

The People's God: Sacrificing Trillions to Ascend

Chapter 101 - Mourning Deathcap's Lethality

The goblin army was already waiting beneath Huang Shengjun. The army numbered roughly 100 million strong and were segregated into four distinct battalions.

The first battalion consisted of 30 million Elite Hobgoblins and 10 million Unique mutated goblins known as Ogres. They were the vanguards of the army.

The second battalion, serving as the long-range units, were strategically placed in the middle. It consisted of 20 million Elite Goblin Slingers and Unique Goblin Archers each.

At the rear of the formation were the remaining two battalions. Both of these units specialized in long-range magic, with one battalion consisting entirely of Unique Burner Goblins, and the other, Unique Freezer Goblins.

The main fighting force of the army was frighteningly powerful, but the goblins commanding the entire army were by no means pushovers either. Over 1,000 Heroic goblins and 2 Goblin Lords sat atop fearsome wolves, positioned at the front of the army. Their superior equipment and the palpable sense of bloodlust they radiated clearly indicated their extensive battle experience. This represented the true strength Huang Shengjun possessed one year ago.

Undaunted by Huang Shengjun's goblin forces, Han Wu countered by summoning his locust army. The locust army, taking to the sky, appeared to be a very chaotic swarm, but they too were meticulously separated into five battalions.

The first battalion consisted of regular locusts. However, after being reinforced by the Rank 4 Sacred Object Law of Gluttony, they had ascended to become Unique locusts, their collective strength now comparable to that of Hobgoblins.

The second battalion consisted of Heavenly Demon Insects. These units possessed distinctive horns and were notably more capable in battle compared to a regular Unique locust

The third battalion was made up of Abyss Bugs. These units primarily functioned as meat shields, due to their incredibly tough exoskeletons and dense bodies.

The fourth battalion consisted of Dark Curse Bugs. These units could seamlessly blend into shadows and spit out curse-infused venom, making them the primary assassins of the locust army.

The fifth and final battalion consisted of the recently hatched Primal Locusts. They were characterized by their immense size, impressive strength, and exceptionally tough exoskeletons.

Like Huang Shengjun, Han Wu possessed and commanded his very own powerful high-ranking locusts. His army contained hundreds of thousands of Heroic Locustmen, each radiating an intimidating aura. Furthermore, he also had three remarkably strong Locustman Lords commanding his army. Under their collective control, the entire locust army displayed a terrifying bloodlust.

The sight of Han Wu's powerful army caused Huang Shengjun's expression to turn grim. Having clawed his way to the top from the very bottom, he clearly knew how frightening it was to face an enemy with overwhelming numbers on their side, especially one that boasted so many high-ranking fighters. He made a silent vow to exercise extreme caution, or he would undoubtedly be defeated.

Huang Shengjun issued his orders, and immediately, his two magic battalions, the Burner and the Freezer Goblins, began their assault. He further activated his Divine Skill: Concentrated Fire from his Legion Aspect to aid them.

The Burner and the Freezer Goblin battalions each unleashed a colossal fireball and a massive glacier, respectively, at the approaching locust swarm. Han Wu immediately commanded his locusts to evade those overwhelmingly powerful attacks. However, despite their successful evasive maneuvers, the lingering extreme heat and intense cold radiating from the spells still caused injuries to a significant number of locusts.

In retaliation, Han Wu ordered his locusts to fly over the goblin vanguard, directly targeting the Goblin Slingers and Goblin Archers first. The locusts flew with remarkable speed and successfully attacked Huang Shengjun's second battalion. The vanguard attempted to turn back to assist the second battalion, but they found their path blocked by a large army of Primal Locusts.

While Huang Shengjun's vanguard and long-range units were occupied, his magic-wielding battalions in the rear changed their strategy, beginning to shower the entire battlefield with glaciers and smaller fireballs in an attempt to disrupt the locust forces.

Han Wu issued repeated commands for his locusts to prioritize the Burner Goblins and Freezer Goblins, but Huang Shengjun maintained his guard at all times, commanding the two battalions in the front to intercept and prevent the locusts from reaching them.

One hour later, with his rich experience in warfare, Huang Shengjun had managed to kill a significant number of Han Wu's locusts. It was clear that if the current situation persisted, Han Wu's defeat would be imminent. Yet, Huang Shengjun wasn't content with mere victory; he intended for Han Wu to suffer greatly for his insolence.

Huang Shengjun fixed his gaze on the three Locustman Lords. *Lord life forms are very valuable. I wonder how Han Wu would react if I eliminated all three of them in one go.*

He chuckled at the thought, then secretly ordered his 2 Goblin Lords to focus their efforts on the three Locustman Lords and inflict a fatal blow on them as soon as the chance presented itself. He even promised generous rewards for those who managed to kill them.

The allure of rewards caused the 2 Goblin Lords to fully concentrate on the Locustman Lords. Han Wu, having already anticipated such a tactic from Huang Shengjun, smiled to himself with amusement and cunningly chose to play along with their strategy.

He instructed the three Locustman Lords to distract the 2 Goblin Lords while he deployed his Heroic Locustmen against the Heroic goblins. Even though the Heroic Locustmen were slightly weaker than the Heroic goblins, they relied on their overwhelming numbers to press the advantage. The latter were repeatedly pushed back, ultimately forced to rely on the surrounding goblin battalions to save their lives, before finally organizing a counterattack.

Han Wu had to admit that the goblins were quite formidable; all 100,000 of his Heroic Locustmen were still not able to defeat them head-on. He had, however, anticipated that, and he finally began to set his countermeasures into motion.

Before the battle had even started, he had secretly infected many of his regular locusts with the Mourning Deathcap's spores and had sent them deep into the goblin army to infect as many goblins as possible. The Deathcap finally displayed its terrifyingly destructive capabilities as the embedded spores rapidly matured into countless smaller Mourning Deathcaps.

Blinded by their bloodlust, none of the goblins noticed the miniscule Deathcaps growing subtly on their bodies. These parasitic fungi absorbed their hosts' life force, rapidly matured, and then began releasing even more spores into their surroundings to infect other nearby life forms.

In less than an hour, all four battalions of the goblin army were completely infected by the Deathcaps, their bodies visibly covered in them. As the Deathcaps steadily drained their goblin hosts' life force, they continued to grow bigger, until upon reaching a certain size, they suddenly detonated.

The explosion itself wasn't particularly strong, only blasting off a layer of skin on the Hobgoblins at most. However, each explosion released even more spores into its surroundings. These newly released spores could travel greater distances and were considerably more potent than those that came before.

Numerous spores embedded themselves precisely where the earlier blasts had taken place, quickly maturing and detonating again. The ensuing chain of continuous explosions caused significant injuries throughout the goblin ranks.

Huang Shengjun frowned; his assured victory now seemed less certain. He quickly activated the Divine Skill: Revitalize from his Earth Aspect. Life force surged out from the ground, mending the goblins' wounds. However, Huang Shengjun hadn't foreseen that this healing ability would also unintentionally nourish the Mourning Deathcaps, inadvertently causing them to grow even more rapidly.

Consequently, the next explosions were even stronger, severely crippling all four battalions of the goblin army. The spores again embedded themselves onto the goblins' bodies. Given the sheer quantity of these spores, the next round of explosions would utterly annihilate the entire goblin force in a single wave. Huang Shengjun finally succumbed to panic.

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[1,462 words]

Chapter 102 - Results

The major class this time was specifically designed as an opportunity for the seniors to powerfully demonstrate their strength to their juniors. Huang Shengjun, being the valedictorian, would be disgraced if he were to lose to Han Wu at this crucial moment.

"Han Wu, I have to admit that you are strong, but it's still not enough to win against me," Huang Shengjun declared, intertwining his fingers together to form a seal and activating his Divine Skills.

[Legion Divine Skill: Fighting Spirit. Increases the fighting spirit and mobility of units, and reduces their perception of pain]

[War Divine Skill: Slaughter. Absorbs 25% of damage dealt to an enemy upon slaying them. Absorbed damage is converted into healing energy to mend the wounds of units. Excess healing energy is converted into a buff that increases units' mobility proportionally to their current stats]

[Earth Divine Skill: Protect. Projects a damage-absorbing film over all units to absorb incoming damage. Also absorbs the energy directly from the earth to help units recover from injuries]

The three Divine Skills transformed into brilliant rays of light that swiftly enveloped every single goblin in the army. The goblins immediately howled with renewed vigor as the injuries inflicted by the exploding Mourning Deathcaps swiftly recovered. The thin, protective membrane of the Earth Divine Skill also insulated the goblins' skin, causing all remaining Mourning Deathcaps to detach and fall away.

Seeing his trump card rendered useless so easily, Han Wu was taken aback. He had never thought that combined Divine Skills could be so incredibly powerful.

Despite his success, however, Huang Shengjun wasn't looking too good. He was already panting heavily after using three Divine Skills in rapid succession. Given the restrictions of the major class, he couldn't access his full power, and activating all three Divine Skills in one go had already pushed him to his absolute limit.

Empowered by the Divine Skills, the goblins fervently prayed.

"The Goblin God has given us his favor! Everyone, kill those insects!"

"Kill them all for the glory of our God!"

The remaining 60 million goblins or so launched another fierce attack, leaving numerous locust carcasses scattered in their wake. Despite their numbers, the locusts found themselves unable to retaliate against the now powerfully reinforced goblin forces.

Han Wu lamented deeply in his heart when he saw his core race being slaughtered, but he was utterly powerless to fight back. All he could do against such overwhelming force was to order his locusts to avoid as many attacks as possible in an attempt to reduce the mounting number of casualties.

Meanwhile, Lina and the other lecturers were observing the state of battle unfolding within each students' divine realm, occasionally discussing promising students.

"Qin Shuang's Lord Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow has potential, and the overall strength of her Thunder Sparrows is quite impressive. She definitely has the qualifications to enroll into Imperial College."

"Xu Tie's Iron Skins are quite strong as well. They are a rare race, and I'm certain that many lecturers will be eager to research them. Furthermore, I've heard that his brother's core race, the Steel Soldiers, is even rarer. We might be able to persuade him to enroll his brother in our college as well."

"*Hmm...* Sun Qingnian's core race is the Foxman. While their combat abilities are average, they are noted for their remarkably high intelligence. Sun Qingnian himself expressed an intention to specialize as a Support, and I do indeed think he's a good candidate."

The lecturers judged each student based on the battle's unfolding events, their individual performance, and the capabilities of their core races, before finally assigning a score. Eventually, only Han Wu's evaluation remained. They observed his battle intently, but no one uttered a score even as the minutes ticked by.

Based on the battle's progression, Han Wu was steadily being pushed back and would have normally been failed under typical circumstances. But how could they possibly bring themselves to label him weak when they looked at the sheer scale of the battle? His Unique locust army, a force of nearly ten billion, had already left everyone in awe.

Han Wu could only blame his bad luck, as he was fighting against Huang Shengjun, the first-year valedictorian. Remarkably, Huang Shengjun had also been pushed by Han Wu to use all of his strength within the given class limits. Even an official first-year student would find it incredibly challenging to repel Huang Shengjun's attack when he activated all three Divine Skills, much less Han Wu, who was merely a student on the reserve list.

Han Wu had initially performed quite well during the first half of the battle, managing to eliminate many of Huang Shengjun's goblins. He also did his utmost during the second half, employing dynamic formations to significantly minimize his own casualties.

His performance was particularly noteworthy, especially when considering that he had fought solely with his core race and hadn't even deployed his other five races. Given all this, it was truly difficult to say who had won this time.

Lina made her decision. She regarded Han Wu as a student possessing remarkable guts. In the latter half of the battle, despite being clearly outmatched and pushed back by Huang Shengjun, he had never surrendered—a quality she deeply admired and wished to see in all her students.

"Han Wu's performance was stellar. Despite this loss, I believe he deserves an excellent grade," she said.

"I agree."

"I agree as well."

"I have no objections."

With nods of approval from the other lecturers, the major class then came to an end, following the finalization of each student's score.

Huang Shengjun begrudgingly recalled his units and halted the battle after receiving the message from the lecturers. Although he had clearly won the battle, he wasn't happy.

The battle had cost him dearly; over half his goblin forces were annihilated, with the losses heavily concentrated among his elite units. He originally commanded thousands of Heroic goblins, but fewer than a hundred had survived the brutal battle. To make matters worse, one of his Goblin Lords had also been killed by the three Locustman Lords.

In contrast to Huang Shengjun, Han Wu's casualties among higher-ranking units were much lower. Of his initial 100,000 Heroic Locustmen, 80,000 remained. Furthermore, thanks to the Hyper Regeneration trait, his three Locustman Lords had survived, and had even improved their battle skills, especially the Dark Locustman, who had acquired the new skill, Dark Domain.

Nevertheless, the casualties on Han Wu's side weren't negligible. He had sent out about 10 billion locusts, and 8 billion of them had been annihilated. While this would have been a terrifying and crippling loss for any other individual, it didn't affect him much. He still had 2 billion locusts remaining, and he could effortlessly restore their numbers in a matter of days.

After sending the seniors away, Lina began announcing the scores for her students. There were four possible scores for this major class: excellent, good, pass, and fail. Those unfortunate enough to receive a failing score would be removed from the reserve list and sent back to their original school.

She listed out the names of five students, and a wave of despair washed over them. It was common knowledge that Imperial College provided exceptional resources, a privilege they would no longer receive after this day.

The other students shuddered, but none of them pleaded on behalf of the five students, knowing it would be futile. Even if the failing students somehow managed to stay this time, much harsher tests awaited them, and they would undoubtedly fail for certain in the future.

After sending away those five students, Lina proceeded to list the names of those who had received a passing score. These students would not be sent away, but they would also not receive any rewards. Following this, she called forward the students who had received a good score, each of whom was rewarded with a Divine Essence for their commendable performance.

A frown creased Han Wu's brow; he had fully expected to be dismissed. A wave of confusion washed over him as he still hadn't heard his name called yet.

Did I get an excellent score? That can't be right. I was beaten up black and blue...

As he kept his confused thoughts to himself, Lina proceeded to announce the names of those who had received an excellent score.

“And now, for those who achieved an excellent score: Qin Shuang, Xu Tie, Sun Qingnian, Qian Lili, Niu Fang, and Han Wu! You will be granted the opportunity to participate in a war against a foreign civilization! This is a truly rare chance, one that many past students have grabbed with both hands to ascend and become Demigods!”

The other students eyed the six enviously.

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Chapter 103 - War with Foreign Civilization

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Chapter 103 - War with Foreign Civilization

Wars with foreign civilizations sounded distant, but in truth, such conflicts were far more common than most believed. They ranged from brief skirmishes lasting only a couple of hours to sprawling wars that stretched across millennia. Any conflict waged against another civilization with the intent to seize their resources qualified as a war with a foreign civilization.

However, this time, Lina’s tone carried a formality that stood out from her usual classes.

Xu Tie raised his hand. “Professor, I have a question.”

Having spent a year in Black Prison, he had learned some measure of restraint and no longer dared to challenge her openly.

Lina smiled. “Go ahead. What’s on your mind?”

Xu Tie glanced at Han Wu before speaking. “I want to understand the scoring criteria this time. How could someone receive an excellent score even after being beaten by their seniors?”

His words were clearly aimed at Han Wu. The Xu family’s reputation had taken a severe hit after the recent incident with the Qin family. Back home, their grandfather had punished both siblings. Xu Gang had lost many units and had been exiled to a family-owned battlefield as punishment. He wouldn’t be allowed back unless he earned enough merits there.

Xu Tie had escaped punishment but received a strict order from his grandfather. He had to do everything in his power to deal with Han Wu. Failure would bring punishment, but success would multiply the family's resources at his disposal.

Driven by this, Xu Tie seized every opportunity to sabotage Han Wu. He didn't care about his own score and had even contacted Huang Shengjun immediately after the major class ended to confirm that Han Wu had failed.

When Huang Shengjun confirmed it, Xu Tie had been overjoyed. He had been certain that Han Wu would fail this time. Thus, he was stunned when Lina still awarded Han Wu an excellent score. He needed to understand why.

Lina's smile softened when she heard Xu Tie's reasonable question. "The scores for every student were determined by a panel, which included me and several other lecturers from the college. Han Wu may have lost to Huang Shengjun in the major class, but his overall performance impressed all of us. That's why we decided to award him an excellent score. Do you have any further questions?"

Her smile grew gentler, yet Xu Tie sensed an underlying threat beneath it. He relented. "No, I have no other questions left, Professor."

Lina sighed in disappointment. She had hoped he would resist stubbornly, giving her the perfect excuse to punish him by sending him to mine coal in Black Prison for at least another year.

"Does anyone have any other questions?" she asked, a faint smile tugging at her lips as she scanned the room. The students, regardless of their scores, shook their heads vigorously. No one dared to challenge her now—only a fool would.

"In that case, everything is settled," Lina declared firmly. "For the six students joining the war, you have one day to prepare. After that, the college will send you to a foreign civilization to experience what it's really like."

She patted the table and left the classroom. The moment she stepped away, the ancient podium shattered into splinters.

The students held their breath, the sight too terrifying to ignore. Lina destroyed the podium so effortlessly with just a light tap. Had she touched someone directly, she could have reduced them to meat paste. Her fearsome reputation as an Invader was well deserved.

Xu Tie broke out in a cold sweat as the scene unfolded. He had the distinct sense that Lina had just issued a silent warning, and he was damn glad he had backed down. If he hadn't, she would have likely smashed his skull in without a second thought.

With a heavy sigh, he turned to Han Wu and muttered, "Don't get too excited. I'll end your life in the foreign civilization."

He strode off without waiting for a response.

Qin Shuang approached Han Wu with confidence. "Don't worry, Han Wu. As long as I'm around, he won't lay a finger on you."

"I'm not worried," Han Wu replied calmly.

Qin Shuang fell silent, unsure how to respond to his curt reply.

Thankfully, Sun Qingnian stepped in, patting Han Wu's shoulder. "Hey, want to hear a secret? Xu Tie has teamed up with Huang Shengjun. They're plotting to get rid of you. Watch your back."

Han Wu was confused. "How did you hear that?"

Sun Qingnian smoothed back his hair with a smug grin. "Nothing much. I'm dating a wealthy instructor. She told me everything and promised to be my partner once I officially enroll at Imperial College. She'll handle the invasion part while I support her behind the scenes. I can't wait for my rosy life to start!"

Qin Shuang took a step away from Sun Qingnian because his actions repulsed her. Several other students whispered insults, mocking him for relying on a wealthy instructor instead of his own strength. They considered it shameful for a young man like him to depend on someone else rather than work hard.

Sun Qingnian ignored their scorn, dismissing them as immature. This was not an era where one could become a God through sheer effort alone. Instead of scraping by, he preferred the fortune that came from a wealthy patron.

Han Wu didn't judge and respected everyone's choices. To him, Sun Qingnian's ability to court a rich woman—when most would be dismissed outright—was a testament to his strength.

"Thank you. I'll keep my guard up against Xu Tie," Han Wu said, patting Sun Qingnian's shoulder with genuine gratitude. He then left the classroom and soon received a message from Xiang Meng. His three seniors were inviting him for tea at the gazebo to discuss the foreign civilization he was about to enter.

Han Wu accepted and arrived at the gazebo promptly. They spent a while sipping tea and exchanging casual talk before Xia Tian steered the conversation toward the foreign civilization. Each foreign civilization operated under its own unique set of rules, and consequently, the nature of the war they faced was entirely different.

Xia Tian and the other two had received insider information about the type of foreign civilization Han Wu would likely be assigned to. Based on Imperial College's current invasion campaigns, there were three possible targets suitable for students on the reserve list: the Rune Civilization, the Totem Civilization, and the Biohazard Civilization.

Unfortunately, the seniors couldn't disclose anything beyond the names because everything else was classified. Instead, they handed Han Wu three sealed pouches.

Each pouch contained vital information and resources tailored to one of the civilizations, but Han Wu could only open them after entering the corresponding civilization. He accepted the pouches with gratitude and spent some extra time with the seniors before returning to his mansion.

That night passed quietly. The next morning, Han Wu arrived on time for the second day of classes. Lina was already there, waiting. Once all six students had assembled, she handed each of them a golden bracelet.

These bracelets were simplified landing pods designed to link Divine Beings to their divine realms. After distributing the items, Lina led the group aboard a small spaceship owned by the college.

The small spaceship passed through various wormholes before arriving at a foreign civilization targeted by Imperial College's war. The six students were randomly dropped off at different locations, marking the official start of their invasion mission.

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[911 words]

Chapter 104 - Rune Civilization

Han Wu safely landed and immediately retrieved the three pouches his seniors had given him. Two crumbled into dust the moment he retrieved them, leaving only one intact. He opened the remaining pouch to examine its contents, and within it was a parchment detailing the civilization he had entered, along with ten cards.

He unfolded the parchment and read its contents. It stated that he was currently in the Rune Civilization, where the fundamental power stemmed from 26 unique runes. By combining them in various ways, these runes could produce millions of different possibilities in this world.

The combinations that consistently yielded stable phenomena were recorded and recognized as part of the Runic Lexicon. Some of the more potent combinations could shift the heavens and sunder the earth itself.

After reading, Han Wu checked the ten cards in his pouch. Each card contained Warfront Essence, a type of energy that boosted the Will of the Warfront and enabled it to generate higher-ranking life forms in greater numbers. In wars against foreign civilizations, Warfront Essence served as a vital resource, linking one to their divine realm.

Han Wu currently possessed ten units. With them, he could summon either 100,000 Common locusts, 10 Heroic locusts, a single 1-Star God equipment, or one special treasure. Without any Warfront Essence, he would be powerless. All he would be able to do was observe his divine realm through the golden bracelet and do nothing.

Fortunately, there were many ways to obtain Warfront Essence. The most common method was to kill native life forms and extract it from their bodies. Han Wu chose that path, activating five cards to connect to his divine realm, and five of his ten Cockroaches instantly appeared beside him. They were like powerful bodyguards, deterring many life forms from attacking Han Wu.

He ordered his Cockroaches to kill the nearby life forms to gather more Warfront Essence. They obeyed and started running in different directions.

[Obtained 0.001 Warfront Essence]

[Obtained 0.002 Warfront Essence]

A steady stream of notifications flowed into his mind as he sensed the wisps of Warfront Essence converging around him.

It took an hour to collect just 0.5 units this way. He frowned, dissatisfied with the sluggish pace. The Cockroaches were powerful, but with only five of them, their killing rate was inevitably slow. They simply couldn't cover enough ground.

To speed things up, Han Wu drew on his remaining Warfront Essence and summoned 50 Unique Primal Locusts. They could sweep across the terrain faster than the Cockroaches, accelerating the collection.

After half an hour of relentless killing, Han Wu finally secured 1 Warfront Essence. At the same time, the Primal Locusts transmitted an urgent report: a goblin nest harboring at least a thousand goblins lay ten kilometers to the south.

This presented a prime opportunity, so Han Wu swiftly mounted one of the Primal Locusts and commanded the Cockroaches to charge toward the goblin nest. The goblins fought back fiercely, hurling wooden javelins and rocks in desperate defense.

Han Wu scoffed at their feeble resistance. The nest had only one Elite Goblin Slinger, but it missed every shot and squandered countless chances. Han Wu recalled Huang Shengjun's goblin army and couldn't help but compare it to the pitiful nest before him. These goblins didn't even qualify as squires.

The Cockroaches crushed the nest with ease, and Han Wu gained 1.2 Warfront Essence after eradicating the goblin nest. After the slaughter, the Cockroaches gathered the nest's treasures and presented them to Han Wu.

As he sifted through the scraps, he found a peculiar stone radiating some kind of pure energy. The moment he picked it up, a message entered his mind.

[First Rune A: One of the basic runes. Contains pure power and one of the basic runes used to form a Runic Lexicon.]

Han Wu twirled the rune between his fingers, his curiosity piqued, as he pondered the nature of the Runic Lexicon. Determined to find more runes, he quickly used the Warfront Essence that he had gathered to summon more units.

With 2.2 Warfront Essence, he called forth 22 Dark Cursed Bugs and dispatched them to scour the area for native life forms. It wasn't long before they discovered a minotaur settlement. Han Wu ordered his Cockroaches to attack the settlement without hesitation.

The minotaurs were far stronger than goblins and yielded significantly more Warfront Essence upon annihilation. After the battle, Han Wu searched one of the tents and found two more runes: another First Rune A and a new Fourth Rune D. Each rune was equivalent to a Rank 1 Sacred Object. He also found hundreds of Common iron hatchets scattered outside.

Han Wu used his Warfront Essence to summon more locusts, expanding his detection radius even further. Over the next three days, he repeated the process and destroyed 18 settlements. However, his reckless slaughter attracted the attention of the region's Lord life form, the Cat Demon Lord.

In retaliation, the Cat Demon Lord mobilized its underlings and began exterminating every locust they encountered. Han Wu lost half his swarm and nearly died twice during the Cat Demon Lord's ambushes. Fortunately, the Cockroaches were strong enough to buy him the time he needed to escape.

The ordeal taught Han Wu a harsh lesson. He resolved to remove the seal that was suppressing his strength. Only by increasing his strength could he earn more Warfront Essence and summon more units to fight alongside him.

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Chapter 105 - Runic Lexicon: Feral

Somewhere between a desert and a grassy plain, Xu Tie led his Iron Skins in a relentless scorpion hunt, each kill yielding at least 0.001 Warfront Essence.

After slaying 10,000 scorpions, he finally amassed 10 Warfront Essence and spent it without hesitation. He then retrieved a black jar from his divine realm. It leaked an eerie black gas that made his hair stand on end. He could feel the danger sealed within.

“Senior Huang Shengjun has many treasures. This Rust Demon is stronger than a Lord life form. I’m sure it’ll kill Han Wu this time,” Xu Tie said, laughing as he held the jar with both hands.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small pouch containing several strands of Han Wu’s hair, which he had secretly collected after class. Carefully, he cracked the jar open just enough to slip in the strands.

The Rust Demon trapped inside roared fiercely. It was led to believe that whoever owned the strands was the one who had imprisoned it. This was exactly Xu Tie’s intent.

He set the jar down and commanded one of his Iron Skins to stand guard before quickly leaving the area. After running a good distance, he instructed his unit to break open the black jar.

The Iron Skin obeyed, smashing the jar with a powerful punch. A dense cloud of rust erupted, swirling and coalescing into a muscular demon. It bellowed toward the sky, freshly freed from its prison, and tore the Iron Skin apart, venting its fury over its captivity.

The Iron Skin’s death did little to quell the Rust Demon’s fury. It sniffed the air sharply and detected the presence of the hair’s owner somewhere within this world.

“My hatred from being imprisoned will be paid in blood!” the demon roared. It twisted into a black mist and surged forward with blinding speed.

On the other side, Han Wu was leading his Cockroaches and 38 Unique locusts through the forest. The locusts fanned out, constantly relaying real-time data on their surroundings. Thanks to their constant monitoring, he easily detected a large pack of wolves in the area. At his command, the Cockroaches charged straight into the wolf pack.

Soon, Han Wu received a notification confirming he had obtained the Warfront Essence. Shortly after, he received ten more units. He used five units to unlock Dark Dragonification, Dragon Slash, Enchant Darkness, and Mighty Cleave, as well as restore part of his strength. With the remaining five, he summoned the last five Cockroaches.

The ten Cockroaches gathered once more, and together, they displayed strength beyond that of a Lord life form. Their various traits, like Gluttony and Hyper Regeneration, made them far more troublesome to confront than an ordinary Lord life form.

They quickly surrounded and devoured the alpha wolf. Witnessing their leader's death, the other wolves fled. Unfortunately for the fleeing wolves, their leader's murderer was capable of flight, and he quickly outpaced them. Before long, the entire pack lay dead.

Afterward, Han Wu searched the wolves' den and discovered four runes, two Rank 1 Sacred Object Wolf Teeth, and a wolf pelt suitable for crafting Divine equipment.

In one corner, he discovered an intricate parchment inscribed with the clichéd tale of a family's rise to power. As he read on, Han Wu realized it also contained a Runic Lexicon.

"This is a Runic Lexicon!" he exclaimed, excitement rising in his voice.

This was the first significant reward he had claimed since arriving. He quickly tallied the runes he needed and realized he had just enough in his inventory. He quickly retrieved the corresponding runes and arranged them in the precise order described in the parchment's Runic Lexicon.

"A+H+M+P..." he murmured, laying out 63 runes in total. When he placed the final rune down, the Runic Lexicon was completed, and a strange energy emanated from the runes. It transformed into a green glow, hovering between Han Wu's fingers.

[Runic Lexicon: Feral (Basic) When used on self: +10% Strength, +20% Physical Defense, +20% Recovery Speed. When used on bladed weapons: 20% chance of inflicting Bleed, +15% Attack Speed, and +10% Lifesteal.]

Han Wu decided to test the newfound power on his own body. His muscles grew stronger, and his vitality increased dramatically. However, amid the rush of power, he sensed a subtle constraint—an instinctive awareness that he could only apply four more Runic Lexicons.

"So there's a cap on how many Runic Lexicons I can use," he mused. "Each grants different effects. Feral is just a Basic Lexicon, yet it's already boosted my strength so much. What might the higher-ranking ones do? I can't wait to find out."

Eager to gather more after experiencing the first Runic Lexicon's effects, Han Wu quickly sent his Cockroaches out to scout for native life forms. Meanwhile, his 38 locusts fanned out, pushing their search radius to its limits.

He hadn't traveled far when he suddenly lost connection with two of the locusts.

They must've been killed, he thought grimly.

Each locust was incredibly precious to Han Wu, especially in the early, resource-scarce stages of the invasion. Losing two at once was enough to force him to change course. He used Dark Dragonification, soared into the sky, and led his Cockroaches toward the last known location of the two locusts.

The ten Cockroaches immediately drew the attention of the attacker. A single Cat Demon with sleek black fur sprang from the shadows, slashing one of the Cockroaches clean in half with its razor-sharp claws!

Han Wu instantly recognized the assailant. It was the Cat Demon Lord that had tried to kill him twice before.

Bastard! he cursed inwardly. *Does it really think I'm easy to bully?*

Han Wu had already regained part of his strength and decided this was the time to settle the score. His Cockroaches could take down a Lord if they worked together, and if that weren't enough, he would personally strike with a surprise attack.

He ordered the Cockroaches to surround and eliminate the Cat Demon Lord. Though its claws were deadly and its strength undeniable, it was alone. The Cockroaches leveraged their Hyper Regeneration to endure its attacks, trading blows until they finally wounded the Cat Demon Lord in a gruesome clash.

The Cat Demon Lord tried to flee, but Han Wu had anticipated this. He flapped his wings and delivered a crushing blow that sent the Cat Demon Lord crashing to the ground. The Cockroaches swarmed, tearing it apart before it could escape.

After sustaining such heavy injuries, the Cat Demon Lord lost the strength to resist and was devoured alive. This Lord life form's death earned Han Wu 2 Warfront Essence at once and proved that he now had enough power to survive in this region.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,182 words]

Chapter 106 - Fire Stone Cave

Han Wu changed his strategy and summoned twenty Skeleton Knights with the 2 Warfront Essence he had just acquired. The Skeleton Knights' unique ability to raise skeletons from corpses proved invaluable in early invasions when manpower was scarce.

He watched carefully as the skeletons emerged from the dead, recalling the time he had led millions of them to assault the Dark Frogman Demigod.

Now, his exploration pace slowed by 80% as he had to command the growing skeleton army. Yet his forces swelled like a rolling snowball, expanding with every native life form he dispatched.

Before long, Han Wu had amassed an army of 1,000 skeletons. Though individually weak, their sheer numbers and intimidating presence shattered the morale of many native life forms, making them easier to hunt down.

However, as undead, the skeletons incited hostility from every living being. His growing skeleton army quickly drew the attention of nearby tribes, all of whom seemed determined to wipe it out. Within days, many of these tribes formed alliances to confront the rising threat together.

After a gruesome battle, the natives' allied forces succeeded in destroying Han Wu's skeleton army, leveraging their familiarity with the terrain to gain a slight advantage. Nevertheless, Han Wu felt no sorrow. The battle had yielded a rich harvest of Warfront Essence, and with it, he could simply summon his skeletons again.

This time, he called forth numerous Skeleton Knights alongside the two strongest skeletons in his disposal, the Skeleton Reanimator and the Osteomancer. Their presence amplified the army's power to unimaginable heights.

In the second war, the tide turned. With every fallen foe, the skeleton army swelled, while the Skeleton Reanimator swiftly reversed their own casualties. They suffered no permanent losses and soon grew into a terrifying horde. Overwhelmed, the allied natives were defeated and forced to retreat to their lands.

Han Wu rallied his skeleton army and slaughtered everyone in the area to claim the land as his own. But that was only the beginning. A mere patch of jungle wouldn't satisfy him; he aimed to conquer the entire region and become a Demigod.

As he expanded his skeleton army, Han Wu monitored messages from the locusts he'd dispatched. They had discovered a cave rich with Fire Stone veins, and a thrill of anticipation surged through him. Minerals, gemstones, and ores were essential to the advancement of any race. Divine realms required these resources, and everyone in the Divine Civilization depended on them.

Naturally, Han Wu redirected his army toward the cave his locusts had found.

It took two days to reach the site. Once there, Han Wu flew into the cave to assess the situation personally. Drawing on the knowledge he'd gained in class, he confirmed the cave contained a medium-sized Fire Stone vein worth mining immediately. However, before beginning extraction, he sent 2 Blood Skeletons and all his Cockroaches into the tunnel to scout ahead.

The air inside the tunnel was scorching, and Han Wu was drenched in sweat after just a few steps. Forced to pause, he used a Mystic Art that wrapped him in a shroud of cold air, allowing him to withstand the intense heat.

The Cockroaches and the Blood Skeletons moved unaffected as they lacked heat receptors altogether. As they pushed deeper into the tunnel, Han Wu noticed the Fire Stone veins growing thicker, along with faint signs that someone else had entered before them.

Is someone already here and mining this place? he wondered. *It doesn't matter. I still need to take this place for myself. I came to invade this land, and claiming this mine is part of that.*

Han Wu moved cautiously until a distant roar echoed from the tunnel's depths. He broke into a run and soon reached its end, where the passage unexpectedly opened into a blazing sea of fire.

A hot wind scorched his face as he spotted a massive fire lion charging through the flames. Then he noticed someone pursuing it. Squinting, he was surprised to see his classmate Niu Fang. Her body blazed with fire, two strong horns sprouting from her forehead, and flames billowed from her nostrils. From a distance, she resembled a flaming minotaur.

Niu Fang sensed Han Wu's presence the moment he noticed her. She shot him a fierce glare and snarled, "This is my spot. Get the fuck out of here!"

Han Wu bristled at her tone. They were all classmates, and he would have shown her respect if she'd spoken civilly. But her harsh, reprimanding voice left no room for courtesy, so he decided to teach her a lesson.

"What if I don't leave?" he challenged. "I found this place. That makes it mine."

"Did I stutter? Get out of here or die!" A jet of fire shot from Niu Fang's nostrils in fury. She abandoned her pursuit of the lion and advanced on Han Wu.

Han Wu didn't fear her, but fighting in a sea of fire gave Niu Fang the advantage. Her current form was closely attuned to fire, and a battle here would likely end in his defeat.

Instead, he stepped back and taunted, “You damn cow—come out and fight me!”

The insult stung Niu Fang, and anger quickly overpowered her reason. She hated being called a cow and was determined to teach that insolent brat a harsh lesson. She charged at him like a raging bull, bursting through the flames.

Han Wu quickly retreated and sprinted out of the tunnel before she could. Niu Fang emerged from the cave and growled, “Don’t think that you can defeat me just because you lured me out. My body is stronger than that of a Lord life form right now.”

Han Wu felt a flicker of surprise. She was far stronger than he had expected. Still, that didn’t mean he lacked countermeasures. He outclassed a Lord-level life form and had already defeated many such opponents.

Without a word, he stealthily activated the Plant Fusion Technique. A Death Lily blossomed on his chest, enveloping him in death aura. The Golden Dragon Grass fused with his wings, while two small dragon heads materialized at the sides of his neck. The glimmering heads seemed ready to unleash powerful breath attacks at any moment.

At the same time, a single vine emerged from Han Wu’s waist and wrapped tightly around his legs. Once fused with his legs, it granted him extraordinary speed, strength, and the special skill known as Spectral Dash.

Han Wu felt raw power surge through his body from the fusion of the three plants. He unsheathed his black greatsword and aimed it at Niu Fang before vanishing without a trace.

“Spectral Dash!”

A chilling gust brushed past the top of Niu Fang’s head just as she registered Han Wu’s movement. In the next instant, one of her horns was sliced clean in half, the tip clattering to the ground.

Han Wu’s voice echoed behind her. “Next time, I’ll aim for your neck.”

Niu Fang felt a cold chill wrap around her. This was the first time she had come so close to death.

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[1,473 words]

Chapter 107 - Demon Anu

Niu Fang ran through every possible strategy in her mind but found no way to defeat Han Wu. His Spectral Dash was too fast for her to follow, and her body was too weak to withstand his attacks. Reluctantly, she had no choice but to surrender.

She muttered, biting back frustration, "Fine, you win. The Flamion in the cave is yours."

Han Wu sheathed his black greatsword and asked, "Why would I want the Flamion? It's just a Lord life form. It won't give me much Warfront Essence even if I kill it."

Niu Fang blinked, confused. "But the Flamion is a favored beast, born from fire, and a Lord from birth!"

"That doesn't concern me," Han Wu replied coolly.

She stared at him, still puzzled. She genuinely had no idea what his goal was. "So... if you don't want it, does that mean I can have it?"

Han Wu nodded. "Sure, but the Fire Stones in the cave are mine."

Niu Fang agreed without hesitation. She hadn't wanted the Fire Stone mine in the first place. It wasn't because she didn't need them, but because she lacked the manpower to mine them.

After entering the Rune Civilization, she had spent her Warfront Essence to unlock her own strength rather than summon units. That left her short-handed, unable to reach a point where she could manage mining on her own.

Without another word, she picked up her horn and stepped into the tunnel to capture the Flamion. Since neither of them had conflicting interests, she no longer sought trouble with Han Wu.

Han Wu ordered his skeletons into the tunnel to start mining. Though they worked slowly, wielding weapons rather than proper tools, their sheer numbers and tireless nature more than compensated. They didn't need rest or food, so over time the mine's output would surge dramatically. Han Wu estimated he could strip the entire site bare within a month.

Meanwhile, Niu Fang spent three more days battling the Flamion before finally subduing it as her mount. The sight of a flaming cow girl astride a Flamion was striking. After taming it, she sent Han Wu an invitation to form a party, proposing that they travel together and split their rewards evenly.

Han Wu rejected her outright. With his skeleton army, he was confident in securing treasures alone. On the other hand, Niu Fang had only herself and still wanted an equal share? The proposal was ridiculous.

Niu Fang pouted, convinced her strength justified the offer. She assumed Han Wu looked down on her. But since they couldn't reach an agreement, she turned her Flamion around and left the cave, heading south to continue her exploration alone.

Just as she was about to leave, an ominous aura suddenly engulfed the area. A bizarre, rust-colored demonic aura formed a barrier that sealed them in and blocked any chance of escape. Intense pressure followed, threatening to crush everything within its bounds.

Han Wu and Niu Fang spun around just in time to see a powerful demon step out from the demonic aura, gripping the skull of a Heroic Blood Skeleton. The demon caught Han Wu's familiar scent, and its eyes flared black-red. Rust flakes swirled violently around it and corroded the Blood Skeleton's skull to dust.

Han Wu frowned. The demon was powerful enough to slay a Blood Skeleton, so he couldn't afford to lower his guard.

"This is the scent of my nemesis! Anu will bathe in your blood!" the demon bellowed, unleashing a massive cloud of rust that surged toward them.

Han Wu quickly used the Plant Fusion Technique. The Gold Dragon Grass' two heads exhaled searing breaths that effortlessly sliced through the rust flakes and struck the demon. To Han Wu's surprise, more rust flakes erupted from the demon's wounds to attack them.

Han Wu flapped his wings and darted through the air to avoid the rust flakes. Niu Fang faced the assault as well but was having an easier time. She unleashed powerful flames that melted the rust flakes into molten iron droplets.

Anu grew more furious as its rust flakes were countered and decided to eliminate Niu Fang first.

Niu Fang met the challenge head-on. She slapped the Flamion, and together they unleashed a blast of intense heat and fire. The flames enveloped them, and they transformed into a miniature sun.

Anu halted its advance due to the high heat and started backing away. Although its rust flakes were formidable, they offered no defense against fire. Anu snapped its head toward Han Wu, ready to unleash its fury on him.

Han Wu unleashed Spectral Dash, slashing into the demon again and again. In mere seconds, Anu was hacked into countless pieces, but it still didn't die. It used its own power to transform its shattered body into rust flakes before reassembling itself.

At the same time, Han Wu's black greatsword started to rust on contact with Anu's blood. Forced to discard the weapon, he moved quickly to keep the spreading rust from

contaminating his body. Now, he was angry as well. Not only had he lost a Blood Skeleton but also a valuable weapon! He swore to avenge his loss against Anu himself.

However, he wasn't sure he could defeat Anu. None of his attacks had worked, and Anu was already recovering from the wounds he'd managed to inflict. Still, he'd noted Anu's weakness to heat and fire. Banking everything on that, he poured the last of his Warfront Essence into summoning his strongest fire unit, Divine Hammer.

A sudden wave of intense heat rippled through the area as Divine Hammer appeared. Though only 1.5 meters tall, his presence loomed like a giant. His cherished weapon, Hellforge, blazed with flames that flickered and writhed like the Nine-headed Hell Snake.

"Divine Hammer, destroy that demon. Reduce it to scrap metal," Han Wu instructed.

Divine Hammer bowed respectfully. "I obey your command, glorious God."

His magma-like blood flared through his veins as he unleashed his full power. Hellforge also started radiating an intense heat, flames coalescing into the Nine-headed Hell Snake, which spewed intense fire to burn Anu.

Divine Hammer wasn't as powerful as Anu, but his flames allowed him to completely suppress his opponent. He struck Anu so relentlessly that the demon accidentally muttered regret over leaving the jar.

Divine Hammer ignored this and continued to obey his God's orders. Each blow disoriented Anu while slowly reshaping its body. After thousands of strikes, Anu's form had transformed into a piece of metal.

Although it had been reduced to a lump of metal, Han Wu could still sense Anu's soul trapped inside. It was still alive and would likely rise again for revenge one day. The thought infuriated him. He wasn't concerned about Anu causing him harm; he just couldn't stand the idea of someone bearing an undeserved grudge against him.

"Osteomancer, Skeleton Reanimator, do either of you know how to destroy its soul?" he asked.

Both responded telepathically, spiritual fire flickering in their hollow eye sockets. They informed him that they could devour Anu's soul to strengthen their own, but they worried the little skeleton wouldn't permit it.

Han Wu frowned. The little skeleton ruled like a tyrant, forbidding its underlings from growing stronger to prevent any challenge to its authority. This stifled the development of the entire skeleton race. Han Wu resolved to speak with it about this once he had time after returning.

Anu, now just a lump of metal, quivered at the thought of Han Wu feeding its soul to the skeletons. It did not fear being sealed again as it could break free in the future. What terrified it was the prospect of its soul being devoured. That would mean true death, with no hope of reincarnation.

Anu smothered the rage in its heart and quickly begged for mercy. “Anu yields and is willing to become your slave. I beg you, please spare my soul.”

Han Wu didn’t believe a word of it, but that hardly mattered. A contract would bind the demon either way. Since Anu was offering servitude, he was more than willing to give the demon a chance. He quickly drafted a contract that was stacked heavily against Anu and forced it to sign.

Curious, Niu Fang peeked at the contract, and her jaw dropped. The terms would make capitalists weep, drive lawyers mad, and even make slave traders think that they were merciful. If Anu signed, it would be bound to Han Wu forever, with no hope of escape.

Unfortunately, Anu had no choice: it was death or a lifetime of servitude. It chose to live and signed the contract.

The contract transformed into two orbs of light and embedded itself into the souls of Han Wu and Anu. From that moment on, Anu became Han Wu’s eternal slave.

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[737 words]

Chapter 108 - War Against Humans

Han Wu’s mood visibly lifted the moment he gained a new slave. At least now, he’d recovered from the loss of a Blood Skeleton and his black greatsword.

“What powers do you possess anyway?” Han Wu asked the metal-lump-reduced Anu curiously.

Bound as his slave, Anu had no choice but to answer honestly. “Master, I am a demon of the Rust Bloodline. I can transform my body into rust flakes and corrode both metal and living matter.”

Han Wu nodded thoughtfully. The Rust Bloodline sounded formidable, offering both defense and the ability to reduce objects to rust. The only weakness was its vulnerability to heat and fire. Once melted, the demon became nearly useless in battle.

He knew many people commanded fire-attribute races in the Divine Civilization, making it one of the most common attributes. That reality dulled Anu's value somewhat.

Anu, unaware of Han Wu's train of thought, mistook his silence for disdain and quickly added, "Master, if you allow it, I can become your weapon. With my power, I can rust any weapon I touch."

Han Wu was intrigued by the idea. He could already envision the power of the ability that turned an enemy's weapon to rust. It was a clever trick that was difficult to defend against. Convinced, Han Wu decided to adopt Anu's suggestion and forge it into his weapon.

Anu sighed in relief and slowly changed its shape, morphing from a lump of metal into a greatsword. Han Wu estimated the transformation would take about ten days. Finding that too slow, he commanded Divine Hammer to carry Anu into the cave housing the vast sea of fire. The intense heat would make Anu more malleable and speed up the process.

In just three days, Anu had transformed into a greatsword. Han Wu seized the new weapon and ordered his skeleton army to scour the land and kill as many native life forms as possible. The skeleton army swelled steadily, eventually reaching 500,000 strong. However, the cost of such rapid growth was the complete loss of stealth.

Soon, a group of humans discovered the vast skeleton army. In nearly every civilization, the undead were universally regarded as enemies. Upon learning of the undead threat, the humans hurried to report it to their city's leaders. The City Lord wasted no time and dispatched scouts to verify the reports.

When the scouts returned with confirmation, the City Lord studied the news with grim resolve. The skeleton army numbered roughly 500,000, while his own forces totaled only 50,000 guards. Even if he hired mercenaries, his forces would barely reach 100,000. The skeleton army was nothing short of a disaster.

The City Lord swiftly issued orders forbidding citizens from approaching the sites where the skeletons had emerged. Simultaneously, he dispatched urgent requests to neighboring cities, calling for a united front against the undead threat.

Reinforcements arrived quickly from the neighboring cities. Within three days, the city had assembled an army of 300,000 guards and mercenaries, backed by 50,000 priests from the church. At last, they had enough forces to confront the skeletons.

With the army gathered, the City Lord commanded them to advance and annihilate the skeleton army. The human forces advanced steadily into the territory overrun by skeletons.

Han Wu's scouts had already informed him about their plan against his skeletons. He had expected a confrontation with the Rune Civilization's main race as the invasion dragged on, but he never imagined it would come so soon.

He ordered his skeletons to launch a preemptive ambush on the human army. At the same time, he summoned Niu Fang to fight alongside him, promising that the spoils would go to whoever killed the enemy unit.

Having witnessed Han Wu's strength, Niu Fang didn't hesitate to accept. She rubbed her fists eagerly, ready to harvest as much Warfront Essence as possible.

Soon, word of the ambush reached them. The humans had fallen into the skeletons' trap, losing 150,000 soldiers. The skeleton army also suffered devastating losses. The priests had cleansed nearly 250,000 skeletons, eradicating them forever.

Han Wu felt the sting of losing so many skeletons, but the rewards were substantial. Slaying 150,000 humans earned him 5,000 Warfront Essence. This amount was enough to summon all his high-value combat units from his divine realm.

The humans of the Rune Civilization had no idea a far stronger force was about to descend upon them.

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[1,189 words]

Chapter 109 - Skeleton Army's Expansion

The human army was resting under the cover of night when a swarm of locusts silently breached their perimeter. Han Wu waited patiently until enough locusts were within striking range, then commanded them to kill the sleeping humans. The locusts moved with deadly silence, and the number of fallen quickly grew under the cover of darkness.

Suddenly, one of the humans realized they were under attack and sounded the warning horn. The blaring alarm roused the humans just in time to see their comrades being torn apart by locusts as large as their arms.

"Enemy attack! Enemy attack!" the humans shouted as they sprang into action and started killing the locusts.

Realizing they had been exposed, the locusts took to the air and vanished into the night. The humans gave chase but failed to catch them. When they tallied their losses, they found 120,000 soldiers had died in the ambush. Combined with the 150,000 killed in the

earlier skeleton attack, their army had lost a staggering 270,000 men in a single day. The survivors dared not close their eyes again.

The City Lord learned of the disaster and immediately recalled the remaining soldiers without even giving them time to deal with the corpses.

However, Han Wu had other plans. He ordered his remaining 250,000 skeletons, along with newly summoned units, to intercept the retreating human army.

The humans had never expected to face such overwhelming force on their way back. Steely, Sarman, the little skeleton, Divine Hammer, Dark Locust, Toxic Locust, Alpheus, and the others lay in wait, unleashing relentless attacks on the survivors. Meanwhile, Niu Fang, mounted on her Flamion, spat flames that consumed a quarter of the retreating troops with terrifying ease.

In the end, only a handful of human experts escaped; the rest perished. Han Wu had won a crushing victory, but he remained unsatisfied. This was merely the opening salvo in his war against the foreign civilization. With help from Skeleton Reanimator and the little skeleton, he swiftly reanimated more skeletons from the corpses and called forth additional locusts using his Warfront Essence.

Eventually, he commanded an army of 350,000 skeletons and 60,000 locusts to lay siege to the city. The citizens were told only that the City Lord had led his forces out to destroy the skeleton army. They remained unaware of the City Lord's defeat or the impending threat closing in on them.

Under the cover of darkness, the locusts assassinated the guards and unbarred the city gates. The skeleton army flooded in and started slaughtering everyone in the city.

The Skeleton Knights kept summoning more skeletons, steadily swelling Han Wu's ranks. Some of the city's larger families managed to mount fierce resistance, fighting off the attacking skeletons.

After defeating the undead around them, they tried to flee, only to run straight into the Lord life forms blocking their path. The humans inside the city were trapped, and the massacre raged on until dawn.

Han Wu watched as the skeletons hauled chests of treasure from the City Lord's mansion and quickly calculated his haul. There were mountains of money, several hundred low-ranking Sacred Objects, multiple sets of Faith equipment, hundreds of Divine equipment, and even a God longsword.

More importantly, he had also found numerous runes. Many of the larger families had hoarded them, and Han Wu gathered every last one. Among them were thousands of basic runes and three Runic Lexicons. Inspecting the Runic Lexicons, he discovered two Basic ones and an Intermediate one.

[Runic Lexicon: Blaze (Basic) When used on self: Learn one random Fire-Attribute Magic, +20% Fire Resistance, +15% Fire Affinity. When used on staves: Learn Fireball, +20% Attack for Fire Magic. When used on armor and shields: Learn Fireshield, +30% Resistance to Fire Magic.]

[Runic Lexicon: Might (Basic) When used on self: Increases Muscle Strength, +40% Physical Strength. When Used on blunt weapons: Inflicts Shatter Debuff.]

[Runic Lexicon: Protect (Intermediate) When used on defensive equipment: Grants Barrier, +50% durability to equipment.]

Han Wu didn't want to take any of the three. His body could only handle four more, and he preferred to save those slots for stronger ones. That didn't mean he was going to abandon the ones he'd obtained today, however. They were useless to him, but they held value for his units.

Divine Hammer received the Blaze Lexicon, which sharpened his control over fire. He also learned a new magic spell, Molten Stone, further boosting his strength. Sarman took in the Might Lexicon, amplifying its monstrous power even more. The little skeleton used a special technique to fuse the Runic Lexicon into one of its bones and was surprised to find it worked flawlessly.

Niu Fang watched in amazement as Han Wu's units grew stronger so effortlessly. She asked him for information on the three Runic Lexicons and the runes required to form Blaze.

Surprisingly, Han Wu agreed. After using Blaze, Niu Fang felt her strength surge rapidly. She sensed she was one step closer to reaching the power of a High Lord life form.

Upon realizing how strong they were, Niu Fang was determined to collect more runes and Runic Lexicons for herself. She bade Han Wu farewell before setting off in a new direction.

Han Wu made no attempt to stop her. Her growing power was becoming insignificant compared to his expanding forces. He summoned more and more units, knowing that the strength of an army mattered far more than a single powerful unit. When the time came, he was confident his millions of skeletons could bring down even a Lord life form.

After Niu Fang's departure, he turned his focus to outfitting his troops with the equipment scavenged from the city. Once his preparations were complete, he marked another city as his next target. He intended to strike by nightfall. The more cities he razed before the enemy caught on, the better.

Millions of skeletons marched out that night. With the aid of the locusts, another city fell and its inhabitants were all turned into skeletons. His army swelled to nearly 2 million, including 100,000 elite Unique Skeleton Knights.

Han Wu handpicked three of his finest Skeleton Knights and provided them with abundant resources—including a Runic Lexicon, numerous Bone Stones, and even Divine Points—to help them break through the barrier to become Heroic units, thus providing him with three new Osteomancers.

Emboldened by his growing power, Han Wu launched a second assault on another city the very next night. Though the guards were prepared, they were no match for his undead army. After conquering that city, he immediately moved on to destroy yet another.

In just five days, Han Wu had razed thirteen cities and expanded his skeleton army to tens of millions.

At last, the king and the pope acted. They summoned a council of kingdoms to address the undead threat. Representatives from the elves, minotaurs, and werewolves attended. Although their lands remained untouched by the skeleton army, their hatred for the undead ran deep.

After the meeting, an allied force comprising the human kingdom, the church, elves, minotaurs, and werewolves was formed to fight Han Wu's undead army.

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Chapter 110 - Benefits of Becoming a Demigod in a Foreign Civilization

[1,426 words]

Chapter 110 - Benefits of Becoming a Demigod in a Foreign Civilization

Meanwhile, within the human kingdom's castle, Princess Jade, the king's only daughter, was openly flirting with a young man. Though she hadn't known him for long, she was utterly smitten by him. Blinded by her affection, she didn't hesitate to hand him the Runic Lexicon, a treasure reserved exclusively for royals, the moment he asked for it.

Not only did she tell him how the runes were arranged, but she even found all the corresponding base runes, formed the Advanced King Lexicon, and willingly presented

the completed Lexicon to him. Naturally, she also divulged the allied army's secret plot to eliminate the skeleton army.

As the man leisurely savored the grapes the princess fed him, his thoughts drifted. *Han Wu... You began this invasion just a couple of days ago, and yet you've already become such a major threat that it required the four kingdoms to ally themselves to fight against. You are indeed a reliable friend...*

The man was none other than Sun Qingnian, one of the six students who had entered the Rune Civilization. Upon his arrival, he skillfully used his charisma to win over different women, eventually seducing the kingdom's princess. With the princess' help, he had recovered his strength to that of a Lord life form and had managed to summon tens of thousands of his units.

More importantly, he also managed to learn many secrets known only to the royal family. To the princess, they were nothing but baseless rumors, but Sun Qingnian, leveraging his unique knowledge as someone from the Divine Civilization, was able to connect the disparate pieces of information, especially vital clues on how to become a Demigod.

The six students had entered the Rune Civilization primarily to ascend to become Demigods, with securing resources being a secondary objective. In the Divine Civilization, the path to becoming a Demigod was quite straightforward; it merely required at least six Divine Essence, or a total of ten Divine Essence to become a perfect Demigod.

However, it was far more complex for a Divine being to become a Demigod in a foreign civilization. Not only would they need a sufficient amount of Divine Essence, but they also had to satisfy specific requirements for Demigod ascension based on that civilization's unique rules. For example, to become a Demigod in the Rune Civilization, one first had to locate the corresponding Special Runic Lexicon.

Special Runic Lexicons were one rank above Advanced Runic Lexicons, making them naturally even harder to find. Even the human kingdom's royal family only had clues about them and had never actually acquired one. Even though Sun Qingnian knew how incredibly difficult it was to find one, he was still willing to try. The benefits of becoming a Demigod in a foreign civilization were simply too good to pass up.

Each civilization possessed its own religion, and every religion had a different concept of what a God embodied. Naturally, every God had a corresponding Divine Aspect and authority. A Demigod from the Divine Civilization would typically wield only the authorities native to that civilization. However, should a Divine Being become a Demigod within a foreign civilization, they would receive authorities from both the foreign civilization and the Divine Civilization.

In terms of battle strength, this meant a Demigod who ascended in a foreign civilization could easily defeat one who had only advanced in the Divine Civilization, as they essentially wielded twice as many authorities. This powerful advantage was precisely why the Divine Civilization was so keen on invading numerous foreign civilizations.

Although Sun Qingnian had finally obtained clues about becoming a Demigod, a significant concern weighed on him—it would likely take him at least ten years to accumulate enough strength to verify the authenticity of the rumor.

Since he was running out of time, he decided to cooperate with someone else. He would provide the clue, and in return, his partner would provide the army. The partnership would boost their chances of obtaining the Special Runic Lexicon. His immediate priority now was to devise a plan to save Han Wu from the allied forces.

It was in Sun Qingnian's best interest to allow Han Wu to win and obtain even more resources to raise the necessary army. This, however, was proving difficult—his current identity lacked sufficient influence. At most, he could only convince the princess to speak with the king and perhaps influence the human army's movements. Sun Qingnian was at a loss regarding how to handle the other three kingdoms and the church.

He was stumped until the princess mentioned something intriguing about the elven kingdom—the elven kingdom was a matriarchy, with a queen at its helm.

Sun Qingnian's eyes immediately lit up. While he was confident in his ability to charm women, he wasn't quite sure what kind of benefits becoming the elven queen's lover would yield.

Meanwhile, Han Wu received intelligence from his locusts regarding the coalition formed by the kingdoms and the church. He was worried about his army's fighting strength; while he had a multitude of skeletons, he knew they were individually weak, capable only of dealing with ordinary civilians. He greatly feared that his forces would suffer a severe defeat against the highly-trained army.

As Han Wu was lost in thought, seeking a solution, the Origin of Mutation's mocking tone resonated from the depths of his mind. "Oh dear, my dear vessel. It seems I must intervene and assist you during this crisis, after all."

"What do you want?"

"I have a plan, but you'll need to give me something in return. It's not much; just a Divine Essence."

Han Wu scoffed. *What else could you want but Divine Essence?*

Nevertheless, he agreed. "Before I give you the Divine Essence, tell me your plan first. Otherwise, I can't say it's worth the cost."

After a three-second silence, the Origin of Mutation finally replied, "I don't mind telling you. I've heard of the Rune Civilization before, and there's a particular Runic Lexicon I know of that can induce a very impressive mutation."

Han Wu's eyes lit up. "So, what exactly is this Runic Lexicon you're referring to??"

The Origin of Mutation slyly chuckled. "Thank you for your patronage. That piece of information will be one Divine Essence."

Han Wu grumbled and reluctantly surrendered the Divine Essence. The Origin of Mutation then shared the details and specifics of the Runic Lexicon. To Han Wu's pleasant surprise and relief, the Divine Essence had proven to be a worthwhile investment.

The Origin of Mutation shared with him a specific method for transforming the spores of the Mourning Deathcap into a potent virus. The Intermediate Plague Lexicon was essential for the mutation process.

If applied to his own body, the Runic Lexicon would transform Han Wu into a walking plague, with every single one of his cells carrying the virus. Alternatively, if he imbued a weapon with its power, he would be able to inflict various ailments with just a single attack!

"Interesting," Han Wu mused. "Let's give it a shot!"

He swiftly formed the Plague Lexicon and applied it to the Mourning Deathcap in his golden pot. Then, using Controlled Mutation, he successfully identified the specific mutation required, called Viral Spores.

Han Wu quickly spent 10,000 Divine Points to complete the mutation, after which he proceeded to infect a large portion of locusts with the newly developed virus. He then issued a command for these infected locusts to head straight towards the allied army.

The allied army soon found itself face-to-face with the locusts. Since they already knew these insects were working alongside the skeletons, the soldiers wasted no time in eliminating them. However, none of them noticed the virus silently bursting forth from the locust corpses. After all, viruses were, by nature, microscopic in every world.

The virus swiftly became airborne, and the unsuspecting soldiers inhaled it without realizing. They experienced no discomfort and maintained their usual marching pace as if nothing was amiss. However, with every breath they exhaled, they unwittingly propagated even more of the virus to their surrounding comrades, allowing the infection to silently and covertly spread throughout the army.

In less than twenty-four hours, the virus had thoroughly infiltrated and infected every single member of the army. As night fell, the first Mourning Deathcap grew on a

soldier's skin. The actual war had begun that very night, though not a single shot had been fired.

Han Wu had successfully created the first ever bioweapon—simultaneously fungal and viral—in the recorded history of the Rune Civilization.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 111 - Punishment of Each Kingdom

[1,534 words]

Chapter 111 - Punishment of Each Kingdom

The soldiers observed with horror as the Mourning Deathcap slowly enveloped their bodies. In a desperate attempt, one soldier yanked a mushroom off, only to be startled when it detonated unexpectedly.

The ruptured Mourning Deathcap released even more viral spores, which swiftly re-infiltrated her body. The very spot where she had ripped off the previous mushroom darkened almost immediately, and a new one slowly started to sprout.

This wasn't merely a few scattered cases; soon, every member of the allied army found themselves facing the same condition. The members of the church worked tirelessly, attempting to purge the virus, but it was futile. Soldiers would just get reinfected if they remained in camp.

The Deathcaps relentlessly drained away the soldiers' life force, and any attempt to forcibly remove them would trigger an explosion. The soldiers were utterly stumped, as they couldn't afford to keep the Deathcaps on their bodies—they were still in the midst of a war, too—but couldn't safely take them off either.

The soldiers' morale rapidly dropped, and their combat capabilities reduced drastically. Seizing this opportune moment, Han Wu ordered his skeleton army to move forward. Millions of skeletons clashed with the afflicted soldiers—already greatly weakened by the Mourning Deathcaps' torment—leading to an inevitable and crushing victory for the skeleton army.

The war spanned three days. By its conclusion, Han Wu had utterly broken and scattered the allied army. The skeleton army grew yet again, now commanding a force

of 15 million skeletons alongside 2 million Unique undead. He had even managed to summon five mutated Heroic undead from the allied factions.

Among the new summons was the human skeleton Greatsword Osteomancer. This mutated Osteomancer variant possessed the unique ability to form a massive greatsword constructed entirely from bone fragments.

Additionally, there was the Radiant Reanimator, a mutated Skeleton Reanimator summoned from the remains of a church Saint. It possessed the unique ability to heal skeletons using light attribute magic.

Finally, there were the Osteoarcher, Osteotearer, and Osteocharger, summoned from the corpses of an elf, werewolf, and minotaur respectively. The Osteoarcher could shoot countless bone arrows and even enchant them with the wind, earth, fire, or water attributes.

The Osteotearer could instantly form large bone claws during combat, while the Osteocharger could form a massive bone armor boasting incredible defensive capabilities. The three new units were all considered mutations of the Osteomancer due to their shared ability to control and manipulate bone fragments.

With the addition of the five Heroic undead, Han Wu's army grew even more powerful. In just three days after his victory over the allied forces, he conquered ten more cities. Their inhabitants were swiftly converted into part of his skeleton army, and the cities' treasures were thoroughly plundered.

The human king was finally genuinely terrified—he had lost twenty cities in a mere ten days! Considering the kingdom possessed a total of only fifty cities, it became horrifyingly clear that his domain's collapse was imminent if the skeleton army's advance continued.

The threat posed by the skeleton army extended to the other kingdoms. With no hope of victory or escape, their only remaining option was diplomacy. They preferred to pay tribute to safeguard their citizens and their own lives rather than perish in a futile confrontation against the seemingly invincible army.

However, a new issue arose: the kingdoms had no idea who to approach to initiate a truce request. The identity of the skeleton army's leader was, so far, a complete mystery to them.

While they were still racking their brains trying to figure out the identity and whereabouts of the skeleton army's leader, Sun Qingnian, who was both Princess Jade's lover and, more recently, the elf queen's new mate, spoke up. He claimed he could find the leader of the skeleton army and request a truce.

The werewolves, minotaurs, and the church found it hard to believe that a young, unseasoned man like him, who had probably never even seen a battlefield, could find the leader of the skeleton army. Nevertheless, given the human king's and the elves' willingness to grant him an opportunity, the other three factions ultimately consented to his plan.

Completely clueless about the situation, the factions had no choice but to agree, after all. The five factions gathered some treasures and requested Sun Qingnian to deliver them to the leader of the skeleton army. Their desperate hope was that this act of diplomacy might somehow secure a truce and spare their lives. With the gifts in hand, Sun Qingnian cheerfully set off towards the skeleton army.

Unfortunately, most of the skeletons were simply dumb and sought to kill him, and even the little skeleton had to emerge to prevent the other skeletons from assaulting him. Thankfully, Sun Qingnian's powerful presence indicated he was stronger than a Lord life form, so none dared to attack.

As a Skeleton Lord, the little skeleton possessed intelligence and therefore naturally understood Sun Qingnian's message. At the same time, it also sensed that Sun Qingnian shared a similar nature with Han Wu. Without delay, it quickly relayed the news of Sun Qingnian's arrival to Han Wu.

Han Wu naturally welcomed him, and the two celebrated their reunion, sharing updates and information. Sun Qingnian proceeded to reveal the reason for the visit. Upon learning of the five factions' desire for peaceful negotiations, Han Wu grew serious.

This is a golden opportunity to extort considerable wealth from them!

he thought.

As long as the factions agreed to his terms, he would immediately cease his skeletons' assaults on their respective kingdoms. Han Wu first requested for the prized Runic Lexicons of each faction, along with a large number of base runes. Furthermore, he specified that he also desired any unique or rare treasures they might possess.

At the same time, Sun Qingnian also suggested demanding reduced reparations from the human and the elven kingdoms, given his relationship with their rulers. He had, after all, promised to speak favorably on their behalf. Han Wu agreed, choosing to acknowledge Sun Qingnian's efforts.

In the end, they agreed on a special reparation package. The human king, having suffered the most losses, would pay the least amount. They only needed to give 20 Runic Lexicons, including one Advanced Runic Lexicon, 20,000 base runes, and several treasures.

The elf kingdom would be required to pay 40 Runic Lexicons, with at least two being Advanced Runic Lexicons, along with 40,000 base runes, and several treasures. The other three factions, however, would each have to provide 60 Runic Lexicons, including three Advanced ones, 60,000 base runes, and several treasures.

Should they refuse to pay, Han Wu would not hesitate to invade their cities and turn their citizens into skeletons. Sun Qingnian nodded and hurried back to relay the agreed-upon terms.

The five factions eagerly listened to the demands of the skeleton army's leader. The human king readily agreed, while the elf queen hesitated before finally nodding. She still found the terms unacceptable but realized she had to sacrifice her wealth to save her kingdom.

The other three factions, however, flat-out disagreed. Runic Lexicons were the foundation of any kingdom, and they would never reveal them so willingly, especially since Han Wu had demanded 60, including at least three Advanced Runic Lexicons! Among those three factions, only the church could possibly afford it—the werewolves and minotaurs didn't even collectively possess three Advanced Runic Lexicons.

The werewolf king and the minotaur king quickly sought out Sun Qingnian, hoping he would put in a good word for them. They went as far as offering their daughters in marriage to him if he could lower the price. He immediately refused, however.

While he might rely on wealthy ladies for his survival, he still had personal standards to live by^[1]. At the very least, he needed to be willing to sleep with the lady—she didn't necessarily need to be attractive. However, the werewolf princess was covered in fur, and the minotaur princess was more muscular than a regular man! He couldn't stomach the idea of sleeping with either at all.

Still, he noted their desperation and offered an alternative. If they lacked Advanced Runic Lexicons, they could offer information related to their Gods, such as ruins, ancient sites, or sacrificial altars instead. If even that wasn't possible, they could also pay with Divine Essence.

Neither the minotaur nor the werewolf kings had Demigod-level beings in their kingdoms. However, many brave individuals had attempted to clear the ruins, and though they failed, they still managed to obtain some Divine Essence from those ruins. After their deaths, their respective kingdoms would cremate their bodies and refine the Divine Essence to boost their families' strength.

The Divine Essence would now serve as payment. The two kings, though reluctant, had no choice. They were currently powerless against the undead.

Sun Qingnian was pleased, having concluded his negotiations with the two kings, when, unexpectedly, the church revolted. The pope declared that the righteous church would never submit to the undead, refusing any tribute to the skeletons.

Hearing this, Han Wu decided to teach the church a lesson: he would invade and destroy their holy site, the Radiant Harbor!

1. A man of standards indeed 📖

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Chapter 112 - War on Radiant Harbor

[1,276 words]

Chapter 112 - War on Radiant Harbor

The skeleton army's movement was now irreconcilable. The four kingdoms, having no doubt that the skeletons were about to besiege the church, found themselves in a rare moment of total agreement: they would simply bide their time, sit back and observe.

If the church won, the four kingdoms would completely ignore Han Wu's demands and swiftly move to aid the church in destroying the skeleton army. If the skeletons won, they would then honor the previously negotiated payment. The Pope, though keenly aware of these underlying motives, still chose to confront the undead.

The church was quite confident. None of their core clergy members had participated in the allied army's fight against the undead; only a handful of priests had been deployed. More importantly, the church possessed the home-ground advantage, as the skeletons were targeting their holy land, the Radiant Harbor. Thus, the church quickly recalled their elite forces to join the battle.

The outcome of this battle remained entirely unknown. Han Wu's army of 20 million skeletons marched for two days before finally arriving at Radiant Harbor. He remained concealed in the darkness, secretly observing the activities within the holy city.

Every part of Radiant Harbor was built from Light Stone, causing the city to radiate with light energy. It was like a colossal domain of pure light, effectively warding off undead.

Not only did the church benefit from fighting on its own turf, but it also possessed three formidable armies: the Radiant Army, the Thunder Army, and the Blazing Army. These

armies represented the pinnacle of the church's military might and were exceptionally powerful.

As a precaution, the church also recalled numerous clergy members who were stationed elsewhere, successfully amassing a fighting force of at least 2 million. Han Wu, however, decided to hold back, preferring to wait and observe rather than ordering his skeletons to charge in without a clear strategy; such a premature move would undoubtedly result in the annihilation of his entire skeleton army.

Radiant Harbor is like a massive impenetrable steel plate. I need to find a chink in their armor and disorient their forces before I can even consider attacking.

Unfortunately, Han Wu lacked a powerful unit under his command that could accomplish such a task. He pondered for a bit, then reached into his pocket and retrieved a Spectre Vine seed. The rare seed had been produced by his jade pot.

In Han Wu's opinion, however, using up a single, precious Rank 6 seed to sow chaos within Radiant Harbor was a decidedly good price to pay. He then placed the precious seed into his mouth and began to chew it.

Gene Lock!

His cells began to assimilate the Spectre Vine's genes, triggering a mutation within his body. Before long, he had incorporated the strength of the Spectre Vine into his body, feeling its raw power coursing through his veins.

With a single wave of his arm, numerous vines rapidly sprouted from the ground. He could now move through them with remarkable ease, much like a spectre. Each time he altered his position, he would unleash a powerful Spectral Dash in his wake.

Han Wu transformed into a vengeful spectre, and he charged into Radiant Harbor. He moved with such incredible speed that the guards found themselves utterly unable to stop him. He swiftly wove his way through them, mercilessly cutting down as many as he could.

Wielding the sword made from Anu, he dealt death with brutal swiftness—a simple touch against an enemy was enough. Those unfortunate enough to be grazed by the blade swiftly eroded away, their wounds rapidly transforming into a consuming rust that spread relentlessly throughout their bodies.

Ordinary cleansing spells proved insufficient, merely slowing the inevitable spread rather than completely eliminating the rust. In this horrific manner, countless soldiers perished as Han Wu relentlessly continued his assault.

Orders reached the three armies, and they swiftly moved to assist in the fight. The generals commanding each of these forces were seasoned experts, having once

explored ancient ruins. Despite not completing the ruins' trials, they had nonetheless gained some Divine Essence, which helped in strengthening their bodies. Furthermore, they possessed numerous powerful Runic Lexicons, making them formidable opponents, on par with High Lords.

Even then, they were no match for Han Wu's overwhelming speed, and they ultimately suffered defeat. Their attacks, though powerful, were rendered completely useless as long as they failed to land a single hit on him. It finally became clear to them that they could do absolutely nothing against Han Wu in his current state.

Han Wu used his incredible speed to his advantage and unleashed a barrage of rapid attacks. He successfully managed to inflict injuries upon the generals of both the Blazing Army and the Thunder Army, yet he was unable to deliver a decisive blow to the Radiant Army's general. This particular general was the only one among the three who successfully parried Han Wu's attacks and even launched counterattacks of their own.

Realizing he couldn't deal any significant damage to the Radiant Army's general, Han Wu swiftly switched targets, focusing his attacks on the soldiers instead. The church's carefully cultivated experts began to fall one by one under his relentless and ruthless strikes.

Having fought continuously for two hours within Radiant Harbor, he finally felt exhaustion seize his body. He swiftly made his escape from the area and immediately commanded his skeleton army to commence their attack on the holy city without delay.

The skeletons poured into Radiant Harbor, relentlessly engaging the already exhausted clergy, already disoriented from Han Wu's previous actions. Among the fallen, many were swiftly resurrected by the little skeleton, becoming new Skeleton Knights.

Simultaneously, many skeletons were constantly being purified by the clergy members, rendering them permanently unable to be reanimated. Nevertheless, these purified skeletons unexpectedly served a secondary purpose for the skeletal army—the Osteomancers transformed those bone fragments into imposing giants or, in the case of the Greatsword Osteomancer, a formidable greatsword, and started a rampage. Four hours later, Radiant Harbor had been utterly reduced to ruins, and the casualties among the clergy had skyrocketed dramatically.

Yet, the skeleton army did not emerge unscathed, having lost a substantial number of units. Under the furious and sustained assault of the church's forces, almost 15 million skeletons were permanently destroyed. Han Wu felt his numbers dwindling rapidly and commanded his forces to pull back. His skeleton army immediately complied, beginning their retreat.

Though the three armies yearned to chase the skeletons and exact retribution for their lost comrades, the general of the Radiant Army held them back. He argued that any attack now would be futile; their forces were too disorganized, severely wounded, and

utterly exhausted. To pursue the skeletons in their current state would only result in their own meaningless deaths.

Their immediate priority shifted to rescuing the wounded and reducing further casualties. After the war, a detailed report was prepared and presented to the Pope, who was so shocked by its contents that he almost fainted. 1.6 million had perished, with an additional 300,000 severely injured and 150,000 sustaining minor wounds. Furthermore, the three armies were on the verge of collapse.

The church had suffered a crushing defeat. The Pope let out a heavy sigh, his gaze sweeping across the utterly ruined Radiant Harbor. He began to question his initial decision; had he consented to the reparations, he would not have incurred such devastating losses.

Yet, it was far too late for regrets. He faced two choices: completely surrender or wage a hopeless war. He found himself at a complete loss, utterly unaware that someone had materialized within his chambers.

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Chapter 113 - Destruction of Werewolf Kingdom

[1,543 words]

Chapter 113 - Destruction of Werewolf Kingdom

The Pope, finally aware of the man's presence, immediately raised a cry of alarm. "Who are you? How dare you breach the sanctity of Radiant Harbor?"

This intruder was Xu Tie. Upon learning of Han Wu's skeleton army attacking Radiant Harbor, Xu Tie had mobilized his Iron Skins with the intention of coming to the holy city's aid. Unfortunately, he arrived too late to prevent the devastation. Nevertheless, the situation was not entirely without hope; a weakened church would prove considerably easier to control than one at the height of its power.

Xu Tie gently cleared his throat. "Esteemed Pope, please do not be alarmed. I am here to help."

The Pope, naturally wary and suspicious of this unexpected visitor, was in dire straits, and desperately needed all the help he could get. He was prepared to do whatever it

took if it meant avenging his lost clergy and simultaneously eradicating the skeleton army.

The following night, the skeleton army launched yet another attack on Radiant Harbor. After a night of rest, Han Wu had successfully reanimated an additional 5 million skeletons, providing him with ample forces to wage another full-scale war.

The church, however, was in no condition whatsoever to endure another fight. Its members were riddled with wounds, wrapped in bandages and many were physically incapable of combat.

The skeleton army effortlessly repelled the remaining guards and surged into Radiant Harbor once more. The clergy members, filled with rage, watched helplessly as the undead defiled their sacred grounds, knowing they were too weak to intervene. The skeletons were too strong and they were powerless.

The skeletons were gleefully slaughtering their way through Radiant Harbor when the Pope personally stepped forward to confront them. Physically, he was not a large man, but in that moment, in the eyes of his devout clergy, he loomed like a towering giant. Clad in pristine white robes, he radiated an aura so profound it made him seem like a God.

With a voice ringing with conviction, he proclaimed, “*Oh*, lost undead, cease your abominable march and withdraw from Radiant Harbor! I promise you mercy if you do so! However, if you persist, the gods themselves will deliver justice upon you!”

The skeletons stared at the Pope, their vacant gazes conveying a clear sense of ridicule, poised to simply trample him into meat paste. However, a brilliant light suddenly appeared, enveloping the Pope. A shimmering magic array formed beneath his feet, and from it, groups of powerful units began to step out.

Han Wu immediately recognized the summoning array and the units emerging from it. They were, unmistakably, Xu Tie’s Iron Skins!

The Pope exclaimed loudly, “Almighty forces of God, unleash the iron fist of justice upon them and annihilate these pitiful undead!”

The Iron Skins advanced, effortlessly tearing through the skeletons as if they were made of paper. The clergy members erupted in cheers, their voices ringing with newfound hope.

“Go and destroy those undeads!”

“Avenge our fallen brothers and sisters!”

“The almighty God has descended. Praise be to our God!”

The previously unstoppable skeleton army was now gradually being pushed back by the Iron Skins. Faced with this unexpected resistance, Han Wu had no choice but to command his Heroic Osteomancers to enter the fray.

The Osteomancers, utilizing the scattered bone fragments, transformed into colossal bone giants. With their massively powerful frames, they brutally flung Iron Skins to the ground, then mercilessly stomped them into the very earth. However, the Iron Skins employed their unique technique to challenge the Osteomancers.

The Iron Skins merged, transforming into numerous towering Iron Skin giants that immediately confronted the bone giants. The fierce battle raged on relentlessly, with skeletons and Iron Skins perishing at an alarming rate.

Yet, amidst the chaos, the Pope perceived a glimmer of hope. He discreetly contacted Xu Tie, seeking to know the exact Warfront Essence necessary to summon more Iron Skins. The church was prepared to pay any price to ensure their victory.

Xu Tie smiled inwardly and readily accepted the deal. With more Warfront Essence now at his disposal, he summoned even more Iron Skins, sending them against the skeleton army. Under the weight of this new wave, the skeletons were gradually being pushed back by the Iron Skins.

Realizing he had already lost 2 million skeletons, and with more Iron Skins pouring onto the battlefield, Han Wu was forced to order a temporary retreat for his forces, now planning to wear the church down in a lengthy, drawn-out war.

Once the skeletons were driven off, the clergy members erupted in cheers and gazed at the Iron Skins with deep reverence and awe, convinced they were divine emissaries from God. The Pope exhaled slowly, a wave of relief washing over him. He had, at least, managed to successfully defend Radiant Harbor from the skeletons this time.

To prevent any further attacks, the Pope expended a significant amount of the church's treasures to summon even more Iron Skins to bolster Radiant Harbor's defenses. Within a mere two days, Xu Tie successfully summoned 6 million Iron Skins, effectively transforming Radiant Harbor into an impregnable fortress.

Assessing the numerical superiority of the Iron Skins, Han Wu determined that engaging them would be too great a risk even if he possessed 20 million skeletons, let alone the mere 3 million he currently commanded. He therefore made the strategic decision to withdraw from the vicinity.

Soon, the news of the skeletons' defeat at the hands of the church spread rapidly among each of the kingdoms. The werewolves and minotaurs, upon hearing this, declared their intent to join forces and eliminate the undead and immediately sent resources to the church to aid its recovery.

In contrast, the human king and the elven kingdom remained silent. The human king even went so far as to secretly send Han Wu the full payment he had demanded: 20 Runic Lexicons, one of which was an Advanced type, 20,000 base runes, various treasures, and even three Divine Essence. In return, they earnestly requested that Han Wu refrain from invading the territory of the human kingdom any further.

Han Wu accepted the human king's offer and completely ignored the human kingdom from that point forward. Instead, he led his remaining 3 million skeletons—still a sizable army despite their recent losses—to launch an attack on the werewolf kingdom. With the help of his locusts, Han Wu effortlessly laid waste to the werewolf cities and plundered their riches.

After successfully destroying five cities, he had even managed to swell his skeleton army to 8 million, 2 million of which were Unique undeads. It had truly become a monstrous army. The werewolf king, enraged by the loss of five of his cities, believed Han Wu had completely dismissed him as an easy target.

He issued a direct command for all his soldiers to assemble, aiming for a single, decisive battle with the skeleton army. All 12 million werewolf soldiers immediately heeded his call, prepared to fight valiantly for the sake of their king.

If the church could repel them, then so can I! he thought to himself with conviction.

The fierce battle spanned five days and nights. However, without any means to prevent the continuous reanimation of skeletons or to purify the deadly Mourning Deathcap infection, the werewolf army was utterly annihilated, their 12 million soldiers ultimately becoming skeletons.

Finally consumed by terror, the werewolf king relented and belatedly agreed to pay the price Han Wu had previously demanded, but the opportunity for negotiation had long passed. Not one to suffer such a blatant attempt at manipulation, Han Wu coldly dismissed the werewolf king's offer. He instead split his 20 million skeleton army into four distinct battalions, unleashing them to destroy the werewolf kingdom.

Within a mere month, Han Wu had brought about the complete destruction of all 42 cities, converting every single werewolf into a skeleton. The werewolf kingdom was officially annihilated.

The minotaur king, now consumed by profound fear, instantly withdrew all support from the church and sent an emissary to offer his kingdom's surrender to the skeleton army. In response, Han Wu, seizing the moment, ruthlessly demanded double the original amount from the minotaurs as a condition for their continued survival.

After the brutal, month-long war, Han Wu had not only amassed a formidable army but also a substantial collection of treasures. Among these, his most prized treasures were, without question, the ten Advanced Runic Lexicons.

Considering his body's limits, he carefully selected four from the ten to incorporate into himself.

[Runic Lexicon: King (Advanced). Grants the King's Dominance skill. +100% damage to every skill learned]

[Runic Lexicon: Battle Frenzy (Advanced). Grants the passive ability, Battle Frenzy. Increases strength based on number of kills. Capped at 1,000%]

[Runic Lexicon: Redlust (Advanced). Increases all physical parameters every time the color red is spotted. Capped at 500%]

[Runic Lexicon: Nature (Advanced). Grants the passive ability, All Language. Can communicate with any life form through telepathy]

Han Wu felt his body and soul surge with a massive boost after successfully incorporating all four Advanced Runic Lexicons. He then surveyed his skeleton army—now boasting 60 million units—and decided to get revenge on the church. This time, he resolved to permanently eliminate Xu Tie!

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Chapter 114 - Trials in Ancient Ruins

[1,230 words]

Chapter 114 - Trials in Ancient Ruins

Han Wu, deciding the moment was right, led his immense 60-million-strong skeleton army on a march towards Radiant Harbor. However, when he finally arrived, he was profoundly shocked by the utterly desolate state of the church's holy grounds.

The skeletons marched into the once thriving city, intending to find their enemies, but found no signs of life. They did, however, uncover numerous dead clergy members. Upon closer inspection, it was evident that they had been beaten to death, judging by the multitude of fist-sized wounds on their bodies.

Han Wu immediately recognized this as the handiwork of Xu Tie's Iron Skins. They were renowned as expert punchers and boasted incredible destructive power; each punch was powerful enough to kill someone.

This grim reality unfolded once again. After Xu Tie's Iron Skins successfully chased away the skeleton army, the Pope publicly declared him the church's honored guest. In a dual effort to drive away the undead and to raise the morale of the clergy, the Pope authorized the use of most of the church's resources for Xu Tie to summon even more Iron Skins.

Xu Tie only revealed his true intentions after he had successfully summoned most of his Iron Skins. He had been cunningly exploiting the church during their period of crisis specifically to obtain their resources, which explained how he managed to summon 20 million Iron Skins in such a brief period. He then coldly ordered his Iron Skins to destroy the church only after their resources had been completely exhausted.

Han Wu chuckled, his eyes sweeping over the ruined city. "So, this is why the church didn't send any reinforcements during my war with the werewolves—they had already been decimated by Xu Tie! Perhaps I should thank him for indirectly helping me conquer the werewolf kingdom so easily."

Although Radiant Harbor lay in ruins, some valuable treasures still remained in plain sight. The church, befitting its status as a holy site, had constructed the very buildings from Light Stones. In Han Wu's eyes, the devastated Radiant Harbor was now nothing less than an open-air Light Stone mine! He wasted no time, ordering his skeletons to commence mining the precious stones from the site.

Meanwhile, Sun Qingnian was constantly sniffing out information for them both. He was quite pleased with his decision to ally with Han Wu, especially after receiving news of the werewolf kingdom's collapse and the sheer size of Han Wu's 60 million-strong skeleton army.

He sent his Foxmen with vital intelligence for Han Wu: he had discovered an ancient ruin that potentially harbored secrets to ascending as a Demigod of the Rune Civilization. Han Wu received this news with great pleasure; their primary reason for being there was to achieve Demigod ascension in the first place. With such a clear opportunity now available, he felt he had no choice but to pursue it.

After agreeing on a specific time and place, the two assembled their personal armies and converged at an oasis, which lay in the heart of a massive, desolate wilderness and was rumored to be the entrance to the ruins. As per the information he had acquired, Sun Qingnian then sacrificed 10,000 basic runes, causing the entrance to the ruins to open.

Their combined forces poured into the ancient ruins, beginning the exploration. With 60 million skeletons and 2 million Foxmen, they easily charted a safe path through the first floor, identifying and marking existing traps. Their advance to the second floor was unhindered, until they were met with immediate resistance from powerful guardians.

The second floor proved far more treacherous—they were forced to battle against floor guardians emerging at regular intervals. Han Wu ultimately sacrificed 20 million skeletons before he could eliminate all the guardians and clear the way to the third floor.

Sun Qingnian was relieved that Han Wu was with him; he wouldn't have been able to defeat the guardians on his own. He now understood why the majority of the Rune Civilization's natives had perished during their expeditions into ancient ruins. It was clear that without possessing the power level of at least a Demigod, surviving within these treacherous ruins was an almost impossible feat.

The third floor was predictably more difficult than the second. It was riddled with various traps, with even more powerful guardians blocking their path.

After a brutal struggle that cost him almost 30 million skeletons, Han Wu finally uncovered the route to the fourth and final floor of the ruins. Surprisingly, this time, they encountered no guardians or traps blocking their way.

Sun Qingnian's Intel proved accurate—the fourth floor indeed contained multiple trials, each offering an opportunity for Demigod ascension. There were eight such trials, each corresponding with a special Runic Lexicon. After passing the trials, one would obtain the corresponding special Runic Lexicon and become a Demigod in the Rune Civilization.

After quickly reviewing the details of all eight trials, Sun Qingnian selected the one most aligned with his strengths and led his army into it. Han Wu then took his turn with the remaining seven options, settling on a trial named "Famine." He entered this trial with the 10 million skeletons still under his command.

The moment he stepped through the shimmering gate, he was transported into a desolate place. Within the realm, a special energy amplified the digestion rate of living beings, forcing them to constantly eat in order to survive.

Immediately after entering, Han Wu noticed with alarm that his connection to his divine realm had been severed, rendering him unable to take out any food. He wasn't alone in this desolate place, however. Roaming the barren landscape were special undead known as Starved Wretches. These horrifying creatures were once humans who had perished from starvation, now raised as undead and forced to endure the unending torment of hunger.

To successfully complete this trial, participants had to not only endure the relentless attacks of the Starved Wretches, but also the constant starvation they themselves experienced. To successfully complete the trial, they had to endure these harsh conditions for a full 30 days.

Han Wu immediately grasped the Famine trial's main theme—the Starved Wretches were both his opponents and his sole food source. To survive, he would have to defeat

and then eat them. This realization left him feeling very queasy. Despite his willingness to kill, the thought of cannibalism, even of the undead, was deeply disturbing.

Thankfully, Han Wu wasn't without options. With the Plant Fusion Technique, he merged with the Death Lily, Golden Dragon Grass, and Spectre Vine. He then ordered the three plants to extend their roots, allowing him to absorb whatever scarce nutrients the ground contained to sustain himself.

Fortunately, his skeleton army didn't need to eat at all, so they wouldn't experience any hunger. He instructed them to protect him while he concentrated on drawing what little nutrients he could from the earth.

Immediately after giving out his orders, agonizing hunger began to consume Han Wu. All the food in his system had been digested, and the limited nutrients absorbed from the soil weren't enough to keep him awake. As a result, he had no choice but to put his body into a dormant state to reduce as much energy consumption as possible.

With his skeleton army protecting him, Han Wu quickly fell asleep, patiently awaiting the conclusion of the trial.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,105 words]

Chapter 115 - Xu Tie's Ambition

The Rune Civilization had entered an age of turmoil. The undead army's threat had only just passed when the Iron Skin army started invading the land. They were immune to conventional weapons, making it effortless for them to tear through the land's native life forms.

The church, the human kingdom, and the minotaur kingdom all fell to the Iron Skins' brutal strength. Only the elven kingdom managed to hold them at bay, protected by a barrier woven from elemental magic. But the magic was costly. It drained resources by the day, and the elves couldn't maintain it much longer.

Xu Tie read the frontline report with satisfaction. Given the current situation, victory was well within his grasp.

"Sun Qingnian has been missing for a month," he mused. "If I'm right, he's probably found the ruins and is trying to become a Demigod. But even if he succeeds, it'll be too late. I'll have crushed all four kingdoms by then. His troops are better suited for support roles, so there's nothing he can do against me."

He chuckled softly. "Niu Fang ran to the minotaur kingdom, trying to claim the throne, but I captured her. Qian Lili is greedy for money, and I've bought her off. She's likely battling Qin Shuang right now. Her core race, the stone golems, should counter Qin Shuang's Thunder Sparrows effectively. I'll wait for Qin Shuang's defeat before revealing myself. And then... *Hehe*.

"As for Han Wu, I haven't heard from him since I defeated him a month ago. Maybe the Rust Demon finished him off. Han Wu, it would be an honor for you to die at the hands of the Rust Demon!"

Just then, one of the Iron Skins cautiously approached Xu Tie and handed him a new report. According to it, Qian Lili's stone golems had successfully cornered Qin Shuang's Thunder Sparrows in a valley. Xu Tie had been waiting for this news for a long time.

Qin Shuang, let's see how you escape me now, he thought, then rallied 10 million Iron Skins and marched straight for the valley where Qin Shuang was trapped. His army moved with speed and discipline, reaching their destination in just three days.

Qian Lili awaited him there with her stone golem army. As one of the top scorers, she was also formidable. Her stone golems were also resistant to the Thunder Sparrows' lightning attacks, making it easy to trap Qin Shuang in the valley.

She wasted no time. As soon as she saw Xu Tie, she stretched out her hands. "I've done as you asked. She's trapped. Now pay up the rest."

Xu Tie took his time, gazing down at the valley where flashes of lightning crackled intermittently. "Well done. But before I pay the rest, I need you to put on a show with me."

Qian Lili frowned. "What do you want?"

"I want you to act like my Iron Skins crushed your stone golems," Xu Tie said coolly.

Her anger flared. "Are you serious? Do you have any idea how much Warfront Essence I spent to summon all 20 million of them? They're not just throwaway pawns for your convenience!"

Xu Tie let out a sharp snort. "I can always summon the other 30 million Iron Skins and have them join this conversation properly."

Qian Lili fell silent. Though she was greedy, she was also smart enough to recognize who held the advantage. Her 20 million stone golems were powerful, but they were no match for 40 million Iron Skins. If they actually fought, she would lose not just her entire force but the final payment as well.

She relented. "Fine. But I want double the final payment, and you're leaving me 500,000 stone golems."

"Done," Xu Tie said without hesitation.

Soon, the clash of battle erupted above the valley. Stone golem and Iron Skin corpses tumbled down into the hollow below at irregular intervals.

Hidden in the shadows, Qin Shuang knew Xu Tie and Qian Lili were locked in combat overhead. She hoped both would be wounded, giving her a chance to slip away and rebuild her army.

Unfortunately, that hope was short-lived. Soon, the fighting stopped, and Xu Tie descended into the valley and appeared before her.

When he saw her, Xu Tie quickly put on an act. "Qin Shuang, you're really here! I heard Qian Lili drove you to this place and tried to kill you. I abandoned all my battles and rushed here. I'm glad you're safe. I've defeated her stone golems, and she won't threaten you again anytime soon."

Qin Shuang frowned but nodded. "Thank you."

"You're too kind. I'm just lending a hand."

She forced a smile but said nothing. Instead, she signaled her Thunder Sparrows to fly out from the valley. As she prepared to mount her Lord life form, the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow, and leave, Xu Tie stopped her. "Qin Shuang, are you really going to go now? Why not stay and fight with me? Together we can defeat the native factions here and split the spoils evenly."

Qin Shuang shook her head. "Xu Tie, thank you for the offer, but I have other matters to attend to. This is where we part ways."

Xu Tie scowled. "You're going after Han Wu, aren't you? I can tell you that he's already dead. I killed him with the Rust Demon, a being stronger than a Lord life form."

Qin Shuang's face drained of color, but she trusted Han Wu's strength more than Xu Tie's boast. "Han Wu is powerful on his own. The Rust Demon alone couldn't kill him. Besides, he has his skeletons guarding him. Even if he couldn't win, he could still have them to hold it off."

"Those pathetic skeletons are nothing compared to my Iron Skins, much less the Rust Demon!" he retorted.

"I don't want to waste any more time talking to you. Goodbye." Without hesitation, Qin Shuang commanded her Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow to take flight.

Xu Tie panicked. He commanded his Iron Skins to leap down from the valley's edge, landing atop the Thunder Sparrow to block its escape.

Qin Shuang grew angry. "What do you want, Xu Tie?"

"What do I want? I want you to stay here with me. I'm the strongest now. Everyone must obey me, including you."

Dropping the nice guy act, Xu Tie threatened, "Do as I say, or you won't leave this place alive."

Qin Shuang scoffed, never believing he had come to rescue her. She commanded her Thunder Sparrows to attack the Iron Skins. She would rather die fighting than fall into Xu Tie's hands.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,324 words]

Chapter 116 - Divine Power, Famine

Han Wu stirred from his hibernation, and an unprecedented weakness weighed down his entire body. He was utterly drained. Blinking, he looked down at his emaciated frame—reduced to little more than skin stretched over bones after an extended period without food.

He then surveyed his skeleton army. He originally had 10 million of them, but now only 10,000 remained. These survivors were the elite: 1,000 Heroic skeletons and the rest Unique skeletons. Beyond the skeletons' ring, countless Starved Wretches knelt and prayed to him.

Han Wu's attention shifted to a strange orb of energy hovering before him. More precisely, it was a Special Runic Lexicon.

[Runic Lexicon: Famine (Special) Used on self to grant control over another life form's digestion and metabolism speed.]

Han Wu absorbed the Special Runic Lexicon into his body, feeling it flow through him like a warm current. Flesh slowly regrew over his emaciated frame, restoring a more normal appearance.

He stumbled through his first two steps, then noticed a gate materializing ahead. It took 20 seconds to cover the final five meters and exit the trial. Immediately, he connected to

his divine realm and summoned a great quantity of food. He devoured it rapidly, digesting it instantly, as the nutrients flooded through him. After consuming enough to feed a hundred people, the gnawing hunger finally subsided.

At last, Han Wu regained enough strength to inspect his own data.

[Name: Han Wu-Origin of Mutation]

[Rank: Demigod (Foreign) / Rank 2 Supergene Soldier]

[Divine Talent: Chosen One (Exclusive), Defiance]

[Divine Powers: Sacrifice (Exclusive), Controlled Mutation, Gene Lock, Famine]

[Skills: Mighty Cleave, Enchant Darkness, Dragon Slash, Dark Dragonification, Flash Kick, Plant Fusion Technique, King's Dominance...]

[Divine Essence: 9 (5 remaining, in the process of being absorbed. Once you have 10 Divine Essence, you can become a perfect Demigod in the Divine Civilization)]

[Divine Points: 39.7 million (Personal) / 322.74 million (Foreign)]

[Faith Points: 49.08 million]

[Core Level: Level 10 (Rank 4 Sacred Object Law of Gluttony (Sealed), Rank 2 Sacred Object Revelation Stone, Rank 2 Sacred Object Shadow Nail, Rank 1 Sacred Object Poison Gland, Rank 1 Sacred Object Elf Shortbow)]

...

Han Wu confirmed his advancement to Demigod and the acquisition of Famine. Though pleased, a faint sense of dissatisfaction lingered. He had gained only a single Divine Power from ascending within the Rune Civilization, which struck him as unreasonably stingy.

Fortunately, the Origin of Mutation had reached Rank 2, granting him the Gene Lock ability, which was an even greater boon than Famine. Still, what pleased him most was ascending into a Demigod in a different civilization. Once he returned to the Divine Civilization and absorbed the remaining Divine Essence, he could finally become a perfect Demigod.

As Han Wu reviewed his gains, Sun Qingnian stumbled out of his own trial. His body showed no visible wounds, but his mind teetered on the edge of collapse. His face was pale and drawn, as though something had drained him dry over ten relentless nights.

“I’ve become a Demigod...” he murmured, voice hollow, before collapsing where he stood.

Han Wu quickly checked his conditions and was relieved to find that he had merely fainted from exhaustion. He placed Sun Qingnian and his Foxmen into his divine realm to rest temporarily. Then, gathering the remnants of his skeleton army, Han Wu headed toward the ruins’ exit.

As Han Wu moved through the second floor, he caught sight of a familiar figure. Qian Lili was locked in battle, commanding her stone golems to fend off the guardian’s relentless assault. Despite her efforts, the guardian’s power was overwhelming, and she didn’t have enough golems to turn the tide. At this rate, she was bound to fail.

Qian Lili noticed him as well and quickly devised a plan to win against the guardian. She waved and motioned for Han Wu to approach her. He was confused but approached cautiously. “Qian Lili, what’s going on?”

Even though they were classmates, they were also rivals. He had no reason to lower his guard.

She didn’t mind his wariness and got straight to the point. “You have a good relationship with Qin Shuang, right? I have some news about her. Want to hear it?”

Han Wu nodded instantly at the mention of Qin Shuang. “Tell me.”

Qian Lili nodded back. “I will, but first you need to pay me 10,000 Warfront Essence.”

It was a steep price, but for Qin Shuang’s sake, Han Wu agreed without hesitation. Seeing how readily he paid, Qian Lili regretted setting the price so low. Still, since she had made the offer and he had accepted, she didn’t want to break her word. She quickly shared the news.

Han Wu’s heart sank when he learned that Xu Tie had trapped Qin Shuang in the valley. Without wasting a moment, he hurried out of the ruins and headed straight for the valley.

He flew relentlessly for an entire day until he reached the coordinates Qian Lili had given him. Looking down into the valley, he spotted intermittent flashes of golden lightning—an unmistakable sign of the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow—and swiftly dove into the valley.

Han Wu used Dark Dragonification alongside King’s Dominance, doubling the power of all his abilities. His dragon form, now fused with the Plant Fusion Technique and enhanced by King’s Dominance, surged with strength that easily surpassed a Lord’s and neared the rank of a High Lord.

As he landed, he saw the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow locked in battle against an Iron Skin Lord. The Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow was covered in injuries, and several Iron Skins were crawling over its body to pluck its feathers.

The Iron Skin Lord had merged with countless Iron Skins, drastically increasing its size and destructive power. It pressed on relentlessly, and the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow would surely lose if the fight dragged on. Han Wu silently commended his timing and swiftly intervened.

The Iron Skin Lord didn't recognize him and shooed him away. Han Wu didn't hesitate and pointed at it while using his new Divine Power, *Famine*. Suddenly, the Iron Skin Lord and the Iron Skins fused to it felt their stomachs empty as if they hadn't eaten in ten days. Weakness washed over them, dragging their strength down. Within three minutes, all of them fainted from hunger.

The Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow stared at Han Wu in disbelief. He patted its head and urged, "Stop spacing out. Quickly take me to your God. We don't have time."

The Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow nodded and gestured for Han Wu to mount it. Immediately after, it led him to the cave where Xu Tie held Qin Shuang captive and was moments away from violating her.

Han Wu shouted, unleashing his Divine Power at the same time. "Let go of her!"

Suddenly, Xu Tie was overwhelmed by unbearable hunger and dizziness, so intense that he tried biting into his own flesh to quell the craving. He gritted his teeth and stared at Han Wu in disbelief. "How? How are you still alive? The Rust Demon should have killed you!"

Han Wu said nothing and intensified his Divine Power's strength.

Xu Tie's hunger crushed him. He collapsed to the ground, too weak to stand. Desperately, he summoned food from his divine realm and ate ravenously, but no matter how much he consumed, it could not match the energy he was burning.

"You... You've become a Demigod..." Xu Tie blurted through a mouthful of food.

Han Wu approached him and mercilessly slashed his throat with his greatsword. The rust covering the blade seeped into the wound, infecting Xu Tie and eating away at him from within. Agony twisted his face as his flesh crumbled into rust flakes.

"The Rust Demon didn't kill me. It became my slave instead. Sorry to disappoint you, Xu Tie." Han Wu spoke only as Xu Tie slowly crumbled into rust flakes. By then, Xu Tie was already dead and couldn't hear a word.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,360 words]

Chapter 117 - Qin Shuang's Ascension

The Iron Skins outside erupted into a frenzy the moment they sensed Xu Tie's death. Their God's fall shattered their faith, a fate far worse than death itself. Stripped of reason, the Iron Skins became relentless war machines, charging blindly toward the place where Xu Tie had drawn his last breath.

Han Wu knew he couldn't hold them off alone, not even as a Demigod. Grabbing Qin Shuang, he soared into the sky atop the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow. The Iron Skins roared beneath them, but none could stop their escape.

After flying for several hundred kilometers, they finally touched down in a ruined town. Qin Shuang had been tending to her wounds during the flight and now looked to Han Wu with cautious curiosity. "So you're a Demigod now?"

"Yep, a real one," he confirmed.

In the Rune Civilization, the only difference between a Demigod and a regular being was narrow, defined mainly by possession of a Special Runic Lexicon.

"It seems gold will shine no matter where it is." Qin Shuang felt a twinge of envy. "Congratulations on becoming a Demigod."

Han Wu met her gaze. "I know the way to the ancient ruins. I can help you gather more Warfront Essence so you can summon more units. That'll give you a real chance to enter the ruins. Whether you pass the trial and obtain a Special Runic Lexicon, though, is up to you."

Qin Shuang nodded, savoring the possibility of becoming a Demigod in the Rune Civilization. Then a shadow crossed her face as she recalled Han Wu had just killed Xu Tie. "Won't the college punish you for killing Xu Tie? His family will definitely come and seek justice from you."

Han Wu scoffed. "If I hadn't killed him, do you think they would have let me live? I'm not worried about their revenge. What concerns me is how harshly the college will punish me."

Qin Shuang gave a reassuring nod. "Don't worry. I'll be your witness. Xu Tie was the one who started it, and he even sent the Rust Demon to kill you. He admitted it himself."

Han Wu smiled. "We'll worry about punishment when we get back to the College. Right now, we need to focus on gathering as much Warfront Essence as possible for you."

Among the five factions, Han Wu had already annihilated the werewolf kingdom, while Xu Tie had crushed the church, the human kingdom, and the minotaur kingdom. Only the elven kingdom remained, but it too teetered on the brink of collapse.

Han Wu had already accepted the elves' payment and promised to spare them. That left the duo with no choice but to test their luck and scour the wilderness for any remaining source of Warfront Essence.

Qin Shuang heeded his words, and they mounted the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow to search the wilderness. They touched down in a mountainous region where Han Wu spotted a large tribe of barbarians. Their massive frames and thick hair made them look less like humans and more like bears standing upright.

Qin Shuang found her target and summoned her units to strike. Though she had only 30,000 Thunder Sparrows left after the battles with Qian Lili and Xu Tie, her forces were still strong enough to take on the barbarians.

In the next instant, lightning split the sky and crashed down in waves, incinerating the enemy where they stood. Han Wu seized the moment to summon his skeleton army and raise the fallen barbarians as undead soldiers. This method efficiently expanded his forces.

He also sent many locusts to scout the surrounding area, hoping to find even more native life forms. While their fighting power remained average, the locusts excelled at scouting. Soon, they discovered another barbarian tribe deeper in the mountains.

The two of them rode Thunder Sparrows to attack the new tribe and claim more Warfront Essence. After the battle, Han Wu commanded his skeletons to raise additional soldiers from the fresh corpses.

This strategy brought great benefits to both. Qin Shuang collected Warfront Essence and rune stones, while Han Wu replenished his skeleton army with the fallen.

Their armies grew quickly as days passed. During one campaign against a barbarian tribe, they even found a rich iron mine.

Iron ores were cheap and abundant, so people rarely bothered to mine them. However, Han Wu was different because he possessed the Refiner. By feeding it iron ore, he could produce valuable Iron Stones. He estimated that the vast iron mine held at least several million tonnes of ore. If he refined it all, he would obtain at least an equal amount of Iron Stones.

Han Wu would never miss a chance to grow his wealth. He commanded some of his skeletons to remain behind and mine the area, telling them he would return one day to collect the ore. Though the skeletons lacked intelligence, they were tireless workers. Each grabbed a weapon and started mining aimlessly.

Concerned about their directionless efforts, Han Wu left 10 Scorching Dwarves to oversee the skeletons before departing to continue expanding his army.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang had been gathering Warfront Essence for ten days when Sun Qingnian finally awoke. After such a long rest, he felt rejuvenated and not as hollow as he had once been.

Han Wu filled him in on everything that had transpired while he had been unconscious. Sun Qingnian listened in shock and sympathy, especially for Princess Jade. She was technically his lover, and hearing that her kingdom had fallen and that she had likely died in the battle weighed heavily on him.

He spat out in anger, "Xu Tie, that bastard. Serves him right."

Grief quickly turned to alarm when he learned that the Iron Skins had launched an assault on the elven kingdom. During the last crisis, he'd been trapped in the trial and powerless to save Princess Jade. Now, freed from his confinement, he saw a chance to somewhat ease the burden of guilt. Determined to prove to the elf queen that he was no coward, he swiftly rallied his Foxmen and bid the two farewell before rushing toward the elven kingdom.

Meanwhile, Han Wu and Qin Shuang continued their daily work mining and gathering Warfront Essence. After a month, Han Wu had amassed 15 million skeletons. He discovered seven new mines and assigned skeletons to work them around the clock to increase his income.

Thanks to Han Wu's support, Qin Shuang soon summoned 30 million Thunder Sparrows. Armed with this force and the map Han Wu had provided, she prepared to face the trials within the ruins, confident she would succeed.

After sending her into the ruins, Han Wu grew bored and turned his attention to the affairs of the elven kingdom. Reports reached him that Sun Qingnian had taken decisive action to defend the kingdom against the Iron Skins' invasion. Without their God, the Iron Skins were scattered like loose sand, easily overwhelmed by the combined assault of Sun Qingnian and the elven forces.

The elf queen was so elated that she proposed to Sun Qingnian before her subjects. Sun Qingnian naturally accepted such a splendid offer and became the first outsider to be crowned king of the elven kingdom. Han Wu arrived just in time for their wedding.

Once crowned, Sun Qingnian started using the elven kingdom's resources for his own benefit. He openly declared that he had earned them. After all, even prostitutes charged for their services. Sun Qingnian had given not only his body but also his soul, so it was only natural for him to claim the kingdom's wealth for himself.

The men of the elven kingdom quickly learned from Sun Qingnian and started imitating him. Han Wu only stayed for a few days before he couldn't stand it anymore. He returned to the wilderness with his skeleton army and continued his hunt for additional resources.

A month later, Han Wu finally saw Qin Shuang emerge from the ruins. As expected, she had passed the month-long trial and ascended into a Demigod. She had fulfilled her dream of becoming a Demigod before enrolling in Imperial College.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,063 words]

Chapter 118 - Perfect Demigod

[Runic Lexicon: Stormbringer (Special) When used on self, increases thunder and lightning attribute skills by 500%. Grants user a new skill: Storm Domain.]

Qin Shuang had grown noticeably stronger, and Han Wu could sense she was nearing the rank of High Lord. Now a Demigod, Qin Shuang had no further desires. She continued to accompany Han Wu in their search for resources until Lina sent a notification ordering them to return.

Following her instructions, Han Wu and the others left the Rune Civilization and returned to the Divine Civilization. Six had set out, but only five came back.

News of Xu Tie's death quickly reached his family. His parents burst into Imperial College, grief-stricken and demanding harsh punishment for their son's killer. Han Wu did not hide the truth and recounted everything that had happened.

The college then questioned Qian Lili and Qin Shuang, verifying Han Wu's testimony and confirming its accuracy. Although Xu Tie had initially attempted to assassinate Han Wu, he was the one who ultimately died. After reviewing the case, the college decided to punish Han Wu by suspending him from classes until the exams were over.

Han Wu was visibly surprised by how light the punishment turned out to be. He had expected something harsher, like banishment to the Black Prison to mine coal. Suspension was technically severe, but it held little weight for the current Han Wu.

He had already become a Demigod in a foreign civilization and had hoped for time alone to focus on absorbing the remaining Divine Essence. Once he had 10 Divine Essence, or 20 in total, he could finally ascend into a perfect Demigod of the Divine Civilization. Being suspended from class gave him exactly the time he needed to concentrate on this goal.

During the suspension, Han Wu devoted himself to absorbing the Divine Essence and succeeded on the fifteenth day. Without hesitation, he ascended into a perfect Demigod.

The Will of the Divine Civilization approved and bathed him in divine light, its world-bending energy purifying his body and drawing out even more of his potential.

After three full days under that light, Han Wu finally emerged as a perfect Demigod. The first thing he noticed was his newfound strength. Even without using Dark Dragonification, he now matched the power of a High Lord life form. He also sensed a change in his vision. In addition to the physical world, he could now see soul energy drifting through the air.

What's going on? he wondered, quickly checking his data to see if something had gone wrong.

[Name: Han Wu-Origin of Mutation]

[Rank: Demigod / Rank 2 Supergene Soldier]

[Divine Talent: Chosen One (Exclusive), Defiance]

[Divine Powers: Sacrifice (Exclusive), Controlled Mutation, Gene Lock, Famine, Life Infusion, Merge (Exclusive)]

[Skills: Mighty Cleave, Enchant Darkness, Dragon Slash, Dark Dragonification, Flash Kick, Plant Fusion Technique, King's Dominance...]

[Divine Essence: 10 (Perfect Demigod)]

[Divine Aspect: Defiance (Rank 5 Divine Aspect. Awakened Divine Skill: Souleater Gaze)]

[Divine Points: 89.43 million (Personal) / 567.74 million (Foreign)]

[Faith Points: 11.09 million]

[Core Level: Level 10 (Maximum Level: 20. Rank 4 Sacred Object Law of Gluttony (Sealed), Rank 2 Sacred Object Revelation Stone, Rank 2 Sacred Object Shadow Nail, Rank 1 Sacred Object Poison Gland, Rank 1 Sacred Object Elf Shortbow)]

...

Because of his Exclusive Divine Talent: Chosen One, Han Wu gained an extra Exclusive Skill each time he ranked up, thus acquiring two new Divine Powers after becoming a Demigod.

[Life Infusion: Blesses a unit's lifespan. Increases lifespan in proportion to Divine Points used.]

[Merge (Exclusive): Uses Divine Points to combine objects with a certain degree of compatibility.]

After becoming a Demigod, Han Wu also discovered a new Defiance Aspect. He was certain it stemmed from his Divine Talent of the same name and had unlocked a new Divine Skill called Souleater Gaze, which likely explained the change in his eyes.

[Souleater Gaze: It allows the user to see the soul energy floating around without using any Divine Points.]

Han Wu experimented by infusing Souleater Gaze with Divine Points. He realized his eyes could draw in and refine soul energy, then channel it into his own soul.

He spent 1 million Divine Points to use it and clearly felt his soul grow stronger after absorbing the ambient soul energy. Since he remained within his divine realm, the surrounding soul energy was scarce, limiting the effect. Still, he was confident that using Souleater Gaze in an area rich with soul energy would rapidly strengthen his soul.

With a clear understanding of Souleater Gaze, he turned his attention to the new Exclusive Divine Skill he had gained. True to its name, Merge allowed him to combine two or more items into one.

However, the items needed a certain degree of compatibility. The greater the compatibility, the easier the merge and the fewer Divine Points required. Conversely, lower compatibility meant a more difficult fusion and a higher Divine Point cost.

To test it, he reviewed the Skills he had already mastered. After attending many classes in foreign civilizations, he had accumulated a lot of Skills. Each Skill held unique strengths, but his repertoire had become difficult to manage. He decided to merge similar Skills to streamline his arsenal, making it simpler and more efficient.

He turned his attention first to Mighty Cleave and Dragon Slash. Both were slashing-type Skills, so he wasn't surprised to find that their compatibility was extremely high. He spent 100 Divine Points to merge them and gained a new Skill called Great Dragon Cleave.

Excited, he decided to merge more Skills. This time, he picked Enchant Darkness, Dark Dragonification, Plant Fusion Technique, and King's Dominance and spent 3 million Divine Points. At last, they merged into a single, powerful Skill called the Black Dragon King Transformation.

After using the Skill, he transformed into a three-meter-tall Black Dragon King with staggering stats. His physical strength, endurance, and magic resistance soared, while his attacks gained automatic enchantments from the dark attribute, King's Dominance, and a deadly aura. He also gained the ability to fly at high speeds and could use Spectral Dash at will.

In this form, Han Wu grew at least five times stronger, and his Great Dragon Cleave increased tenfold in power. Ecstatic to have acquired two such potent Skills, he then considered his own race, wondering if he could use Merge on living beings.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

- Chapter 119 - The Beauty of Merging

Chapter 119 - The Beauty of Merging

[1,167 words]

Chapter 119 - The Beauty of Merging

Han Wu decided to test Merge with his locusts first. He selected two freshly hatched ones and noted their compatibility was very high. Spending 10 Divine Points, he successfully merged them. The resulting locust was visibly twice as large but remained at the Elite rank.

Next, he experimented with Elite locusts, merging them continuously. After merging 100 of them, the resulting locust had grown to the height of an average person, but it was still Elite.

Curious, Han Wu scaled up the test to 1,000 Elite locusts. The merged locust now matched the size of an elephant but remained an Elite life form.

Hmm... Does this mean that merging the same life forms only increases their size without affecting their rank? he wondered.

To test this theory further, he selected 2 Unique locusts: the defensive Abyss Locust and the powerful Primal Locust. Their compatibility was moderate, so merging them

cost 10,000 Divine Points and took a full hour. When the process finished, the merged locust sported a robust body armored with a dense exoskeleton, clearly combining the strongest traits of both.

The experiment sparked new ideas on what to do next. He decided to merge a Heavenly Demon Insect and a Dark Curse Bug with the newly merged locust. After spending 1.1 million Divine Points, a locust emerged bearing all four characteristics.

This new locust matched the size of a mammoth. Its dense exoskeleton provided exceptional defense, a long horn sharp as a sword stood ready for offense, and it could meld into shadows to unleash dark energy orbs that cursed enemies. Though it remained a Unique locust, its combat power rivaled that of a Heroic locust.

Han Wu decided to push the experiment further by merging a Heroic Locustman with it. Their compatibility was low, forcing him to spend 5 million Divine Points to merge them.

He waited 35 realm hours for the process to complete. The new Locustman stood five meters tall and retained all four of its original traits. The merge had elevated it to a Heroic life form, but its actual combat power surpassed that of a regular Heroic Locustman.

Han Wu placed it in the Blood Coliseum to test its strength. As he predicted, even the strength-focused Heroic Minotaur failed to defeat it. He then matched it against several other opponents, confirming that it could overcome every Heroic life form except the Heroic Osteomancer in its bone giant form.

“Could this be a new way to nurture powerful Heroic units?” Han Wu wondered, surprised by his discovery. A stable Evolution Path that reliably produced Heroic units was highly coveted across the Divine Civilization. As long as they agreed, Han Wu could mass-produce strong Heroic units for them within a short period.

Han Wu’s excitement faded the moment he saw the cost. Setting aside the units required to merge into a Heroic unit, the merging process alone demanded an overwhelming 6.1 million Divine Points. The sheer amount made him sigh at his own poverty. If he had the funds, he would’ve already transformed every one of his Heroic Locustmen giants.

Still, after so many successful attempts, Han Wu grew eager to try merging materials. He pulled out thousands of Fire Stones and started merging them. After spending 10,000 Divine Points, he succeeded in merging 1,000 stones into a single, fist-sized red crystal. It was no longer a mere Fire Stone but had become a Rank 1 Sacred Object, Fire Crystal.

[Rank 1 Sacred Object: Fire Crystal. After equipping to the Core, all races obtain the fire attribute, and their mastery of fire-based skills increases.]

A thousand Fire Stones and 10,000 Divine Points had yielded only a single Rank 1 Sacred Object. Though it was a clear loss, Han Wu chose to keep merging, hoping to turn his luck around. He merged 2,000 Fire Stones and spent 20,000 Divine Points to produce a Rank 2 Sacred Object. Next, he combined 4,000 Fire Stones with 40,000 Divine Points to obtain a Rank 3 Sacred Object.

Finally, he merged 8,000 Fire Stones and invested 80,000 Divine Points to create a Rank 4 Sacred Object. The higher the rank, the more difficult the merging process became. Reaching Rank 4 was the current limit of his abilities. Satisfied, he paused to check the market price of the Rank 4 Sacred Object Fire Crystal online. To his surprise, it was listed at 1.6 million Divine Points.

Even after deducting the cost of materials, Han Wu realized he stood to gain roughly 800,000 Divine Points in profit. This was an entirely new avenue for making money. Based on his pace, he could craft a Rank 4 Sacred Object every 2.5 realm days. If he worked nonstop for an entire realm year, he could potentially earn 150 million Divine Points. That was already enough to purchase a single Divine Essence!

Even Gods would salivate at the thought of earning a single Divine Essence daily! Han Wu could apply this method to other stones—Light Stones, Dark Stones, Iron Stones, and more—to produce Sacred Objects of different attributes.

“It looks like I’ve found another way to make money,” he muttered, excitement sparking in his eyes.

Unbeknownst to Han Wu, a God had stepped out of the teleporter and appeared in the capital. His first move was to activate the transponder and scan for a signal. A faint ping soon came through, and the God, named Hu Hai, broke into a wide grin.

“The signal’s weak, but it’s pinging ten times faster than before. I’m close to the thief who stole the God King’s treasure. This place is near Imperial College, so I should head there and test it on Han Wu to confirm if he’s really the culprit,” he muttered, striding toward the college.

As Hu Hai reached the college gates, the guards stopped him. Despite being a God, he didn’t dare challenge them. They were only Divine Beings, but this was Imperial College, a place that had produced Demigods, Gods, Major Gods, and even God Kings. To force his way in would be suicidal.

Frowning, Hu Hai considered how to get inside when two Demigod parents stormed out. They were furious, berating the college for protecting their son’s murderer. They claimed suspension was no real punishment and voiced other grievances.

Hu Hai quickly approached them, revealed his identity as a God, and projected his Divine Authority as he spoke. "Can you help me? I'm willing to pay handsomely."

The parents eagerly accepted. A God offering a reward? No one in their right mind would refuse. They quickly agreed to assist him.

From their conversation, Hu Hai learned they had come demanding justice for their son's death. The killer, by sheer coincidence, was the very person Hu Hai had been hunting: Han Wu.

What luck. The murderer they're after is my target too. I can pose as a grieving family member and use this opening to enter Imperial College and confront Han Wu myself, he thought.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 120 - Ticket to Foreign Ancient Battleground

[1,304 words]

Chapter 120 - Ticket to Foreign Ancient Battleground

Lina accompanied Han Wu to meet Xu Tie's parents once again. The moment they arrived, the parents erupted into screams and accusations, demanding how Han Wu could be so heartless as to kill his own classmate without any fear of consequences. Han Wu remained silent, watching them as if they were nothing more than clowns. He felt no remorse for what he had done.

Hu Hai, who had come along with Xu Tie's parents, said nothing. Instead, he discreetly checked his transponder. The signal was pinging faster now, confirming that Han Wu was indeed the thief who had stolen the treasure meant for the God King.

A surge of excitement surged through Hu Hai as he finally found the thief. If he could capture Han Wu and deliver him to the God King, the reward would be enormous. He could already envision the moment he ascended into a Major God. Still, there was a problem. How was he supposed to capture Han Wu?

The God King's territory lay at least 10,000 light years away. Even with rapid use of the teleporter, the journey would take at least a month. Worse still, Han Wu was an unofficial student here, so Hu Hai had to devise a way to abduct him without alerting the college.

Hu Hai was lost in thought when Lina briskly sent the visitors away. Even she couldn't bear the cruel accusations pouring from Xu Tie's parents. After driving them off, she turned to Han Wu and tried to reassure him. "Han Wu, don't listen to a word they said. Xu Tie's death was the result of his own weakness. You did nothing wrong killing him."

Han Wu brightened at Lina's support. "Don't worry, Professor. Their words won't affect me. From now on, I'll only grow stronger."

Her eyes sparkled with approval as she looked at him. "That's my good student."

She remembered the upcoming exams and offered him advice. "Though you're suspended now, you must not slack off in your training. As reserve students, you won't take the regular exams, but you still have to pass the enrollment test for Imperial College.

"If you fail that, you will be rejected. You are already a perfect Demigod, so your focus should be on acquiring a strong Divine Aspect. A high-ranking Divine Aspect is essential if you want to become a perfect God in the future."

"I understand. I will work hard," Han Wu said.

Lina nodded and handed him a ticket. "This will get you into the Foreign Ancient Battleground. If you're free, you should head there first. With your current strength and the size of your army, you should be able to handle it. It'll give you a real taste of what combat between Demigods looks like."

Han Wu accepted the ticket with gratitude. "Thank you. I won't let you down."

Lina smiled without saying another word.

Back at his place, Han Wu examined the ticket and noticed it admitted two people. Using it alone would be a waste, but he wasn't sure whom to invite.

Qin Shuang had returned home, dedicating herself to closed-door training to absorb the remaining Divine Essence. She aimed to become a perfect Demigod within the Divine Civilization before the exam. Meanwhile, Sun Qingnian spent his time enjoying himself with his instructor girlfriend.

The only other Demigods he knew were his high school teacher, Tian Wen, and the three seniors in Imperial College. After weighing his options, he decided to call Tian Wen.

The video call connected quickly, and Tian Wen greeted him warmly, his voice gentle like a kind father's. "Han Wu, how have you been? Are you settling in well at Imperial College? You should visit us from time to time. Both Instructor Xu Mei and I miss you."

Han Wu smiled and shared his news eagerly. “Mr. Tian, I’ve become a perfect Demigod.”

Tian Wen’s shock was immediate. “A Demigod? No, a perfect Demigod? You’ve already accumulated 10 Divine Essence in your body? Has Imperial College become so generous they grant Divine Essence to every student?”

He recalled the first time he ascended into a Demigod in the past. Back then, in his second year of college, he had reached that rank with only 8 Divine Essence. Even then, it had drawn admiration from many girls. But now Han Wu, his student, had surpassed him, becoming a perfect Demigod with 10 Divine Essence before even entering college!

Tian Wen felt a mix of pride and envy. Watching his student surpass him so quickly stirred a deep, profound emotion.

Han Wu then extended an invitation. “Mr. Tian, I want to invite you to form a team and explore the Foreign Ancient Battleground. Are you free to join me?”

Tian Wen nearly collapsed from shock. “Han Wu, did I hear that right? You have a ticket to the Ancient Battleground—the place where you can collect fragments of Divine Aspects? You can’t buy that ticket with money! How did you get it?”

Han Wu waved the ticket before the screen.

“My goodness. It really is the ticket to the Foreign Ancient Battleground!” Tian Wen exclaimed. “How did you get it? I thought only Gods had a chance to acquire one.”

Han Wu chuckled. “Mr. Tian, why so many questions? Do you want to come?”

“Yes, absolutely. We must go no matter what.” Tian Wen bit his lip in excitement. Despite his hesitation about relying on his former student, he knew this was a rare opportunity to grow stronger.

Han Wu nodded. “Then let’s meet at the teleporter in the capital tomorrow at eight in the morning.”

After settling on the time, Han Wu started preparing for the excursion. His first priority was upgrading his Core’s Sacred Objects. Now that he had become a Demigod, his Core’s level cap had risen to 20, allowing him to equip Rank 4 Sacred Objects. It was time to replace the Rank 1 and 2 Sacred Objects.

Han Wu carefully decided which Sacred Objects to keep. The Rank 4 Law of Gluttony (Sealed) was indispensable, as was the Rank 2 Revelation Stone for its unique effect. He removed the rest and scoured online for Rank 4 Sacred Objects suited to his locusts. Soon, he found several promising options.

[Rank 4 Sacred Object: Clone Scroll. After equipping to the Core, allows the core race to learn the Clone skill. Up to two clones can be created, each possessing 50% of the original's strength and some of its characteristics.]

It was priced at a steep 70 million Divine Points, which was roughly 40 times more expensive than the Rank 4 Fire Crystal he had previously merged. Even so, Han Wu deemed it worth the investment and bought it without hesitation. As he continued browsing, another Sacred Object caught his attention.

[Rank 4 Sacred Object: Thunderblaze Grenade. After equipping to the Core, allows the core race to learn Thunderblaze Detonation. The strength of the explosion is proportional to the user's current life force.]

With a large number of units at his disposal, Han Wu felt no worry about losses from kamikaze attacks. Still, the Sacred Object came with the steep price tag of 90 million Divine Points. He bit his lip and decided to buy it anyway. He continued browsing and soon spotted a well-matched Rank 2 Sacred Object that enhanced the Thunderblaze Grenade.

[Rank 2 Sacred Object: Thunderblaze Core. After equipping to the Core, the strength of thunder and fire attributes of the core race increases.]

It significantly boosted the power of Thunderblaze Detonation and cost only 3 million Divine Points, so Han Wu purchased it without hesitation. Next, he hunted for one final Rank 4 Sacred Object. After a long search, he finally found a rare one: the Underworld Seal, priced at 200 million Divine Points!

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Chapter 121 - Divine Realm Core Level 20

[1,090 words]

Chapter 121 - Divine Realm Core Level 20

[Rank 4 Sacred Object: Underworld Seal. After equipping to the Core, converts core race into soul form upon their death (This effect applies only to core races of Heroic rank or lower).]

Despite its many restrictions, the Underworld Seal remained valuable to Han Wu. His Defiance Aspect demanded a steady intake of souls to advance. The more souls it

absorbed, the faster it grew. Yet Han Wu had already spent a substantial amount of Divine Points merging his units and Sacred Objects. His resources dwindled further after buying two Rank 4 Sacred Objects and a Rank 2 Sacred Object. He did not have enough to purchase the Underworld Seal right now.

He was going to the Ancient Battleground soon, so had to get the Underworld Seal at all costs. He mulled over his options and finally resolved to borrow the money. But whom could he turn to?

Qin Shuang was busy training and unlikely to answer his messages. Sun Qingnian lived with a wealthy woman due to poverty and had no funds to spare. Tian Wen was an awkward choice. After all, he had just invited Tian Wen over, so asking to borrow money now would seem inappropriate. It would make him look like a swidler.

Ultimately, Han Wu decided to reach out to his senior, Xiang Meng, who prized loyalty and camaraderie. He was confident Xiang Meng would lend him the money if asked. Without delay, Han Wu placed a video call.

Xiang Meng answered quickly. Han Wu could see he was in an arena. Below him, a massive army of mammoths clashed against an army of Bugbears. The battle raged with brutal intensity.

“Han Wu? What’s going on?” Xiang Meng asked.

“Senior Xiang Meng, I’ve ascended into a Demigod and wanted to borrow some Divine Points to buy Sacred Objects,” he replied.

“Congrats! How much do you need? Send me your account.”

“I need 200 million.”

“Consider it done. Check your account,” Xiang Meng replied casually as he commanded his Fulgur Mammoth Lord to charge into the Bugbear army, crushing them into a bloody mess. Witnessing this, the enemy immediately surrendered.

Han Wu checked his account and thanked him. “Thank you, Senior Xiang Meng. I’ll repay you once I return.”

After hanging up, Han Wu quickly used the funds to purchase the Underworld Seal. Then, he absorbed fragments of a divine realm left behind by a Demigod. His Core eagerly absorbed the fragments, shooting up to level 20, which was the level cap for Demigods. During this process, his divine realm expanded rapidly, and excitement welled up within him as he observed the transformation.

It felt good to stockpile rare resources. Fortunately, he had acquired these from the Demigods who had previously sought the Origin of Mutation. Without those spoils, his Core would not have leveled up so swiftly.

Han Wu's divine realm grew steadily until it reached the Demigods' size limit of 10,000 square kilometers. With this increase, he was confident he could cultivate more units of his core race. He already looked forward to the day he would use Sacrifice to recoup the money spent today.

Next, he equipped the Sacred Objects he had acquired onto his Core. Each one unleashed its unique effects, triggering a massive transformation among the units within his divine realm.

All of Han Wu's locusts were affected, their bodies beginning to transform. Some gained both thunder and fire attributes and even acquired related skills. A few gained the Clone skill, while others underwent subtler changes that would only become apparent upon death.

Han Wu could feel his core race growing stronger again, which filled him with joy. The sensation resembled a father watching his son return home at last with a spouse. With renewed confidence, Han Wu was ready to enter the Ancient Battleground.

The night passed, and Han Wu arrived at the meeting point. To his surprise, Tian Wen was already there, waiting. Han Wu glanced at the scattered cigarette butts and realized Tian Wen had been waiting for a long time.

"Mr. Tian? When did you get here?" he asked.

Tian Wen finished another cigarette. "I arrived last night. I was too excited to sleep, so I just waited here for you."

Han Wu almost laughed. He never imagined Tian Wen, a seasoned Demigod, could be as eager as a kindergartener on a field trip. "Then let's not waste any more time. Let's depart."

Han Wu pulled out the ticket and let a single drop of blood fall onto it. Tian Wen followed, his hands trembling as he added his own blood. The ticket absorbed their blood, glowing red. Now only they could use it. Han Wu then shook the ticket and spent 100 Divine Points. Flames burst forth, consuming the ticket and forming a gate.

They stepped through together and found themselves in a place lined with neatly arranged tents on both sides. They had successfully arrived at the Foreign Ancient Battleground.

Tian Wen chuckled and cried out with delight, "The Ancient Battleground! This is the real Ancient Battleground. The air here feels so fresh!"

He was so thrilled that he forgot to keep his composure in front of his student. Han Wu nearly died of embarrassment and briefly considered telling others he didn't know who Tian Wen was.

Realizing his slip, Tian Wen quickly composed himself. "Han Wu, did you see that? I was cheering for you."

Cheering for me? Do you take me for an idiot? Han Wu wanted to dig a hole to hide.

As they spoke, a guide arrived promptly to welcome them. After verifying and registering their information, the guide led them to one of the tents. "This will be your temporary residence. If you need anything, please don't hesitate to ask. We are happy to assist you."

Han Wu eyed the dilapidated tent and suspected the guide was joking. The tent barely qualified as shelter!

He was about to demand a better one when Tian Wen stopped him. "Wait. Let's not be hasty. Let's check inside first."

Han Wu sighed but agreed. Inside, they found the space far larger than it appeared from outside. Not only was there room to rest, but also a vast arena about one square kilometer in size.

Han Wu nodded in approval and decided to use the tent for now. Tian Wen had no complaints. He would have been content sleeping outdoors, so having a tent to block the elements and a bed to sleep on felt like a luxury.

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[1,212 words]

Chapter 122 - Summoning Units

Han Wu discovered a manual about the tent in the room prepared for their rest. The manual explained that the tent was an invention of the Divine Civilization, crafted according to the laws of the Ancient Battleground. It had the unique ability to evade the scans of the Will of the Ancient Battleground.

Members of the Divine Civilization could reside within the tent and summon their units onto the specialized arena inside it. The arena's size determined how many units could be summoned.

Han Wu frowned as he read. Restricting the number of units meant curbing his combat power. He had relied on overwhelming numbers to win his battles. Without that advantage, how was he supposed to keep winning?

Using his authority as a Divine Civilization member, Han Wu accessed the tent's interface. Since two people currently occupied the tent, he could only claim half the arena, which was only 0.5 square kilometers large, to summon his units.

He scrolled through the data to check his summoning limits. With only 0.5 square kilometers of space, he could summon up to 500,000 Elite locusts, 50,000 Unique locusts, 5,000 Heroic Locustmen, or 5 Locustman Lords.

If he chose to summon skeletons instead, his maximum numbers would shift to 3 million Common skeletons, 300,000 Elite skeletons, 30,000 Unique Skeleton Knights, 3,000 Heroic skeletons, or 3 Skeleton Lords.

The interface also listed data for Scorching Dwarves, Swordwind, Epistians, and minotaurs. Swordwind and Epistians had the lowest summoning limits. Within 0.5 square kilometers, he could only summon a single Swordwind Lord or Epistian Lord.

Han Wu weighed his options carefully and chose to summon his locusts first. He had invested heavily in upgrading them through Sacred Objects and his Core and wanted to test their power.

He called forth his Locustman Lord Dark Locust, 10 Cockroaches, 1,990 Heroic Locustmen, and 20,000 Unique locusts, reaching the maximum limit of what he could summon for now.

After summoning them, Han Wu reviewed the list of services available for the tent and its upgrades. The list detailed the materials required to enhance the tent as well as the rules governing the process. Those entering the area with a ticket would receive the lowest-grade tent by default. The tent's interior space was considered a fragment of the Divine Civilization, while its outer layer concealed their presence from the Will of the Ancient Battleground.

However, stepping outside the tent meant exposure to the Will of the Ancient Battleground. Most of their authority and access would be cut off, preventing them from summoning units beyond the tent's boundaries. If any of their summoned units died, they would have to return to the tent to summon more units.

The Ancient Battleground was a unique domain that rewarded various fragments of Divine Aspects. These fragments served as currency, with higher-ranking ones holding greater value. Once enough fragments of the same Divine Aspect were collected, they would coalesce into a complete Divine Aspect.

A complete Divine Aspect held more value than its fragments. It could be sold to the local guides in exchange for specific Divine Aspect fragments or used as material to upgrade the tent. The higher the tent's grade, the more units one could summon.

Han Wu's heart raced as he finished reading the manual. He was eager to hunt the Divine Souls roaming the Ancient Battleground and start farming for Divine Aspect fragments.

He stepped out of his room and saw that Tian Wen had already summoned his units. Within his allocated 0.5 square kilometers, he had summoned 1 Rabbitman Lord, 10 Heroic Rabbitmen, and 39,990 Unique Rabbitmen.

Han Wu used Inspect Eye and observed that the Rabbitmen were well-trained. Each Unique Rabbitman possessed two battle skills, two support skills, and a special physique.

[Flying Kick: Increases leg strength and improves power of kicks, jumps, and sprinting.]

[Carrot Missile: Condenses a carrot-shaped energy missile and launches it at an enemy. Auto-tracks the enemy's location.]

[Heal Orb: Releases a ball of healing energy to mend the wounds of the target.]

[Fleetfoot: Reduces target's body weight and increases its speed.]

The 10 Heroic Rabbitmen had each mastered a distinct skill based on their role as either attackers or support. Those specializing in support had learned the Rank 4 Skill: Physical Activation, which significantly boosted the physical abilities of their allies. The attackers had mastered the Rank 4 Skill: Moonvault, a devastating kick capable of shattering boulders.

Tian Wen's sole Rabbitman Lord was a prodigy in support. It had not only acquired numerous support skills but had also mastered the legendary Healing Domain. When activated, this domain healed all allied wounds within a radius of 1,000 meters.

Han Wu felt a deep sense of security with the Rabbitmen army protecting him. He sensed their chances of survival had increased dramatically. After finalizing preparations, they led their armies out of the tent to hunt. The Rabbitmen marched across the ground, while locusts took to the air, covering every angle.

Tian Wen brimmed with excitement as he walked beside Han Wu and started to share his knowledge of the Ancient Battleground. "Han Wu, did you know the wandering Divine Souls here can also be separated into different ranks? Look closely at the halo beneath their feet. They come in five colors: white, blue, purple, black, and red.

“The lowest rank bears a white halo and drops only Rank 1 Divine Aspect fragments. Blue halos drop Rank 2 fragments, and the ranks rise accordingly. Red halos yield Rank 5 fragments, the highest. Even so, with our current strength, we can barely defeat a purple halo, let alone a red one. Purple halos surpass even a Lord life form in power...”

Han Wu listened attentively, absorbing every detail. Before long, he received word from the locust scouts he had deployed. They had located a lone Divine Soul surrounded by a radiant white halo. He quickly relayed the news to Tian Wen, who was ecstatic. “What are we waiting for? Let’s kill it!”

The Rabbitmen used Fleetfoot and chased alongside the flying locusts. Within three minutes, they found the lone Divine Soul. It had a humanoid form, but its face remained blurred and indistinct. It wore heavy black armor and carried black spear that gave it a menacing presence. As the locusts had reported, the intensity of the white halo indicated that this was one of the more powerful variants.

“Dark Locust, take it down yourself,” Han Wu ordered, assigning his strongest unit to the task.

Dark Locust obeyed instantly, soaring toward the Divine Soul. A black God longbow materialized in its multiple arms. After clutching the weapon with two jointed arms and drawing the string with two more, it conjured a single arrow of dense dark energy and loosed it.

The Divine Soul swept its spear to deflect the tentative assault. It shattered the arrow and unleashed a shockwave that tore open one of Dark Locust’s arms.

Such a wound would have been grievous for any other unit, but it meant nothing to Dark Locust thanks to its Hyper Regeneration. The wound closed up instantly, and Dark Locust launched its counterattack. It gripped the longbow with one arm while the other three jointed arms unleashed a rapid volley. A barrage of dark arrows bombarded the Divine Soul.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 123 - Fragments of Divine Aspect

[1,065 words]

Chapter 123 - Fragments of Divine Aspect

The Divine Soul wielded its spear with masterful precision, deflecting every black arrow that rained down on it without letting a single one slip through. But this was exactly what Dark Locust had planned. It had consumed a Wisdom Fruit, granting it the capacity for advanced tactics.

The broken arrows didn't vanish upon hitting the ground. Instead, they accumulated steadily around the Divine Soul. Once there were enough, Dark Locust slung its longbow across its back and extended its control over the shattered arrows. It transformed them into pure dark energy, shaping a binding ring underneath the Divine Soul. Instantly, the Divine Soul's movements grew restricted, as if invisible chains held it fast.

Tian Wen cheered at the sight. As an experienced Demigod, he recognized Dark Locust's precise mastery and skillful manipulation of the dark energy.

The dark circle underneath the Divine Soul was called Shadebound. Anyone who stepped onto it would find their shadow tethered and their movements locked in place.

Seizing the moment, Dark Locust beat its wings fiercely and summoned a black God longsword. With a swift thrust, it struck the Divine Soul. As it perished, the Divine Soul dissolved into smoke, releasing eight radiant white orbs.

Tian Wen waved his hand and collected the light orbs. "These are definitely Divine Aspect fragments. Although they're only Rank 1, we got lucky to find eight of them. Not bad at all."

Han Wu picked up a fragment, pinching it between his fingers. Pure energy pulsed through it, accompanied by a faint consciousness without true sentience. This consciousness belonged to the corresponding Divine Aspect. As he studied it, he realized the fragment and consciousness were part of the Rank 1 Armor Aspect—a common type that could be found anywhere.

Tian Wen took his time sensing the consciousness in all eight fragments, then singled one out. "This one comes from the Valor Aspect. Still Rank 1, but its Divine Skill is quite powerful, making it more valuable than the rest. I'd say it's worth twice as much."

Han Wu nodded, impressed by Tian Wen's expertise. He felt grateful for having invited the right companion. With Tian Wen by his side, he could gather far greater rewards than usual.

Having defeated the first Divine Soul, they decided to press on. Han Wu sent his locusts scouting the area, and soon they found another. This time, however, it was not a lone Divine Soul but a small group.

The group consisted of 13 Divine Souls, and a blue halo was their leader. Their forms varied, ranging from a tiger to a lizard.

Tian Wen studied them and shook his head. “These are all weaker types. They won’t drop nearly as many fragments as the one we faced earlier.”

Han Wu noticed Tian Wen’s disdain and asked, “Should we leave then?”

“Leave? Absolutely not. We should fight strong enemies, but we should never pass up easy prey. Why give up free treasure?” Tian Wen said with a grin.

“Then let’s wipe them out in one blow,” Han Wu said, signaling his locusts to prepare for a full-scale attack.

Tian Wen didn’t want to lose either. Though his role was Support, he had still invested time in refining his core race’s offensive capabilities. The locusts’ wing beats thundered through the air while the Rabbitmen army unleashed a barrage of Rabbit Missiles, each one automatically tracking their target.

The missiles lacked power but served well to disrupt the enemy’s focus. Han Wu’s Heroic Locustmen seized the chance and attacked. They summoned two clones with half their strength and charged at the Divine Souls before using Thunderblaze Detonation.

The explosions’ sounds rattled the ground beneath them. The thunder and fire attributes were difficult to counter, and even the Heroic Divine Soul struggled to withstand the relentless chain of blasts. The explosions raged for two full minutes, and Han Wu and Tian Wen’s concentrated fire annihilated the entire group of Divine Souls, including the one with the blue halo.

Tian Wen quickly gathered the fallen Divine Aspect fragments and examined them. From the 13 Divine Souls, they collected 29 Rank 1 fragments and a single Rank 2 fragment.

Tian Wen inspected each fragment and grumbled, “What a bunch of cheapskates.”

Earning only 30 fragments from 13 Divine Souls meant each gave fewer than three fragments on average, far less than the lone Divine Soul that had yielded eight fragments previously. He sorted the more valuable fragments into the same bag holding the Valor fragment and placed the Rank 2 fragment carefully into a separate blue bag.

Han Wu felt disappointed by their haul. He had expected high-ranking Divine Aspect fragments to come easily once he arrived. Instead, seeing how few fragments each Divine Soul dropped and how many Divine Aspects existed, he realized it would take a long time to obtain even a single Rank 5 Divine Aspect.

Tian Wen noticed his disappointment and consoled him. “Han Wu, we’re just getting started, so it’s normal to gather so little at first. Once we upgrade the tent and summon

more units, we'll be able to take down stronger Divine Souls and collect as many high-ranking Divine Aspect fragments as we want."

Han Wu nodded, his resolve hardening. They were about to move when a report came from one of the locust scouts. Two figures from the Divine Civilization were spying on them. He was immediately alerted and whispered to Tian Wen, "Behind you, to your right, about 30 degrees off, two people are watching us."

Tian Wen shuddered, suddenly recalling a crucial piece of information he had learned early on about the Ancient Battleground. They had to stay vigilant; any encounter with someone from the Divine Civilization here could turn deadly.

This place was deadly because members of the Divine Civilization couldn't afford to be discovered here. That was why many fugitive Demigods fled to this territory, hunting others to survive. They could obtain not only vital resources but also the support of the Will of the Ancient Battleground.

"What should we do?" Tian Wen asked, clearly at a loss. As a Support, he lacked the strength to fight and doubted he could hold his own against those spying on them.

Han Wu stayed composed. "If they try to rob us, we will teach them a lesson. I will show them just how ruthless the world can be."

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[1,252 words]

Chapter 124 - Excellent Hunter

The two pursuers crouched together in the darkness, watching Han Wu and Tian Wen. "Big brother, those two don't even have 100,000 units combined. They must be newcomers. We should teach them a lesson."

The speaker bore a scar across his face, giving him a menacing look. He stared greedily at Tian Wen as the latter carefully placed fragments into a bag.

His elder brother was fat and covered in freckles, eyes glinting with even more greed as he studied Han Wu and Tian Wen's fragments. "They've only taken down a few wandering low-ranking Divine Souls. Their haul is small. Let's follow them for now. Once they gather enough fragments, we'll kill them."

"Good idea, big brother," the younger one agreed, nodding and giving a thumbs-up. The elder brother's lips curled into a cruel smile at the praise.

Meanwhile, Tian Wen felt a chill run down his spine once he realized they were being followed. He walked with trepidation and was worried that he would be robbed at any time. This was the nightmare of a Support like him. Supports usually lacked strong offensive power and carried a lot of money, so they constantly feared becoming targets for robbery.

“Han Wu, let’s head back to camp and deal with the fragments we’ve collected,” Tian Wen suggested.

Han Wu, who had deployed his locusts to track their pursuers, placed a reassuring hand on Tian Wen’s shoulder. “Don’t worry, Mr. Tian. I’ve got everything under control. Trust me.”

Tian Wen felt a flicker of calm, but then a sudden thought struck him. He was supposed to be the teacher! Why was he the one being reassured by his student?

Han Wu ignored him for now and spread out his locusts to search for more Divine Souls. After a thorough sweep, they found another one with a purple halo.

Han Wu’s heart pounded as he received the report. A purple-halo Divine Soul would drop a Rank 3 Divine Aspect fragment. One Rank 3 fragment was worth more than 100 Rank 1 fragments. But a purple-halo Divine Soul was as powerful as a Lord life form.

Even so, he didn’t hesitate. He had Tian Wen with him, and they both had two Lord life forms under their command. They would definitely win. More importantly, Han Wu and Tian Wen were strong enough to face and kill the purple halo themselves.

Han Wu quickly led Tian Wen and their armies toward the purple-halo Divine Soul. They marched for two hours, eliminating two small teams of Divine Souls along the way. By the time they approached the purple-halo Divine Soul’s vicinity, they had collected 50 Rank 1 Divine Aspect fragments and 2 Rank 2 Divine Aspect fragments.

Han Wu studied their target closely. The Divine Soul wore flowing purple robes and held a feathered fan in one hand. At first glance, it looked frail, almost unassuming. But with every flick of its fan, violent gusts of wind surged outward, powerful enough to obliterate a Heroic unit in a single strike. The scattered corpses of various units surrounding it stood as grim warnings. The Divine Soul had just emerged from a brutal battle.

“That one looks strong.” Tian Wen could gauge its strength simply by the carnage surrounding it.

If Lord life forms ranked from one to nine, his Rabbitman Lord barely reached the second tier, while Han Wu’s Dark Locust ranked as high as the seventh. But this Divine Soul, with its masterful control of wind, clearly belonged to the ninth tier.

Tian Wen was confident that he could win if he summoned all his units and slowly wore down the Divine Soul. Unfortunately, he was unable to summon them now. His only army consisted of the 40,000 Rabbitmen standing before him. He had no cannon fodder to distract the Divine Soul.

Still, just because he didn't have them didn't mean Han Wu didn't. Tian Wen turned to him. "Han Wu, I think we can slowly grind it down. Could you use your units' Clone and Thunderblaze Detonation? I'll have my army keep firing Carrot Missiles without pause. We should be able to bring it down that way."

Han Wu shook his head. "We don't have to waste so much time on it."

"Do you have another plan?"

"No. We fight head-on."

Tian Wen frowned. "Fight it directly? Who's going to do that? You or me? We're here with our true bodies. If we die, it's over."

Han Wu nodded. "I understand."

Before Tian Wen could respond, Han Wu activated Black Dragon King Transformation. His body morphed into a three-meter-tall black dragonoid with two vast wings stretching behind him.

Thanks to the combined bonuses of his merged Skills—Enchant Darkness, King's Dominance, and the Plant Fusion Technique—Han Wu's power soared to the level of a Lord. The purple-halo Divine Soul sensed the threat in Han Wu's aura and immediately waved its fan numerous times.

Strong gales surged toward Han Wu, but he merely smiled as he easily dodged the attacks. Raising his fingers, he pointed at the Divine Soul. "Be hungry."

The power of Famine took hold. The Divine Soul's stomach clenched painfully, as if thousands of maggots were devouring its very sustenance.

The moment its focus faltered from hunger, Han Wu closed in. He swung his greatsword in a sweeping arc, using the Great Dragon Cleave to sever the purple-halo Divine Soul's head with ease. The head soared into the air, while the body shattered into 8 Rank 3 Divine Aspect fragments.

Coincidentally, the head dropped neatly in front of the two pursuers, transforming into a lone Rank 3 Divine Aspect fragment. Their eyes lit up with greed. A single Rank 3 fragment held the value of 100 Rank 1 fragments.

Tian Wen had eight such fragments, but neither of the two pursuers dared to challenge Han Wu after witnessing his strength. They knew they couldn't match him and decided to retreat. Before they did so, though, they didn't mind collecting the Divine Aspect fragment lying in front of them. After tracking the pair for so long, they intended to walk away with something.

The elder brother reached down to pick it up when Han Wu's voice cut through the air behind them. "I never thought you'd be bold enough to steal from me."

Startled, the two pursuers jumped and spun around. Neither had noticed when Han Wu had appeared behind them.

The younger brother quickly pocketed the fragment and barked, "Who says it's yours? This is the Ancient Battleground. If something's on the ground, it's fair game."

The elder brother backed him up. "Can you prove it belonged to you?"

Han Wu frowned. Their greed was so intense they were willing to gamble with their lives. He stopped wasting words and lifted his greatsword before unleashing another Great Dragon Cleave.

The brothers summoned a Divine shield to defend themselves, but it made little difference. Han Wu sliced through both the shield and their bodies with ease. He gathered the fragments they had collected along the way, grinning as he counted his spoils.

"An excellent hunter always appears as the prey. Unfortunately for you two, you crossed paths with me," he said.

Tian Wen joined Han Wu to sort the fragments. As they organized the pieces, something unexpected happened. When Tian Wen grouped the regular Rank 1 Divine Aspect fragments together, some merged into a complete Rank 1 Divine Aspect. Though weak, it was the first fully formed Divine Aspect they had collected here.

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Chapter 125 - Meeting at the Ancient Battleground

[837 words]

Chapter 125 - Meeting at the Ancient Battleground

After exploring a little more, the two finally returned to their tent with their armies. This expedition had brought them substantial rewards. They had obtained 9 Rank 3 fragments, 16 Rank 2 fragments, and 169 Rank 1 fragments. They had also secured 2 complete Rank 1 Divine Aspects.

Han Wu wanted to sell everything to upgrade the tent, but Tian Wen stopped him. As a Support, he couldn't stand the idea of spending all their resources so recklessly. Individual fragments held little value, but a complete Divine Aspect was an entirely different matter.

Tian Wen sorted the fragments by type and used his authority to access the campsite's free market. There, he repeatedly traded lower-tier fragments for random ones. After several exchanges, they managed to assemble 6 complete Divine Aspects, including 1 Rank 2 Divine Aspect.

They sold the completed Divine Aspects to the guide and acquired enough resources to significantly upgrade their tent. They invested everything, transforming the tent completely. The rooms grew larger and filled with more furniture, while the arena doubled in size.

Han Wu could now summon many more units for battle. In contrast, Tian Wen, having already summoned all his higher-ranking units, resorted to summoning Common Rabbitmen as cannon fodder.

With their improved army, they returned to explore the Ancient Battleground. This time, they ventured deeper into the area, where larger groups of Divine Souls patrolled. They fought fiercely and gained more high-ranking Divine Aspect fragments.

Days passed as they continued farming fragments. Meanwhile, two Demigods used a ticket to enter the Ancient Battleground.

Liu Letian smiled as he complimented Zhang Gang, "Brother Zhang, I have to admit, it's impressive that you secured a ticket to the Ancient Battleground."

Zhang Gang was clearly pleased by the praise. The God King had granted him generous rewards after he submitted intelligence on Han Wu, and the ticket was part of that compensation.

"It's just a ticket to the Ancient Battleground," Zhang Gang said with a chuckle. "Nothing special."

After gaining wealth, Zhang Gang finally felt free to boast. He could say what he wanted and do things he couldn't before. With those resources, he could ascend into a God.

Liu Letian laughed. "Brother Zhang, you're too modest."

Zhang Gang laughed harder. It felt good to be served by another Demigod. "Liu Letian, we came this time to find a strong support-oriented Rank 3 Divine Aspect for my wife. She just became a Demigod and needs a reliable Divine Aspect to support her."

"I understand. I'll work hard to find a suitable one for her." Liu Letian patted his chest with confidence, though inside, he felt unsatisfied. He needed one for himself to increase his own strength,

Zhang Gang's plan meant that even if Liu Letian found a suitable support-oriented Rank 3 Divine Aspect, he would have to yield it to Zhang Gang's wife. Yet, Liu Letian had no choice but to endure it. He couldn't surpass Zhang Gang and still depended on him to grow stronger.

The guide soon assigned them the same shabby tent. Once inside, they started to summon their units. Zhang Gang summoned his formidable Wolf Riders, which was a hybrid of orcs and Raid Wolves. This unit surpassed its peers in coordinated combat.

Liu Letian summoned his core race, the Dark Frogmen. Though Common life forms, they had a strong affinity for the dark attribute and curses. A single Heroic Dark Frogman could easily master several types of curses. Zhang Gang had witnessed their power firsthand, which led him to invite Liu Letian to the Ancient Battleground.

After summoning their units and making brief preparations, they set out to explore. Empowered by the Dark Frogmen's curses, Zhang Gang finally felt the thrill of crushing his enemies. He eliminated 30 Divine Souls in rapid succession with minimal casualties.

Buoyed by success, Zhang Gang aimed to hunt higher-ranking Divine Souls to obtain rarer fragments. He led Liu Letian deeper into the Ancient Battleground, where groups of purple-halo Divine Souls appeared in small clusters.

By chance, the two came across a small group of purple-halo Divine Souls patrolling the area. The patrol launched a vicious assault that decimated half of Zhang Gang and Liu Letian's armies. Fortunately, the two managed to escape in time.

Back in the camp, Liu Letian combined the fragments and started selling them. He gained enough resources to upgrade the tent before summoning more units. With larger armies, they set out again, heading deeper into the Ancient Battleground.

However, neither of them had expected to run into anyone familiar that far in. Liu Letian's anger flared the moment he saw Han Wu and Tian Wen. One had ruined his reputation; the other had taken most of his resources in both bets. He wanted to kill them both then and there to vent his fury.

Zhang Gang noticed them too, but instead of anger, excitement lit his face. Seeing Han Wu, he could already picture the resources that would soon flow into his pocket.

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Chapter 126 - Defiance Divine Skill: Defiant Sword

[1,146 words]

Chapter 126 - Defiance Divine Skill: Defiant Sword

Han Wu had also noticed Zhang Gang's and Liu Letian's presence through his locust. He informed Tian Wen, who cautioned him against acting rashly. Zhang Gang had been a Demigod for many years and was considered quite powerful. Han Wu, having only just ascended, stood little chance of winning a direct confrontation.

Tian Wen kept a calm demeanor. "Mr. Zhang, Mr. Liu, I didn't expect to run into you both today."

Liu Letian ignored him completely. To their surprise, Zhang Gang greeted them warmly. "Mr. Tian, what a surprise! I'm fortunate to meet you both here. Han Wu, I've been searching for you ever since we crossed paths at the Divine River Ruins."

Han Wu's heart skipped a beat at the mention of the ruins. *How did Zhang Gang know I was at the Divine River Ruins? The mask Tian Wen gave me was supposed to prevent Demigods like him from inspecting my data.*

He hoped Zhang Gang lacked concrete proof and replied, "I don't know what you are talking about."

"Is that so? Then I must have mistaken you for someone else," Zhang Gang said. "Still, I must admit your progress is remarkable. You are the same age as my son, yet already a Demigod. It's a shame my fool of a son lost his divine realm and is doomed to remain useless forever."

Tian Wen sensed the rising tension and, worried the situation would spiral into a fight, quickly found an excuse to leave. "Mr. Zhang, Mr. Liu, Han Wu and I still have matters to attend to. We'll take our leave. Goodbye."

He promptly dragged Han Wu away.

Only after they had put some distance between themselves did Liu Letian huff. "Brother Zhang, are you really letting them go so easily? He's the one who crippled your son."

Zhang Gang laughed coldly. "Don't worry. We will meet him again as long as he doesn't leave this place."

Liu Letian nodded. "True. Let's upgrade our tent and use our armies to crush them. I doubt a newly ascended Demigod can challenge us."

Meanwhile, Tian Wen was still pulling Han Wu away as he spoke. "Zhang Gang and Liu Letian are both here. They'll do everything they can to cause trouble. You've just become a Demigod and don't have a Divine Skill. You can't beat Zhang Gang right now. We should leave before they catch up."

Han Wu disagreed. "Mr. Tian, how can you lose confidence? We arrived first, so we should have the advantage."

Tian Wen explained, "That's because you don't understand Zhang Gang well enough. Before I arrived, I heard he gained a powerful sponsor who greatly increased his strength. He even nurtured a Lord life form."

Han Wu pouted. "I doubt that he's that strong. He looks weak to me."

"Stop trying to fight him for now. You've got great potential. Even if we don't get a proper Divine Aspect here, it'll only delay your growth slightly," Tian Wen said, his tone more cautious.

"The exams are coming soon, so you should be very careful. Although you don't have to take the exam since you're on the reserve list, you still must pass the test given by Imperial College. Preserving your strength is your top priority right now."

Han Wu felt touched by Tian Wen's thoughtfulness but still refused to listen. "Mr. Tian, this is a rare chance to enter the Ancient Battleground. You should know I won't give up just because of Zhang Gang. I hope you understand, and I'm sorry for not listening."

He then commanded his army and flew toward his next target.

Tian Wen stomped on the ground angrily. "You little runt. How can you be so defiant? I'm doing it for your own good!"

Han Wu fought harder in the battles that followed. Zhang Gang's threats hung over him like a sharp sword, forcing him to grow stronger as quickly as possible.

While purchasing Sacred Objects, Han Wu had already planned his next move. He intended to use the Rank 4 Sacred Object: Underworld Seal, to turn his core race into souls after death, then consume them with the Defiance Divine Skill: Souleater Gaze. This would quickly raise his Divine Aspect's rank.

He had planned to wait until his locust army grew large enough, but with Zhang Gang already present, he had to seize every second to increase his strength. Returning to his tent, he sent his Heroic and Unique locusts back to his divine realm, leaving only three Locustman Lords to guard him. Then he summoned 700,000 Elite locusts.

They would serve as cannon fodder, and he didn't mind sacrificing them since he had even more in his divine realm. Han Wu brought all 700,000 Elite locusts into the Ancient Battleground and ordered them to detonate on every Divine Soul they encountered. Each locust could summon two clones before all three exploded.

After death, the Underworld Seal converted each one into a soul. Though these souls were extremely weak, Han Wu had never intended for them to fight. Their sole purpose was to boost his Divine Aspect's rank.

Souleater Gaze!

The swarm of locust souls was drawn into Han Wu's eyes and transformed into energy for his soul to absorb. He felt his soul grow stronger after devouring the souls of 700,000 Elite locusts. At the same time, the Defiance Aspect advanced by one-sixth according to the experience bar.

He needed only five more repetitions to rank up his Divine Aspect and unlock another powerful Divine Skill. With this first success, he returned and summoned another 700,000 Elite locusts. He didn't care about the rank of the Divine Souls he encountered. He commanded his locusts to launch relentless self-detonation assaults until all 700,000 perished.

Han Wu repeated this process five more times, and the experience bar for the Defiance Aspect finally reached its limit. Two distinct Divine Skills then appeared for him to choose from.

[Option 1: Defiance Divine Skill: Defiant Sword. Summons a powerful weapon through the Divine Skill. Converts physical damage to magical damage and vice versa. Can be merged with any swords. Effects are permanent.]

[Option 2: Defiance Divine Skill: Defiant Dual Gun. Summons a powerful weapon through the Divine Skill. Can turn ranged physical damage to ranged magical damage and vice versa. Can be fused with any guns. Effects are permanent.]

Han Wu faced two paths: specialize as a swordsman or as a gunman. He glanced at the Rust Demon greatsword and chose the former. With numerous sword-related skills already in his arsenal and a preference for a greatsword, the decision came easily.

Once he selected the swordsman path, knowledge of the Defiant Sword streamed into his mind. By the time he regained focus, he had learned the Divine Skill's effects,

characteristics, and usage. He felt its power and admitted that it was an incredible Divine Skill.

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[1,011 words]

Chapter 127 - Increasing Strength

Although the Defiant Sword had the word *sword* in its name, it was actually a type of Divine Skill. In truth, it granted its user a new way to strike at close range. Han Wu could absorb souls from various races, unlocking different forms through the skill. For now, the weapon took the shape of a longsword, but Han Wu sensed that its form would shift as he absorbed more locust souls.

He expected the sword to adopt the locusts' traits, with its next transformation most likely becoming a scythe. Based on his understanding, if that happened, he would gain the Defiant Scythe, along with new abilities and effects.

Still, that evolution was far off. For the moment, Han Wu summoned the Defiant Sword, a thick longsword about 1.5 meters long with a razor-sharp edge. He felt its weight keenly as he wielded it. As a test, he swung it at a tree. The trunk split cleanly in two, and to his surprise, sparks flared along the cut, as if the blade had been searing hot.

Han Wu frowned in confusion. He hadn't enchanted the sword with any attributes. To familiarize himself with the weapon, he cast Enchant Darkness on it before slicing another tree. Normally, the cut should show signs of corrosion typical of the dark element, but the incision was as smooth and clear as a mirror. No corrosion appeared.

He then selected a boulder and struck it in half. Unexpectedly, the rock shattered into pieces as if crushed by a hammer. How could a bladed weapon display the force of a blunt weapon?

Han Wu was shocked but now he understood the properties of the Defiant Sword. As its name implied, it was a weapon that went against the norm. Enchanting it with the dark attribute would cause it to inhibit the effects while cutting a boulder was turned into smashing a boulder instead.

He was pleased with the effects and confident he could use the properties to make someone lower their guard. After a few more experiments, he had already discovered several ways to deceive others. All he needed now was an enemy.

Unable to persuade Han Wu, Tian Wen relented and did what he could do best. He exchanged the Divine Aspect fragments they had collected for the specific pieces required to complete other Divine Aspects before selling them off.

This strategy earned him enough resources to upgrade their tent repeatedly. Eventually, they expanded the arena inside to cover 4 square kilometers. With more space, they could summon more units. Han Wu was now able to summon more Elite locusts to detonate, absorb their souls with his Souleater Gaze, and accelerate his Divine Aspect's ranking progress.

Meanwhile, as they defeated increasingly powerful Divine Souls, they collected higher-ranking Divine Aspect fragments. Tian Wen resumed his fragment trading and finally secured a complete Rank 3 Hurricane Aspect.

A Demigod with the Hurricane Aspect would not only gain three corresponding Divine Skills but also a significant boost in mastery over the wind attribute for their core race. However, this Divine Aspect proved useless to both Han Wu and Tian Wen.

Han Wu's locusts had stronger affinities with poison, earth, and fire, while Tian Wen's Rabbitmen leaned toward light, water, and wood attributes. Neither could harness the power of wind. Ultimately, Tian Wen exchanged the Hurricane Aspect for another Rank 3 Divine Aspect called Warm Sunshine. It was tailor-made for support and was also the highest-ranking Divine Aspect that Tian Wen could absorb.

With Han Wu's consent, Tian Wen absorbed the Divine Aspect, growing stronger, though he still needed to invest substantial Divine Points to unlock Warm Sunshine's Divine Skills.

Tian Wen's core race benefited from the blessing of the Warm Sunshine. One of the battle-orientated Heroic Rabbitman merged with the Lord Template Tian Wen provided and ascended to become a Rabbitman Lord. At last, he possessed a combat-oriented Lord life form.

Both Han Wu and Tian Wen were having a great time. Meanwhile, Zhang Gang managed to contact the bankrupt God King and informed him that Han Wu had already entered the Ancient Battleground. The God King, having received Hu Hai's earlier report, was well aware that Han Wu was the thief.

Without hesitation, he ordered Hu Hai to seize the opportunity and capture Han Wu at once. Acting swiftly, Hu Hai tapped into his network and secured two tickets to the Ancient Battleground. He kept one for himself. Using a secret technique, he split his body in two, each half retaining the strength of a Demigod. This clever trick allowed him to bypass the ticket inspection system undetected.

He handed the other ticket to Xu Tie's parents. Upon learning they had a chance to capture their son's murderer, they agreed without hesitation and vowed to avenge their

lost child. The tickets swiftly transported Hu Hai and Xu Tie's parents into the Ancient Battleground.

Zhang Gang greeted the group warmly. After Hu Hai explained the situation, everyone in the camp understood they shared the same mission: to capture Han Wu. A single God and four Demigods working together to hunt a newly ascended Demigod like Han Wu made Hu Hai feel like he was using a cannon to kill a fly.

Still, the bankrupt God King's orders left no room for refusal. Hu Hai had to do his best and relay the results back to the God King. To ensure their plan ran smoothly, Hu Hai volunteered to lead the four Demigods on a hunt for Divine Souls within the Ancient Battleground to boost their strength.

Although his power as a God had been split between two bodies, they still functioned flawlessly, capable of unleashing about 70% of his original strength. That was more than enough to annihilate any Divine Soul they came across.

Zhang Gang and the others gained so much that their tents were significantly upgraded, and they each obtained a suitable Divine Aspect. Fueled by their progress, they trained with renewed determination and swore they would not rest until Han Wu was captured.

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[1,004 words]

Chapter 128 - Conduitborn

One day, just after Han Wu and Tian Wen stepped out of their tent, spies bribed by Hu Hai sent out the signal. The moment the message reached him, Hu Hai sprang into action with the others. The Xu parents formed one group, Zhang Gang and Liu Letian another, while Hu Hai moved independently, forming the third.

The three groups advanced in unison, following Han Wu's trail. According to the plan, whoever found him first would fire a flare to signal the others to converge at once. Together, they formed a tightening coil, closing in to trap their target.

Although the four Demigods were confident in their power and eager to claim victory themselves, Hu Hai overruled them. Only he knew that Han Wu had stolen the bankrupt God King's treasure.

Hu Hai understood that anything coveted by the God King would be far from ordinary. For safety, he ordered them to only move once all three groups had gathered. Naturally,

the four Demigods feared Hu Hai's Divine Authority and followed his command without question.

On the other side, Han Wu and Tian Wen were hunting Divine Souls as usual. With their upgraded tent, they could now summon even more units. Han Wu had called forth 10 million Elite locusts, 3 Locustman Lords, and Steely. Though not at full strength, he felt confident in his ability to defeat a Demigod.

Tian Wen was not as powerful. He only had 2 Rabbitman Lords, 700 Heroic Rabbitmen, 300,000 Unique Rabbitmen, and the rest were Elite Rabbitmen. One moved on the ground while the other soared through the air, coordinating their attacks with precision.

As they pushed deeper into the Ancient Battleground, they started encountering stronger Divine Souls. The most frequent formation they faced consisted of purple, blue, and white halos, all led by a single black-halo Divine Soul.

Without hesitation, Han Wu ordered his locusts to self-detonate on contact. The locusts obeyed instantly, swarming the enemies and bombarding them alongside their clones. Counting his locust clones, Han Wu's army numbered at least 30 million strong. Their Thunderblaze Detonations reduced the battlefield to smoldering cinders.

The Divine Souls either perished instantly or suffered wounds so severe they could no longer fight. Tian Wen would then command his Rabbitmen to strike, unleashing thousands of Carrot Missiles that rained down from the sky. Even the black-halo Divine Soul failed to defend against the relentless assault.

The only drawback came from Han Wu's rapid depletion of locusts. Fortunately, his divine realm produced enough to sustain this relentless assault, thanks to the locusts' impressive reproductive abilities. As long as his population remained above 10 billion, his divine realm would generate 65 million locusts daily. With such vast numbers, Han Wu commanded his army without restraint.

The locusts exploded, scattering numerous Divine Soul fragments across the ground. Tian Wen eagerly gathered and carefully sorted the fragments before stowing each into its proper bag. Once done, he looked up and said, "Han Wu, you're out of cannon fodder again. Let's head back to the tent."

Han Wu had just finished absorbing the locust souls. Despite being only Elite locusts, the sheer number of souls unleashed a tremendous surge of energy. The absorption strengthened his soul slightly, and his Defiance Aspect, ranked up once more.

Han Wu was given another choice again.

[Option 1: Defiance Divine Skill: Battleborn. Gain strength relative to the damage your units have sustained. Can target any unit in your command.]

[Option 2: Defiance Divine Skill: Conduitborn. Gain strength proportional to the accumulated energy. Can be used on units in your command.]

The two Divine Skills were excellent choices that would further boost his strength, but Han Wu remained uncertain about the type of energy required for Conduitborn. He possessed life energy, class energy, plant energy, rune energy, and many others. Did Conduitborn demand a specific energy type, or all of them?

The Divine Aspect provided the answer after Han Wu asked. As a powerful entity born from the Divine Talents of a God, the Divine Skill accepted all types of energy as usable. Without hesitation, Han Wu chose the second option.

While turning the tide in moments of near death was impressive, Han Wu preferred to eliminate his enemies while fully unharmed. He made his decision, and Conduitborn became the third Divine Skill he learned. As it took effect, a strange energy spread across his skin like a shimmering membrane. It fluctuated in strength depending on the energy he expended. If Han Wu didn't use any energy, the energy membrane would remain in its prime state.

Satisfied with his new Divine Skill, Han Wu told Tian Wen, "I do need more units. Let's head back now."

Tian Wen ordered his Rabbitmen to return to their tent. Han Wu followed closely, surrounded by his Lord life forms, who moved earnestly to protect him.

They had just turned around when an explosion burst overhead. A single red flare could be seen floating in the air. Han Wu immediately recognized it—flares were used in the Ancient Battleground to signal allies. Each team assigned its own meaning to the colors and patterns. A red flare like this could mean danger, a warning, or a call to regroup.

Han Wu stared at the flare and had a bad feeling. "Mr. Tian, let's head back quickly. Something's off with the flare."

Tian Wen looked up and nodded. "You're right. The flare lacks the usual abbreviation identifying its meaning. Whoever sent it did not want anyone to decode the message."

Han Wu didn't care and started running toward the tent. Tian Wen and his Rabbitmen followed, struggling to keep up. After only a short distance, two figures blocked their path. They were Xu Tie's parents, the ones who had exposed Han Wu's location.

"What do you two want?" Han Wu growled, though he already knew the answer. They had come to avenge their son.

Without waiting for a reply, he braced himself, seized his Rust Demon greatsword, and lunged at them with no warning.

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Chapter 129 - Killing Xu Tie's Parents

[1,387 words]

Chapter 129 - Killing Xu Tie's Parents

Already on high alert, Xu Tie's parents swiftly countered Han Wu's sudden, aggressive attack, their divine God weapons clashing loudly against his Rust Demon greatsword. After a short but fierce exchange, Anu activated its Rust Domain skill, causing the Xu couple's weapons to instantly corrode.

By the time the Xu couple noticed the rust spreading across their weapons, it was already too late to salvage them. Though the weapon spirits tried to resist, the rust effortlessly overpowered them. The couple was thus forced to discard their precious God weapons to prevent the rapidly spreading corrosion from reaching them. This loss only intensified the couple's anger and hatred.

"You vile, murderous child! How could you destroy our God weapons, without so much as a warning or explanation? Such insolence! Who is responsible for raising you with such abominable manners?" Xu Tie's mother shrieked in a fit of rage, her outburst instantly igniting Han Wu's own wrath.

He didn't mind being called crazy or violent, but he absolutely despised it when someone poked fun at his familial matters. This was a shared, unwavering resolve between him and the original host.

"You dare insult me?" he snarled. "Then you will die right here."

Han Wu's intent was clear: he would kill the two here. He quickly transformed right before their horrified eyes, and using his Black Dragon King Transformation, he grew significantly stronger and became a towering black dragonoid. At the same moment, he also activated his newly acquired Divine Skill: Conduitborn.

A thin film of unseen energy immediately enveloped him, instantly doubling his strength. He then summoned the Defiant Sword and seamlessly merged it with the Rust Demon greatsword. The fusion significantly enhanced the Rust Demon greatsword, imbuing it with the Defiant Sword's characteristics.

Though thoroughly furious, the Xu couple were not blinded by their rage, becoming even more vigilant upon detecting the undeniable presence of a High Lord radiating from Han Wu. This was particularly alarming, as they, despite having been Demigods for so long, had only just reached that threshold themselves, yet Han Wu, a newly ascended Demigod, had already reached that very threshold!

His potential is truly unheard of! This brat must be eliminated at all costs! If he continues to grow at this rate, he will very soon become a devastating thorn in our Xu family's flesh. For the sake of both our family's future and our own survival, we have to kill him now!

The two completely ignored Hu Hai's instructions, intent instead on eliminating the boy at all costs. Their loyal units obeyed them without hesitation, charging suicidally towards Han Wu.

To avoid expending too much energy, Han Wu activated the Rust Domain of his Rust Demon greatsword, creating a corrosive field around himself. Any entity that came near Han Wu was relentlessly broken down into rust, their fur, skin, flesh, blood, and bones crumbling until no trace of them remained.

Understanding that a retreat was impossible, Tian Wen immediately lent Han Wu his full support. He swiftly ordered his units to relentlessly bombard the approaching enemies with thousands of Carrot Missiles. Though the Xu couple's army was undeniably powerful, even they faced great difficulty in defending against such an overwhelming barrage of projectiles.

The combined forces of the Xu couple gradually diminished under the powerful, relentless assault from both Han Wu and Tian Wen. Witnessing that overwhelming their enemies with sheer numbers was proving ineffective, the Xu couple quickly shifted their approach. They resolved to do what they should have done from the very beginning—prioritize eliminating the leaders.

The couple dispatched three Lord life forms, instructing them to bypass the Carrot Missiles and penetrate the Rust Domain to strike at Han Wu. Yet, Han Wu remained still; his forces had already anticipated and prepared for precisely this tactic.

As the three Locustman Lords charged, Dark Locust initiated its Dark Domain, instantly obscuring the vision of the three enemy Lords. Simultaneously, Toxic Locust unleashed a corrosive cloud of toxins, rapidly poisoning their now-blinded adversaries.

The final Locustman Lord swiftly summoned two clones and immediately dispatched them to attack the three enemy Lords with Thunderblaze Detonation. Meanwhile, Steely chose to position himself close to Han Wu, taking on the role of his personal guard.

As his very first Heroic life form, Han Wu had consistently given Steely more preferential treatment, including a significant allocation of resources to aid his growth. That was the

primary reason Steely had achieved such remarkable strength; in fact, Steely was currently stronger than even the combined might of the three Locustman Lords.

While the Locustman Lords were engaged in fierce combat against the three enemy Lords, another Lord life form, specially nurtured by the Xu couple and specialized in assassination, remained hidden in the shadows. It patiently prepared to launch its attack on Han Wu, waiting for the opportune moment when his attention would be diverted.

However, the assassin had severely miscalculated its strike. Steely instantly detected and locked onto the Lord life form the second it emerged, striking it down with a single, powerful Steelcutter and sending it to its demise. The Xu couple, seeing their assassin perish in an instant, grew even more resolute in their desire to kill Han Wu.

The couple began using their Divine Skills to reinforce their units, completely disregarding the enormous amount of Divine Points they were spending. Their army became noticeably more powerful after being bolstered by seven different Divine Skills. At this point, neither the Rust Domain nor the barrage of Carrot Missiles was enough to deter the Xu couple's advancing forces.

Just as the Xu couple believed their victory was imminent, Steely delivered yet another unexpected surprise. He unleashed its Hurricane Domain, generating intensely sharp winds that effortlessly swept away all of the nearby enemies. The Xu couple, filled with rage, roared, "That damned Swordwind!"

Unable to fight back against the relentless wind, the two decided to personally attack Han Wu. They unleashed their full strength, instantly becoming as formidable as High Lord life forms, and then combined their attacks in a focused effort to kill him.

A soft chuckle escaped Han Wu's lips as he casually took a step. In the very next instant, without any prior warning, he appeared directly behind the unsuspecting couple. A brilliant flash of steel gleamed, cutting cleanly through their bodies.

The two finally realized they had been slashed by Han Wu. Fortunately for them, the wound wasn't fatal; his Spectral Dash had inflicted only superficial damage. With gritted teeth, they bore the pain and resumed their attack.

Han Wu, however, deliberately took his time, preparing to unleash the Great Dragon Cleave. As he swung his sword, he propelled himself forward, soaring through the air like a magnificent flying Great Dragon.

He ascended swiftly, and in that same motion, Xu Tie's father's head was cleanly severed. For Han Wu, killing someone of the same rank was an effortless feat, given that he had poured all his power into the strike.

The sight of her husband being decapitated instantly shattered Xu Tie's mother's sanity, sending her into a frenzy.

“I will kill you!” she shrieked, her grief and rage consuming her.

Her shrill howls had barely escaped her throat when a God dagger suddenly stabbed her. Tian Wen had appeared from behind, striking without warning. Even though he was currently only as strong as a Lord life form, his surprise attack with a God dagger was still enough to effectively ambush a High Lord.

Xu Tie’s mother felt her life force rapidly ebbing away, her movements growing increasingly dull and unresponsive. Han Wu calmly drew near and decapitated her without a trace of emotion, thereby reuniting her with her husband and son.

Tian Wen retrieved his dagger and immediately instructed the Rabbitmen to swiftly gather the two fallen corpses. The flesh of Demigods served as excellent raw material for nurturing new Lord life forms.

“We have to get out of here now!” Tian Wen urged Han Wu, simultaneously working to hide any traces of their fight. The latter nodded in agreement and was about to transform back when a familiar voice cut through the air.

“Do you truly believe you’ll walk out of here alive?”

The chilling question came from none other than Liu Letian, Han Wu’s previous homeroom teacher.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,403 words]

Chapter 130 - Battle for Survival

Wolf Riders, along with numerous Dark Frogmen, encircled Tian Wen and Han Wu from all directions. Liu Letian and Zhang Gang swiftly emerged, mounted atop Raid Wolf Lords.

Tian Wen swiftly ordered his Rabbitmen to stick close, a move to both fend off the Wolf Riders and ensure Han Wu’s safety. Meanwhile, Liu Letian surveyed the scene, recognizing the scattered corpses of the Xu couple and their fallen units strewn across the ground, which Tian Wen had not yet fully cleared from the area.

“Unbelievable, Mr. Tian and Han Wu! It seems you’ve become so incredibly powerful that you can kill two Demigods and emerge mostly unscathed,” Liu Letian commented, his voice tinged with a noticeable unease and a hint of envy.

Han Wu's gaze swept over his enemies, observing that there were at least 40 million Wolf Riders and Dark Frogmen in total. They were all fresh, uninjured, and eager for combat. He found himself questioning his chances of victory against such an overwhelmingly large army.

On the other hand, Han Wu was limited to just four exhausted Lord life forms who hadn't had any time to recover their strength. Tian Wen's Rabbitmen were similarly depleted after expending so much energy on Carrot Missiles, now barely able to stand upright.

Han Wu's confidence wavered regarding their current odds. Tian Wen, assessing the situation, knew their survival was highly unlikely. He made the immediate decision to risk everything for Han Wu's escape, even if it cost him his life. He believed that sometimes, excessive deliberation could actually diminish the chances of survival.

He whispered, "I'll use my units to carve out a path for your escape. When the moment comes, run and ascend high into the sky. They won't be able to catch you then."

"No." Han Wu firmly shook his head. While he deeply respected Tian Wen's willingness to sacrifice himself for his survival, he absolutely didn't want their escape to come at such a cost.

"Stop being so stubborn, Han Wu. I will only have one chance to create this opening for you. You must seize it at all costs!" Tian Wen urged, steeling himself.

Gripping Tian Wen's arms, Han Wu shook his head. "Mr. Tian, there's absolutely no need for you to sacrifice yourself. I have this situation under control. Just trust me."

The sheer conviction in Han Wu's voice carried a profound weight that rendered Tian Wen utterly unable to resist.

"You have the situation under control? You?" Liu Letian sneered, a harsh laugh erupting. "That's complete bullshit! There's 40 million of us here, and so few of you! There's no point in even trying to resist."

Zhang Gang nodded in agreement. "Mr. Tian, our objective here is to capture Han Wu. We will spare you if you withdraw now and do not interfere with our mission."

Liu Letian's eyes briefly betrayed a vicious intent, though he swiftly masked his evident displeasure. Tian Wen, however, broke into open laughter. "Mr. Zhang, I appreciate your willingness to spare me, but as a teacher, my unwavering principle dictates that I cannot permit my student to die before I do."

Zhang Gang sighed. "Mr. Tian, we truly could've been good friends, but you've forfeited that chance. Don't blame me for this then."

With a wave of his arm, his Wolf Riders immediately charged. Tian Wen swiftly ordered his Rabbitmen to unleash as many Carrot Missiles as they possibly could, while the battle-oriented Rabbitman Lord immediately jumped into the chaotic fray, cutting down as many enemies as it could.

Unfortunately, the sheer number of Wolf Riders proved overwhelming, slowly forcing the Rabbitman army to retreat. Tian Wen's heart was heavy with grief as he saw his Rabbitmen, whom he had personally nurtured, being relentlessly slaughtered. The pain was as sharp and unbearable as that of losing one's own child.

Deeply moved, Han Wu sprang into action. He retrieved a Spectre Vine seed from his pocket and, after consuming it, immediately activated Gene Lock. His cells rapidly processed the Spectre Vine genes, causing thin, spectral vines to begin sprouting from his body. Gripping his Rust Demon greatsword, he then activated the Defiant Sword, which, to his surprise, transformed into a lethal scythe this time.

Han Wu had absorbed so many locust souls in his previous battle with the Xu couple that his Defiant Sword had evolved, unlocking a new form: the Soul Reaper. Upon grasping it, he instantly comprehended its powers. This new form possessed the unique ability to alternate between a physical and an incorporeal state.

In its physical form, the Soul Reaper's edge became incredibly razor-sharp, allowing it to effortlessly cut through most objects. Conversely, when it shifted to its intangible form, it gained the ability to phase through anything. Every creature killed by the Soul Reaper would have its soul absorbed, which in turn sharpened the scythe's blade.

Han Wu seamlessly fused it with the Rust Demon sword, transforming it into a formidable war scythe. He stood like the legendary grim reaper with the scythe in hand. Curiously, despite this striking transformation and his aura reaching the threshold of a High Lord, Zhang Gang and Liu Letian remained completely unfazed by his new form.

At Zhang Gang's command, his Wolf Rider High Lord stepped forward. This particular unit was born from the fusion of an orc High Lord and Raid Wolf High Lord—a combination that rendered it far stronger than any of its typical peers.

With a surge of power, the Wolf Rider High Lord activated its Frost Domain and Berserk Domain simultaneously. The other Wolf Riders braced themselves, ready to join the hunt. Han Wu frowned, clearly unsettled by the combined assault of the Wolf Rider High Lord, and pointed a finger at it.

Swathes of Spectre Vines erupted from the ground, but the Wolf Rider High Lord displayed impressive agility, successfully evading all of them. What the High Lord didn't realize, however, was that Han Wu hadn't intended to directly attack them with those vines—they were meant to be used for his Spectral Dash instead!

Han Wu vanished from sight and instantly materialized at a large Spectre Vine directly behind the Wolf Rider High Lord. Almost immediately, a wide, cross-shaped wound appeared on the Wolf Rider High Lord's body—it was severely injured.

Han Wu gave the enemy no opportunity to recover, instead materializing randomly and unpredictably amongst the dense Spectre Vines. He steadily eradicated the combined forces of the Wolf Riders and the Dark Frogmen as cross-shaped slashes blossomed across the battlefield. Numerous units fell instantly to his attacks.

The Soul Reaper expanded, growing visibly larger and sharper with every soul absorbed, but Han Wu knew it still wasn't enough to secure victory. His primary objective was to eliminate their leaders first. Killing Zhang Gang and Liu Letian would cripple their command, transforming their vast army into nothing more than mindless drones.

Han Wu, fixing his gaze on the pair, disappeared once more. A massive, cross-shaped slash, almost invisible to the naked eye, swiftly flew towards their throats.

Reacting instantly, Zhang Gang crushed the protective jade talisman he had received from the bankrupt God King, causing a protective shield to materialize and block the otherwise fatal attack. Liu Letian, however, found himself utterly stunned and could only watch in silence as Han Wu vanished from his sight.

Spectral Dash!

Han Wu reappeared behind Liu Letian in the blink of an eye. While Zhang Gang remained completely unharmed, Liu Letian's expression was fixed in a horrified shock as his head slowly slid off his neck.

Han Wu felt a growing fatigue spread through his cells after unleashing that intense attack—an undeniable signal from his body alerting him that Gene Lock would soon deactivate. Deciding it was time to retreat, he swiftly dashed through the Spectre Vines, seized Tian Wen, and made his escape.

"Don't you dare think you can escape after slaughtering so many of my units!" Zhang Gang roared, his voice thundering behind them. He swiftly activated his Divine Skill, instantly summoning a massive wolf from thin air.

"Fenrir, stop them!"

The giant wolf Fenrir immediately obeyed, relentlessly chasing after Han Wu, who was using his Spectral Dash. Its enormous paws then struck, sending both Han Wu and Tian Wen flying. At that critical moment, Han Wu's Gene Lock reached its limit and deactivated, rendering him unable to activate it for the next ten days.

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[1,226 words]

Chapter 131 - Defeated and Caught

Han Wu's body ached intensely as he lay sprawled on the ground, feeling as though the massive wolf Fenrir had pulverized all his bones. Tian Wen, whose physical body was comparatively weaker than Han Wu's, lay unconscious beside him, leaving Han Wu uncertain if he was still alive.

Fenrir let out a low growl, then carefully took both Han Wu and Tian Wen into its massive mouth before returning to its master. Zhang Gang felt an intense desire to kill the now-weakened boy, craving vengeance for his fallen Wolf Rider High Lord. In the end, however, he managed to restrain himself, recalling Hu Hai's earlier warning as well as the God King's promise of a reward.

Hu Hai soon appeared. He took in the aftermath of the intense battle, yet paid no mind to the fallen or even Zhang Gang. Instead, his focus immediately shifted to Han Wu, whose injuries he thoroughly examined. A sigh of relief escaped him after he confirmed that Han Wu was still alive and would not die from his wounds.

"Phew! That's good news. As long as he's alive, all is well. It would have been impossible to provide a satisfactory explanation to the God King otherwise."

Zhang Gang adopted the most pitiful expression he could manage. "Dear God, I've spent so much just to capture him..."

Hu Hai irritably dismissed him with a wave of his hand. "Yes, yes, I'm aware. Your primary concern is your reward. It will be granted to you as soon as we've left this place."

"Thank you for your generosity!" Zhang Gang exclaimed, clearly overjoyed. His gaze then shifted to the unconscious Tian Wen, whom he viewed as a valuable Demigod resource.

As he prepared to deliver a fatal blow, Han Wu's desperate shout echoed: "I will end my own life if you so much as lay a hand on him!"

"Given how severely injured you are, can you even manage to take your own life?" Zhang Gang questioned, his voice laced with scorn.

Han Wu dismissed the remark, fixing his gaze on Hu Hai. "I'm not sure why you want me, but I have a strong feeling that my death would lead to serious repercussions for you, wouldn't it?"

Convinced Han Wu couldn't end his own life under his watchful eye, Hu Hai paid him no mind. Yet, Hu Hai was soon struck with the greatest fright of his life when he saw Han Wu's flesh rapidly dissolve within moments, reducing him to mere skin and bones.

Han Wu had activated Famine, dramatically increasing his metabolic rate. This put him in a state of near-death with only a thread of life force remaining. Witnessing this, Hu Hai panicked and no longer dared to risk the consequences.

If the boy dies and the God King's treasure is gone for good, how will I ever explain myself?

"Very well, I promise that no harm will come to him," Hu Hai conceded. He then cast a stern look at Zhang Gang, reprimanding him for acting on his own initiative.

Zhang Gang begrudgingly ceased his attack on Tian Wen, but he ruthlessly annihilated all of Tian Wen's surviving units. As he then moved to execute Han Wu's four Lords, Han Wu issued another threat, leaving Zhang Gang no alternative but to back down.

The four Lords were sealed away by Han Wu and left stranded in the Ancient Battleground. This marked the extent of Hu Hai's involvement. It was now solely up to those Lords, and Tian Wen, to fend for themselves and survive in that treacherous location.

Hu Hai was so eager to leave he didn't even bother going back to his tent. Instead, he activated the teleporter and instantly transported himself back to the bankrupt God King's palace.

Fearing Hu Hai would monopolize the credit, Zhang Gang rushed after them. Hu Hai, however, was focused on stabilizing Han Wu's critical condition. Once done, he tossed Han Wu into his divine realm, commanding his core race to attend to him. At the same time, he used his Divine Authority to completely seal Han Wu's strength and powers.

With his powers sealed, even if Han Wu recovered completely, he would possess only slightly more strength than a regular person, rendering him completely powerless within Hu Hai's divine realm. That was Hu Hai's belief, anyway.

Thanks to the diligent care provided by Hu Hai's core race, Han Wu made a rapid recovery within Hu Hai's divine realm. Nevertheless, he found himself unable to access any of his skills or powers, as they had been completely sealed by Hu Hai.

Stripped of his powers, skills, and even his authority as a Demigod from the Divine Civilization, Han Wu was effectively powerless. He couldn't activate the Blood Coliseum

Permanent Coordinates as he lacked the required Divine Points. Despite holding numerous hidden trump cards, he could not find a way to break free.

However, just because Han Wu himself couldn't find a way out didn't mean the Origin of Mutation was equally without options. Every time Hu Hai's focus shifted away from Han Wu's condition, the Origin of Mutation would diligently begin its work.

Although Han Wu's power was sealed and Controlled Mutation was inaccessible, it nevertheless possessed the capacity to perform actions by accessing his stored Divine Essence, provided it first secured his explicit consent.

Having consumed all the Divine Essence Han Wu had in reserve, it still craved more. Its attention then turned to the Faith Points actively being generated by Han Wu's races; 100 million Faith Points amounted to a single Divine Point, and each 100 million Divine Points equated to one Divine Essence.

Han Wu's divine realm had already expanded considerably, a result of his ascension into a Demigod and the incorporation of divine realm fragments, which had directly contributed to the steady increase in the number of locusts inhabiting his divine realm as days went by.

Thankfully, Hu Hai's journey back to the bankrupt God King's palace proved to be a lengthy one. During this time, the Origin of Mutation sought Han Wu's consent to begin absorbing the Divine Essence that his races were continuously generating. Han Wu readily agreed, and 27 days subsequently passed.

Relief washed over Hu Hai as he realized he was just a day's journey from the God King's palace. Han Wu, on the other hand, was filled with worry, as he remained completely powerless in his sealed state.

The Origin of Mutation absorbed one final Divine Essence and let out a triumphant cheer. It had successfully accumulated enough Divine Essence to achieve a rank-up. This advancement meant it could then restore some of Han Wu's sealed powers and, more importantly, figure out a plan to escape from Hu Hai's divine realm.

Han Wu waited with bated breath for the Origin of Mutation to complete its rank-up. He knew that without it, he would surely be dead once they reached the bankrupt God King's palace. The entire process took eighteen real hours, which translated to nine realm months.

Han Wu quickly sensed a surge of power flowing from the Origin of Mutation, and simultaneously felt his own body ranking up as well. He had now officially become a Rank 3 Super Genesoldier. At the same time, he acquired a third, powerful skill from the Origin of Mutation: Gene Recombination.

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[1,518 words]

Chapter 132 - Gene Recombination

Han Wu felt the surge of power from his new skill and instantly grasped its capabilities. Although Gene Recombination and Controlled Mutation ultimately led to similar results, they operated on entirely different fundamental principles.

Controlled Mutation operated by forcibly inducing mutations, creating new traits or structures where none existed before. Although the direction of these mutations could be precisely controlled, the process invariably caused considerable injury to the target's physical body.

Gene Recombination, in contrast, functioned by merging two distinct genes, thereby altering the target's fundamental body structure. This process caused no detrimental effects to the target's body.

Han Wu carefully considered his options, trying to figure out how he could utilize Gene Recombination to escape from Hu Hai's divine realm. He was still engrossed in his thoughts when the unit responsible for delivering his food daily arrived once again.

The Tigermen were Hu Hai's core race. To safeguard against any deception from Han Wu, Hu Hai deliberately appointed a Tigerman who was born deaf to be responsible for bringing Han Wu's food.

It had been 28 days in the real world, meaning Han Wu had been in the divine realm for 28 realm years. The Tigerman responsible for his meals had begun this duty when it was still young, and the daily delivery had long since become a fixed part of its routine.

Just as the Tigerman placed the meal and turned to leave, he seized its paws, catching it completely by surprise. Due to the Origin of Mutation's rank-up, he had become a Rank 3 Super Genesoldier, which had, in turn, boosted his physical strength once more. Despite still having his other abilities sealed, his raw physical power was now equivalent to that of a Heroic life form.

The grip strength of a Heroic life form proved too overwhelming for the Elite Tigerman to overcome. It struggled desperately to free itself but failed, so it let out a roar, which quickly attracted numerous armed Tigermen guarding the area. The squad's leader, a Unique Tigerman, tried to forcibly remove Han Wu's hands, but was unexpectedly caught in Han Wu's grasp as well.

With the genes of two different Tigermen now within his grasp, Han Wu activated Gene Recombination to restructure their genes. Given that both were from the same species, their genes proved highly compatible, allowing Han Wu to easily complete the process with minimal energy expenditure.

To the utter shock of the other Tigermen, they witnessed the deaf Tigerman sprout two new ears while the Unique Tigerman simultaneously lost its own. Both affected individuals were equally bewildered by the sudden transformation.

The previously deaf Tigerman, experiencing sound for the very first time in its life, excitedly perked up its new ears to fully embrace its newfound sense. Meanwhile, the other, now without ears, cradled its head in profound despair. A chilling fear coursed through its body as it discovered it was completely deaf and couldn't even feel the presence of its ears.

Witnessing the terrifying transformation, the remaining Tigermen quickly backed away, gripped by the fear that Han Wu might also remove their ears. Seizing the moment, Han Wu delivered a powerful kick that tore his prison door clean off its hinges.

He came up to the Tigerman who had consistently delivered his food for years and expressed his gratitude. "Thank you for delivering so many meals to me over the years. Consider those new ears a personal gift from me."

The Tigerman, hearing Han Wu's voice for the very first time, instantly grew excited, quickly kowtowing and mumbling something incoherently in its joy. Though the other Tigermen couldn't make out its exact words, they knew it was thanking Han Wu for its newly gained ears. As it kowtowed, a thin strand of Faith extended, linking it directly to his body—he had obtained his first Tigerman Devotee!

Han Wu had finally found a method to escape Hu Hai's divine realm. The strategy was clear: he would spread his faith throughout the realm to amass followers, then leverage their collective power to destroy Hu Hai's Core. Once the Core was obliterated, Han Wu would be able to break free from the divine realm.

Han Wu knew time was rapidly running out. He made a rough calculation, deducing that he had three more realm months at the absolute most. Furthermore, he also had the exceptionally difficult task of converting the faith of a core race, especially one that still offered worship to a living God, Hu Hai himself.

Regardless of the obstacles, Han Wu was left with no alternative. From his brief exchange with Hu Hai, he already had a strong suspicion that the God King, seeking the Origin of Mutation, would almost certainly attempt to forcibly extract it from his body regardless of his condition.

Given that he and the Origin of Mutation had already completely fused, the forceful extraction of the Origin of Mutation would almost certainly result in his death. As a

result, in order to survive, he had no choice but to stake everything on a single, desperate attempt.

As Han Wu was deep in thought, contemplating how to effectively spread his faith, the earless Tigerman let out a furious roar and charged directly at him. The creature, in its desperation, believed that by killing Han Wu, it would somehow regain its lost ears. However, the earless Tigerman had severely underestimated its own capabilities. As a Unique life form, its power was significantly inferior when compared to Han Wu's strength.

While Han Wu typically showed no mercy to those trying to kill him, he chose not to squander any resources, especially now that he possessed Gene Recombination. Before the watchful eyes of the other Tigermen, he beckoned the previously deaf Tigerman to his side. He then placed a reassuring hand on its paws before forcefully seizing the earless Tigerman.

Using Gene Recombination again, Han Wu transferred all beneficial genes from the earless Tigerman to its companion. The moment Han Wu released his hands, the earless Tigerman had been reduced to a pile of rotten flesh, while the other Tigerman surged with renewed life.

Possessing an imposing, muscular physique with four arms and four eyes, the Tigerman had successfully ascended from an Elite to a Unique rank. Overwhelmed by its newly acquired strength, it unleashed an excited roar into the air, a power it had never before known. The other Tigermen recoiled in fear, struck by the shocking transformation.

One of the older Tigermen, his hands trembling visibly, pointed a shaky finger at Han Wu. "He's an Evil God! A heretic! Seize him."

Despite the older one's command, the other Tigermen were paralyzed by fear, none daring to approach Han Wu. The older one, exasperated, roared, "Capture him! Whoever accomplishes this feat will be named the next village chief!"

The position of village chief was highly coveted among the Tigermen, as it granted the exclusive privilege of journeying to the temple to pray to their God every year. Furthermore, if they were lucky, individuals possessing exceptional abilities could be chosen to join the Sacred Guards, thereby becoming a part of God's personal army, a role that also came with the benefit of receiving numerous resources.

The attractive offer swayed the other Tigermen, who, fueled by greed, launched an attack on Han Wu. One Tigerman surged forward, and the others quickly poured in behind. Han Wu was certainly capable of defending himself, but battling against so many at once would undoubtedly present a significant challenge.

More importantly, the Tigermen appeared to have mastered some form of martial arts, rendering their paws exceptionally deadly in combat. As Han Wu tried to fend them off, he soon began to feel his body breaking down under the sustained assault.

Just as Han Wu was prepared to make his last stand, an unexpected turn of events occurred. The mutated Tigerman betrayed its own kind, choosing instead to align itself with Han Wu. It flailed its four front paws, attempting to fend off its former comrades' attacks, but it was a losing battle; the Tigermen swiftly overwhelmed and wrestled it to the ground.

Moved by its unexpected loyalty, Han Wu chose to gamble again. "I shall make you stronger once more," he declared.

He launched himself into the midst of the Tigerman group, swiftly rescuing the mutated Tigerman and simultaneously seizing another to serve as genetic material. Activating Gene Recombination once more, he transformed the captured Tigerman into a mere lump of flesh while further enhancing his first Tigerman Devotee.

With six arms and six eyes, the mutated Tigerman became significantly stronger. Its incredible life force surged, surpassing that of a Unique life form and elevating it to the status of a Heroic life form. Witnessing its grotesque new form, the other Tigermen were struck with fear and began to back away nervously.

With its ascension to a Heroic life form, the mutated Tigerman's intelligence also sharpened. It cast its gaze upon the Tigermen who had once tormented it in its youth and, breaking its silence for the first time, declared, "Those who hurt my God shall die!"

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[1,284 words]

Chapter 133 - Converting More Devotees

With its imposing physique, powerful muscles, six eyes, and six arms, the mutated Tigerman was a truly daunting opponent. It easily overcame the other Tigermen, subduing them with brute force. Before long, all the Tigermen who had attacked them lay sprawled on the ground, growling in agonizing pain.

The village chief alone remained untouched. The mutated Tigerman had not forgotten the chief's past kindness in feeding it, and so, out of respect and gratitude, decided to leave him unharmed. The old village chief cast a fearful glance at the defeated Tigermen, a wave of regret washing over him for having so hastily denounced Han Wu as an Evil God.

This situation was, by all rights, a matter solely between my God and the captive; I should have simply allowed my God to handle the situation. Furthermore, I am already old and practically at death's door—there was absolutely no logical reason for me to have risked my life in such a manner.

“Oh great God, I beg your forgiveness for my impudence. From this day forward, I promise to worship you without fail, every day and every week of my life,” it pleaded to Han Wu.

Han Wu paid no mind to the village chief's frantic pleas, instead focusing on the thin strand of faith that he felt entering his body. With it, he had secured yet another new believer.

Han Wu chose to forgive the village chief, but in return, he gave a clear instruction: the chief was to inform every single Tigerman of Han Wu's greatness and ideally convert everyone in the village into his believer. This was crucial, as Han Wu was virtually out of Divine Points at that point.

A sense of relief washed over the Tigerman village chief upon receiving Han Wu's instructions; at least death was no longer an immediate concern. However, a lingering fear that Han Wu might renege on his word spurred it to action. It promptly sprinted back to the village, immediately beginning to recount tales of Han Wu's formidable power. Its account was corroborated by the other Tigmens, who had personally experienced defeat by the mutated one.

The small village saw the emergence of several more individuals who now worshipped Han Wu. As for Han Wu himself, he led the mutated Tigerman away from the village and began traveling in the direction of the temple that the village chief had previously mentioned.

To the Tigmens, the temple was a sacred place, believed to be the very place their God manifested and the ancestral origin of all Tigmens. However, Han Wu was armed with the knowledge of the Divine Civilization and the experience of having his own divine realm. The temple was, in all likelihood, the very location where Hu Hai had concealed his Core.

It didn't take long for Han Wu to realize the significant inconvenience of traveling alongside the mutated Tigerman. Their differing appearances—his humanoid form contrasting sharply with the Tigerman's six eyes and six arms—meant they drew a considerable amount of unwanted attention everywhere they went. Faced with this obstacle, Han Wu was compelled to devise a different method for infiltrating the temple and destroying the Core.

With his loyal mutant Tigerman at his side, Han Wu continued to formulate plans as they traveled. They made wide detours around any villages they came across, carefully

avoiding detection by other Tigermen to keep Hu Hai completely unaware of their activities. The thought of Hu Hai discovering his escape weighed heavily on his mind.

If Hu Hai were to discover their activities, Han Wu would instantly lose all hope of escaping, and it would be game over. This was, after all, Hu Hai's divine realm, and as the undisputed God of this land, he was utterly unstoppable.

Despite Han Wu's best attempts to steer clear of the Tigermen, he couldn't escape detection entirely. While navigating a mountainous area, they were unexpectedly spotted by a band of Tigermen bandits.

The bandit leader, who was himself a Heroic life form, attempted to capture both Han Wu and the mutated Tigerman, intending to sell them to a circus for profit. Regrettably for the bandit leader, its power paled in comparison to that of Han Wu and the mutated Tigerman.

With ease, they overwhelmed the bandits, leaving their leader with several broken teeth. The humbled leader immediately groveled on the ground, desperately pleading for mercy and pledging to serve Han Wu as a slave, vowing never to defy him again.

As the bandit leader desperately pleaded for its life, Han Wu felt a thin strand of Faith connect to his body. Needing more followers, Han Wu reluctantly agreed to accept the leader as his subordinate.

Seeing that their leader had been spared, the other bandits also began to plead for mercy. With each plea, more strands of Faith streamed into Han Wu's body. Seizing the opportunity, he decided to claim the place as his territory, transforming the entire bandit squad into his devoted followers.

Han Wu showcased his Gene Recombination ability, which only intensified their fervent worship. To them, strength was paramount; they would readily declare anyone their master if that person could enhance their power. For them, worshipping a new God and converting their faith was an insignificant price to pay for such a tangible gain.

Having spent two realm days empowering every bandit, Han Wu then gave them their mission: kidnap as many Tigermen as they could from the surrounding villages. The bandit leader, now significantly more powerful thanks to Han Wu's skill, led his subordinates down the mountain, successfully capturing a large number of Tigermen from the villages.

Han Wu proceeded to showcase his abilities to the captured Tigermen, yet only a portion of them chose to convert and become his believers. Many of the captives maintained their fervent devotion to Hu Hai. Since he couldn't afford to waste time on the stubborn ones, he used them as components to bolster the strength of his own Tigermen.

He carried out his plan, steadily accumulating a growing number of believers. Being in a humanoid form, he couldn't approach the Tigermen's temple, much less infiltrate it to locate Hu Hai's Core. Fortunately, his Tigermen subordinates were perfectly suited for such an infiltration.

In this divine realm, where personal strength was paramount, the temple consistently sought out and recruited exceptionally powerful Tigermen. Han Wu devised a plan to have one of his subordinates infiltrate the temple, thereby saving himself a considerable amount of effort and trouble.

He selected several physically fit Tigermen and significantly increased their strength before instructing them to find a way to infiltrate the temple. His strategy was relentless: if one failed, he would send ten, and if ten couldn't succeed, he would send a hundred more!

It took Han Wu a considerable amount of time, but at last, one of his Tigermen subordinates achieved the necessary strength to pass the temple's trials and gain entry. With his subordinate inside, Han Wu began discreetly communicating with it, carefully directing its movements in the search for Hu Hai's Core.

Despite a thorough search of the temple, the Tigerman found nothing that matched Han Wu's description. Hearing this, Han Wu frowned.

The Core isn't in the temple? Then where is it? Don't tell me it's buried deep underground!

With his plan still in motion, Han Wu deployed more Tigermen to comb the divine realm for the Core. This widespread search, however, didn't go unnoticed and soon attracted the attention of a powerful Tigerman General, a highly renowned individual within the Tigermen Kingdom.

Determined to eradicate the poisonous tumour that was the bandit village, it rallied its own troops and began its advance towards the bandit stronghold.

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Chapter 134 - Hu Yong, Hu Chi

[1,460 words]

Chapter 134 - Hu Yong, Hu Chi

The entire village now served as Han Wu's subjects. Those who stubbornly refused to worship him were converted into material to empower his forces. Also, the very first mutated Tigerman he created had become Han Wu's right hand man.

In recognition of its unwavering bravery and loyalty, Han Wu bestowed upon it the name Hu Yong. After numerous applications of Gene Recombination, it had been elevated to a Lord life form. It now possessed eight eyes, eight powerful arms, and a towering height of five meters—a direct and successful outcome of Han Wu's genetic experiments.

The transformations weren't limited to Hu Yong. A significant number of Tigermen, all yearning for greater power, had undergone Han Wu's Gene Recombination on multiple occasions.

Some Tigermen now possessed multiple arms, while others exhibited several legs fused into a single limb. There was even one individual whose body contained numerous redundant organs. Despite these diverse forms, their overall strength had seen a significant boost, all thanks to Han Wu's Gene Recombination.

With their power expanding, their belief in Han Wu solidified. When the Tigerman General's army finally appeared at their doorstep, Hu Yong was the first to step forward and eagerly requested to engage in combat.

"Esteemed God," Hu Yong stated, "please give me the order to kill them! I will personally wrest the head of that general and present it to you as a victorious gift!"

Han Wu profoundly admired Hu Yong's courage. The Tigerman, who had once been deaf, had learned to speak within a single realm month, simultaneously growing stronger and mastering numerous close combat skills in the process. Han Wu had no qualms calling it a genius. Nevertheless, Hu Yong displayed a slight naivety in its assumption that others inherently shared its own preferences.

Han Wu recoiled internally, thinking, *I am basically a god; what use would I have for the Tigerman General's severed head? I'm certainly not so perverted as to use a general's head as a night soil bucket or anything like that! Instead, I'd rather you compel the Tigerman General to surrender, or better yet, bring it to me so I can utilize it as material to boost the power of our forces.*

"Hu Yong, you don't need to present me with his head," Han Wu stated. "My command is for you to assemble your brothers, descend, and destroy the army. Take them alive; only those who stubbornly refuse to surrender until their final breath should be killed."

"I understand, my glorious God."

A thousand of Han Wu's enhanced Tigermen, under Hu Yong's leadership, emerged from the village. Just as the general was about to issue the attack order for its army, the

village gates burst open, and a horde of mutated Tigermen surged forth. Reacting quickly, the Tigerman General barked orders for its troops to engage and to ensure the gates remained open for their imminent invasion.

However, the Tigerman General had gravely underestimated the formidable strength of Hu Yong and the other mutated Tigermen. Many of these transformed warriors were capable of simultaneously engaging ten regular Tigermen, and Hu Yong itself could face down a hundred alone. It surged through the opposing army with incredible speed, reaching the general in an instant.

The general reeled in shock. While it stood as a three-meter-tall giant among its fellow Tigermen, Hu Yong dwarfed it, towering at an imposing five meters. Though both were Lord life forms and possessed the identical skills bestowed upon the Tigermen tribe by Hu Hai, the sheer difference in their heights suggested an imminent loss for the general.

The seasoned general, despite the shocking sight, steadied its breathing and suppressed its fear, bracing itself for the inevitable fight. "Though I've annihilated countless traitorous legions, I've never seen such an abhorrent being as yourself," it snarled. "I will personally sever your head and turn it into my celebration wine cup!"

Hu Yong completely disregarded the general's threats, however, focusing intently on capturing him as swiftly as possible instead. Meanwhile, Han Wu remained at the top of the village, closely observing the events unfolding below.

Han Wu had a clear view of his Tigermen overpowering the enemy army. This was hardly surprising, as the opposing force consisted of mere Elite Tigermen while his mutated units were, at the very least, Unique life forms. Given this disparity in power, it was entirely normal for the enemy army to be suppressed.

However, the opposing Tigermen army held a considerable numerical advantage. If the confrontation persisted, Hu Yong would likely find himself in grave danger. Han Wu reflected that he wouldn't be in such a predicament if his formidable skills hadn't been sealed; in the past, he could have eliminated such a force with a single, decisive sword stroke.

However, the situation was no longer the same. With his powers sealed, he could only rely on Gene Recombination. Every action required careful calculation, and he had to conserve his strength as much as possible.

Han Wu issued a fresh order. "Archers, ready your bows to fire upon the approaching army, and someone have Hu Chi report to me at once."

A scrawny Tigerman, dressed in worn, drab garments, soon materialized before Han Wu. Its frame was so thin it seemed almost emaciated, and at just 1.7 meters tall, it was easily one of the smallest and slimmest Tigermen in the village. Nevertheless, to dismiss its capabilities based on its appearance would be a serious misjudgment.

Hu Chi was the second Tigerman Lord that Han Wu had successfully mutated from the village populace. Han Wu bestowed upon it the name Hu Chi due to its intense dedication to martial arts. He instructed, "Hu Chi, I order you to go forth, aid your brethren, and secure victory for us in this war!"

Hu Chi paused for a moment before quietly responding, "As you command."

Emerging slowly from the village, Hu Chi appeared before the army. A Tigerman soldier, misjudging Hu Chi's capabilities based on its lean frame, delivered a punch. In response, Hu Chi swiftly countered with a punch of its own.

The sheer strength and masterful martial arts proficiency of a Tigerman Lord effortlessly tore the Tigerman soldier's body apart, scattering its pieces in different directions. Witnessing this horrifying display, the surrounding Tigerman soldiers immediately retreated rapidly, wary of Hu Chi's casual yet devastating punches.

Hu Chi, however, wasn't one to show mercy. It relentlessly hunted down the retreating soldiers, pounding each one into the earth with its fists. Hu Chi was also remarkably diligent and thorough, aiding everyone as per Han Wu's instructions. It would only deem its task complete once it could no longer detect any enemies in its vicinity.

Hu Chi intensified its pace, eager to conclude its task and return to its cultivation in the village. Not a single soldier could withstand or block its attacks as it moved with the swiftness of the wind. Despite their desperate pleas, Hu Chi remained unconcerned. It continued its relentless killing, determined not to cease until every last enemy had been eliminated and its command fully accomplished.

Not a single Tigerman soldier proved capable of stopping Hu Chi's rampage. Ultimately, the Tigerman General was compelled to abandon its ongoing fight with Hu Yong and instead turn its attention to Hu Chi. All the while, it secretly fumed, inwardly scolding its own ineffective soldiers.

Hu Yong alone presented a formidable challenge, and now with Hu Chi entering the fray, the general found itself overwhelmed. How could it possibly contend with two such powerful foes simultaneously? Inevitably, its neck was soon snapped due to the coordinated assault from Hu Yong and Hu Chi.

Witnessing their general's demise, the soldiers' morale utterly collapsed. Han Wu's mutated Tigermen swiftly captured the entire force and brought them before him. He attempted to proselytize them, but his efforts were in vain; not a single one of the captured Tigermen was willing to worship him.

Han Wu let out a sigh of resignation and, with a decisive move, killed one of the soldiers who was defiantly shouting at him. Surprisingly, the very instant he committed this act, he felt a subtle but significant change—a portion of the captured Tigermen began to convert, and faint streams of Faith Points drifted from their bodies, entering his own!

Overjoyed by the effectiveness of this brutal method, Han Wu proceeded to execute one of the Tigermen army's team leaders. As a result of this act, he acquired an even greater number of new believers.

It dawned on Han Wu that the Tigermen soldiers understood only one language: raw power. Being diplomatic with them was pointless. He realized he needed to show them, through blood and death, that defiance against him would inevitably lead to their demise.

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Chapter 135 - Flight Squad and Excavation Squad

[1,164 words]

Chapter 135 - Flight Squad and Excavation Squad

After killing several more Tigermen, Han Wu finally converted 20% of them into his believers. From that single battle, he gained control over 20,000 Tigermen units. Those who refused to worship him and remained alive were turned into ingredients, while the dead were buried. Many of these soldiers possessed exceptional strength, giving Han Wu confidence that he could create another Lord life form through his Gene Recombination.

Having faced the full assault of the Tigermen army, Han Wu realized his actions had already drawn the attention of the local Tigermen. Time was running out. If any of them reported back to Hu Hai, all his efforts would be wasted. He ordered his believers to quickly clean up the battlefield and sent one of the new Tigerman Zealots to the prison.

After using 40,000 Tigermen as ingredients, Han Wu finally produced another Tigerman Lord, further strengthening his army. He had just finished managing the aftermath when a Tigerman spy he had placed in the temple sent a report. According to the spy, Hu Hai's Core was not hidden within the temple but in a forbidden zone outside the capital.

The forbidden zone was guarded by ten Tigerman High Lords and several hundred Tigerman Lords. Rumors circulated about an even more powerful guardian, a Tigerman said to surpass the High Lords in strength. The area was locked down under the strictest security measures. Not even the Tigerman King was permitted to enter, no matter the reason. Anyone who approached, regardless of rank or intent, was executed on the spot.

Han Wu frowned as he studied the report. *Several High Lords and hundreds of Lords... Even at my peak, with my Skills unsealed and my full army at my command, I doubt I could defeat them. I only have three Tigerman Lords right now. What am I supposed to do?*

A direct assault was out of the question, so Han Wu needed another way to infiltrate the place and locate the Core, either through his units or himself. *This is too difficult. With the units I have now, it's impossible. The guardians of the forbidden zones aren't blind or deaf Tigermen. Any Tigerman who enters will be spotted. How can I stop them from discovering us?*

Considering the Tigermen's exceptional martial skills and their strength on land, Han Wu devised two possible solutions: grant his troops the power of flight or the ability to burrow underground.

A Tigerman Highlord would've probably learned some sort of domain skill, but even that had limits. Han Wu hoped that such skills would fail to detect intruders approaching from above or beneath the earth. If he could locate the Core this way, his chances of success would rise dramatically.

Without wasting time, he summoned his units and ordered them to gather as many birds as possible, favoring the largest species. At the same time, he instructed them to purchase or capture any living creatures adept at digging.

The Tigermen moved swiftly, gathering the necessary beings. Using Gene Recombination, Han Wu transferred wings and claws onto his warriors. Many Tigermen sprouted wings, while others developed powerful claws capable of carving massive tunnels beneath the surface.

Han Wu divided them into two squads: the Flight Squad and the Excavation Squad. Those who had acquired one of the two traits quickly adapted to their transformed limbs, while Han Wu continued creating more. He was racing against time, determined to flee Hu Hai's divine realm before the latter could reach the God King's palace.

Elsewhere in the divine realm, the Tigerman King hurled a report across the palace floor. It documented the incident in Han Wu's village with precise detail, yet never mentioned Han Wu by name. Instead, it described only a strange group of mutated Tigermen living there. These mutated Tigermen had become a plague, even destroying one of the Tigerman Kingdom's official armies.

The Tigerman King roared, "This blasted tumor must be eradicated. I will not allow anyone to disrupt the kingdom's peace!"

One of the Tigerman Admirals stepped forward. "I will not fail you, Your Highness. Allow me to capture the bandit leader and present their head as a gift."

The Tigerman King's fury eased with the Admiral's assurance. "Good. What of the annual ceremony? How are preparations coming along?"

One of the Tigerman Ministers stepped forward. "Your Highness, everything is proceeding as planned. The tribute for our God has been prepared. We have commissioned the kingdom's finest blacksmith to forge the God equipment. We are confident our God will be pleased."

The Tigerman King nodded with satisfaction. "Excellent. It is good to see everything moving smoothly."

Soon after, the Tigerman Admiral led 100,000 troops as they marched toward Han Wu's village.

Han Wu had spent countless sleepless days transforming every Tigerman under his command, granting them the ability to either fly or tunnel. After several days of intense training, they had gained a solid grasp of their new powers. With time running short, Han Wu swiftly led them toward the forbidden zone.

The Flight Squad, capable of high-speed aerial movement, quickly outpaced the rest and reached a point 50 kilometers from the capital. This marked the edge of the forbidden zone.

Han Wu gave strict orders not to advance beyond that line. "Flight Squad, Hu Chi will command you. Fly high to survey the terrain, locate the Core, and, if possible, map the area. Remain completely undetected.

"Excavation Squad, Hu Yong will lead you. Begin by digging straight down 100 meters, then tunnel horizontally toward the forbidden zone."

The two squads moved promptly to carry out their orders. Han Wu watched closely as they executed his plan, all while scanning his surroundings with sharp vigilance. He was prepared to flee the moment he sensed any danger.

Fortunately, eight hours passed without anyone approaching from the forbidden zone. He also received encouraging news from the Flight Squad. They had discovered the Core hidden deep within the forbidden zone, though it was guarded by three old Tigermen.

From above, the three seemed ordinary, but anyone with a keen eye could tell they were extraordinary in every way. It was likely that the three were stronger than High Lords.

Han Wu frowned. *How can I infiltrate with such formidable guardians protecting the Core?*

He doubted he could defeat all of them even if he threw every unit he had into the fight. His concerns eased slightly when a Tigerman infiltrator within the temple sent a report with good news. Tomorrow marked a special occasion for the Tigmens: their annual celebration to honor their God.

During the ceremony, the Tigerman King would offer a powerful God equipment as tribute, seeking blessings and protection. Many from within the forbidden zone would attend the celebration.

Han Wu's lips curled into a grin as he listened to the report. Wasn't this the perfect chance to strike, with all three elder Tigmens leaving for the celebration? He waited patiently for the next day to arrive.

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[1,068 words]

Chapter 136 - Shattering the Core

On the second day, a large contingent of Tigmens marched into the capital to attend the ceremony. The city, already lively by nature, buzzed with even greater energy than usual.

Han Wu stood atop the mountain, watching the forbidden zone with sharp focus. Soon, he spotted a group emerging from within. About 80 Tigmens sprinted toward the capital at a reckless speed.

Han Wu could gauge their strength by their pace. Ten were High Lords, the rest ordinary Lords, but what caught his attention were the two figures leading the charge. They were the elders!

Han Wu scanned the scene for the third elder but found no sign of them. That meant only one elder remained to guard the Core, while the other two advanced to the ceremony.

It was not the outcome Han Wu had hoped for, but at least he faced only one elder today instead of three. He waited until the group disappeared beyond the horizon, then ordered his units into action. "Destroy the Core!"

Hu Chi commanded the Flight Squad as they dived toward the Core, aiming to shatter it with their momentum. Yet, when they reached 100 meters above the forbidden zone, they entered the range of the elder Tigerman's domain.

The elder's eyes snapped open as it sensed the intruders. Two fierce lights flared from its gaze as it growled, "Fools. You come seeking death by trespassing here."

As the elder spoke, its body trembled and a strange wave surged through its domain. Within seconds, Han Wu lost contact with thousands of his units. Any Elite Tigerman within 100 meters was killed on the spot.

The remaining troops plunged another 50 meters before a second wave rippled outward. This time, every Unique Tigerman perished, and Han Wu lost several thousand more connections.

Only the Heroic Tigmans and Hu Chi survived the descent. The moment they touched the ground, the gravity around them intensified. Their feet felt fused to the earth, and no matter how hard they beat their wings, they couldn't lift off.

Hu Chi knew they had fallen into a trap, but as a seasoned warrior, it refused to panic or give up. Slowly, it started moving toward the Core, vowing to carry out Han Wu's orders at any cost.

However, the elder had no intention of letting Hu Chi reach its goal. It heightened the pressure of its domain until Hu Chi had to burn through immense energy just to move. Blood seeped from its orifices with every step. Even so, it pressed on, inching forward with grim determination.

As Hu Chi advanced, it gradually adapted to the crushing gravity and soon walked at a normal pace. The elder Tigerman, shocked that Hu Chi could still move within its domain, resolved to kill it.

The elder exploited its domain, using it to rapidly close the distance. After appearing beside Hu Chi, the elder slashed with powerful claws, tearing through Hu Chi's flesh and exposing bone beneath. The grievous wound left Hu Chi on the brink of death, yet it endured the agony and crawled slowly toward the Core.

The elder admired Hu Chi's tenacity but showed no mercy. It struck with a brutal punch, crushing Hu Chi's heart with its claws. Even a High Lord would not survive such an injury, let alone a Lord. The elder assumed the battle was over, but Hu Chi suddenly jabbed a fist into the elder's chest.

Unfortunately, the elder only suffered an injury to its resilience as a powerful High Lord. Hu Chi had still failed to kill it.

"I've crushed your heart! How are you still alive?" the elder Tigerman exclaimed.

The answer lay with Han Wu, who had implanted three hearts into Hu Chi beforehand. The latter made no effort to explain and launched a relentless assault on the elder

Tigerman. The elder staggered under the surprise attack, briefly suppressed. Hu Chi's goal was not to defeat the elder but to stall for time.

Han Wu ordered the Excavation Squad to dig faster. The 10,000 Tigermen responded with fierce urgency, their synchronized effort shaking the earth beneath them. They had calculated precisely and were confident the Core lay just above. Until now, they had held back because any movement would alert the elder Tigerman. That was why they needed a distraction, and Hu Chi was tasked with the critical role.

Seizing the moment, the Excavation Squad dug frantically until they broke through the ground and stopped mere centimeters from the Core. The elder tried to intervene, but Hu Chi grabbed him tightly, refusing to let go. The elder Tigerman struggled violently, attempting to kill Hu Chi, but the latter held firm.

Hu Yong and the other Tigerman Lords of the Excavation Squad launched their assault on the Core. Their reinforced claws and powerful bodies shattered its surface, cracking it open. Yet, their power only managed to fracture it; the Core did not shatter completely.

Meanwhile, Hu Hai, racing toward the palace, suddenly sensed an attack on his Core. He halted abruptly and examined his divine realm. When he returned, his anger rippled violently through the space within it.

The shockwave struck his already cracked Core, shattering it into fragments. Hu Hai watched helplessly as his Core broke apart, and he felt his connection to the divine realm snap away. Pale as paper, he collapsed to the ground, unable to accept what had just happened.

Han Wu stood triumphantly on the mountain above, laughing with satisfaction. He hadn't expected Hu Hai's arrival to be the final blow that toppled everything. Now that the Core was destroyed, the divine realm was crumbling. Still, given its vastness, its complete disintegration would take time.

Han Wu knew he could escape at any moment, but he stayed. He understood he would reappear near Hu Hai's location. He also recalled that Zhang Gang accompanied Hu Hai to receive a reward from the God King.

With his Skills sealed away, he only had Gene Recombination and the strength of a Heroic life form. If he ran into Zhang Gang now, he would be captured without question. He needed to grow stronger before making his escape.

Then he remembered the celebration in the capital, where the Tigerman King planned to present Hu Hai with a God equipment as tribute. If Han Wu could seize the God equipment first, his chances of escape would improve.

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Chapter 137 - Escaping to the Blood Coliseum

[1,268 words]

Chapter 137 - Escaping to the Blood Coliseum

Han Wu summoned a member of the Flight Squad to carry him to the capital. Inside the city, many Tigermen reveled in the festivities, unaware that the divine realm was slowly collapsing after the loss of the Core. Only the Tigerman High Lords could sense the impending disaster. The Tigerman King was deep in prayer when it suddenly felt the connection between the divine realm and his God sever.

The sudden change froze him mid-phrase on the altar. The guards stationed at the forbidden zone sensed the disturbance and rushed back in alarm. Citizens watched the group of powerful Tigermen flee but had no idea what had triggered their flight. They also wondered why their king had abruptly stopped praying.

The Tigerman King had no choice but to suppress the fear in its heart and completed the ritual to prevent panic among the masses. Yet, the blessed light of their God failed to descend. The king understood the reason, but the commoners remained in the dark. Whispers and speculation spread through the crowd about why their prayers went unanswered.

The Tigerman King addressed them, "My loyal subjects, our God is attending to urgent matters but has promised to grant us even greater resources to strengthen our already mighty nation..."

It took some time for the Tigerman King's words to quell the crowd's unease. Some of the commoners left with disappointment because they didn't get to see the blessed light of their God. Just then, someone fell from the sky and landed beside the God equipment. No one reacted in time because none of them had anticipated something like this happening.

The Tigerman King stared in shock as Han Wu reached out and seized the God equipment. The instant his fingers touched it, Han Wu discovered its abilities.

[Wind Boots: 4-Star God Equipment.

Effect 1: Air Walk. One can walk on air as if one were on land.

Effect 2: Rapid Walk: Increases movement speed and reduces stamina consumption at the same time.

Effect 3: Skill: Wind Riding. Summons a gust of wind to travel faster.

Effect 4: Skill: Summon Tornado Eagle. Summons a Tornado Eagle that will obey any command. Strength of Tornado Eagle dependent on Divine Points used.]

The Tigerman King realized what was happening and roared at Han Wu, “You thief! How dare you steal the treasure meant for our God? Let it go, and I might leave you with a complete corpse!”

Han Wu ignored the warning. Instead, he bit his finger and let his blood drip onto the Wind Boots. As a 4-Star God equipment, the boots responded instantly, recognizing him as their master since he was already a Demigod. The God equipment absorbed his blood, sealing the contract. The Wind Boots wrapped around Han Wu’s feet and lifted him into the sky, enabling him to walk on air.

The Tigerman King lunged, but it was too late. Even as a High Lord, it could not hope to catch someone equipped with a God equipment. All it could do was watch helplessly as Han Wu escaped into the air.

The commoners witnessed the scene and erupted with excitement. “Didn’t the king say only Gods can use that God equipment? Has our God just descended?”

“That must be it! Our God has accepted our offering and revealed Himself to us. Now, He will bless us and bring prosperity!”

“Hail to our God! We offer our faith and our earnest prayers!”

No one knew who started the cheers, but soon the entire crowd joined in. Even the Tigermen who had not seen what happened shouted with the rest. The capital echoed with laughter and celebration, honoring the God that had descended and taken their offering in exchange for blessing them.

The Tigerman King almost fainted from rage. *These commoners! Don’t they realize they have been fooled?!*

It then ordered its troops to issue a warrant for Han Wu’s capture. But just then, another figure descended nearby.

One of the guards, fully alert, launched a sudden attack on the figure. Its blade barely touched the target before it shattered with overwhelming force. The guard’s body was crushed instantly, turning into a bloody pulp as his blood sprayed across the ground.

The Tigerman King finally recognized the figure as Hu Hai, the very God they had worshipped all this time. It dropped to its knees and prayed with urgent reverence. "I greet my esteemed God."

Hu Hai had no time to waste. His only focus was finding Han Wu, breaking every bone in his body, and dragging him before the God King. If the God King was pleased, he would likely grant Hu Hai a chance to reconstruct his shattered Core.

"Where is he?" Hu Hai demanded.

The Tigerman King understood the urgency and pointed toward Han Wu's escape route. "He stole the God equipment, the Wind Boots, and fled that way."

Fury surged through Hu Hai. Chasing Han Wu was already difficult, but now the stolen Wind Boots made the pursuit nearly impossible. He resolved to leave his divine realm and confront Han Wu in the real world. This choice came with a heavy price: he would never find his divine realm again. Still, capturing Han Wu was worth any cost.

When Hu Hai returned to the real world, chaos engulfed the surroundings. It looked as if a fierce hurricane had torn through the area during his absence. Blood and feathers stained the ground, and Zhang Gang was nowhere to be seen. Hu Hai understood that Han Wu had slipped out of the divine realm just before him.

"Damn brat! I will capture you no matter what!"

He activated his Divine Skills to track Han Wu's trail and gave chase. Even without a divine realm, a God was no fragile creature.

After several minutes, he finally spotted Han Wu in the distance. Zhang Gang also pursued Han Wu but could not close the gap; the Wind Boots gave Han Wu a clear advantage.

"You brat. Let's see how you escape me!" Hu Hai bellowed, appearing in a flash just behind Han Wu.

Han Wu was already running with the Wind Boots, but even he couldn't shake off Hu Hai. Left with no choice, Han Wu spent all the Faith Points gathered from his Tigermen and activated the Permanent Coordinates of the Blood Coliseum. Just as Hu Hai nearly grabbed him, Han Wu vanished through teleportation.

Hu Hai roared in frustration. He had been a breath away from capturing him, and now the brat was gone. All that remained was the dreaded certainty of the God King's punishment.

On the other side, Han Wu stumbled into the familiar grounds of the Blood Coliseum. Gasping for breath, he steadied himself. After facing so many brushes with death, he

had to admit the Permanent Coordinates were far more valuable than he had once believed.

As long as he could access the location, he could spend one million Divine Points to return here, no matter where he was. He used to think it was a useless feature, but he now saw it as a lifeline.

Even after escaping Hu Hai, Han Wu could still feel the seal clinging to his body. The suppression remained, cutting him off from his divine realm and stripping him of his authority as a Demigod. He still couldn't access his Skills or powers yet.

Worse still, Han Wu had spent his last Divine Points to teleport here. He was completely broke, with no way to return. He scanned the crowds gathering around, his expression vacant. "What should I do now?"

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[992 words]

Chapter 138 - Successor's Challenge

Han Wu still had no idea what to do when a new notification popped up.

[Dear candidate, a challenge has been issued to you by a fellow candidate, a Demigod known as Firewind. Do you accept this challenge? (Note that your candidacy will be revoked if you decline three challenges or if you are defeated in a challenge.)]

Han Wu scowled. "I decline."

Without access to his divine realm, accepting now would be suicide. He had barely rejected the challenge when another notification popped up. This time it was from another Demigod candidate White Ice. Han Wu exhaled heavily and declined again. If he could summon his units, he wouldn't have turned down a single one.

To his growing dismay, a third challenge notification appeared from yet another Demigod. He cursed under his breath. "Are they trying to kill me? Declining three times or losing even once means losing my candidacy."

Faced with no other option, Han Wu chose to accept the challenge. He resolved to defend his title with everything he had. The moment he accepted, the arena materialized around him. For Demigods, the arena stretched across 10,000 square kilometers wide, an area vast enough to accommodate their summoned units.

Han Wu caught sight of his challenger. To his surprise, the opponent was a loli, barely 1.5 meters tall. She wore a gothic dress, her skin was pale as porcelain, and her cheeks were plump and delicate like a high-end doll. As she appeared in the arena, she waved to her companions. "Firewind, White Ice, I'll be the one to take him on now."

Han Wu sighed, lamenting his luck. He had never expected his challengers to be working together. Usually, no one dared to challenge him here, yet they came one after another today.

After greeting her companions, she turned to Han Wu. "Are you Locust Plague? What a disgusting name."

Han Wu was rendered speechless. He never imagined the little girl would be so rude. She continued without waiting for a reply, "My name is Dark Night. Remember it well, because you will lose to me."

She radiated confidence, and the crowd erupted in cheers. Some recognized Locust Plague, but many more knew the famous Dark Night. A fan club had even formed to support her.

"Dark Night, you are so cute! Go and defeat him!"

"Dark Night, my beloved, victory is yours for sure!"

"Locust Plague, if you hurt a single hair on my sweet Dark Night, I will fight you to the death!"

The fan club's cheers echoed as Dark Night pointed at them and snapped, "Quiet, you pigs! Watch quietly."

"*Oho*, our sweet Dark Night is shy. She's so adorable."

"Dark Night called me a fat pig but not the others. Does that mean she likes me?"

"Dark Night, honey! Let's get married and give birth to your baby!"

Her cheeks flushed red. If she could, she would've disbanded the entire fan club on the spot. Frustrated and unable to silence them, she turned her fury on Han Wu instead. "Locust Plague, it's time for you to die."

She raised her arms and summoned 1 billion bats from her divine realm. A torrent of bats poured forth, darkening the sky. Han Wu blinked in surprise. This was the first time he had seen anyone muster an army rivaling his own in sheer numbers.

Dark Night taunted, "*Hehe*, are you afraid? This is my true strength. If you don't want my bats to drain your units into dry husks, you should surrender and stop wasting my time."

Han Wu saw through her words. She spoke to provoke him, challenging his pride to keep him fighting. He stared at the mass of bats and devised a plan to defeat her.

The preparation timer counted down, yet Han Wu summoned no units from his divine realm. Naturally, the crowd grew restless, confused by his inaction as the match neared.

Even Dark Night grew curious. “Why aren’t you summoning your units? Don’t tell me you are really afraid of my bats?”

Han Wu ignored her and kept his gaze fixed on the bats. The match started the moment the timer hit zero. The administrator showed no concern whether Han Wu summoned his units or not. Dark Night chose brute force, unleashing every bat in her swarm to attack him, regardless of his intentions.

Han Wu used his Wind Boots and moved swiftly, slipping through the bats’ encirclement before charging straight at Dark Night. His plan was not to defeat the bats but to take down their leader first.

The strategy was sound, but he had underestimated her strength. Though small and fragile-looking, she was a Demigod and a contender to succeed the Blood Coliseum.

Her power was real. When Han Wu launched his attack, she leapt into the air with effortless grace and drove a kick into him with her slender legs. He tried to block, but the impact hurled him through the air and slammed him into the wall beneath the stands.

The large crater from the impact revealed just how strong she really was.

“*Hehe*, do you see my strength? I’ve trained in close-quarters combat, so fighting me head-on is suicide,” Dark Night bragged.

Han Wu sprang out of the crater in the wall. He was mostly unscathed, with only minor injuries. His resilience came from the Origin of Mutation reaching Rank 3, which had strengthened his body tenfold. Without that boost, her attack would have knocked him unconscious.

Brushing dust from his clothes, he quickly reassessed the situation. A direct assault wouldn’t work; she was too skilled. That left the swarm of bats. There were too many, and they flew at impossible speeds. He needed to kill at least half of them to force her surrender and win the match. Even for him, that was a daunting challenge.

Han Wu darted around the arena in circles, racking his brain for another solution.

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[1,165 words]

Chapter 139 - Vampire's Blood

Numerous bats swarmed Han Wu, aiming to drain his blood. He threw punches to fend them off, but they came in overwhelming numbers. He could not stop them all, so several bats latched onto his skin, sinking their fangs deep before drawing his blood.

Han Wu felt his strength ebb as his blood drained away. If this continued, the bats would reduce him to a dry husk. With no other option, he turned to his only available Divine Power, Gene Recombination. He had to graft the bats' traits onto his body to increase his own strength.

He stopped hesitating and turned the bats clinging to him into his ingredients. He ignored most of their traits, focusing solely on their fangs. Slowly, he replaced his own teeth with the bats' sharp fangs.

Suddenly, an overwhelming urge to suck blood surged through him. He grabbed a bat and bit into it, draining it dry. The warm blood stitched his wounds and strengthened his body. Realizing his path to victory, Han Wu seized as many bats as he could and drained them all. His injuries healed rapidly, and his vigor returned steadily.

The little loli's hair stood on end as she watched Han Wu suck the blood from her units. She never imagined he was capable of such a thing. She also noticed that he was growing stronger with every drop he drew from the bats.

If this continued, it would be disastrous. She made a swift decision to unleash one of her ultimate techniques. She chanted a long spell, and countless bats swarmed around her.

From the midst of the swarm, a pale man cloaked in black answered her call and materialized in the arena. This was the Blood Divine Skill: Permanent Vampire Summon. Summoning a single vampire permanently required sacrificing at least 1 billion bats. The vampire radiated an overwhelming presence as a powerful Lord life form, slowing down Han Wu a little.

At that moment, Han Wu spotted a blood shadow linking the vampire to the shadow beneath his feet. This strange connection trapped him, draining his blood through an unknown force. The strength he had just gained from the bats flowed directly to the vampire within three minutes.

The vampire reveled in the experience, having never tasted such high-quality blood before. To it, Han Wu was reduced to little more than a delicious meal.

Despite this, Han Wu refused to surrender. If the vampire could drain his blood, he could do the same to it. With the Wind Boots' aid, he shot forward and sank his fangs into the vampire's neck. Fresh blood flowed into his mouth, and he felt his body lighten as if temporarily freed from the seal.

The vampire froze in shock. It had never imagined anyone would dare to suck its blood. Such an act was a grave insult, as vampires held the reputation of being the ultimate blood-drainers among all species. Enraged, it lunged to suck the blood back from Han Wu.

The crowd watched as Han Wu and the vampire bit into each other's necks, each trying to drain the other's blood completely. As the vampire drew his blood, Han Wu realized his own fangs could not match the vampire's four specialized ones. Fortunately, Gene Recombination allowed him to steal those fangs as well.

As he continued to drain the vampire's blood, Han Wu used Gene Recombination to slowly swap one of the vampire's special fangs into his own mouth. At the same time, he transferred one of his ordinary fangs into the vampire's mouth. With the first fang in place, Han Wu noticed his blood-draining efficiency increase by 20%.

Their fierce struggle went on, and Han Wu briefly gained the upper hand. He used Gene Recombination again, exchanging a second fang, and his blood-draining efficiency climbed to 30%.

The vampire felt its own blood-draining speed slowing down and broke off its bite on Han Wu. It opened its mouth and discovered its once-proud fangs had deteriorated into ordinary, rotting ones. Running its fingers over them, it even felt the hollow cavities etched deep within.

The vampire reeled in confusion and tried to pull away from Han Wu, but he had no intention of letting such a prime target escape. He latched onto the vampire and continued exchanging fangs. Before long, he had transferred the third and fourth fangs into his own mouth. His blood-draining speed surged dramatically, and he quickly reduced the vampire to a desiccated husk.

Han Wu released his grip and tossed the withered corpse aside, smiling as he bared his fangs. "Now, what are you going to do with me?"

Dark Night's eyes caught sight of the four gleaming golden fangs in Han Wu's mouth. Those fangs were the pride of her vampire. How had Han Wu acquired them? The situation felt unnatural.

She resolved to go all out and summoned every bat. They converged around her, and eight figures emerged from the swarm. They differed in gender and age—men and women, young and old—but each one radiated strength. All of them wielded

considerable power, each roughly equivalent to a Lord life form, yet the eldest among them stood apart, radiating the unmistakable presence of a High Lord!

“Suck him dry!” Dark Night thundered.

All eight of them obeyed her command the moment they were summoned. They surrounded Han Wu and sank their fangs into his flesh. Thirty-two golden fangs pierced his body, draining his blood at a staggering rate.

“Gene Recombination! Give me their fangs.” Han Wu summoned every ounce of strength, biting into one vampire and reclaiming his stolen blood.

At first, his draining speed lagged far behind the eight vampires. Everything changed once he seized the first golden fang. With each fang he reclaimed, his blood-draining power surged. He quickly reduced two vampires to dry husks before replenishing his blood and life force.

By the time he finished off the fourth vampire, half of his teeth had transformed into the dull golden fangs of his enemies. He defeated three more, and his face glowed with renewed vigor. His strength soared, briefly reaching the threshold of a High Lord.

He fixed his gaze on the final Vampire High Lord and licked his lips. His mouth was filled with the golden fangs, and he craved for the Vampire High Lord’s blood.

Terrified, the vampire tried to flee, but Han Wu would not allow it. With the power of his Wind Boots and the 28 golden fangs in his mouth, he matched the Vampire High Lord’s strength. In just two strides, he closed the distance and started draining its blood. The Vampire High Lord struggled to resist, but its power faded quickly as Han Wu drained it dry.

At last, the final vampire collapsed into a dry husk like the others. Han Wu seized the moment to transform his last fang into a golden vampire fang. The change sparked a sudden revelation in his mind—he had unlocked the Bloodfeast Domain.

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Chapter 140 - Returning to Imperial College

[1,050 words]

Chapter 140 - Returning to Imperial College

Dark Night had already frozen in fear by the time Han Wu drained the fourth vampire to death. She only came to her senses once all her summoned vampires lay lifeless. Raising her thin arms, she surrendered without hesitation.

Just as she did, Han Wu appeared behind her, his golden fangs hovering a breath away from her neck. If she had hesitated even a second longer, he would have sunk his fangs into her and drained her nearly dry. The loli trembled, cold sweat slicking her skin. She had never imagined her opponent could be so ruthless.

The Blood Coliseum always enforced fairness. Once she surrendered, a barrier materialized between her and Han Wu to stop any further attack. At the same time, her defeat stripped her of her candidacy. The glowing mark on her hand dissolved into red light and flowed into Han Wu's mark instead.

Although Han Wu remained sealed, he could still sense his Blood Coliseum evolving once more. The chances of producing Heroic lifeforms had clearly increased again.

He received his rewards and turned to leave, but Dark Night called after him. "Locust Plague, please wait."

Two figures stepped forward to stand beside her—Firewind and White Ice, the challengers who had previously issued a duel against Han Wu. Firewind was a youth with blazing red hair, radiating intense heat. Han Wu could feel the fiery energy from a distance. Firewind had clearly merged a Divine Aspect with the fire attribute. White Ice, a stunning woman, exuded a chilling aura, likely the result of merging a Divine Aspect with the ice attribute.

The little loli regained some of her confidence once the two arrived. "Locust Plague, I'll concede this time, but don't get cocky. I'll win next time."

Han Wu scoffed. He had already defeated her despite being sealed. He doubted she could win once he could use his units again.

White Ice, more composed than the others, tried to ease the tension. "She's just joking. Actually, we were wondering whether you are from one of the top colleges. You look young enough to be a student."

Her words struck Han Wu. He remembered entering the Ancient Battlefield a few days before the exams. Then he had spent twenty-eight days trapped inside Hu Hai's divine realm. That meant the exams had already ended.

He asked them about it, and the three exchanged puzzled looks. Eventually, Dark Night told him the exams had concluded ten days ago, and most colleges had already started classes. All three of them were second-year students from Demonic Imperial College.

The news hit Han Wu hard. He had missed both the entrance exams and the enrollment test. In other words, he had failed by default. Imperial College had likely removed his name from the reserve list.

Panic set in. He bolted toward the teleporters but stopped after a few steps. Turning back, he pulled out a sizable Core fragment and held it up. "I'm selling this for 10 million Divine Points. Any takers?"

Firewind's eyes widened in disbelief. "Only 10 million? A Core fragment that size usually goes for at least 30 million Divine Points."

Han Wu was out of options and couldn't afford to waste time.

White Ice answered promptly, "I will buy it. Give me your account number."

Only then did Han Wu remember that his account was linked to his divine realm. Even if White Ice transferred the money, he wouldn't be able to access it. "Sorry. I can only accept cards right now."

White Ice nodded, transferred 10 million Divine Points into a card, and handed it over. Han Wu took the card, gave her the Core fragment, and sprinted to the teleporter without another word. After the transaction, the teleporter whisked him back to the Imperial Capital. He then climbed onto a flying device and tried to enter Imperial College, but a guard blocked his path.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" the guard demanded.

Han Wu was exasperated. "I'm Han Wu, a student on the reserve list. I'm here to find Professor Lina."

The guard looked at him and scoffed. "Since when do we admit new reserve students at the start of a semester? Do you really think I'll let you in just because you know Professor Lina's name?"

Han Wu corrected himself, "I'm from the previous batch of students."

The guard hesitated, unsure if Han Wu was telling the truth. "All right. How about this? Contact one of your classmates or Professor Lina. Have them come vouch for you. I can't let you in otherwise."

Han Wu sighed at the guard's dedication. With the seal still in place, he couldn't contact anybody right now. Left with no other option, he waited outside, hoping someone he knew would pass by. He spent an entire day watching for a familiar face before Sun Qingnian finally appeared.

An older woman accompanied him, likely one of Sun Qingnian's wealthy older girlfriends. The two were flirting as they strolled past, but Han Wu stepped forward to stop them. The woman frowned at the interruption, though Sun Qingnian lit up with delight. "Han Wu! Where have you been? Don't you know we've all been desperately searching for you?"

Han Wu managed a bitter smile. The past few days had been anything but easy, but at least he'd made it back in one piece. "I need to see Professor Lina. Could you call her for me?"

Sun Qingnian nodded. "No problem. I'll call her right now."

Using his authority, Sun Qingnian quickly contacted Lina. Less than thirty seconds after he ended the call, Lina appeared at the entrance. She wore her usual purple work dress, though her face showed signs of exhaustion. The sleepless days had clearly taken their toll. She hurried over to Han Wu, gave him a once-over, and immediately noticed something was off.

"This isn't the place to talk. Han Wu, follow me." Without waiting for a response, she led him into Imperial College and vanished from sight.

Sun Qingnian watched them go before something struck him. "*Oh* right! I need to let Qin Shuang know about this."

He called her and shared the news. Back at Imperial College, inside a mansion veiled in lightning, a girl's joyful scream rang out.

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[1,661 words]

Chapter 141 - Skeleton Race's Betrayal

In her office, Lina intently observed Han Wu. "Tell me everything that has transpired in the past few days," she instructed. "I expect a complete account; do not leave out anything."

Han Wu nodded and proceeded to tell her everything that had happened, carefully excluding any information related to the Origin of Mutation. As he recounted his abduction, Lina's smile became unsettlingly softer and wider. Han Wu swallowed hard, fully aware that her seemingly pleasant expression masked a rapidly intensifying fury.

“No God King, no matter how powerful, can abduct one of our students and expect to go unpunished!” she exclaimed. “Han Wu, don’t worry about this. The college will personally ensure you receive ample compensation!”

Han Wu gave a confident nod, convinced that the college possessed the genuine capability to fulfill its promise.

Lina then continued, explaining, “Given that your seal was left behind by a God, I can’t remove it by myself. I’ll need to reach out to Professor Xu for assistance with that. And, since you didn’t manage to take the college’s enrollment test, your identity remains a point of concern. Professor Xu’s help will be necessary for resolving that too.”

She leveraged her authority to contact Xu Hai. His face promptly appeared on the video call, and his voice, imbued with a strict tone, questioned, “What’s wrong?”

She then proceeded to explain the full extent of what had transpired. Upon hearing the news, Xu Hai materialized in her office within the very next instant. He fixed his gaze upon Han Wu and a deep frown creased his brow. Under Xu Hai’s penetrating scrutiny, Han Wu felt as though his entire being was laid bare, leaving him feeling uneasy and restless.

While Xu Hai examined Han Wu, the Origin of Mutation went completely still, doing everything in its power to prevent Xu Hai from detecting its presence. Xu Hai maintained his scrutiny for a few moments, then paused, a look of concern replacing his frown as he stated, “You’ve suffered so much!”

Xu Hai gently patted Han Wu’s shoulder, offering words of consolation. “For you to escape another God’s divine realm, all while your powers were sealed, and then return safely—that is nothing short of a miracle! Do not worry about this matter. I will personally seek out the chancellor to discuss this incident and ensure you receive the justice you deserve. Plus, we need to brainstorm how to officially get you into the college.

“You must understand that Imperial College retains its status as one of the most prestigious institutions, and as such, there are certain rules we are absolutely bound to uphold for the sake of fairness. While I acknowledge that your potential and current strength surpass that of most first-year students here, we are still obligated to go through the established procedure.

“It remains quite a headache that you weren’t able to take either the initial test or the enrollment test. However, there’s no need to worry! You are a student whom I personally recruited, and as such, I will assist you to the absolute best of my ability.”

“Thank you, Professor,” Han Wu said gratefully.

Han Wu didn't have any special relationship with Xu Hai—the man had simply given a verbal promise to accept him as a student. They weren't yet true mentor and mentee, as the official ceremony had not taken place. Yet, even under these circumstances, Major God Xu Hai was still willing to extend his help, and Han Wu was deeply touched by this kindness.

“Alright, don't worry about it. Let me help unseal you first. We'll have to wait a while for the rest of the problems to be sorted out,” Xu Hai said reassuringly, his hand falling gently on Han Wu's shoulder. What appeared to be a casual pat actually carried immense power. That single motion alone drained 300 million Divine Points from Xu Hai's personal account.

Every cell in Han Wu's body quivered as golden energy began to float out and dissipate. Immediately afterward, he felt his connection to his divine realm being fully restored.

“You should quickly inspect your divine realm,” Xu Hai advised. “You haven't returned in so many days, so there must be a great many things requiring your attention there.”

With a nod, Han Wu returned to his divine realm. No sooner had he done so than the office door suddenly burst open, and Qin Shuang dashed frantically into Lina's office.

“Where is Han Wu, Professor? Where is he?” she asked with evident worry, her eyes desperately darting around the room.

Seeing Qin Shuang's anxious expression, Lina's face brightened with a cheerful smile. A memory of her own college days, filled with similar worries, flickered through her mind. “He's just returned to his divine realm,” she explained kindly. “Qin Shuang, you're welcome to wait for him here.”

Qin Shuang nodded resolutely. “Yes! I will wait for him here, no matter how long it takes!”

Lina responded with a quiet chuckle and said nothing more. Xu Hai briefly furrowed his brow, then left to handle the complicated aftermath of Han Wu's abduction.

Back in his divine realm, Han Wu hovered in the air, immediately sensing the changes that had occurred within it. Years of unchecked growth had brought his divine realm to the very precipice of collapse, strained to its limits by overpopulation.

His divine realm had already reached its maximum size of 10,000 square kilometers, the largest possible for a Demigod, and his Core had likewise reached its peak at Level 20. In essence, he was now considered a complete Demigod in every aspect concerning his divine realm. The only thing he was lacking was his Divine Aspects.

Han Wu remained unworried, as his recent ascension to Demigod status granted him ample time. However, as he scanned his divine realm, a deep frown settled on his face. He was utterly taken aback to discover his units locked in an internal civil war.

The locusts, being his core race, remained untouched, as no other race dared to challenge them. In the span of 30 realm years, the locust population had exploded to 100 billion. However, precisely because they hadn't engaged in combat for over three decades, they had regressed significantly, becoming mere Elite life forms. He was absolutely certain that another 10 realm years of inactivity would reduce them back to Common locusts.

However, the remaining four races were engaged in a fierce internal struggle. This devastating war had ignited ten realm years after Han Wu's disappearance.

The skeletons initiated the war, targeting the Epistians first. In response, the Epistians attempted to forge alliances with both the minotaurs and the Scorching Dwarves. Unfortunately, internal disputes over the unequal allocation of resources caused the proposed alliance to splinter apart.

After 20 realm years of relentless warfare, the skeletons had managed to seize control of a significant portion of the divine realm. The Epistians, pushed back, were now defensively holed up within their city walls. Meanwhile, the Scorching Dwarves and minotaurs had formed an alliance, creating an equilibrium which prevented either from overpowering the other, effectively keeping both factions in check.

Han Wu frowned deeply, a question nagging at him: given that all his subjects worshipped him, why couldn't they simply coexist peacefully? His anger flared, and in a decisive act, he sacrificed every locust unit that was beneath the Unique rank. Instantly, a massive magical array materialized into view, hovering high above the realm.

Though calmly munching on grass, the locusts' attention was immediately drawn to the ominous array when it appeared. Without warning, countless numbers of them were sacrificed, their Life Energy pouring into the array. In total, a staggering 99 billion locusts were sacrificed, leaving Han Wu with just 1 billion locusts that were of Unique rank or higher.

A recently hatched Locustman Lord found itself simultaneously overjoyed and terrified. Due to its inherent strength and significantly longer lifespan, it had learned about the annual sacrificial ritual that had been performed without fail until 30 realm years ago. The very fact that the ritual had now been activated left no doubt: their God had returned!

For the loyal locusts, there was no greater desire than this. The return of their God was a desire that emanated from the very depths of their souls. Following the lead of the Locustman Lord, the remaining locusts instinctively ascended high into the air, their instincts guiding them in a desperate search for their God.

Sensing the powerful magical array of Sacrifice, the other four races also began to move. Among them, the Scorching Dwarves, known for their unwavering loyalty to Han Wu, were overcome with ecstasy. Even their leader, Divine Hammer, was so overwhelmed by emotion that tears streamed down his face.

The minotaurs and Epistians, however, remained largely unconcerned. Their loyalty to Han Wu was lukewarm at best; Han Wu had forcefully acquired one of these races, while the other had been a relatively recent gift from Xu Hai. The skeletons, on the other hand, were seized by panic. The Skeleton High Lord, specifically, was acutely aware of the misdeeds it had committed over the past few realm years.

Convinced that Han Wu would offer no forgiveness, it resolved to commit the ultimate betrayal: breaking the Core that linked its God to the divine realm! It knew that once the Core was destroyed, the God would permanently lose the coordinates to His divine realm and thus be forever unable to return.

The skeleton race intended to seize control of the divine realm, after which they would employ a secret method to make their escape. The skeletons were unconcerned about their destination, as their very nature allowed them to survive in any environment.

Once its decision was made, the little skeleton wasted no time, instantly teleporting to the Temple. The spiritual flames flickering within its eye sockets intensified as it rapidly gathered Bone Energy, which it then aimed directly at Han Wu's Core.

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Chapter 142 - Divine Realm's Core Protection Plan

[1,531 words]

Chapter 142 - Divine Realm's Core Protection Plan

An immense concentration of Life Energy, drawn from almost 100 billion locusts, formed a vast clump that then dissipated into the Sacrifice magical array. Han Wu had never before witnessed such an overwhelming amount of Life Energy channeled into Sacrifice.

Three distinct options materialized before him, each one shattering his previous understanding of just how incredibly powerful his Sacrifice skill could be.

[Option 1: Ice King. King-tier Life Form. Possesses Rank 1 Divine Aspect: Frost]

[Option 2: 50 Divine Essence]

[Option 3: Rank 5 Divine Aspect: Destruction]

The sight of the three options left Han Wu speechless. Any one of these options held the power to propel his strength to unimaginable new heights.

The first option presented was an Ice King, a life form whose power vastly exceeded that of a High Lord. It also came with the Rank 1 Frost Aspect. While a Rank 1 Divine Aspect typically granted only a single Divine Skill, the Ice King's inherent strength was sufficient to elevate that skill's destructive capacity to an alarming degree. Han Wu instinctively felt that, even in his prime, he would still be outmatched against such a life form.

The second option offered 50 Divine Essence, an incredibly straightforward and utterly mouthwatering choice. Every individual required Divine Essence; only those who were inherently lazy or truly content would find themselves without a need for it. Nevertheless, the third option presented completely overshadowed the allure of the first two.

The Rank 5 Destruction Aspect was an incredible reward. Han Wu recalled learning in class that Destruction stood on par with other immensely powerful Divine Aspects such as Death and Life. As he was still merely a Demigod, he was in dire need of more powerful Divine Aspects.

Upon selecting the third option, he grasped the Divine Aspect. Immediately, he sensed a powerful and unruly force pulsating from it, palpable even in its dormant state. The immense power he felt emanating from it was enough to put him on edge, despite not having activated it yet.

Once my Defiance Aspect reaches its next rank, I can then begin the absorption of the Destruction Aspect!

As he gazed intently at the Divine Aspect, a sudden thought struck him: he still possessed the recommendation pendant for the Death Aspect, an item he had acquired from the Wisdom Tree some time ago.

The pendant bore the unmistakable mark of the Death God. By crushing it, he would be instantly transported to the Death God Palace. His ability to secure the Divine Aspect after that point would be entirely dependent on his own efforts.

"I should likely hold off on searching for clues related to the Death Aspect until I've gained more strength," Han Wu mused quietly to himself, securing both the Destruction Aspect and the recommendation pendant.

No sooner had he put them away than he sensed a powerful energy wave emanating from the Temple within his divine realm. The resulting shockwave was unmistakably the product of a violent clash between Bone Energy and Dark Energy.

Han Wu wasted no time in checking his Temple, where he found Alpheus, a large, gaping wound on his abdomen bleeding profusely, snarling fiercely at the Skeleton High Lord. Sensing Han Wu's arrival, Alpheus urgently cried out, "It's attempting to shatter the Core! You have to stop it!"

Han Wu's posture tensed, his eyes widening in disbelief as he stared at the little skeleton. "You actually want to destroy my Core?" he uttered, his voice filled with shock.

The little skeleton's decision to betray him utterly confused Han Wu. He had, after all, never once overlooked it when distributing resources, despite it not belonging to his core race.

The spiritual flames in the little skeleton's eye sockets flickered wildly, reflecting its internal turmoil and complicated emotions. Ultimately, it gave in and confessed everything

"Yes, I want to destroy your Core! You have no need for the other races; you only need me!" the little skeleton's transmitted telepathically.

To Han Wu's astonishment, the skeleton's feminine voice held discernible tones of both uncertainty and rage. Han Wu himself was utterly perplexed by the bizarre turn of events.

Is... Is the little skeleton alright? Why does it sound like a wife who has been neglected by her husband for too long? Nevertheless, it admitted to trying to destroy my Core, and such an act cannot go unpunished.

Han Wu was reluctant to allow such a dangerous race to remain within his divine realm, fearing it might one day lead to its complete destruction. However, he also took into account the numerous times the little skeleton had assisted him during his growth, which made him unwilling to kill it on the spot.

Ultimately, Han Wu decided to exile the little skeleton. By doing so, he guaranteed it would never again be able to return to his divine realm or lay a hand on the Core. It was, undoubtedly, the safest solution.

The little skeleton had fully braced itself for death when it made the decision to destroy Han Wu's Core, so it was utterly astonished that Han Wu chose to spare its life. Han Wu opened a gateway to Doron City and personally oversaw the little skeleton's exile. As a final measure, he left a distinct mark on its body to ensure it could never return to his divine realm.

All the skeletons who had sided with the little skeleton were also banished. This left only two skeletons within his divine realm who remained steadfastly loyal to him: the Osteomancer and the Skeleton Reanimator. As both were already Lord life forms, they could at least temporarily alleviate Han Wu's problem of insufficient fighting units.

With the skeletons dealt with, Han Wu moved to his Core and reflected on his situation anew. He'd put too much faith in his subordinate races, a misjudgment that almost resulted in the skeletons' betrayal completely obliterating his Core. Fortunately, Alpheus had intervened, otherwise, he would have been crippled indefinitely.

To protect his Core and ensure the security of his divine realm, Han Wu resolved to put some countermeasures in place. After several days of careful consideration, Han Wu ultimately decided upon two distinct approaches.

His first measure was to position loyal units to guard his Core, directly entrusting them with its security. For this vital task, he personally chose Alpheus, the newly ascended Locustman Lord, and Divine Hammer—whom he affectionately nicknamed “Hammie” as a reward for his unwavering loyalty during Han Wu's absence. All three individuals were not only formidable Lord life forms but also Han Wu's most devoted and trusted units.

Han Wu's second countermeasure involved constructing a formidable maze around his Core. This labyrinth would serve a similar purpose to Hu Hai's forbidden zone, specifically designed to thwart any attempts to infiltrate his divine realm and safeguard his Core from destruction. He tasked the Epistians with planning its construction, and true to their superior intellect, they quickly presented Han Wu with a highly satisfactory blueprint.

Han Wu instructed the Scorching Dwarves to oversee the building project, with the minotaurs and locusts serving as the workforce. The construction of the maze soon got underway, and through collective effort and cooperation, the maze was completed within two realm years.

With a final check of his maze to ensure nothing was amiss, Han Wu carefully relocated his Core and embedded it within. Immediately after, he positioned his three loyal guards, establishing a rotation system designed to maximize their defensive efforts for the Core's safety.

Only after securing his divine realm did Han Wu return to Lina's office. His intention was to return to the Ancient Battleground to retrieve his three Locustman Lords and Steely, whose survival he had already verified through the strong Faith threads that still connected him to them.

He had barely returned when he encountered Qin Shuang, who had evidently been waiting for his reappearance for three full days. She moved towards him, her voice earnest as she said, “Han Wu, welcome back.”

Han Wu was momentarily stunned, though a sense of happiness stirred within him as he met her gaze, which literally crackled with electricity. “Thanks,” he said. “Have you heard anything about Mr. Tian Wen recently?”

The memory of entering the Ancient Battleground with Tian Wen was seared into Han Wu’s mind. Ultimately, Han Wu himself was abducted by Hu Hai, leaving Tian Wen critically injured and stranded to die.

All of Tian Wen’s units had been wiped out that day. With no one left to protect him, his prospects of making it back to the tent alive were virtually nonexistent. Han Wu was consumed with worry, genuinely afraid of receiving news that Tian Wen had died.

“I haven’t received any news concerning Mr. Tian,” she said, shaking her head. “However, someone from high school did send me a message saying that Mr. Liu has passed away.”

Han Wu let out a deep sigh, a wave of relief washing over him. The absence of any news about Mr. Tian was, in all likelihood, a positive indication of his survival. As for Liu Letian, Han Wu already knew he was dead, having been the one to kill him.

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[1,435 words]

Chapter 143 - Golden Door

Han Wu and Qin Shuang, intending to rescue their high school homeroom teacher, approached Lina. They bought a ticket to the Ancient Battleground from her for 1 billion Divine Points, then used it to teleport. Upon their arrival, Han Wu swiftly moved towards the tent he used to share with Tian Wen.

The tent was, thankfully, still there. However, its inside was exactly as they’d left it. Tian Wen hadn’t returned even once since his abduction, so where could he be?

Aside from fragments of Divine Aspects and concealed Demigods from the Divine Civilization, the Ancient Battleground was barren. Given the harsh conditions, it was utterly impossible for anyone to survive in such an environment without adequate provisions.

To locate Tian Wen, Han Wu and Qin Shuang summoned a large number of their units. The locusts dispersed to cover a broad search area, while the Thunder Sparrows, leveraging their aerial capabilities, conducted their search from above. The Thunder

Sparrows also launched lightning attacks on any weaker Divine Souls they encountered.

Despite searching for three days straight, the two found no trace of Tian Wen. It was only when Han Wu unexpectedly arrived in a desert area that he finally caught the faint yet unmistakable signal of his three Locustman Lords and Steely nearby. All their threads of Faith were unmistakably emanating from underground!

Upon Han Wu's command, his locusts commenced digging the immediate area, and after a full day of diligent digging, they finally uncovered what lay beneath all the sand: a magnificent golden door!

Measuring ten meters in height and five in width, the golden door was adorned with intricate engravings that pulsed with powerful Space Energy. The threads of Faith connecting Han Wu to his three Locustman Lords and Steely were undeniably emanating from behind this mysterious door.

"They are inside this gate!" Han Wu exclaimed, reaching out to touch the golden door handle. However, a sudden burst of lightning erupted from it, forcefully repelling him backward. It was immediately clear that this golden door was not something that could be opened through brute force alone.

Since Qin Shuang was well-versed in manipulating lightning, she decided to give it a try. "Here, let me try opening it instead," she suggested.

With a nod, Han Wu stepped back and gave her ample space. Her eyes began to spark with electricity, and a powerful Lightning Energy enveloped her body. Han Wu, however, had no idea what the lightning was doing to her.

Enveloped in her domain, she advanced towards the door, her fingers delicately touching the golden handle. A powerful current of lightning surged through the handle, but remarkably, it left her entirely unscathed. She then took a firm grip and began to pull the door open.

The heavy golden door slowly creaked open, revealing an unknown gate before them. Han Wu immediately sensed the threads of Faith growing even stronger. Without hesitation, he instructed one of his new Locustman Lords, accompanied by a small group of locusts, to explore the mysterious entrance. Once inside, the Locustman Lord tried to establish communication with Han Wu, but to its dismay, its messages were being intercepted.

Despite losing contact with the Locustman Lord, Han Wu knew they were alive due to their strong Faith threads. Qin Shuang did likewise, ordering a small group of Thunder Sparrows into the gate. She, too, found that while her units survived, they couldn't send any messages.

After a fifteen-minute wait, during which the threads of Faith remained consistently stable—a clear sign that everyone inside was still alive—they finally decided to enter the gate themselves. Bringing all their units along, they stepped through the entrance to uncover what was going on.

They were instantly transported to a boundless desert of yellow sand. No sooner had they arrived than a multitude of scorpion-shaped Divine Souls emerged from beneath the sand. These creatures all had white halos beneath their feet, identifying them as the weakest among the Divine Souls.

Without a moment's hesitation, the two immediately ordered their units to launch an all-out assault on the Divine Souls. The overwhelming attack unleashed by the locusts and Thunder Sparrows soon left the surrounding area densely covered in Rank 1 Divine Aspect fragments.

Han Wu retrieved all the fragments, which he then managed to fuse into five complete Rank 1 Divine Aspects. Among these, two were the Scorpion Aspect, with the remaining three being the Sand Aspect. Although these were considered common Divine Aspects, Han Wu nonetheless instructed Qin Shuang to keep them secure as they resumed their travels.

As Han Wu and Qin Shuang delved deeper into the area, numerous scorpion Divine Souls repeatedly ambushed them. However, the combined might of the locusts and Thunder Sparrows ensured that Han Wu and Qin Shuang remained entirely unscathed.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang obtained a significant amount of Divine Aspect fragments from their frequent battles. However, they soon realized something was off. Although the fragment drop rate was notably higher in this area compared to outside, they also observed that the scorpion Divine Souls weren't actively attempting to kill them. Instead, it was as if these creatures were deliberately trying to get themselves killed.

In essence, the scorpion Divine Souls were nothing more than cannon fodder. They emerged from the sand with an ulterior motive, not to engage in combat. When Han Wu and Qin Shuang attempted to retreat, they discovered the gate had vanished, leaving them undeniably trapped.

The realization hit Han Wu swiftly. "I get it now," he said. "These scorpion Divine Souls aren't trying to fight us; they're draining our stamina and wasting our time! We're cut off from our divine realm here, and without supplies, we'll starve to death!"

As Han Wu spoke, Qin Shuang quickly launched herself onto her Gold Crown Thunder Sparrow, soaring a thousand meters skyward. However, even from that height, all she could see was an endless sea of sand. It seemed as though sand was the only thing that existed in this vast expanse.

She returned to the ground, a visible dejection in her demeanor. “Are we stuck here forever, with nothing left but to bide our time until death?” she asked, her voice heavy with resignation.

To a Demigod, a death by starvation was an exceptionally cruel end. Han Wu was deep in thought, trying to devise a plan, when he suddenly sensed the familiar threads of Faith emanating from his three Locustman Lords and Steely. They were unmistakably close by.

“Qin Shuang, I can sense where my units are,” Han Wu stated. “We need to get to them immediately and find out how they’ve been surviving here. They must have discovered a way.”

After Qin Shuang nodded in agreement, she quickly helped Han Wu onto her Gold Crown Thunder Sparrow. The pair immediately ascended into the air, completely disregarding the scorpions that continued to crawl across the sandy ground below.

They soared through the air, heading directly toward the location where Han Wu had last sensed the presence of his units. It took a while, but they finally located the three Locustman Lords and Steely. To their surprise, the group was locked in a fierce battle against a colossal Sand Golem.

The Sand Golem was remarkably slow, yet it proved to be almost impervious to every form of attack. Its massive body, composed entirely of sand, possessed an astonishing ability to mend any injury within mere moments.

Dark Locust, highly proficient in dark attribute skills, had already learned the Dark Domain. While it could employ this domain to disorient the Sand Golem’s vision and exert some degree of control over it, it was utterly incapable of inflicting any lasting wound on the creature. Similarly, Toxic Locust’s potent venom proved entirely useless against the Sand Golem, precisely because the golem lacked any flesh that could be poisoned.

The final Locustman Lord had awakened its innate earth attribute, which significantly enhanced its defensive capabilities. However, it possessed limited offensive methods, meaning it was unable to inflict any damage upon the Sand Golem either. Thus, only Steely, with his Hurricane Domain, was capable of temporarily fending off the relentless attacks of the Sand Golem.

“I’ll help you!” Han Wu roared, immediately activating his Black Dragon King Transformation and drawing forth the Defiant Sword as he charged headlong into the ongoing battle.

With surprising ease, the sword plunged into the Sand Golem. Leveraging its unique property, the sword transformed its damage from physical to the water attribute, which happened to be the Sand Golem’s most significant weakness.

A single, precise stroke left the golem severely wounded.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[1,591 words]

Chapter 144 - Rescuing Tian Wen

The Defiant Sword simply wasn't long enough to completely penetrate the massive body of the Sand Golem. Realizing this, Han Wu instantaneously transformed its shape into that of the Soul Reaper.

Having absorbed countless souls, the Soul Reaper was now both massive in size and incredibly sharp. It effortlessly cut clean through the Sand Golem's chest, allowing Han Wu to tear the colossal creature in half. As the Golem split, water droplets sprayed out from the gaping wound.

This injury proved fatal for the Sand Golem—the water attribute severely impeded its ability to recover, preventing it from reconstituting its sandy body. Within three seconds, its entire form collapsed, leaving behind five valuable pieces of Rank 4 Divine Aspect fragments.

The ease with which Han Wu defeated the Sand Golem stunned Qin Shuang; she hadn't realized he had a water attribute skill. After persistently hounding him for an answer, he finally divulged that the ability originated from his Divine Skill.

The Defiant Sword possessed the extraordinary ability to convert its damage into the attribute that its enemy was weakest in. This incredibly powerful property gave it the power to kill virtually anything in its path, making it the ultimate bane of beings who were highly specialized in a single attribute.

For safekeeping, Han Wu tossed the fragments to Qin Shuang. Among them were two Gold Sand Aspect fragments, two Giant Aspect fragments, and one Recovery Aspect fragment. These were considered precious Divine Aspect fragments, easily capable of being exchanged for two to three complete Rank 1 Divine Aspects in the world outside.

The three Locustman Lords and Steely immediately dropped to their knees before Han Wu. They had been locked in a grueling battle against the Sand Golem for three entire days, yet Han Wu had defeated it in a mere three minutes. All four were left in complete awe of Han Wu's incredible strength.

Steely's unwavering faith in Han Wu deepened even further, elevating it to the status of a Saint. The Faith emanating from it amplified a hundred times over, making the

connection thread to Han Wu incredibly strong. This strengthened thread of Faith now granted Han Wu the power to directly descend onto Steely's body and allow him to control it completely.

With a nod of approval, Han Wu patted Steely's shoulder, celebrating its status as his very first Saint among all of his units. Once assured of Steely's condition, he proceeded to examine the other three Locustman Lords.

The three Locustman Lords had grown considerably stronger after their period apart. Dark Locust, in particular, was now on the cusp of ascending to the rank of High Lord. Han Wu observed their progress with an approving nod, silently hoping that his entire locust swarm would continue to grow stronger as swiftly as possible.

Han Wu then asked for an account of their experiences in his absence. The four units explained that they, along with Tian Wen, had accidentally entered this area while trying to find a safe spot—Tian Wen had lost his way back to the tent after his units were wiped out. Working as a team, they had managed to break through the encirclement of scorpion Divine Souls hundreds of times within this peculiar place.

However, their relentless slaughter of scorpions eventually drew the attention of the realm's rulers. Three days before, two Sand Golems unexpectedly emerged; one promptly abducted Tian Wen, leaving the remaining four to battle the second Golem. On the third day, Han Wu arrived and killed that exact Sand Golem that had been trying to hold them back.

Their survival story left Han Wu completely bewildered. How could they have lived in a place where nothing but Divine Aspect fragments existed? Though a Demigod could certainly endure hunger for extended periods, that didn't mean they could go without food indefinitely.

Han Wu's question was soon answered. They explained to Han Wu that Tian Wen had managed the water situation. His Healing Aspect included a Divine Skill called Healing Spring, which not only accelerated the recovery of wounds but also provided them with water to drink.

Their only food source was the Three Locustman Lords. Thanks to their Hyper Regeneration trait, the Lords could regrow even large parts of their bodies after being cut. This unique ability was the secret to their extended survival in this barren place.

Their ingenuity left Han Wu speechless, though Qin Shuang visibly recoiled, her stomach violently churning at the revelation. She vowed to herself never to taste locust flesh under any circumstances.

Having confirmed Tian Wen's presence in this realm, Han Wu resolved to rescue him at all costs. He then gathered his locusts and began moving in the direction his four units had indicated—the very path the Sand Golem had taken after abducting Tian Wen.

As they continued their journey, they not only encountered a multitude of white haloed scorpion Divine Souls but also came across numerous blue haloed cactus Divine Souls. These cacti stood perfectly still, but they could launch countless sharp spines when an enemy got too close. Their attacks claimed the lives of many locusts and Thunder Sparrows.

Han Wu unleashed the full power of all three of his Divine Skills—Souleater Gaze, Defiant Sword, and Conduitborn—to boost the strength of his locusts, instantly obliterating the cactus Divine Souls. He also managed to collect a large number of Rank 2 Divine Aspect fragments, specifically the Hardy, Spines, and Survival Aspects. Once the cacti were dealt with, they continued on their way.

A distant, massive city was finally discovered by the locust scouts. Within its boundaries resided various Divine Souls, each displaying unique halos: white haloed scorpions and desert rats, blue haloed soldier ants and snakes, purple haloed owls, and numerous others. The black haloed Sand Golems, however, acted as peacekeepers, with other Divine Souls making way whenever they passed.

At the same moment, Han Wu noticed several Divine Souls with red halos. Standing approximately three meters tall, these beings were entirely black, with vicious, wolf-like heads. Their presence was so commanding that even the Sand Golem Divine Souls respectfully lowered their heads when encountering them.

Han Wu discretely followed the wolf-headed Divine Souls, which led him to a grand altar in the city's central area. Tens of thousands of wolf-headed Divine Souls completely surrounded the structure. To his horror, a familiar individual was tied to the altar: Tian Wen! He was clearly the intended sacrifice, bound for their ritual.

A wave of hesitation washed over Han Wu. Their enemies were overwhelmingly powerful, and he was at a loss for what to do. Even though he commanded a vast number of locusts and Qin Shuang still had many Thunder Sparrows at her disposal, neither could stand against ten thousand red haloed Divine Souls all at once.

Even the weakest wolf-headed Divine Soul possessed the strength equivalent to a Lord. With ten thousand red halos in sight, it meant they were essentially confronting ten thousand Lords. Han Wu seriously doubted his chances of victory, even if he were to summon every single one of his units, especially since there were more Divine Souls scattered throughout the city.

Time was of the essence; there was no time left to deliberate. If they didn't act soon, Tian Wen would inevitably be offered as a sacrifice in the ceremony. He was determined to save him, no matter the cost, but he was stumped.

In preparation for battle, Han Wu activated Controlled Mutation, sacrificing his locusts' remaining lifespan to dramatically increase their power. Soon, every one of his locusts was as strong as a Heroic life form. This power was temporary, though, as they were

destined to die within 24 hours, their lives extinguishing once that time limit was reached.

“Go and destroy that city!” Han Wu ordered. Responding to his call, the locusts immediately surged forward, enveloping the city and ruthlessly attacking every Divine Soul laid eyes on and utterly eradicating all of the white and blue haloed Divine Souls.

The purple haloed owls, being capable of flight, posed a different threat. As they prepared to dive on the locusts, however, they were suddenly met with a barrage of powerful lightning bolts as Qin Shuang entered the fray, having ordered her Thunder Sparrows to attack.

Undeterred by their attacks, the Sand Golem scooped up handfuls of sand and launched them towards the swarming locusts and Thunder Sparrows. The sand struck like deadly cannonballs, instantly killing many of them.

Han Wu then instructed his four Locustman Lords and Steely to shift their focus and target the Sand Golems instead. With aid of the Defiant Sword, each of them was now capable of inflicting significant damage upon the otherwise impervious Sand Golems. With this sudden conflict, the city was plunged into a state of utter chaos for a short period.

The wolf-headed Divine Souls detected the commotion and quickly banded together to confront their adversary. This, however, was precisely what Han Wu had been hoping for. He finally saw his opportunity and, without hesitation, drew a Rank 6 Spectre Vine seed from his pocket.

Gene Lock!

After Han Wu consumed the seed and absorbed its genes, his body began to transform. Spectre Vines then grew from him, giving him a truly menacing look.

“Black Dragon King Transformation! Bloodfeast Domain!”

Han Wu intensified his power even further, pushing himself to the very limits of a High Lord. This was Han Wu’s strongest form.

He landed on the altar with a resounding thud, announcing, “Mr. Tian, we’re here to rescue you!”

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[1,458 words]

Chapter 145 - Merging Divine Aspects

Hundreds of wolf-headed Divine Souls still guarded the altar, and they all launched a simultaneous attack the moment they spotted Han Wu. In response, he quickly summoned numerous Spectre Vines, and his figure darted across the battlefield, leaving behind countless cross-shaped slashes on the ground.

Han Wu was formidable even without activating Spectral Dash, so with the Skill activated, he easily wiped out the Divine Souls in his way. They dropped numerous Rank 5 Divine Aspect fragments, but Han Wu couldn't spare a moment to pick them up, rushing instead to crush the chains that had Tian Wen bound.

Feeling himself being shifted, Tian Wen struggled to open his eyes. As his vision cleared, he saw Han Wu's face, and his voice trembled with disbelief. "Am I dreaming?" he managed to utter.

"Mr. Tian, you're caught in a bad dream," the voice confirmed. "We're here to pull you out."

After successfully rescuing Tian Wen, Han Wu didn't hesitate, swiftly ascending into the sky. Qin Shuang, recognizing his signal, quickly ordered their units to fall back. The four Locustman Lords and Steely quickly finished off their remaining enemies, then effortlessly leapt over the city walls and fled. By taking to the air, they managed to swiftly escape the pursuing Divine Souls for the time being.

Despite their escape, they remained trapped within the barren realm with no apparent way out. Tian Wen was provided with medical care, water, and food from Han Wu, which helped him recover most of his strength. He expressed great satisfaction seeing his students grow into powerful Demigods, whose strength now even rivaled his own.

"Don't worry about finding an exit," Tian Wen assured them, his voice now steadier. "While I was captured, I overheard some intriguing secrets from the Divine Souls. They spoke of a unique mirror in their king's palace capable of dimensional travel. I'm certain that's our ticket out of this desolate place."

Han Wu reacted with shock. "Those wolf-headed Divine Souls were already red halos," he said, bewildered. "How much stronger is their king going to be?"

A wave of worry washed over Qin Shuang. She had already seen many of her Thunder Sparrows fall in battle. If the fighting continued, she feared most of the units she had painstakingly raised would be annihilated. Even with all their combined remaining forces, breaking through the city's defenses seemed like an insurmountable task.

"We have no option but to persevere and slowly reduce their numbers," Tian Wen said, shaking his head with a grim expression on his face. "There's no other way."

Unfortunately, all of my units have been killed, and I am severely weakened. I don't think I can offer any help at all in this state."

"No need to worry, Mr. Tian," Han Wu assured Tian Wen, his voice full of warmth. "The fact that we rescued you today is already a fantastic sign. I'd even call it my greatest reward." His deep respect for Tian Wen was evident.

Tian Wen offered a grateful smile as he extended a small pouch towards them. "Inside," he explained, "you'll find Divine Aspect fragments, as well as some completed Divine Aspects that I've managed to gather throughout my stay here. They might prove beneficial for you both."

Since his intention was clearly to provide complete support, Han Wu didn't hesitate; he emptied the entire contents of the pouch, and then added all the Divine Aspect fragments he had gathered alongside Qin Shuang.

As Divine Aspect fragments merged with others of the same type, they formed complete Divine Aspects. A quick tally revealed a total of 123 Rank 1 Divine Aspects, 42 Rank 2 Divine Aspects, 10 Rank 3 Divine Aspects, and one Rank 4 Divine Aspect.

They still hadn't come across any complete Rank 5 Divine Aspects, nor did they have enough fragments to create one. Despite this, they had amassed a significant amount of wealth. Unfortunately, they were still stuck in this realm, which meant they couldn't convert these valuable items into actual money.

Even though they had the means to increase their strength by absorbing Divine Aspects, Han Wu faced a limitation: he only possessed 12 Divine Essence, which his units had worked tirelessly to gather quite recently. To absorb a second Divine Aspect, he required 16 Divine Essence. Moreover, he was resolute in his decision not to absorb any Divine Aspect below Rank 5.

Qin Shuang found herself in the exact same situation as Han Wu. She possessed the Rank 5 Stormbringer Aspect but only had 14 Divine Essence, meaning she couldn't absorb another Divine Aspect even if she wanted to.

Han Wu directly asked Tian Wen about his current Divine Essence count. Without hesitation, Tian Wen revealed he had 23 Divine Essence, a quantity he had accumulated over time. He then explained that, while his combat capabilities as a Support Demigod were weak, he was exceptionally skilled at harvesting Faith Points.

In addition, he also possessed three Divine Aspects: Harvest, Healing, and Warm Sunshine. The Harvest Aspect was solely for cultivating his divine realm, rendering it useless in direct combat. The Healing Aspect, as its name implied, was for healing his units, while Warm Sunshine further enhanced his healing capabilities.

Tian Wen still had the capacity to absorb two additional Rank 3 Divine Aspects. However, the Rank 3 Divine Aspects currently available to them were both inherently weak and fundamentally incompatible with his abilities, explaining his reluctance to absorb any of them.

Han Wu looked at the fragments, a bold idea forming in his mind. If they lacked a suitable Divine Aspect, he could simply merge them and form a new one himself. He'd done this with items, units, and even Sacred Objects; it might work on Divine Aspects too.

Gazing at the Divine Aspects before him, Han Wu decided to proceed with his idea. He was, however, worried about the risk of failure, so he sought out a secluded spot, where he then proceeded to merge two Rank 1 Sand Aspects together.

Because the two Sand Aspects were of the same type, their compatibility was exceptionally high. Han Wu expended only a few Divine Points to successfully complete the merging process. After the fusion, the Sand Aspect was elevated to Rank 2, but it still retained all of its original properties.

Undeterred, Han Wu persevered, continuously merging identical Divine Aspects. A crucial breakthrough came with the eighth merger—he had obtained the Rank 3 Gravel Aspect!

Possessing even more energy than a Rank 2 Divine Aspect, this newly formed Divine Aspect was especially well-suited for individuals specializing in the earth attribute. For the average Demigod, the Gravel Aspect was considered a fairly decent Divine Aspect.

Still unsatisfied, Han Wu continued to merge even more Rank 1 Sand Aspects with his newly formed Gravel Aspect. His persistence paid off after the eighteenth merger, and the Gravel Aspect finally evolved into the Rank 4 Sandstone Aspect, a Divine Aspect that many Gods specializing in the earth attribute yearned for.

This Divine Aspect contained pure earth elements, a property that would allow any God to instantly master an earth-type domain the moment they absorbed it. The immense energy radiated by the Sandstone Aspect also drew the immediate attention of both Tian Wen and Qin Shuang.

A bewildered Tian Wen asked, “Han Wu, what exactly are you doing?”

Seeing the Sandstone Divine Aspect in his hands, Qin Shuang asked, her voice laced with surprise, “Where did the Rank 4 Divine Aspect come from?”

Under their inquisitive gazes, Han Wu finally confessed. “I have a unique skill that allows me to merge items with high compatibility, though it comes at a price. I combined eighteen Rank 1 Sand Aspects together to create this Rank 4 Sandstone Aspect.”

Since Tian Wen and Qin Shuang remained unconvinced, Han Wu produced the Rank 4 Gold Sand Aspect they had previously acquired. He then activated his Merge skill, fusing the two Divine Aspects together. Due to their high compatibility, Han Wu only needed to expend 30 million Divine Points to complete the merger, resulting in a single Divine Aspect—the Rank 5 Sand Sea Aspect.

As soon as they sensed the pure earth attribute energy radiating from it, both Tian Wen and Qin Shuang could tell that it was indeed a proper Rank 5 Divine Aspect. They found it utterly ridiculous to consider that such a powerful Divine Aspect could be obtained by merging eighteen Rank 1 Divine Aspects and a single Rank 4 Divine Aspect.

Once he had given the Rank 5 Sand Sea Aspect to Qin Shuang, Han Wu shifted his focus to the remaining Divine Aspects in their possession. He was now prepared to merge two suitable ones specifically for Tian Wen.

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Chapter 146 - Spine Carapace and Resurrection Aspects

[1,099 words]

Chapter 146 - Spine Carapace and Resurrection Aspects

At Tian Wen's request, Han Wu used Merge to create two Rank 3 Divine Aspects that had never existed before. The first was Spine Carapace, formed by merging the Spine, Thick Hide, and Hardy Aspects. Tian Wen absorbed it and gained three Divine Skills, thanks to the ample Divine Essence already within his body.

[Spine Armor: Forms a protective carapace lined with sharp spines. It offers both offensive and defensive power. The number of units covered by Spine Armor depends on the amount of Divine Points used.]

[Spine Shot: Launches a barrage of spines in a designated direction. The quantity of spines released scales with Divine Points expended.]

[Spine Forest: Summons a dense cluster of tough spines from the ground over a wide area. These spines slow enemy movement. The range of Spine Forest varies based on Divine Points invested.]

Tian Wen favored Spine Carapace for its versatility. It offered offense, defense, and crowd control through its ability to impair enemy movement. The second Divine Aspect was Resurrection, also Rank 3, formed by merging the Survival and Recovery Aspects. It granted three powerful Divine Skills: Topical Healing, Life Frenzy, and Resurrection.

[Topical Healing: Restores wounds, including lost limbs, to their original form. It cannot heal fatal injuries to vital areas like the heart or head, nor can it be used on dead targets. The healing area expands with more Divine Points used.]

[Life Frenzy: Strengthens the target's Life Energy, enhancing both physical and mental states. The level of reinforcement depends on Divine Points applied.]

[Resurrection: Activates within five seconds after the target dies. It can only revive units, and each unit can only be resurrected once. The Divine Points required vary with the unit's life force.]

Resurrection focused mainly on one's own units, but its effects proved extremely powerful. Its final skill alone made it the strongest Rank 3 Divine Aspect.

Tian Wen grew incredibly powerful after acquiring numerous Divine Aspects. He had finally become a capable team player, combining strong offensive skills with exceptional Support-oriented Divine Skills. Eager to take revenge on the Divine Souls that had abducted him, he pushed to strike now that he was ready.

Naturally, Han Wu and Qin Shuang agreed. After a brief rest, they soared toward the city again. This time, though, the city's defenses had increased dramatically in response to their previous actions. The lower-ranking Divine Souls no longer roamed freely, and the streets swarmed with patrolling Sand Golems.

"Han Wu, what's our plan?" Qin Shuang asked instinctively, relying on him as her steadfast pillar. Tian Wen also turned to Han Wu, ready to charge forward and distract the Sand Golems if given the order. Part of him longed to test his new Divine Skills in battle.

Han Wu gave a nod. "We'll strike and take care of the Sand Golems first."

Qin Shuang nodded and used her Stormbringer's Lightning Lance. White lightning crackled and surged as it concentrated in her hands. Meanwhile, the Thunder Sparrows circling above formed miniature lightning lances as well.

Before she could launch the attack, however, Han Wu stopped her. The Sand Golems could regenerate quickly, making a standard lightning assault ineffective. But Han Wu had already prepared a countermeasure. He used the Defiant Sword and channeled its trait into each of the lightning lances. Now, every one of them struck with the Defiant Sword's force and properties.

Han Wu nodded, and Qin Shuang hurled the lance. At the same time, the Thunder Sparrows' countless lightning lances rained down on the Sand Golems. Their sandy bodies made them immune to lightning, and they could easily repair the damage. However, the lightning lances carried the Defiant Sword's power, dealing critical damage.

The lightning lances sank cleanly into the Sand Golems and triggered powerful explosions. Unlike before, they carried water-attribute damage rather than lightning. The Sand Golem couldn't resist the power water attacks and perished.

The wolf-headed Divine Souls only noticed what was happening once many Sand Golems had fallen. They howled and charged toward Han Wu. Seizing the moment, Tian Wen poured a large amount of Divine Points into Spine Forest. In the next instant, sharp spines erupted from the ground, spreading over a wide area.

The wolf-headed Divine Souls, caught off guard, ran headlong into the thicket and shrieked as the spines tore into their limbs. Though they were stronger than the Sand Golems, they lacked the same regenerative power.

Qin Shuang took advantage of their surprise and spent many Divine Points to use the Divine Skill: Thunderclap. The thunderclouds swelled and spread until they blotted out half the sky. A moment later, torrents of lightning descended. Each bolt carved scorched gashes into the wolf-headed Divine Souls, burning flesh and cracking bone.

The Thunder Sparrows, adapted to life near thunderclouds, darted through the lightning strikes and attacked the wolf-headed Divine Souls. Even these formidable foes struggled to resist. Many were killed instantly, shattering into Divine Aspect fragments. The remaining wolf-headed Divine Souls were stronger, but they recognized their hopeless situation and retreated while howling in defeat.

Suddenly, the altar in the center of the city became enveloped in swirling sand as the Divine Souls howled. The sand coalesced into a fierce sandstorm, and a massive figure emerged. It was ten meters tall, held a golden lance, and had the lower body of a scorpion with a man's upper body.

This was the city's king and the strongest Divine Soul in the space, known as the King Scorpion. Once summoned, it roared loudly and unleashed a massive sand hurricane toward Han Wu's group.

Han Wu reacted instantly, activating Black Dragon King Transformation to shield Qin Shuang and Tian Wen. The rest of their units were less fortunate. The sandstorm killed many Thunder Sparrows and locusts, sparing only the strongest among them.

The King Scorpion remained unsatisfied, even after slaughtering millions of units. It charged forward with terrifying speed, like a freight truck weighing hundreds of tons, barreling toward them with unstoppable force.

Han Wu glanced at his wounded units, then at the two teammates that he was protecting. There was no easy way out. Even if they escaped, the units behind them would be annihilated. He couldn't abandon the units he had painstakingly raised. If they had to die, it wouldn't be for nothing. He would use every ounce of strength to hold the line.

"Bloodfeast Domain, Conduitborn, and Soul Reaper!" Han Wu poured his power into the swing of his enormous scythe and struck at the King Scorpion. The desert trembled as their clash sent shockwaves through the sand.

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Chapter 147 - Killing the Divine Soul

[1,142 words]

Chapter 147 - Killing the Divine Soul

Han Wu's Soul Reaper clashed against the King Scorpion's golden lance, unleashing a shockwave that rippled through the space around them. Their strength was evenly matched, and for a moment, it was impossible to tell who would come out on top. This was the first time the King Scorpion had faced an opponent capable of withstanding its full power.

A cruel smile spread across the King Scorpion's face as it lunged forward, aiming its stinger at Han Wu with a lightning-fast jab. This move had slain countless foes before, and it expected another easy victory. Yet to its shock, Han Wu dodged the signature attack.

Han Wu had already anticipated the attack. The moment the stinger moved, he activated Spectral Dash, slipping into the shadows and rendering himself untouchable. As he reemerged, he swung Soul Reaper behind him in a wide arc, unleashing a cross-shaped slash that tore through the King Scorpion's body.

Soul Reaper's razor edge, combined with the Defiant Sword's unique traits, struck a critical blow. Before the King Scorpion could recover, the human half of its body shattered into pieces. The scorpion half remained alive, swinging its stinger wildly in a desperate attempt to strike Han Wu, but every attack missed. Han Wu moved with the precision of a seasoned assassin, landing a single fatal hit before retreating.

Qin Shuang, Tian Wen, Steely, the 4 Locustman Lords, and the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow all saw the scorpion half was blind and seized the moment to finish it. They unleashed a devastating combination of Thunderclap, Strong Spine, Steelcutter, Dark Breath, Poison Breath, Earth Breath, and the Golden-Crown Thunder Sparrow's lightning. The chaotic onslaught reduced the scorpion half to dust, leaving nine items scattered on the ground after it vanished.

The wolf-headed Divine Souls panicked when the King Scorpion died. They had worshipped it as their god, and with its death, their faith collapsed. Without the King Scorpion to shield them, they all fled into the wilderness. Han Wu chose not to pursue them. There were too many Divine Souls, and his units were too few to chase them all down.

Han Wu dropped to the ground after deactivating the Black Dragon King Transformation. The battle with the King Scorpion had drained his strength. Although the three powerful plants within his body helped him recover some stamina, it still took time before he caught his breath.

Qin Shuang retrieved the nine items the King Scorpion had dropped and called out in delight, "Han Wu, these are incredible treasures! Come take a look."

She showed him and Tian Wen their haul: 5 Rank 5 Divine Aspect fragments and 4 complete Rank 5 Divine Aspects.

[Rank 5 Divine Aspect: Golden Lance.]

[Rank 5 Divine Aspect: King.]

[Rank 5 Divine Aspect: Sandstorm.]

[Rank 5 Divine Aspect: Scorpion Lord.]

The Rank 5 Golden Lance Aspect stood apart from others. As an Affixed Divine Aspect, no Demigod could absorb it. The Divine Aspect itself took the form of a golden lance. Once it recognized its owner, it transformed into a God weapon, a Sacred Object, and a Divine Aspect all at once.

Han Wu remembered his friend Yuan Zhong, whose weapon held a similar dual status as both a God weapon and a Sacred Object. Yuan Zhong would have been astonished to learn about the Rank 5 Golden Lance Aspect.

Han Wu, however, had no intention of giving away something so precious. He took the lance and asked Qin Shuang, "Do you like lances?"

The question caught her off guard, but she answered truthfully, "Yes. Lances are excellent at channeling electricity."

“Good. Then this Rank 5 Divine Aspect is yours,” he said, handing her the golden lance.

Qin Shuang stared at him, wide-eyed. “You’re really giving it to me? This is an extremely rare Affixed Divine Aspect. You’d be even stronger if you kept it for yourself.”

Han Wu shook his head. “I already have my Defiant Sword. If I keep absorbing souls, I can unlock new forms. The Golden Lance wouldn’t be of much use to me.”

Qin Shuang nodded and reluctantly accepted the precious gift. Tian Wen’s eyes widened, but he had no choice but to accept it. He wasn’t a perfect Demigod, so he could not absorb a Rank 5 Divine Aspect even if he possessed one. Besides, his body had already reached its limit for absorbing Divine Aspects. Asking for it now would have been rude.

Still, Han Wu was not narrow-minded. Tian Wen had helped him greatly and served as a good teacher. So Han Wu chose the Rank 5 Sandstorm Aspect and handed it to Tian Wen. Compared to the other three, the Sandstorm Aspect seemed less impressive, but it remained a rare Rank 5 Divine Aspect among all those in existence.

Han Wu wanted Tian Wen to have it so he could sell it for a substantial amount of resources. That would allow Tian Wen to quickly grow stronger and eventually ascend into a God. This was the least Han Wu could do to repay the kindness and guidance his teacher had offered.

After handing them the two Rank 5 Divine Aspects, Han Wu pocketed the rest. It was only natural for him to claim the lion’s share, since he had slain the King Scorpion. With that settled, they turned their attention to the city’s residents. Every inhabitant was a Divine Soul. Though they weren’t strong individually, they had strength in numbers. If Han Wu’s group wiped them all out, they could collect a significant number of Divine Aspect fragments.

Han Wu commanded his four Locustman Lords to guard the city’s entrances, blocking any chance of escape for the remaining Divine Souls. At the same time, he ordered the remaining forces to slaughter every one of them inside the city. Tian Wen, who had obtained a Rank 5 Divine Aspect due to Han Wu’s generosity, eagerly sought to impress his students.

As Han Wu gave the order, Tian Wen used the Divine Skill: Spine Forest he had just recently learned. Spine Forest’s range expanded dramatically as he channeled more Divine Points into it. Countless low-ranking Divine Souls were impaled and killed within its reach, with only a handful managing to survive.

Qin Shuang followed with a devastating display of her own. She summoned a vast cloud, from which lightning rained down, reducing most low-ranking Divine Souls to smoldering charcoal before they shattered into Divine Aspect fragments. Meanwhile, Steely, unwilling to stand idle, transformed into a tornado. He tore through the

battlefield, annihilating everything in his path while gathering every Divine Aspect fragment scattered on the ground.

The massacre raged for three days straight. After eliminating every Divine Soul in the city, Han Wu opened his pouch and froze in shock at the sheer volume of Divine Aspect fragments spilling out. The amount was staggering.

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[1,402 words]

Chapter 148 - God King's Compensation

After merging the corresponding fragments, Han Wu acquired 2,940 complete Divine Aspects. His collection included 2,300 Rank 1, 500 Rank 2, 100 Rank 3, 30 Rank 4, and 10 Rank 5 Divine Aspects. Han Wu's eyes sparkled with excitement as he took in the vast number before him.

I'm rich! he thought. This was a fortune even for Gods, let alone Demigods like themselves.

"There are still many powerful Divine Souls in this space, but we don't have many Divine Points left. Let's find a way back to our tent first," Han Wu suggested.

Tian Wen and Qin Shuang nodded in agreement. The three of them searched the city and came across a large hole beneath the altar. It opened into a cave, the lair of the King Scorpion.

Long ago, the King Scorpion had been a member of the Divine Civilization who accidentally passed through the golden gates and gained the powers of the Divine Souls. Deep within the cave, Han Wu and the others discovered a mirror. It pulsed with Space Energy and was supposed to be the key to leaving the space.

Han Wu decided to test the mirror first. He sent a Locustman Lord through it and waited. After half an hour passed without the Faith thread breaking, Han Wu confirmed it was safe and entered next. He emerged in a long corridor and followed it for quite a while before reaching the exit. When he stepped outside, he tumbled into a desert. There were no landmarks around, but he was certain he had returned to the Ancient Battleground.

Soon, Tian Wen, Qin Shuang, and the remaining units followed him out. They flew back the way they came, repelling several attacks along the journey, and successfully

reached their camp. Once inside, the three sat together and emptied the pouch full of Divine Aspects.

Under their watchful eyes, Han Wu spent a vast amount of Divine Points and ten full days merging every Divine Aspect into Rank 5 ones. He now held a total of 124 Rank 5 Divine Aspects. This staggering fortune would astonish anyone. Many Demigods endured great hardship just to acquire a single Rank 5 Divine Aspect, yet Han Wu had gained so many after only one adventure.

If the other Demigods knew, they would have been green with envy. But both Tian Wen and Qin Shuang understood that their windfall was possible only because of Han Wu's merging efforts. Without him merging so many low-ranking Divine Aspects into high-ranking ones, their profit would've been reduced by 60-70%.

That was why neither of them argued over the final split. Tian Wen chose ten common Rank 5 Divine Aspects. Qin Shuang selected ten as well, but she picked two that suited her needs. She planned to absorb those two and sell the rest to gain more Divine Essence.

Han Wu would take the remaining 104 Rank 5 Divine Aspects. He estimated they would sell for at least 10,000 Divine Essence. With that kind of wealth, he wouldn't need to lift a finger and could still ascend into a God eventually. Once again, he faced the unusual problem of having too much money to spend. Soon, however, he found a way to use it.

He could invest the money into upgrading his tent. According to the guide, if he spent enough money and resources, the tent could be permanently linked to his divine realm. Though it would only occupy five square meters within his realm, its actual interior covered several thousand square kilometers. It was an exceptionally efficient way to expand his divine realm's space. The prospect thrilled him, and he knew it was a worthwhile investment.

After asking Tian Wen to relinquish his share, Han Wu obtained full ownership of the tent and poured his Divine Aspects into it. As the Rank 5 Divine Aspects flooded the tent, the arena inside slowly expanded. Han Wu invested all of the fairly common Divine Aspects, growing the arena to 30,000 square kilometers—three times larger than his divine realm.

He could have made it even larger, but there was already more than enough space for his needs. He set aside the remaining special Rank 5 Divine Aspects to trade for Divine Essence. At the same time, he relocated some of his races from his divine realm into the tent. With that much room, he could nurture even more units.

The three of them returned to the Divine Civilization in good spirits after claiming their rewards. Back home, Tian Wen bid farewell and chose to enter closed-door training for a while. He needed time to increase the population and strength of his race and work toward his own ascension into a God.

Naturally, Han Wu and Qin Shuang had no objections. After bidding Tian Wen goodbye, they returned to Imperial College.

Lina sensed their arrival and sent a message asking Han Wu to visit her office briefly. Han Wu said goodbye to Qin Shuang and headed to Lina's office, where she awaited him dressed in her usual purple work attire.

"Han Wu, regarding your abduction by Hu Hai... The college completed its investigation during your absence. The True Martial God King has personally apologized and sent compensation," she explained.

Han Wu frowned in confusion. "Who is that?"

"The True Martial God King is one of the God Kings battling in a distant civilization on behalf of the Divine Civilization. He is also the one behind Hu Hai," Lina answered.

Han Wu's eyes widened. That meant the True Martial God King was the so-called bankrupt God King who had poured hundreds of billions of Divine Points into the failed mutated beast farm. He couldn't help wondering what kind of compensation someone like that would offer.

"I'm eager to see what it is," he said.

Lina smiled and handed him two cards. They were the promised compensation. Han Wu examined them carefully and froze when he saw that the first card contained the complete corpse of a God, including that God's Divine Aspects and Divine Authority. Han Wu's scalp tingled as he looked closer. It was Hu Hai!

Hu Hai had served the God King loyally for at least half his life, only to become part of the God King's compensation in the end. Han Wu found the irony bitter. The second card held an entire divine realm marked with signs of early civilization. Through the card, Han Wu could tell it had belonged to Hu Hai as well.

He shook his head and sighed, yet he accepted without hesitation. Lina gave him a knowing look. "Han Wu, a complete corpse of a God holds immense value. Don't waste it."

Han Wu understood her meaning and asked, "Professor, is there a way to ensure I don't waste it?"

As he spoke, he handed her a Rank 5 Divine Aspect. Lina accepted it, though she was secretly surprised that Han Wu would offer such a precious gift. Since he had shown such generosity, she wouldn't hold back either.

“I do know a method,” she said. “You can refine the corpse into a clone. Once it’s done, the clone will retain the strength and rank it held in life. If you’re willing to invest the resources, it can even ascend further. Do you want to learn how?”

“Of course!” Han Wu replied without hesitation. He was still only a Demigod. If he could create a clone with the power of a God, he would surpass all his peers. And since the clone could continue to grow, it wouldn’t be a wasted effort.

Lina nodded in approval at his eagerness and drew out a scroll from her bosom.

Han Wu took the scroll, noticing it was still warm and carried a faint, lingering fragrance. “Thank you, Professor.”

Lina smiled, but her expression soon turned serious. “With the God King’s apology, the matter of your abduction ends here. However, the college’s leadership has yet to decide on your enrollment. Some lecturers remain dissatisfied. After all, you caused trouble even before joining.”

Her voice held a trace of sympathy beneath its sternness. Without the abduction, Han Wu’s enrollment would have been simple and smooth. Unfortunately, the unexpected event had thrown everything into disarray.

“Professor, I will prove with my own strength that those who are dissatisfied with me are wrong. Just wait and see.” Han Wu, now stronger, felt hope rising for the future.

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[793 words]

Chapter 149 - Clone Han Wen

After leaving Lina’s office, Han Wu exited the college and found a nearby hotel. He checked in and stayed there for the time being. Since the college had not yet officially admitted him as a student, he could not stay in the dorm. He accepted this, knowing the college had its rules. If he wanted them to bend them, he would have to prove his potential and strength. He refused to believe the college would deny him admission if he proved powerful enough.

Once in his room, he quickly entered his divine realm and started refining Hu Hai’s corpse using the scroll Lina had given him. The method was complex and demanding, requiring many precious resources. To fund the process, Han Wu sold the special Rank 5 Divine Aspects and received 130 Divine Essence in return. With that, he refined the corpse tirelessly.

Time passed quickly. After half a realm year, his progress became evident. He succeeded after spending 113 Divine Essence. The clone's data appeared, granting him control over it. Since Hu Hai was now his clone, Han Wu decided to rename it Han Wen. To become a fine soldier and scholar was an honorable goal[1].

Han Wu then checked the data interface for Han Wen.

[Name: Han Wen]

[Rank: God]

[Divine Talent: Furinkazan (Doubles stats after each ascension)]

[Divine Powers: Wind Walk (Increases speed), Forest Fend (Summons a wood armor), Fire Fling (Fire-based attack), Earth Explosion (Obtained the strength to shatter mountains)]

[Divine Essence: 42]

[Divine Aspects: 5]

[Rank 5 Divine Aspect: Martial Path; Divine Skills: Overlord Body, Flash Strike, Might, Strong Kick, Iron Fist]

[Rank 4 Divine Aspect: Summon; Divine Skills: Summon Wind Giant, Summon Fire Giant, Summon Wood Giant, Summon Earth Giant]

[Rank 4 Divine Aspect: Tigerman; Divine Skills: Tiger Roar, Tiger Strike, Tiger Pounce, Tiger Hunt]

[Rank 3 Divine Aspect: Brawler; Divine Skills: Fist, Kick, Body]

[Rank 5 Divine Aspect: True Martial Arts; Divine Skill: True Martial Heart]

[Skills: Flash Kick, Roundhouse Kick, Tiger Punch, Mountain Smasher, ... (187 more skills)]

[Divine Authority: 40% (Max 100%)]

...

Han Wu felt a twinge of envy as he studied the clone's data. A God had 42 Divine Essence! It was an overwhelming difference compared to his own 12 Divine Essence as a Demigod. What caught his attention next was Han Wen's True Martial Arts Aspect, which contained only a single Divine Skill called True Martial Heart.

I thought Rank 5 Divine Aspects had five Divine Skills, Han Wu mused.

Curious, he ordered Han Wen to use it. When Han Wen used it on Han Wu, a peace unlike anything he had known washed over him. His eyes drifted to a nearby blade of grass. It trembled violently in the wind, yet the gusts never tore it from the earth. That simple image struck Han Wu with a sudden revelation. In that moment, he instinctively learned a Rank 1 skill called Duragrass Body, which also appeared in Han Wu's data.

He gasped as the effects of True Martial Heart became clear. It was a Divine Skill that enhanced his comprehension of martial arts. While it offered no direct combat utility, it gave him the ability to continuously develop new martial arts and grow stronger.

Perhaps True Martial Aspect was no weaker than others like the Death or Destruction Aspects, but it still felt useless to him. Without learning an extremely powerful Skill, it provided no advantage against formidable foes.

Han Wu noticed Han Wen possessed hundreds of Skills, so he decided to simplify them. Using Merge, he combined the skills until only two powerful Rank 6 Skills remained.

The first, Martial God Kick, could destroy everything with a single strike. The second, Martial God Flash, relied on unstoppable speed to defeat enemies. Though simple in name, these Skills held immense potential and strength.

After merging the Skills, Han Wu focused on the five Divine Aspects. The sheer number of Divine Skills confused him.

Since I can merge Skills, I could technically merge Divine Skills as well, he thought.

To test the idea, he summoned his clone again and decided to merge the Divine Skills. He started with the four Divine Skills under the Summon Aspect, each linked to summoning a Giant of Wind, Wood, Fire, and Earth.

First, he merged Summon Wind Giant and Summon Wood Giant to create a new Divine Skill called Summon Fell Leaf Envoy. Next, he fused Summon Fire Giant with Summon Earth Giant. The process completed with all four Divine Skills merging into a single, powerful skill named Summon Chaos Saint.

1. Wu (武) is the word for martial art while Wen (文) means culture, etiquette, art etc. The raw uses 文武双全, meaning to be a fine scholar and soldier. ㊦

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[1,185 words]

Chapter 150 - Merging Divine Skills

Han Wu grew curious about the strength of a Divine Skill formed by merging four others, so he ordered Han Wen to activate it. Han Wen spent nearly a third of his Divine Points before it activated. A magical array materialized in front of them, and from within it emerged the Chaos Saint, a towering being several hundred meters tall. Han Wu also had the authority to read the Chaos Saint's data interface.

[Name: Chaos Saint]

[Race: Elemental Giant]

[Rank: King]

[Talent: Chaos Strength (Contains all four Wind, Wood, Fire, and Earth attributes)]

[Skill: Tornado (Rank 5), Expansive Forest (Rank 5), Blazing Flare (Rank 5), Earthquake (Rank 5), Chaos Strike (Rank 6)]

Han Wu stared at the data in disbelief. He had never imagined the Chaos Saint was not only a King life form but also possessed five incredibly powerful skills. This being alone could take on most Demigods. On top of that, the Divine Skill would grow even stronger as Han Wen ascended into a new rank.

Surprised by the results of merging four Divine Skills, Han Wu resolved to attempt something even more ambitious. He aimed to merge all the Divine Skills from the four remaining Divine Aspects.

The risk was great, but he never shied away from danger. Pouring vast amounts of Divine Points into the process, he merged the remaining Divine Skills into one. The cost surpassed his expectations, forcing him to sell off several Rank 5 Divine Aspects to raise more funds.

After spending a staggering 70 billion Divine Points, he finally succeeded. The result was a completely original Divine Skill unlike anything that had existed before. He named it the True Martial Tiger God.

[Divine Skill: True Martial Tiger God. Transforms the target into the True Martial Tiger God and significantly increases all stats. Permanently increases mastery of one's body and grants a martial skill.]

Han Wu studied the data with excitement and ordered his clone to apply it to him. The clone spent 10% of his Divine Points to use it on Han Wu. Instantly, Han Wu felt a surge

of power ripple through his body. His palms and feet gradually transformed into tiger paws, while a tiger-shaped energy shield wrapped around him.

With the shield's protection, Han Wu sensed that he was tough enough to withstand attacks from even a King life form like the Chaos Saint. At the same time, he learned to wield his new paws in combat, manifesting two Rank 3 Skills called Crush Claws and Claw Rush. In this form, Han Wu believed he could face King life forms even without relying on his Black Dragon King Transformation.

Han Wu then grew curious about how much stronger his clone would become by using the Divine Skill on himself, especially given how powerful Han Wu had already become as a Demigod. With that in mind, Han Wu signaled for Han Wen to do so.

Han Wen complied, and the effects appeared nearly identical to Han Wu's transformation. However, Han Wu soon sensed something unusual. The space surrounding Han Wen started to crack and repair itself in an endless loop. It was a clear sign that Han Wen's strength had reached the upper threshold of what Han Wu's divine realm could endure.

That limit applied only if Han Wen remained still. If he launched any attacks, part of Han Wu's divine realm could shatter permanently. To avoid irreversible damage, Han Wu quickly instructed Han Wen to stop using the Divine Skill. Han Wen nodded and deactivated it. Even so, Han Wu could sense a slight increase in Han Wen's strength after the attempt.

Will my units rank up if I ask Han Wen to use the Divine Skill on them repeatedly?

Han Wu wondered.

He wanted to test it but decided to wait. Instead, he watched his clone with satisfaction, knowing Han Wen could easily defeat someone as strong as Hu Hai right now.

After dealing with the clone, Han Wu turned his attention to the second card the True Martial God King had given him as compensation. Inside the card lay Hu Hai's divine realm. The Tigermen had thrived there for many years, developing an early civilization. Though they no longer followed Hu Hai's orders, they continued to live comfortably.

Without the Core, however, the divine realm suffered from various natural disasters, and the land was slowly dying. If no one intervened, the divine realm would vanish completely within several thousand years.

"I should strip out everything of value before it disappears," Han Wu muttered.

What was the most precious resource within a divine realm? Ores, food, and land paled in comparison to the subjects themselves. A large group of Believers generated

abundant Faith Points, making them the most valuable asset. Hu Hai had nurtured billions of Tigermen, each producing a significant amount of Faith Points.

Han Wu had already set his sights on the wealth they could produce. And he had the perfect tool to spread his faith: his clone, Han Wen. With a face identical to Hu Hai's, Han Wen would have no trouble convincing the Tigermen. If not, Han Wen could easily subjugate them. With his strength, he could defeat every Tigermen in the divine realm.

Han Wu controlled Han Wen as they descended into the Tigermen's divine realm. With his link to the divine realm severed, Han Wen had lost its protection and plummeted like a meteor, striking the ground with enough force to gouge a crater hundreds of meters wide. Fortunately, his body was extraordinarily durable, and he was unscathed. He got to his feet and made a few short jumps.

Meanwhile, his arrival quickly drew the attention of many powerful Tigermen nearby, including the Tigerman King. As ruler of the city, the Tigerman King held the highest authority within the divine realm.

When the Core shattered, it immediately realized that Hu Hai was no longer their god. In response, it spread a new faith throughout the kingdom, rewrote history to praise itself as a god, and commanded poets and storytellers to promote its faith. It even secretly ordered the temple's deity statue replaced with its own likeness. The ordinary Tigermen remained unaware and naturally worshiped it as a god.

The Tigerman King soon started absorbing the Faith Points once intended for Hu Hai. As they poured into its body, its power swelled, and it finally evolved into a true King life form. Even the three Tigerman elders sealed in the forbidden zone were no longer its equals.

Drunk on newfound power, the Tigerman King had no intention of surrendering the Faith Points back to Hu Hai. So when it sensed Hu Hai's return, it rallied a massive army and declared that an evil god had come to invade their land.

Upon hearing of the arrival of an evil god, the simple Tigermen took up arms. They swore to kill the invader for the kingdom's sake, unaware that the so-called evil god was their original, true god.

Three days later, as Han Wen strolled across a vast grassy plain, the Tigermen launched a sudden ambush.

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