him, for he knew his two lifebound beasts would proceed to terrorize Sikong Tianchen's own. There were no gentlemen's agreements in group battles.

Using Voidgod Sword Intent and the Trivita Fiendfist, he followed up each sword strike with a punch. He then used Godringer—a move that required him to fight like a mad fiend. His white hair flared up as he struck. Sikong Tianchen rushed in to block with his sword, but was sent crashing into a boulder.

"You're courting death!" His eyes were bloodshot, and for him to still be able to stand upright, he was quite tough indeed. However, Tianming was even tougher. He used Cosmic Break once more. Though Sikong Tianchen managed to react to it, his sword was still sent flying again. Tianming then pierced his dragonformed sword into Sikong Tianchen's lower abdomen.

"You—"

Right as he was about to curse, Tianming smashed his face in, sending his head crashing against the boulder once more. Sikong Tianchen's eyes rolled back in his head as he collapsed like a fish out of water. It was finally over.

Tianming clapped his hands clean. It wasn't an easy fight, though he had many tricks up his sleeve and was ruthless enough to use them. It was easy to clean up once the balance of the fight had tipped in his favor.

Turning back, he saw that Ying Huo had made sure that the Blueflame Phoenix was poked full of holes. It knelt and begged as it cried for mercy.

As for the Crimsonflame Phoenix, it could no longer fight, especially after seeing its master and comrade defeated. The poison from Meow Meow's claws was quickly wearing it down. The battle ended with beastmaster and lifebound beasts all defeated. While Sikong Tianchen wasn't knocked out, he was at least shaken enough to be dazed.

"So, does my swordcraft pass?" Tianming asked.

"Pssst!" Sikong Tianchen spat out some saliva, only for it to land back on his face.

"Glad you think so. I hope you don't go around boasting like that again."

Tianming's words almost made Sikong Tianchen faint from anger. He didn't say he passed; he was only trying to spit! Right as he was about to snap, Tianming gave him a stomp on a face as he passed by, burying his head deeper into the mud.

"Mmmfff!" Mud flowed into Sikong Tianchen's mouth as he struggled to breathe. The bad-tasting mud, coupled with his messed up stomach and pierce wound, made for a recipe of searing pain. He paled from the sensation as cold sweat formed. If it weren't for his strong will, he'd have been begging for mercy. Even after Tianming stopped stomping, he looked completely haggard as he crawled back up, breathing desperately.

Eyes bloodshot, he howled, "Your swordsmanship is indeed strong. To be honest, I'm impressed. But you're too sneaky. There's no way you'll reach any real heights with that attitude! Not to mention, you're too arrogant. The Elysian Children saw all of your moves, not to mention the other two Heavenly Will beastmasters from the Onyx Sect! An affront to me is an affront to them! The moment you step into the Realm Wars will be the start of your nightmare!"

He shut his mouth so hard that it hurt.

"Thanks for your concern. You can go home to your sword school now."

Fan Wutian had already been sent running off by him, so all that remained were Sikong Tianchen and Jing Xuan. There was no way they would be able to step through the gate with Tianming around.

Though Sikong Tianchen had wanted to say something else, he only noticed how embarrassingly he had lost after seeing how Weisheng Ruosu looked at him. It wasn't even disdainful; she simply looked at him tepidly. It oozed so much disinterest that he could feel his heart bleeding out, only for it to worsen when he saw her smile at Tianming.

Alas, there was nothing he could do about it. All he could do was hope the Elysian Children and onyx disciples could make Tianming's life a living hell.