

# The People's God: Sacrificing Trillions to Ascend

## - Chapter 215 - Second Calamity

[ 1,863 words ]

### Chapter 215 - Second Calamity

Han Wu, leading several of his units, launched a direct assault on the bandit king's secluded cave. Predictably, the bandit king attempted to make yet another escape, but Han Wu had anticipated this move and arrived fully prepared. With swift precision, he issued orders to his Dark Cursed Bugs, who were lying in ambush nearby, to fire a barrage of Shadow Nails, effectively pinning the bandit king in place.

"Wait! Please, don't kill me! I serve as the informant for the Wei Kingdom's General Wu Lei! I was specifically instructed to observe this piece of land—"

Despite the bandit king's frantic squeals, Han Wu remained completely unmoved. He held no interest in the Wei Kingdom or General Wu Lei, and without a moment's hesitation, he commanded his half-dragon to end the bandit king's life.

"Transfer all the treasures within this cave into my shelter," Han Wu instructed. Once back at his base, he set about upgrading his shelter once again. Afterwards, with his eyes gleaming with keen anticipation, he eagerly began the process of tallying the immense fortune he had just plundered.

The chests contained various currency denominations, gold and silver ingots, and sparkling jewelry. However, thanks to the capabilities of his personal interface, Han Wu effortlessly and swiftly converted every single item into readily usable Gold Coins and other essential resources.

[Silver ingot: 10 Gold Coins]

[Gold ingot: 100 Gold Coins]

[Necklace: 300 Gold Coins]

[Hundred-year Agarwood: 2,000 Wood]

[...]

In the midst of converting his recently plundered spoils into useful resources, Han Wu stumbled upon a peculiar item: a massive, finely detailed, hand-drawn map illustrating

the local geographical features. Upon closer inspection, he noted with keen interest that significant portions of this hand-drawn map coincided precisely with the topology displayed on his own magical map, leading him to confidently conclude that the newfound map was accurate and reliable.

Upon turning the map over, a detailed drawing of a massive continent was revealed. On the massive map, the region where Han Wu and his fellow students resided appeared as nothing more than a small dot at its center. This dot was, in turn, surrounded by four even more enormous continents, each one tens of thousands of times greater in size.

The four colossal continents were named the Barbaric Lands, the Holy Church, the Black Prison, and the Warring Kingdom. Specifically within the sprawling Warring Kingdom Continent, the territory nearest to Han Wu's current location was known as the Wei Kingdom.

It became clear to Han Wu that the Wei Kingdom was almost certainly the location the bandit king had desperately mentioned just prior to his demise. This revelation was significant, especially given that the Wei Kingdom itself appeared to be quite massive, most likely several thousand times the size of his relatively small estate.

Within the vast Warring Kingdom Continent, the Wei Kingdom, by itself, spanned approximately one-tenth of the entire Warring Kingdom Continent. The remainder of the continent was fragmented into various other regions, such as Qin, Tang, and Ming, among a multitude of others.

"To think the Warring Kingdom Civilization is so massive! But why didn't the library contain this information?" he mused, clearly puzzled.

Considering the fact that the Warring Kingdom Civilization and the Divine Civilization were supposed to have close ties with each other, it stood to reason that the Divine Civilization would possess detailed information about this place. Han Wu ultimately came to the conclusion that Imperial College was most likely intentionally withholding complete information from its students. The underlying reasons for such a decision, however, remained a mystery to him.

*I should order the Dark Cursed Bugs to continue exploring this region before meeting up with Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian.*

The future felt too distant for him to deal with, so Han Wu decided to concentrate on the present. Just then, an urgent doorbell chime echoed from outside. He immediately knew it was Duan Meng; no one else could've rung his doorbell.

As Han Wu ushered Duan Meng inside, her eyes widened with both awe and excitement as she took in his recently upgraded shelter. Han Wu's Level 7 shelter had expanded considerably once more, now comparable to a small-sized city. Duan Meng's own Level 5 shelter was, at this point, entirely incomparable to his.

“Han Wu, I never imagined you would achieve something this incredible! You’re simply amazing!”

Han Wu smiled. “Oh, it’s nothing much. I merely had a stroke of luck and managed to nurture a few special units that were particularly well-suited for this place.”

“No, you are quite mistaken on that point,” she responded, playfully wagging a finger in disagreement. “Luck isn’t separate from your abilities—it’s an undeniable part of your strength! Locusts are by nature very fragile creatures, but you, against all odds, have managed to nurture them into such incredibly powerful beings!

“It’s also very difficult to nurture skeletons—their numbers only expand by participating in numerous battles and quite literally stepping over countless fallen corpses... You should seriously consider getting the War Aspect—it’ll definitely help you a lot.”

Her suggestion had been made without much deliberation, but Han Wu himself had taken it quite seriously. He had, in fact, recently begun to delve into the Destruction Aspect, and had already managed to grasp a portion of the essence of destruction itself. He had a feeling that his understanding would expand greatly if he were to obtain the War Aspect.

When examining the intricate connections between Divine Aspects, it became clear that Destruction was always closely associated with War; the two concepts were, in essence, inseparable. This implied that securing the War Aspect would significantly accelerate his comprehension of Destruction. The challenge, however, lay in the fact that the War Aspect, like the Destruction and Death Aspects, was a Rank 5 Divine Aspect, placing it among the rarest and most difficult to obtain.

Han Wu took Duan Meng’s advice into account, filing it away for future reference. After taking a few moments to look around his impressive new shelter and mansion, Duan Meng finally revealed the true purpose of her visit—she was still hoping to rent some skeletons from him.

“I don’t need higher-ranking ones; just the Common ones will do,” she clarified. “I want to employ them as a labor force to gather resources, just like you have. You see, I’ve already set up a lumberyard, a Stone mine and an ore mine back at my estate, but I’m lacking the necessary manpower to put them to use.”

Though Duan Meng’s lizardmen were robust, they were still living beings. This meant they were not only susceptible to injuries during manual labor, but they also consumed large amounts of food. Consequently, she decided to rent some skeletons from Han Wu, as these undead laborers required no food or sleep and could operate tirelessly around the clock.

Han Wu understood all this—he himself was keenly aware of the immense benefits his skeletons provided. Taking a moment to sit down, he began working on a fair rental

price for them. Having just acquired a vast sum of money, he had no immediate need for Gold Coins. Instead, with his decision to concentrate on upgrading his shelter, he was now in greater need of raw materials like Wood, Stone, and ore.

He was keenly aware that the small region he currently inhabited meant his resource supply was destined to run out swiftly. His relentless gathering techniques were such that the majority of resource nodes wouldn't withstand even a few days of exploitation. Therefore, he was counting on Duan Meng to provide him with a reliable and continuous flow of basic resources.

Han Wu laid out his terms: he would supply her with as many skeletons as she wished, under the condition that payment would not be in Gold Coins, but rather in a predetermined amount of basic resources. To illustrate, he would expect a share of Wood if she used his skeletons for logging, ores if they were used for mining, or Stones if they were used for gathering. This way, Duan Meng wouldn't need to incur a steep capital cost, while Han Wu would simultaneously secure a steady stream of basic resources.

She readily agreed to the proposition, and what followed was a surprisingly vicious negotiation between the two. After much back-and-forth, Han Wu ultimately conceded, agreeing to claim 30% of the total resources gathered by the skeletons, and to seal the deal, both parties signed an agreement.

For a trial run, Duan Meng decided to rent 100,000 skeletons in one go. Han Wu readily agreed, even offering for her to rent even more if she found them insufficient. After seeing her off, he contentedly held on to the signed agreement, pleased with the new arrangement.

Han Wu soon drifted off to sleep. The dawn of the second day soon arrived, and his rest was abruptly shattered by a loud, insistent alarm blaring directly within his mind.

[Outsiders, the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization has prepared the second banquet for everyone. Please enjoy it to the fullest!]

Han Wu was abruptly roused from his sleep, shooting up wide awake as a second alarm blared loudly.

[Outsiders, be aware that due to the influence of the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization, you are now required to seek out and combine forces with an ally within the next sixty minutes. Be warned that any who do not succeed in this task will be subjected to a random pairing with another participant.]

It suddenly dawned on Han Wu why Duan Meng had relocated her shelter so close to his own, even before the second calamity. She had clearly been anticipating this precise situation all along!

He swiftly dashed out, extending an invitation to Duan Meng to form an alliance with him. In response, their forces began to rally, arranging themselves into neat rows, all awaiting their respective masters' commands.

The alliance was quickly established, and a simultaneous notification echoed within both their minds.

[Alliance formed. You now have exactly 1 hour and 59 minutes to prepare your supplies. After the end of the timer, you will be transported to a special space designated for war. All spatial abilities and any equipment possessing spatial properties will be completely sealed and rendered inactive while in this combat zone.]

They looked at each other, and a surprising synergy sparked between them.

"It appears the enemies won't be directing their attacks toward our shelters. Let's then prioritize taking every supply we can carry, to ensure we're ready for whatever unexpected challenges might come our way," Han Wu said.

Duan Meng nodded. "You have the superior army, while I am abundant in supplies. So, you'll provide the fighting force, and I'll make sure we have all the provisions we need."

"No problem."

Without hesitation, a huge horde of skeletons swarmed into Duan Meng's storage, each taking as much as it could carry. Han Wu also prepared a lot of breadfruits for food, just in case their provisions ran low. The preparation time soon ended, and an enormous gate materialized in front of their shelters.

The two led their army through the gate without hesitation.

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

[ 1,299 words ]

## **Chapter 216 - First Battle**

Han Wu and Duan Meng passed through the gate and emerged in a vast space prepared for their war. They found themselves standing in the middle of a vast grassy prairie, stretching empty in every direction.

Han Wu commanded his locusts to spread out and survey the perimeter. As the Dark Cursed Bugs fanned out across the terrain, the magic map in Han Wu's possession automatically displayed the terrain within a ten-kilometer radius.

“What is this? There’s nothing but grass for ten kilometers. No rivers, no mountains, nothing,” he muttered.

Duan Meng opened her interface and noticed a change. Back in their shelters’ region, the interface had displayed their personal data and shelter details. Here, it showed only information about their army.

Han Wu checked his own interface and confirmed it.

[Name: Han Wu]

[Army: Infantry: Skeletons. Size: 1,972,897. Lord: 1, Heroic: 221, Unique: 65,489, Elite: 908,388, Common: 999,798]

[Technician: Scorching Dwarves. Size: 70. Unique: 18, Elite: 52]

[Lancer: Half-Dragons. Size: 80. Heroic: 2, Unique: 24, Elite: 54]

[Archer: Dark Cursed Bugs. Size: 69,873. Unique: 48,902, Elite: 20,971]

[Worker: Grovekins. Size: 75. Elite: 75]

Han Wu’s Infantry numbered an immense 1.97 million skeletons, far surpassing the combined total of the other four castes.

Duan Meng’s army also consisted of five castes: Infantry Lizardmen, Physician Stony Lizardmen, Archer Blazing Lizardmen, Lancer Lizardmen, and Vanguard Centurion Treants.

They had just finished reviewing their armies’ data when the voice of the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization echoed once more. “Outsiders, you must survive in this space for an entire month. You will receive no aid during this period, while powerful armies will attack at random intervals. Fight hard in this desperate situation.”

The voice faded. Han Wu and Duan Meng exchanged uneasy glances. Her expression tightened with disbelief. “I didn’t know we had to survive here for a whole month. Isn’t that too long?”

Han Wu remained calm. “We brought plenty of food. We should manage to last that long.”

He was right. The skeletons didn’t need to eat at all. His Dark Cursed Bugs still required food, but they weren’t picky and could survive on grass. The rest of their armies did need supplies, but thankfully, their numbers were small. Han Wu doubted their troops could consume all the provisions carried by the skeletons.

On top of that, Han Wu had his Grovekins, which produced breadfruits periodically. He felt confident they could survive the entire month.

His greater worry lay with the enemy armies likely to attack during that time. If the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization sent them, they probably wouldn't be weak. He hoped his skeleton army could hold out that long.

"Let's find a place to set up camp. I have a feeling our enemies will be here soon," he suggested.

Duan Meng knew her limits and followed his lead. The Dark Cursed Bugs spread out in a wider search pattern and eventually found a small lake. It was barely more than a pond, but there was enough water to sustain them for quite some time.

Han Wu quickly ordered his army and Duan Meng to follow him to the lake. Halfway there, they encountered their first enemy force. The leader wore heavy armor and a metal mask that concealed their face, likely to protect vulnerable spots.

Behind the leader stood three battalions, arranged in precise formation: 1,000 Lancers, 1,000 Infantry, and 1,000 Archers. The moment the leader locked eyes with Han Wu and Duan Meng, they gave the order to charge. "Die, you scum!"

Since this was their first encounter with the enemy, Han Wu and Duan Meng decided not to take any chances. The Centurion Treants encircled their combined army in a tight, protective ring while Han Wu deployed his skeletons to engage the incoming forces. The rest of their troops held their ground for the time being.

Han Wu expected his 1.97 million skeletons to overwhelm the smaller army easily. Instead, the 3,000-strong force met them with fierce resistance. Following their leader's command, the Lancers linked their weapons to form a massive lance stretching hundreds of meters. With a single, powerful sweep, they obliterated 100,000 skeletons.

The Infantry and Archers joined the assault. The Infantry summoned a giant blade and shield, using the shield to block the skeletons' advances while a single swing of their colossal blade wiped out 50,000 skeletons in one strike.

The Archers, however, made little impact. The skeletons showed no fear of arrows, and the Centurion Treants blocked every volley, keeping Han Wu and Duan Meng safe under their guard.

After relentless resistance, the skeletons finally clashed with the enemy in a brutal melee. Han Wu noticed that the enemy units were not only skilled as a group but also individually formidable. Each unit could hold its own against 50 to 100 Common skeletons or Iron Skeletons armed with bone weapons.

Driven by curiosity, Han Wu inspected the units' data.

[Lancer/Sword and Shield/Archer. Unique life forms. Skills: Military Close Combat Technique, Military Weapon Combat Technique, Pierce, Shield Bash, Sharpshooter. They are unyielding and brave soldiers who have never lost.]

Han Wu frowned as he examined the data. "They are only Unique life forms, yet they wield such power. I thought I was facing an entire army of Heroic life forms."

The Heroic skeletons grew impatient as their numbers dwindled. These skeletons possessed a degree of intelligence and knew when to strike. One of the Osteomancers leapt forward and manipulated the scattered bone fragments into the shape of a towering bone giant. The rest followed, assembling their bodies with urgent precision.

The enemies froze in shock as the enormous bone giants materialized out of nowhere. It felt as if Han Wu had unleashed hundreds of nuclear strikes simply because they had dared to kick him. They wanted to scold Han Wu for being so honorless, but it was already too late.

The Osteomancers clashed fiercely with the enemy, scattering them with powerful blows. Their formations shattered, and their morale crumbled. Many fell beneath the bone giants' crushing feet.

After most of their forces had been slaughtered, the enemy leader realized their assault had failed. As they tried to flee, a Black Skeleton blocked their path. It had somehow slipped past their defenses unnoticed.

The Black Skeleton gathered its Undead Energy and unleashed a devastating Undead Slash, severely wounding the enemy leader before draining all of their Life Energy. In seconds, the leader's body shriveled into a withered husk.

The Black Skeleton then stripped the armor from the corpse and eagerly presented it to Han Wu. He examined it with mild disgust but then touched it cautiously, discovering it was actually Divine equipment. The armor bore a special protective charm that deflected slashes from bladed weapons.

"Not bad," Han Wu remarked, impressed. He offered the armor to Duan Meng, but she declined. It was heavy and unsightly, and she had no interest in wearing it.

In the end, Han Wu handed it to a Scorching Dwarf for modification. He planned to give it to the Black Skeleton as a reward for eliminating the enemy leader.

The Black Skeleton also gave him a bronze token it had taken from the corpse. One side bore the word *Order*, while the other side displayed the name *Song*. Han Wu remembered hearing of a region called the Song Kingdom on the Warring Kingdom Continent.

*Was the defeated army from there?* he wondered as he examined the token.

To his surprise, the token granted enough experience points to instantly upgrade one of his altars from Level 2 to Level 4. He only needed 180 more tokens to transform all his altars into Eternal Altars. A surge of motivation filled him. The thought of fighting more of them suddenly seemed far more appealing.

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[ 2,245 words ]

## **Chapter 217 - Three Guillotines**

Warring Kingdom Continent, Ten Kingdom Domain, Meditation Palace.

Hundreds of youths were seated, their eyes shut tight, each seemingly engrossed in profound concentration. Without warning, one of these youths toppled from his cushion, blood spraying from his mouth. He had clearly lost.

Three armored men quickly came to his aid, helping him to his feet before escorting him away from the area. Witnessing this, Zhao Cheping, the invigilator representing the Song Kingdom, approached the youth to discover precisely what had transpired.

The youth, still reeling from the experience, replied with a shaky voice, "I faced hundreds of massive, ten-meter-tall bone giants, but with just three battalions under my command, I stood no chance and was completely overpowered."

Zhao Cheping let out a weary sigh. The Song Kingdom's emperor had consistently been derelict in his duties, leading to a relentless and steady decline in the kingdom's might. The situation was particularly frustrating, especially considering that even the promising young general, a prodigy they had invested all their available resources into nurturing, had been defeated so quickly.

His gaze settled on the exhausted youth, a deep sigh of disappointment escaping his lips. He knew it was pointless to scold him now.

"That's alright," he said, his voice tinged with resignation. "Go back and get some rest."

With the young general gone, Zhao Cheping found himself standing alone before the grand palace. His gaze then drifted to a black-faced youth<sup>[1]</sup> seated in the Meditation Palace. This particular youth was one of the younger generation of generals whom Zhao Cheping held in very high regard.

"Bao Xiren, the hope of the Song Kingdom lies on your shoulders. Don't disappoint me!"

The young general, Bao Xiren, involuntarily shuddered as his spirit was drawn into the strange and unfamiliar space. He then raised two fingers, pointing them sharply like the tip of a sword, and muttered silently, "Martial Manifestation."

Behind him, nine battalions shimmered into existence, each boasting a thousand units. Simultaneously, six powerful Spirit Generals materialized at his side. Four of these generals exuded an incredibly intense bloodlust, an aura strong enough to instill terror in the hearts of most living beings. Inscribed onto their bodies were the characters "Long", "Hu", "Chao", and "Han" respectively.[2] The remaining two Spirit Generals, in stark contrast, radiated an air of justice. One of them, wielding a decorative sword, had the character "Zhao" inscribed on its body, while the other, holding a fan, had the character "Ce" inscribed on its body.

"I've detected the enemy's location," the Ce Spirit General said as it pointed its fan in a certain direction, its eyes twinkling like distant stars, giving the impression it could see what was happening thousands of kilometers away.

"There's a presence nearby," the Zhao Spirit General warned, its heightened hearing having pinpointed a presence. Without hesitation, it then swung its sword, unleashing a rapid, flying slash that precisely struck and killed a Dark Cursed Bug that had been hiding just ten meters away.

On the other side, Han Wu had just received a report from his Dark Cursed Bug and was about to review the footage when he suddenly lost contact.

"They actually detected my Dark Cursed Bugs?" he muttered, a hint of surprise in his voice. "They must be very talented this time."

"Should I send my lizardmen to probe their capabilities and gauge their strength?" Duan Meng offered.

Han Wu, not wanting to discourage her enthusiasm, promptly agreed. "Sure, go ahead."

Without hesitation, Duan Meng issued orders for her Infantry Lizardmen and Archer Blazing Lizardmen to move out. Her agile lizardmen quickly pinpointed the enemy's position, and it seemed the opposing force remained unaware of their presence. Observing the situation from a safe distance, she decided to launch an ambush, aiming to eliminate them quickly amidst the chaos.

Just as the lizardmen were about to strike, the Zhao Spirit General's voice suddenly cut through the air, declaring, "Sneaking around in such a manner is truly the action of a despicable person."

Having uttered those words, it leaped high into the air and, with a powerful swing of its sword, unleashed hundreds of flying slashes, striking down all the lizardmen with terrifying accuracy. Duan Meng's carefully constructed ambush had collapsed. She

clenched her fist, her face contorted with a mixture of anger and humiliation, and with a furious shout, ordered her surviving lizardmen to attack head-on.

Thousands of lizardmen suddenly surged from the tall grass, charging directly at Bao Xiren. However, the young general remained stoic, not a single hint of emotion on his face. The four Spirit Generals standing behind him, however, were clearly itching for a fight. With frightening speed, they swung their blades, and within mere moments, all of the attacking lizardmen lay dead.

The Spirit Generals' bloodlust grew even denser, and they let out derisive chuckles, their voices dripping with contempt.

"Mere barbarians!" They sneered. "You don't even have the right to speak in the presence of our lord!"

Bao Xiren continued his advance, his facial expression remaining perfectly impassive. Behind him, his nine thousand soldiers marched with impeccable synchronized movements. Duan Meng, observing the scene, was stunned—it was a devastating blow to see thousands of the lizardmen she had so carefully nurtured be decimated with such terrifying efficiency and speed.

By this point, Han Wu had realized that they were up against a particularly difficult enemy this time. However, it was a fact that the stronger their opponents proved to be, the more significant the potential rewards would become. He issued commands for his skeletons to hold their formation, and it wasn't long before the two forces finally converged.

Bao Xiren's army seemed almost insignificant when pitted against Han Wu's monstrous skeleton army. Despite this overwhelming disparity, Bao Xiren himself remained completely calm, displaying not even a single trace of fear. His four Spirit Generals behind him, however, were positively vibrating with anticipation.

"Lord Bao," one exclaimed, "look at the sheer number of undead here! This person must be extremely wicked! Grant us permission to take his head and enact justice for the people!"

"Hold on," Bao Xiren interjected, speaking for the first time. "He is not truly covered in sins and evil, even though he undeniably has a great deal of blood on his hands. It seems more likely that the people he's killed must have held some sort of grudge against him first."

The Ce Spirit General asked, "Lord Bao, what then are your intentions?"

"We shall remove the evil and protect the good! Let's exorcise the undead in front of us!"

The Zhao Spirit General was moved by his words. “Lord Bao, you are truly wise!”

The four Spirit Generals behind him bowed. “We will assist Lord Bao to the best of our ability!”

With his nine battalions in formation and the six Spirit Generals releasing their energy, Bao Xiren channeled their morale, allowing him to summon three huge guillotines. The moment the three guillotines appeared, Han Wu detected a trace of a Divine Aspect within them, and he quickly realized that even Gods like himself might find it incredibly challenging to evade their abilities.

Once the guillotines were fully materialized, Bao Xiren roared, “Raise!”

One of the guillotines, adorned with a dog head on its frame, slowly raised its blade. At that very moment, Han Wu and Duan Meng saw translucent apparitions of a dog spirit appear directly above the heads of every Common life form within their army. As the guillotine’s blade dropped, the apparitions simultaneously opened their jaws and bit down.

In that terrifying instant, nearly a million Common life forms were utterly obliterated, their souls completely exorcised from existence. Where they had stood moments before, there was now nothing but empty space, as if they had never been.

Han Wu’s heart nearly seized in his chest from the sheer shock of it—the guillotine’s power was too overwhelming! A wave of panic immediately washed over him when he remembered two more of these terrifying devices still remained unused.

“Attack him! Attack and stop him now!” he roared, his voice laced with urgency.

Responding to Han Wu’s command, their army swiftly unleashed a devastating barrage of skills upon Bao Xiren. Branch Pierce, Shadow Nails, Fireballs, and numerous other long-range attacks, all capable of overwhelming Bao Xiren and his army, streaked across the battlefield.

Of course, Bao Xiren’s Spirit Generals were clearly not present just for appearances; they were certainly not pushovers. The four Spirit Generals behind him simply opened their mouths and effortlessly and completely devoured the entire barrage of attacks aimed at them. As Han Wu remained paralyzed by shock and disbelief at this turn of events, Bao Xiren calmly proceeded to raise the blade of the second guillotine.

Once again, as the ominous blade began its ascent, a terrifying apparition, this time of a tiger, materialized above the heads of all their Elite life forms, and the moment the blade dropped, these tiger apparitions simultaneously snapped their jaws shut, violently biting the heads of the Elite life forms clean off. In that instant, millions of them perished on the spot.

Witnessing the horrifying scene of millions of his units simply crumpling without any warning, Han Wu was left utterly petrified. He had absolutely no clue what kind of devastating power was at play; this was the first time he had seen such clean kills. It was, beyond a doubt, the most straightforward and precise killing technique he had ever come across.

“Quick, kill him!” Han Wu bellowed, his voice raw with fury. He had never before suffered such devastating and immediate losses. In response, his Heroic Osteomancers began rapidly absorbing the countless scattered bone fragments around them. They swiftly transformed, growing into hundreds of massive bone giants before charging relentlessly towards Bao Xiren.

The nine battalions behind Bao Xiren quickly sprang into action, shifting formation to create nine immense weapons. They then attacked the charging bone giants, effortlessly crushing the Osteomancers that controlled them and buying Bao Xiren enough time to raise the blade of the third guillotine.

The blade of the intricately carved, dragon-shaped guillotine rose into position. As it did, a majestic, golden apparition of a dragon materialized above the heads of every single Unique life form in Han Wu’s vast army. As the final blade dropped, the golden dragons then swiftly coiled themselves around all his Unique life forms, utterly crushing them to death within a few breaths.[3]

Despite the catastrophic losses, Han Wu quickly observed that every unit above the Unique rank remained intact. Bao Xiren had used up all three of his terrifying guillotines, yet he had only managed to annihilate units at the Unique rank and below. The skill was only effective on units below the Heroic rank!

Still seething and bristling from the devastating losses he had just suffered, Han Wu let out a furious roar, sounding like a creature from the abyss.

“Are you ready to die?” he bellowed, his voice filled with venom. “Attack!”

Once more, the remaining Osteomancers surged forward, and the surviving half-dragons and lizardmen unleashed a vicious counterattack of their own. However, all their attacks were completely blocked by an impenetrable shield created by the nine battalions.

Bao Xiren remained perfectly still, his gaze fixed on Han Wu, and asked, “Even now, do you fail to see the error in your ways?”

Upon hearing those words, Han Wu’s mind was suddenly overwhelmed by a chaotic flurry of memories. He vividly recalled every person he had killed and the immense rivers of blood he had shed. A deep worry then crept into his thoughts, a chilling fear that his parents, should they ever see what he had become, might no longer recognize their own son.

The crushing weight of guilt pressed heavily upon Han Wu's heart, and for a fleeting moment, he was on the verge of pleading for mercy. But just as quickly, he snapped out of his trance, his eyes blazing as he bellowed angrily, "You scoundrel! You dare to play such a trick on me? Osteomancers, shatter their barrier!"

The hundreds of Osteomancers rained blows onto Bao Xiren's barrier while they heeded his command. They ignored the blows from the nine battalions, even if their bodies were being destroyed.

This wasn't just a battle between armies. This was a battle between gods, and also a battle between the Divine Civilization and the Warring Kingdom Civilization. Neither side must show mercy to the other.

1. Not a slur. This is a reference to Judge Bao, also called Bao Qingtian, for his honesty and righteousness. In opera or drama, he is often portrayed with a black face and a white crescent-shaped birthmark on his forehead. In legends, because he was born dark-skinned and extremely ugly, Bao Zheng was considered cursed and thrown away by his father right after birth. However, his virtuous elder sister-in-law, who just had an infant named Bao Mian (包勉), picked Bao Zheng up and raised him like her own son. ☞

2. They represent the four city guards who were loyal to Bao Qingtian. Their names are Zhang Long, Zhao Hu, Wang Chao, and Ma Han. ☞

3. This is yet another reference to Bao Qingtian. He had three level-style guillotines with the handles shaped into the head of a dog, tiger, and dragon. The dog-shaped one was used on commoners, the tiger-shaped one on nobles and influential individuals, and the dragon-shaped one on those from the royal family. ☞

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[ 1,218 words ]

## Chapter 218 - Skull Guillotine

The bone giant shattered and reassembled itself repeatedly during the battle, showcasing its infamous resilience.

Bao Xiren's stamina dwindled as the fight wore on, and he steadily lost ground.

Han Wu called his sole Lord Giga Osteomancer to the front. The 100-meter-tall behemoth thundered across the battlefield and brought its massive foot down on Bao Xiren's barrier. Cracks spiderwebbed across the barrier as the troops struggled to

sustain it. The nine battalions started to falter, but Han Wu knew this was only the beginning.

The Osteomancers led the melee assault while the half-dragons and lizardmen unleashed a relentless hail of ranged attacks from a distance. Soldiers fell within Bao Xiren's ranks, even as the six Spirit Generals worked tirelessly to shield him. Blades clashed in the air, and waves of flying slashes swept through the battlefield.

Both sides sustained heavy injuries. Seizing the moment, the Holy Skeleton and Crystal Lich summoned more skeletons from the corpses littering the ground. Unique Skeleton Knights crawled from the remains, and Han Wu quickly merged them into new Osteomancers, which used the surrounding bone fragments to turn into their bone giant forms and charged into battle.

Bao Xiren finally showed signs of strain when he witnessed the enemy's relentless advance. His foe's endurance bordered on miraculous. Though their forces had once seemed evenly matched, the balance slowly tipped in Han Wu's favor as more Osteomancers entered the fray.

The Holy Skeleton and Crystal Lich even extended their bony claws over the corpses of Bao Xiren's soldiers. New skeletons emerged from the fallen, turning on their former comrades with brutal efficiency.

Bao Xiren grew even more stunned as he watched his battalions descend into chaos. He had no strategy to counter such a relentless army. The six Spirit Generals understood that Bao Xiren had lost; pressing on would only drain their remaining strength. They swiftly lifted him and fled. As long as their general survived, they could rebuild their army.

Han Wu sent his Osteomancers to pursue them, but the Spirit Generals moved too quickly. Frustrated at losing Bao Xiren, Han Wu unleashed his fury on the remnants of the defeated army, reducing them to dust.

Back in the Meditation Palace, Bao Xiren's eyelids snapped open. He sighed in disappointment.

The Song Kingdom's invigilator noticed his mood and asked, "Xiren, what's wrong? How is it going on your end?"

"Master, I'm fine. I've just hit a temporary wall. I can keep fighting," he replied.

Zhao Cheping exhaled with relief and was thankful that Bao Xiren remained in the tournament. The Song Kingdom would have faced ridicule if he had been eliminated so early.

Suddenly, Bao Xiren made an unusual request. “Master, may I visit the Divine Civilization once this tournament ends?”

“I will allow it.”

Meanwhile, Han Wu turned all the corpses into skeletons to replenish his army, including those Bao Xiren had slain. Yet the number of reanimated skeletons fell far short of his expectations.

It seemed Bao Xiren’s three guillotines carried the essence of some form of judgment. Once judged, the fate of the being could no longer be altered.

Han Wu had started with nearly 2 million skeletons, but now fewer than 20,000 remained. The rest of his army had dwindled to barely 100 units. Every unit of the Worker, Physician, and Technician castes had been wiped out.

Han Wu and Duan Meng had lost all of their support-type units. Without the ample food and supplies Han Wu had brought, surviving an entire month in this place would have been impossible.

Duan Meng voiced her concern. “We have so few units left. If we encounter another strong enemy, I’m afraid we won’t survive.”

“That may not be true,” Han Wu replied calmly. “Though we’ve lost many, the ones left are our elite forces. Their strength is formidable. Besides, my skeletons can replenish as long as they keep fighting. We will rebuild our army soon enough.”

Duan Meng had no choice but to trust him, silently praying their next foe would be weaker. Somehow, the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization seemed to answer her plea. The enemies they faced afterward were all weak, falling swiftly to Han Wu’s skeletons. He even collected abundant treasures from their remains.

Despite the loot, Han Wu’s mind lingered on Bao Xiren’s three guillotines, which appeared to wield the power of a Divine Aspect. In his spare moments, he spent Divine Points trying to replicate their power. He also incorporated everything that he had learned about the Destruction Aspect into this effort.

It took him twenty-eight days before he finally grasped the Skill’s mechanics. Just minutes before leaving that space, he succeeded in researching a new Skill on his own. He had tried to reproduce all three guillotines but managed to form only one. The result was a completely black guillotine with a skeleton as its lever, which he named Skull Guillotine.

[Skull Guillotine: Your enemies shall receive the judgment of destruction regardless of their rank. All stand equal before destruction.]

Han Wu had only comprehended the basics, so the chance of killing an enemy with it stood at just 1%. That meant only 1% of an army would perish if he used the Skull Guillotine. Whether it struck cannon fodder or generals depended entirely on luck.

He noticed fifteen minutes remained before they would be transported out of this place. Glancing at his army of 1.2 million skeletons, he sighed with relief. Their numbers were fewer than he had hoped, but he had managed to restore his overall fighting force.

He was beginning to think the second calamity had nearly passed when his scouts raised the alarm—another army was approaching. This one looked formidable, fielding seven full battalions.

After battling many armies, Han Wu developed a rough sense of how a force's strength correlated with its battalion count. Usually, the stronger an army, the more battalions it fielded. Exceptions existed, such as generals from noble families who often had Spirit Generals or treasures guarding them.

Still, battalion count usually provided a reliable measure. A general commanding seven battalions was quite powerful, but Han Wu considered them slightly below his level.

Soon, the two sides met, and the enemy general introduced himself first. "I am Thunderfire General Luo Wulei of the Wei Kingdom. You scum, state your name!"

Han Wu frowned. He'd heard that name before. The bandit king had begged for his life and claimed he was an informant for Luo Wulei. Han Wu hadn't expected to meet the man in person today.

"Luo Wulei? I'll send you to your informant so you can speak with him again." He summoned the Skull Guillotine, and it materialized above him.

Luo Wulei gripped his Yellow Thunder Spear tightly. He didn't know what the Skull Guillotine was, but the black blade and skeletal motif were enough to convince him it was dangerous.

He raised his spear to summon lightning when a skeleton apparition suddenly appeared overhead. The skeletal claws dropped and phased through his skull without resistance. Luo Wulei died instantly, claimed by the Skull Guillotine's judgment.

Upon witnessing their general's death, his soldiers scattered in fear. Han Wu ordered his Osteomancers to pursue them and turn them into skeletons. Meanwhile, he approached Luo Wulei's corpse and claimed all the treasures for himself.

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## Chapter 219 - Level 10 Shelter and Recruiting Villagers

[ 1,350 words ]

### Chapter 219 - Level 10 Shelter and Recruiting Villagers

Han Wu and Duan Meng were automatically transported outside Han Wu's shelter after escaping the second calamity's designated space.

Duan Meng slumped with exhaustion. "I'm so tired. I just want to go back and sleep for three nights straight."

Though Han Wu's protection had kept her from harm, she had remained on high alert the entire time. The moment she no longer had to watch for threats, her brain finally started to surrender to fatigue.

Han Wu chuckled softly. "Go ahead. I'll call if anything urgent comes up."

Duan Meng yawned and headed back to her shelter with the remaining lizardmen. Meanwhile, Han Wu ordered his skeletons to patrol and gather resources before entering his. They had spent thirty days trapped in that space, but their shelters had continued operating normally the entire time.

A lot of units were summoned daily, which in turn protected his shelter. Han Wu felt relief wash over him when he saw hundreds of Scorching Dwarves waiting inside. The ones he had brought into the space had all been killed. He had feared he'd need to wait a long time before resuming weapon forging while replenishing the dwarves' numbers.

He opened the group chat and found only six students remaining, including himself. Everyone else had been eliminated. The second calamity had proven even more brutal than expected.

Now he faced a dilemma. With so few survivors left, who would buy his equipment? Would anyone still be interested in tickets to his training grounds?

The questions gnawed at him until messages from Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian appeared in their small group chat. Sun Qingnian had sent the first message.

[Sun Qingnian: Thank goodness you survived, Han Wu.]

Qin Shuang responded with a hint of irritation.

[Qin Shuang: Of course he wouldn't get eliminated. He's the best.]

[Sun Qingnian: Sure, sure. Your Han Wu is the best. But the second calamity was brutal. Many of our classmates were defeated in space, or their shelters were destroyed while they were away. Such a waste.]

Han Wu agreed.

[Han Wu: Yeah. Only six of us are left in this region. That calamity was terrifying.]

Sun Qingnian read his message and shared a crucial update.

[Sun Qingnian: There are just six of us left here, but other colleges still have students. After the second calamity, the large group chat was unlocked. Han Wu, didn't you know?]

Han Wu's shock was immediate. He hadn't known about it at all. He quickly checked his interface and found a new group chat with 30,000 members.

He opened it and was immediately met with a flurry of messages scrolling past in real time. Every username carried the name of a college as a prefix. When he checked the member list, he found over 600 users marked with *Imperial College*—the largest faction in the entire chat.

Others belonged to the Demonic Imperial College, Tianhai College, and several smaller institutions. Though these factions were noticeably smaller, they were still present. He also spotted students from lesser-known colleges like Greenflight College and New East College. Most of these colleges had fewer than five survivors in the Warring Kingdom Civilization. All of them were elites like Han Wu who had endured the second calamity.

Seeing the large number of students online, Han Wu started selling his tickets into the group chat. He needed more clients and saw no reason to miss the chance to reach all 30,000 students.

However, others soon joined the selling frenzy, offering tickets at even lower prices to undercut him. Many students had apparently cleared ruins on their own. With hundreds of colleges participating in this major class, it was not surprising to find some who managed solo runs.

When Han Wu noticed his competitors drawing away potential buyers, he slashed his prices even further. He cut them so low it was as if he were paying people to take the tickets off his hands.

As he expected, the absurdly low price drew a flood of buyers. Many students snapped up Han Wu's tickets and entered his training grounds.

The other competitors saw how much he was selling, but none of them felt even a hint of envy. They all had their own training grounds and understood the profit margins well

enough to see what was happening. At that price, Han Wu wasn't making money—he was bleeding it. The more tickets he sold, the more he lost. Some of them even bought in bulk, hoping to speed up his financial collapse.

Han Wu, however, did not try to stop them. On the contrary, he pushed to sell even more tickets. He never intended to profit from the ticket sales themselves. What he sought were the corpses his clients left behind. With that many people passing through his grounds, mortality was inevitable. Whether they passed or failed, some would fall.

Han Wu harvested these corpses to summon skeletons, steadily expanding his army. He even rented them out as laborers, earning far more than enough to cover his expenses and invest in upgrading his shelter.

With a steady stream of resources pouring into his storage each day, he quickly upgraded his shelter to Level 10. Level 7 had granted him a Small Castle, Level 8 a Medium Castle, and Level 9 a Large Castle. Finally, at Level 10, his shelter transformed into a City, which provided him essential infrastructure and gave him the authority to recruit up to 10,000 villagers.

Unlike the summoned units, these villagers were living beings with intelligence and emotions. The first villager he recruited was a man named Er Dan. Han Wu questioned him for information, and Er Dan answered honestly. He used to be a villager in the Yuan Kingdom but fled due to his hatred for the cruel emperor and became an exile.

Er Dan had found Han Wu's recruitment notice by chance and decided to try his luck here. Although he was initially afraid of the countless skeletons outside and inside the city, he chose to stay because no tyrant ruled this place.

Han Wu listened carefully to Er Dan's story and pondered deeply. He had never imagined the villagers he recruited carried such complete and complex pasts.

He then asked the new villagers the same question. Despite coming from different places—some from the Qin Kingdom, others from the Holy Church Continent, and even a few from the Black Prison—they gave roughly the same answer. Most could no longer live in their old homes and came here after seeing Han Wu's recruitment notice.

At the same time, Han Wu learned a great deal about the four continents from their stories. Their arrival breathed new life into the city, which was now beginning to thrive.

He opened his interface to check the requirements for upgrading his shelter. In addition to needing hundreds of millions of each resource, there was another crucial criterion: Approval Rating. Without a high enough rating, he couldn't upgrade the shelter to Level 11. That rating also affected other aspects of city management in ways he was only beginning to understand.

On the third day of his rule, Er Dan brought him a gift—a completely pitch-black stone. He'd found it near the edge of the city's territory. At first, he thought it was an ordinary rock, but soon realized it was incredibly durable and impervious to all forms of attack. Convinced it was a rare treasure, he offered it to the city lord as thanks for taking him in.

Han Wu recognized it immediately. The black stone was naturally formed Darksteel, a rare and valuable metal used in weapon forging. When used as a material, weapons crafted from it almost always became Divine weapons. In rare cases, they even ascended to the level of God weapons.

Unfortunately, Han Wu had no one skilled enough to forge with it yet. The Scorching Dwarves excelled at equipment crafting, but the newest batch were all Elite life forms. None possessed the power to handle Darksteel. Thus, he had no choice but to toss it into his storage for the time being.

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

[ 1,207 words ]

## **Chapter 220 - Lightning Tribulation**

Han Wu's skeletons swelled into a monstrous army, and he commanded them to scour the entire region for resources. With his overwhelming strength, the other two students chose to surrender and serve him, helping him manage the territory. Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian were his trusted friends, while Duan Meng stood as his ally. In every sense, Han Wu had become the unstoppable ruler of the region.

Whenever he faced a difficult challenge, he combed through the land and seized every available resource.

Where should he explore next? As someone from the Divine Civilization—a civilization driven by the passion to conquer—he was compelled to seek his next target. The small region they inhabited was merely the beginning. He hungered for more land to seize.

Han Wu selected the Warring Kingdom Continent out of the four nearby options. It was both the closest and the one he knew best. The nearest kingdom to his territory was the Wei Kingdom. He still carried the token he had taken from the corpse of General Luo Wulei from the Wei Kingdom.

Yet invading the kingdom alone was impossible. Han Wu's skeletons were too distinctive. If even one soldier spotted them, the wall-mounted cannons would rain fire on his army. Not even his Osteomancers could withstand such relentless bombardment to lay siege to the kingdom. He needed a different strategy.

Qin Shuang and the others didn't have skeletons, so they focused on expanding their forces to increase their overall strength. Over the course of the second calamity, which lasted an entire month, they had collected numerous caste recipes from fallen generals. After compiling and reviewing the recipes, they began producing new units to bolster their armies.

Qin Shuang's core race was the Thunder Sparrows. With one of the recipes as a reference, she created the Light Cavalry Shock Riders, a fusion of her Thunder Sparrows and Thunder Spirits. She also developed the Heavy Cavalry Sonorous Brigade by combining Giant Thunder Sparrows with Giant Archers.

Additionally, she used recipes to form her own Physician, Technician, and Worker castes. As soon as her shelter reached Level 9, she equipped all their altars. That was when the weather changed. Thunderclouds gathered ominously above Qin Shuang's shelter, as if signaling the world's end.

Han Wu and the others grew worried. They rushed to her shelter, ready to assist at the first sign of trouble. Qin Shuang, however, understood what was happening. When she gathered all nine castes, a system message warned her of the impending tribulation. She now had to endure the lightning tribulation alone to merge the powers of the Nine Martial Castes into herself.

During this trial, no one else could intervene, and no aid would work. Only she could withstand the lightning, and only then could she perfectly fuse their powers into her body. They listened as she explained and watched her step into the storm's heart.

Thunder rolled across the sky, and lightning rained down upon her. In the end, she triumphed. The powers of the nine castes merged fully into her, granting her the ability to transform into any one of them and wield their unique strengths.

After the tribulation, her strength surpassed even Han Wu's. He noticed the difference immediately and redoubled his efforts to complete his own castes. Although his shelter had already reached Level 10, he had only gathered five castes so far: the Infantry skeletons, Technician Scorching Dwarves, Lancer half-dragons, Archer Dark Cursed Bugs, and Worker Grovekings. He still lacked the Physician, Vanguard, Light Cavalry, and Heavy Cavalry castes.

Watching Qin Shuang effortlessly switch forms, he realized that the strength of his own transformations depended heavily on the power of his armies. He scrutinized the remaining four castes carefully, knowing they had to be powerful and well-experienced.

Han Wu poured considerable resources into the task before finally assembling the four castes he was satisfied with.

For his Physician caste, he selected the Sanctumbranch, a humanoid Unique life form. It could heal wounds, detoxify poisons, and enhance allies. It ranked among the most versatile units within the caste.

His Vanguard caste consisted of the Iron Stupas, humanoid Unique life forms clad in heavy armor and armed to the teeth. Their defenses rivaled the strength of a city wall. Even an Osteomancer's bone giant would have to expend immense energy just to breach their guard.

Han Wu chose the Frost Metallions for his Light Cavalry. These Unique life forms wielded unstoppable power, radiating a frigid air that dropped temperatures sharply. Enemies caught in this cold for long periods risked freezing solid.

Finally, his Heavy Cavalry caste consisted of the Deeptide Whales—massive, powerful aquatic units. He prized them for their sheer size and strength, planning to use them to transport his skeletons by sea on his next campaign.

Once he gathered all nine castes, numerous thunderclouds swirled above his shelter. He also received a notification, confirming that he had collected all nine castes and must now face the lightning tribulation to fuse their powers into his body.

He had already been aware of this and made thorough preparations. Yet as he waited, he realized the thunderclouds showed no sign of stopping. Instead, they kept thickening and expanding, layer upon layer.

Qin Shuang's thundercloud had only spanned fifty kilometers when she underwent her own tribulation. In contrast, Han Wu's had already exceeded 500 kilometers, and it was still expanding.

A numbness crept over Han Wu's scalp. He wasn't sure he could survive the lightning from such a massive thundercloud.

Qin Shuang's heart raced when she sensed the immense power contained within those clouds. Her affinity for lightning allowed her to recognize that Han Wu's tribulation was easily a hundred times more intense than hers. Despite being a lightning and thunder expert, she had needed days to recover from her own lightning tribulation.

Han Wu wasn't. He lacked her resistance and would surely suffer far worse injuries. Yet all Qin Shuang could do was wait anxiously for the tribulation to begin.

Sun Qingnian and Duan Meng stood nearby with their Physician castes, ready to heal Han Wu the moment he cleared the lightning tribulation.

Han Wu hovered above his shelter, watching the thunderclouds swell until they stretched 10,000 kilometers in radius—large enough to cover the entire region and a vast expanse of ocean beyond.

Before the lightning struck, the nine castes that Han Wu had chosen materialized around him. Though formed from energy, their visages looked vividly real.

The first bolt of lightning cracked through the sky. The Archer Dark Cursed Bug, the one most compatible with Han Wu, flew into his body. Instantly, he transformed into a Dark Cursed Bug and melted into the shadows, hiding so no one could find him.

Unfortunately, the lightning traced him with ease and unleashed the heavens' fury. It tore into Han Wu, grievously injured him, and charred his body black. He reverted to his human form, feeling his organs tremble violently from the impact.

Still, the second bolt was coming fast, and he had no time to recover from his injuries. He glanced at his Worker Grovekin and an idea sparked. He hoped the Grovekin, as a treant, could speed his recovery and shield him from some of the lightning's power.

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

[ 1,255 words ]

## **Chapter 221 - Nine Martial Castes**

The Grovekin's visage entered Han Wu's body, transforming him into a towering treant. The treant's incredible vitality mended his wounds within moments. He barely had time to savor the recovery before the second lightning bolt struck.

This second strike hit harder than the first, splitting his bark and causing his entire form to dissolve. He was forced back into his human form, wounded once again by the fierce lightning. Without hesitation, he tapped into his third choice, the Sanctumbranch, just before the third lightning bolt descended.

This transformation didn't alter his appearance much, but it flooded his mind with an overwhelming stream of medical knowledge. He quickly absorbed the information and channeled his Divine Points to shape acupuncture needles. With swift precision, he drove the needles into key meridian points, awakening his dormant vitality. His cells pulsed with energy, repairing themselves with a speed and vigor that seemed almost ecstatic.

Then the third bolt struck. It tore through him with terrifying force, stripping away nearly all his vitality. Only a small reserve remained, just enough to keep his body knitting itself back together.

Han Wu's confidence grew as his body repaired itself after enduring the third strike. He next chose the Scorching Dwarf. Though each lightning bolt ravaged and wounded him, his body simultaneously grew stronger with every strike.

Below, Qin Shuang and the others watched with deep worry. Thankfully, Han Wu's chosen castes all boasted incredible strength or exceptional vitality. He endured the onslaught until the eighth lightning strike.

Now, only two choices remained: his skeletons and the Deeptide Whales. Dragging his battered form upright, he chose the Deeptide Whale as his eighth transformation. The visage entered him, and he expanded until he became a massive whale. He swam through the sea and leapt above the surface, sending huge waves crashing around him.

The eighth lightning carried far more destructive power than all the previous seven combined. It split the sea and cut through the towering waves before striking Han Wu directly.

Fortunately, the Deeptide Whale's massive, resilient form withstood the strike. Han Wu had survived the eighth lightning blast!

Up in the sky, the thunderclouds gradually dispersed after unleashing eight lightning strikes. Everyone assumed the final lightning would be weaker, when suddenly the remaining thunderclouds condensed into a single point. The thundercloud, once 10,000 kilometers in diameter, had shrunk to just 5,000. It had become a super-condensed thundercloud.

Qin Shuang nearly fainted at the sight. The cloud had compressed over 1,000 times. The ninth lightning strike promised to eclipse the previous eight. Could Han Wu withstand it?

She glanced at Han Wu with growing apprehension. He had already fused with the skeleton, transforming into a towering hundred-meter crystal giant. This was the union of the Crystal Lich and the Giga Osteomancer, the two strongest undead life forms in his army.

At the same time, the black Skull Guillotine appeared above Han Wu's head. Its deathly chill froze the air, making everyone's hearts momentarily stop. The Skull Guillotine represented Han Wu's comprehension of the concept of destruction and the Destruction Aspect itself. Its presence signaled that Han Wu had significantly deepened his understanding of the Divine Aspect.

A deafening boom echoed from the heavens as the bolt tore through the sky. The sky flared with intense light as the bolt struck the Skull Guillotine. The raw power of the lightning and the destruction it carried resonated with the Skull Guillotine, which absorbed the entire lightning tribulation. The Destruction Aspect had fully consumed the lightning's power.

Han Wu's comprehension and understanding of the concept of destruction improved a lot, which in turn enhanced his Skull Guillotine. The probability of killing an enemy instantly had been raised to 10% or at least 10,000 enemies without fail. The remaining 90% would be affected by the powers of the lightning tribulation and would be temporarily paralyzed. The duration of the paralysis was dependent on each individual's body constitution.

The thunderclouds vanished without a trace, and Han Wu returned to his humanoid form. He stared at his Skull Guillotine with excitement. Judging by its power, he could tell he had reached a basic comprehension of the concept of destruction. With more effort, he could achieve advanced comprehension.

Han Wu floated down slowly and barely touched the ground when a shower of healing and support techniques rained over him. They aimed to restore his weakened state as quickly as possible.

He felt a surge of warmth knowing how much they cared. "I've done it."

Qin Shuang rushed up to him, eyes shining with excitement. "I knew you could!"

Sun Qingnian looked worried. "Do I have to face a lightning tribulation like that? That thundercloud was enormous!"

Duan Meng rolled her eyes. "Do you really think you're as strong as Han Wu? Do you really believe you could summon a thundercloud that massive with your talent?"

Sun Qingnian exhaled in relief. "You're right. I haven't done anything wrong, so I doubt the heavens would send me such a powerful lightning tribulation."

Qin Shuang shot him a sharp glare. "If you're that dense, just stay quiet. I don't understand how those rich ladies fell for you."

Sun Qingnian chuckled. "They love me because of my handsome face and powerful little motor. Your Han Wu is pretty good too."

Qin Shuang blushed and ignored Sun Qingnian completely.

Han Wu chuckled and stepped in to ease the tension. "I fused myself with the nine castes and feel much stronger now. I think I'm as powerful as a High Lord. Each caste has its own unique traits... It's fascinating. Sun Qingnian, Mengmeng, both of you need to work harder and collect all nine castes as soon as possible."

Sun Qingnian's eyes sparkled with anticipation. "I wonder how many tails I'll grow after transforming into my Foxmen form. Maybe I could become the legendary Nine-Tailed Fox."

Duan Meng's expression turned anxious. "I don't have enough resources to buy the powerful recipes needed to complete my nine castes. Hang on, I really do have to collect them all quickly. The third calamity is coming soon. Everyone, we have to stay alert."

Uncertainty crept in as she recalled the looming threat of the third calamity. Her brother was exceptionally talented, yet he had failed to overcome it. She wasn't sure if they could survive it either. All she could hope for now was that she would or that Han Wu would protect her until they made it through.

After the warning, everyone returned to their shelter to strengthen themselves.

Outside the city, Han Wu found an open space and tested the powers of the Nine Martial Castes. The fusion allowed him to transform into any of the nine castes and wield their distinct abilities.

He started with the one he knew best: the Dark Cursed Bug. In an instant, he shrank into a fist-sized Dark Cursed Bug. Though it ranked as the weakest of the nine castes, it remained indispensable. Its mastery of Shadow Meld allowed it to disappear into darkness and gather intelligence unnoticed. Its small size often caused others to overlook it during covert missions.

It was not powerless either; its Shadow Nail could immobilize targets with a nail forged from shadows. When wielded skillfully, that tiny nail could turn the tide of battle.

Once in this form, Han Wu started researching for ways to improve Shadow Nail. His superior intelligence gave him an edge over ordinary Dark Cursed Bugs. After three days of effort, he succeeded in modifying Shadow Nail.

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

[ 1,130 words ]

## **Chapter 222 - Deeptrench Frogmen Ruins**

Han Wu named the new Skill: Shadow Needle. It was smaller than a Shadow Nail, more discreet, and required far less energy to use. Even the weakest Dark Cursed Bug could fire off hundreds of them. At first glance, it seemed like a weaker version of Shadow Nail. Its chances of immobilizing a target were lower, after all. However, Shadow Needle came with a powerful new trait that more than compensated for that loss.

The Shadow Needles could strike meridian points. When they hit an ordinary spot on the victim's shadow, their damage and effects were minimal. But if a Shadow Needle struck a meridian point on the shadow, its immobilizing power multiplied by thousands.

For example, if a Shadow Needle pierced the meridian point that controlled the body's movement, the victim would instantly be paralyzed. Other meridian points carried different effects: some caused blindness, others induced confusion, and a few even triggered violent energy feedback. With this capability, Shadow Needle cemented the Dark Cursed Bugs' role as silent assassins capable of one-shot kills.

Han Wu finished refining the technique and noticed many of his Dark Cursed Bugs had already mastered it. Apparently, they learned any technique he modified or acquired simultaneously.

After enhancing his Dark Cursed Bugs, Han Wu decided to find targets to test Shadow Needle. While scanning for missions in the chat group, he spotted a message from Qin Shuang. They had discovered a ruin near their region's border, but its unique terrain made it impossible for any of them to clear. They hoped Han Wu could assist.

Han Wu agreed and assembled an elite force, including the enhanced Dark Cursed Bugs. Everyone else in the region had already gathered there.

Qin Shuang, Sun Qingnian, Duan Meng, Wu Fang, and Liu Chuan were waiting for him. They had planned to tackle the ruins themselves for the rewards, yet even Qin Shuang, their strongest member, had failed against the complex layout. They had no choice but to seek Han Wu's help.

He asked for details about the ruins and learned it was the Deeptrench Frogmen Ruins. The site lay within a cave, where half the terrain was solid land and the other half a bottomless pit of water. Also, the cave's ceiling barely rose fifteen meters.

The greatest danger came from the monsters dwelling there, the Deeptrench Frogmen. These cunning foes would leap into the water to escape whenever they were losing. None of the five students had units capable of fighting underwater. Despite numerous attempts, they always left the ruins empty-handed.

Han Wu's eyes lit up when they described the underwater battle. His strongest caste, the Heavy Cavalry Deeptide Whales, ruled naval combat. This was the perfect challenge for his units.

When Han Wu entered the Deeptrench Frogmen Ruins, he was transported into a cave. Just as they had described, one half the floor was solid rock while the other half was a deep pool of water. The ceiling glittered with glowing crystals, softening the darkness more than he had expected.

Then a voice echoed in his mind. "Welcome to the Deeptrench Frogmen Ruins, *ribbit!*"

The tone was eerie, and Han Wu thought of a frog's large mouth when he heard it.

"There are six levels in the ruins. You will receive a reward for clearing each one. If you clear all six, you will obtain the treasure guarded by the Deeptrench Frogmen, *ribbit*. Pay 5,000 Food to start the first trial?"

"I accept."

Han Wu placed 5,000 Food on the stone floor before him. As the units sank into the ground, bubbles surfaced in the pool.

He deployed the age-old tactic of sending his skeletons as cannon fodder to test the enemy. The skeletons charged into the water and stood at the edge of the pool. Before they could act, the skeletons started falling down and splashed water everywhere until the pool fell silent once more.

Han Wu frowned in confusion and cautiously moved to the edge of the pool to examine it. Without warning, a long tongue shot out of the water and coiled tightly around his neck. Though he had the strength of a High Lord and could easily break free, he held back, driven by curiosity. He wanted to test the Deeptrench Frogmen's strength for himself.

The tongue yanked him into the water, where the Deeptrench Frogmen moved with ease. Each wielded a metal trident, lunging to stab the moment they spotted him.

Han Wu tapped into his newly acquired Nine Martial Castes' powers and transformed into the frighteningly tough Iron Stupa, clad in menacing heavy armor and armed to the teeth. It was as tough as a city wall, so the Deeptrench Frogmen's tridents did nothing to it.

However, because the Iron Stupa was heavy, and its weight dragged him downward at alarming speed. The Deeptrench Frogmen were smart enough to realize this, so they released him and let him sink down under.

It took a full minute before Han Wu reached the bottom, where he found a vast bed of skeletons. He couldn't tell how thick the bone layer was, but nestled among the remains lay countless token-like items.

Holding his breath, Han Wu brushed aside some bones and grabbed one of the tokens. Instantly, information flooded his mind. These tokens were the same ones that could boost the experience points of his altars!

He examined the token's surface. One side bore the character for *Order*, while the other displayed the character for *Han*. The token had once belonged to a general of the Han Kingdom. Now, it belonged to him.

Unfortunately, the bottom of the pool was filled with bones and tokens. It would take years to sift through everything. He would need to claim this ruin as his own if he wanted to collect them all.

Han Wu unleashed his full power and transformed into his Deeptide Whale form. His massive body filled the pool, displacing a vast volume of water that surged onto the surrounding land. The sudden powerful current forced many of the Deeptrench Frogmen upward, sweeping them out of the water and tossing them onto the shore.

Han Wu's elite forces moved in immediately. The first wave was not his skeletons but his Dark Cursed Bugs. They moved swiftly and unleashed a relentless hail of Shadow Needles.

The Deeptrench Frogmen's meridian points were pierced, and they collapsed, paralyzed on the ground. The skeletons surged forward, finishing them off with ruthless precision. Han Wu's forces tore through the Deeptrench Frogmen with effortless efficiency.

A few lucky Frogmen remained submerged, but a primal fear stirred deep within their bloodline. Han Wu circled beneath the surface, creating powerful whirlpools that shredded the remaining Deeptrench Frogmen into pieces. With this, he cleared the first trial.

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

[ 1,190 words ]

## **Chapter 223 - Deeptrench Frogking**

Soon, the second trial started. The Deeptrench Frogmen had evolved into Elite Deeptrench Frogfighters. They wielded metal tridents, sported long tongues, and had gained a new Skill called Water Bullet. It was a powerful attack capable of shattering even the Iron Skeletons.

Still, they proved no match for Han Wu's formidable Deeptide Whale form. Using the entire pool, he summoned a massive whirlpool that swept them all away in a single, decisive strike.

The third trial raised the stakes. This time, he had to face the Deeptrench Frogzerkers. They had bulky, muscular bodies and astonishing physical strength. Han Wu's enormous whirlpool alone couldn't wipe them out. It took the combined assault of the Dark Cursed Bugs' Shadow Needles and the half-dragons' lightning strikes to bring them down.

Han Wu had to admit the Deeptrench Frogzerkers were impressively powerful despite their amphibian origins. The fourth trial brought even more Frogzerkers, along with a towering creature known as the Deeptrench Megafrog, which stood ten meters tall and just as wide.

Still, it wasn't larger than Han Wu's Deeptide Whale form. Han Wu tackled and launched it onto dry land. The Osteomancers quickly transformed into their bone giant forms, pinned the creature down, and peeled off its skin.

The sight traumatized even the Deeptrench Frogzerkers, which fled into the water in fear of the massive Osteomancers. Sadly for them, Han Wu was stronger. A single, enormous whirlpool followed by a powerful tackle ended them swiftly.

Soon, the fifth trial arrived. The ruins seemed to sense that the Deeptrench Frogzerkers were no match for Han Wu and summoned a single boss monster, the Deeptrench Gigafrog.

The Deeptrench Gigafrog dwarfed even the Deeptrench Megafrog. It was so enormous that it could not fit inside the cave. Half of its massive body remained submerged underwater while only its upper half surfaced. It wielded powerful water-attribute skills like Water Cannon, which shattered two Osteomancers in a single, devastating blast.

Though it was a Lord life form, the Deeptrench Gigafrog was still weak compared to the High Lord Han Wu. Moreover, Han Wu had transformed into the Deeptide Whale, the strongest fighter in the water.

As expected, the Deeptrench Gigafrog shuddered upon sensing Han Wu's presence. It tried to escape by moving onto dry land, but its bulk prevented it from fitting inside the cave. The Osteomancers quickly grabbed boulders and relentlessly hurled them at the monster, trapping it in a pincer attack that left it helpless.

Han Wu tackled it repeatedly before finally slaying it. The Deeptrench Gigafrog floated lifelessly, turning upside down with its belly pressed against the cave ceiling. The Crystal Lich, unwilling to waste such a valuable corpse, commanded the Holy Skeleton and numerous Skeleton Knights to perform a simple summoning ritual.

The enormous Deeptrench Gigafrog's skeleton peeled away from its flesh. Without its muscles, it appeared much smaller, but it retained its strength as a Lord along with its powerful water-attribute skills.

Han Wu welcomed the new, powerful unit in his army and celebrated by circling joyfully through the water. The pool splashed and churned as currents stirred the bones resting at the bottom of the pit.

Han Wu was ready to face the sixth trial. Even before the boss appeared, he sensed the presence of a High Lord. He released his aura to disperse it and finally saw the true form of the boss—the Deeptrench Frogking!

Its colossal body resembled a mountain of flesh. Half of its head broke the water's surface, towering fifteen meters tall. The rest of its massive form remained submerged.

Han Wu could tell the Frogking was nearly as large as himself. The two leviathans filled the pool with barely any room to maneuver. They resembled two fighting giants trapped in a well, with no space to dodge or retreat.

This battle would come down to pure strength and skill. The Deeptrench Frogking opened its massive mouth and unleashed a fierce Water Cannon. The condensed ball of water struck with a weight hundreds of times denser than metal. Even underwater, the force sent waves splashing high.

Han Wu refused to back down. He twisted his body, creating a fierce maelstrom that threatened to tear everything apart. Even the massive Deeptrench Frogking struggled against the raging water currents, spinning on the spot like a puppy caught in a washing machine.

Dizziness swept over it as shallow wounds appeared across its skin from the relentless force of the water. Still, the injuries barely fazed the creature; its organs and skeleton remained untouched. The two exchanged blows, locked in a tense stalemate.

Fortunately, Han Wu was not alone. His skeleton army stood ready. The smartest among them, the Crystal Lich, fixed a cold glare on the water, its spiritual flames flickering fiercely. It commanded the Giga Osteomancer to transform into its towering hundred-meter-tall bone giant and wade into the water to restrain the Deeptrench Frogking. Meanwhile, it issued orders to other units, coordinating multiple tasks with ruthless efficiency.

The Dark Cursed Bugs circled above the water and launched Shadow Needles at intervals toward the Deeptrench Frogking. Though the Shadow Needles only stunned the Frogking for a fleeting 0.01 seconds at random intervals, Han Wu managed to deal significant damage during those brief openings.

The half-dragons gathered and pressed the tips of their lances together to summon a powerful lightning strike. The strongest among them absorbed the full charge into its lance. The Lightning Lance crackled with blue and white energy as the half-dragon aimed it directly at the Deeptrench Frogking and hurled it forward.

The Lightning Lance hit its mark, and its lightning paralyzed the Deeptrench Frogking for five entire seconds. Han Wu seized the opportunity to attack freely and inflicted grievous wounds across the Deeptrench Frogking's body.

Near the water's edge, a small group of Frost Metallions observed the half-dragons' tactic and mimicked it. They gathered freezing air into a concentrated point, forming a massive icicle before launching it at the Deeptrench Frogking.

The Deeptrench Frogking had just shaken off its paralysis when the massive icicle struck. The freezing air locked a large portion of its body in ice, triggering the onset of brumation from the sudden temperature drop. It grew sleepy, and its movements slowed considerably.

Han Wu recognized the Frost Metallions' potential. They had found the Deeptrench Frogking's weakness, so he ordered them to continue.

Obedying their master's command, the Frost Metallions intensified the cold around them and unleashed a barrage of icicles. These further froze the Deeptrench Frogking's body, and Han Wu continued raining heavy blows down on it. Even so, it took the entire team a grueling hour to finally kill the Deeptrench Frogking.

As it died, the strange voice echoed again inside Han Wu's mind. "You have cleared the sixth trial and the Deeptrench Frogmen Ruins, *ribbit!*"

[You have obtained the treasure of the Deeptrench Frogmen, *ribbit!*]

[You have obtained Primalize, *ribbit!*]

[You have obtained Eternal Altar: Deeptrench Frogmen, *ribbit!*]

[You have obtained Deeptrench Frogmen Training Ground, *ribbit!*]

Han Wu felt a surge of satisfaction as the notifications streamed in.

"What's Primalize?" he muttered, curiosity piqued. He decided to check it.

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

[ 1,774 words ]

## **Chapter 224 - Emergency Extraction**

Han Wu's eyes widened when he read what Primalize could do. A Deeptrench Frogman had recorded the details in a book, describing a method to revert their bloodline back to their ancestors, the Deeptrench Megafrogs. By doing this, they would gain powerful physical bodies, inherit the skills tied to their ancestral bloodline, and still manage to retain their intelligence.

This skill held immense value for species or subspecies with strong ancestral bloodlines running through their veins, like the half-dragons, which were the offspring of humans and Great Dragons. Although they inherited powers from both lineages, they also carried their weaknesses. They were strong, but their strength paled compared to the Great Dragons themselves.

What if he gave the book to the half-dragons to cultivate? His heart pounded at the thought. It could allow him to build an entire army of Great Dragons!

Great Dragons stood at the top of many civilizations' food chains. Even the weakest among them were Heroic life forms, and their true potential remained a mystery, even to him. Yet to use Primalize, Han Wu needed to gather vast resources. The cost was so steep that even the Deeptrench Frogmen could only produce a handful of Deeptrench Megafrogs.

"Cultivating an army of Great Dragons. Looks like I just dug a bottomless pit for myself and my wallet," he muttered, shaking his head.

Han Wu chuckled at his own fortune just as the ruins sent him out. The others were waiting at the same spot, their eyes full of anticipation.

He smiled and said, "I did it."

All five of them erupted in cheers. Now bound by an alliance, anything benefiting Han Wu would benefit them as well. It was far better than receiving nothing at all.

Back at his shelter, Han Wu emptied the skeletons and tokens from the bottom of the water pool inside his Deeptrench Frogmen Training Ground. He used the bones to grow his skeletons and the tokens to enhance his altars.

With so many tokens, Han Wu easily transformed the two most difficult altars to level up—the Light Cavalry and Heavy Cavalry—into Eternal Altars.

[Light Cavalry: Frost Metallions. Unique life form. Skills: Icicle, Frost Breath, Metallion Charge, Frost Domain. The strongest ice-attribute light cavalry.]

After transforming an altar into an Eternal Altar, he could summon 10,000 Frost Metallions daily with a single Heroic Frost Metallion General.

[Heavy Cavalry: Deeptide Whales. Heroic life form. Skills: Huge Body, Ambush, Water Burst, Giga Water Cannon, Deeptide Whirlpool, Deeptide Maelstrom. Beloved children of the ocean, kings of naval warfare, overlords of the four seas.]

Once turned into an Eternal Altar, he could summon ten Deeptide Whales daily and one Deeptide Whale Lord, a Lord life form.

Han Wu felt satisfied as he read the descriptions of the Eternal Altars. He sensed his own strength rising alongside the growth of his altars. If he managed to transform all nine altars into Eternal Altars, he believed he could become a King life form in the Warring Kingdom Civilization if he turned all nine altars into Eternal Altars. Yet, he knew the journey ahead remained long and arduous.

After dealing with the upgrades, he prepared the Deeptrench Frogmen Training Ground and started selling its tickets. The remaining students quickly snapped up the brand-new tickets circulating in the market, drawn by Han Wu's low prices. In exchange, he gained a steady supply of corpses to summon skeletons. Though the process was convoluted, it proved highly profitable.

The five students in his region benefited by gaining free access to any of Han Wu's training grounds, which they could use to redeem various rewards.

Two days later, the familiar system voice chimed in everyone's minds. "Outsiders, your intrusion has angered the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization. This time it will destroy all of you. Enjoy what remaining time you have."

Han Wu frowned. Why did it sound like the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization had no intention of playing fair this time?

Duan Meng rushed over and knocked on his shelter's door. When he opened it, she quickly explained, "The information my brother gave me about the third calamity was different. I think something changed, and it angered the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization. Now it wants to destroy all of us using the third calamity."

Others were saying the same thing about the notification.

"Is the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization a child? Don't start a fight if you can't afford to lose."

"Why is it angry? Isn't that just narrow-minded?"

"Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization, my ass. The Warring Kingdom Civilization is so weak it'll serve our Divine Civilization forever."

"Hey, do you think it will actually kill all of us?"

"Are you stupid? We come from the Divine Civilization. Our own Will of the Civilization protects us. What do you have to fear?"

"You're right."

...

They kept discussing this when a stream of notifications echoed in their minds.

[Emergency Extraction: Students of Imperial College, please pay attention. An unknown civilization has attacked the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization. It's going haywire. The danger rating is rising steadily, and your chances of death increase if you stay.]

[Considering this, Imperial College has opened a safe passage for retreat. You may return early, but you must leave everything obtained here behind to prevent the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization from tracking you.]

[Additionally, those who have obtained the powers of the Nine Martial Castes cannot leave. You must complete the trials set by the Warring Kingdom Civilization before departure.]

Han Wu and the five remaining students froze. They never expected Imperial College to order a return to the Divine Civilization. It meant their chances of survival here were dangerously low.

However, the final message blocked the escape route for Han Wu and Qin Shuang. Both had already gained the powers of the Nine Martial Castes and had to remain to face the trials set by the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization.

The other students received the same message, and the group chat exploded with frantic messages.

[The Warring Kingdom Civilization is under invasion. They are killing everyone—friend or foe alike!]

[Time to run. Our lives are worth more than this.]

[Ah, damn it. I don't want to leave. I just upgraded my shelter to Level 8 and still have plenty of resources. I can't even bring any of them with me.]

[Shit, I just acquired the Nine Martial Castes, and now it's stopping me from returning. I don't want it anymore! Can someone remove it from my body?]

[I'm a student from Greenflight College. They never sent me any notification or opened a safe passage for me to return home! I have to survive here alone? Can someone or another college send me back? I want to transfer once I get home.]

[I'm from New East College, facing the same trouble. Can someone send me back?]

More and more students left until only a few thousand remained. Most had already returned.

In the small region where Han Wu was staying, the six of them gathered to discuss their next move.

Wu Fang spoke first. "I'm sorry, but the chances of dying here are too high. I don't want to stay any longer. I'm heading back. Please don't hate me for this."

Liu Chuan followed. "I want to go back too. I have some resources I'm willing to part with for five Divine Essence. Anyone interested?"

Qin Shuang and Han Wu were irritated. They didn't mind that Liu Chuan wanted to leave. After all, preserving one's life was natural. Their relationship was purely cooperative; no one owed their life for another. However, Liu Chuan trying to sell resources he couldn't bring along was infuriating.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang ignored him.

Liu Chuan pressed on, "I know what you're thinking. You could just take the resources once I'm gone since I can't bring them. Let me be clear. I won't let anyone profit from my hard work. If you don't pay, I'll toss everything into the sea. No one gets a thing."

Sun Qingnian snapped, "Liu Chuan, are you insane? You've been enjoying the free training grounds Han Wu provided. Why not pay your dues now? Most of those resources were gathered by Han Wu's skeletons anyway!"

"Don't start a fight with me. That's a different matter. If you're so noble, why don't you stay here with them to die? Guilt trips don't work on me. Last offer. Five Divine Essence for all the resources. Take it or I dump them into the ocean."

Han Wu spoke for the first time. "Three, take it or leave it. We'll sign an agreement stating that I will pay you once I leave here alive."

Liu Chuan hesitated but finally agreed. He couldn't take the resources with him, so getting three Divine Essence for nothing was a fair trade. Even if Han Wu failed to return, he wouldn't suffer any loss.

Wu Fang decided to follow Liu Chuan's lead. "I have plenty of resources too. I can sell them off for three Divine Essence."

Han Wu, unwilling to continue the discussion, scoffed. "Sign the agreement."

The two signed and departed, leaving only Sun Qingnian and Duan Meng behind.

Han Wu spoke softly. "It's time for you two to leave as well."

Sun Qingnian glanced at them and laughed. "Leave? Why? Why should I leave when you two are still here?"

Qin Shuang tried to persuade him. “Qingnian, your situation is different from ours. Leave while you still can.”

“No, I won’t. I may live off a woman, but I am not spineless. If you keep trying to persuade me, I will start the lightning tribulation right now!” Sun Qingnian threatened.

Han Wu sensed his determination and stopped pressing him. He and Qin Shuang turned their attention to Duan Meng.

Duan Meng lowered her head. “I’m sorry, but I can’t stay here. My brother is still waiting for me. Here are the resources I’ve gathered. You can have them all. I don’t want any payment. Consider it compensation for leaving you behind.”

Han Wu said gently, “Don’t worry. Go back first. Your brother must be worried.”

“Goodbye. I pray for your safe return.” Her voice was soft as she approached the safe passage back to the Divine Civilization. She glanced once more at the three left in the Warring Kingdom Civilization and shuddered, sensing she had lost something forever.

Han Wu sighed as he watched Duan Meng leave. Now only three remained in this entire region, yet he felt a strength and certainty he had never experienced before.

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

[ 1,030 words ]

## **Chapter 225 - Buying Resources**

Suddenly, Sun Qingnian’s eyes lit up. “*Aiya*, I just remembered something important!”

Qin Shuang and Han Wu exchanged puzzled looks. “What is it?”

“We need to buy everyone’s resources! Right now, there’s a surplus. If we offer them some money, they’ll definitely sell.”

The two slapped their foreheads in sudden understanding. The students preparing to leave couldn’t take their resources with them. All they had to do was name their price, and no matter how low, they would sell.

The three quickly checked the group chat. Only 3,000 students remained, many still hesitating whether to stay or go. They immediately sent a flood of messages urging them to make a decision.

[We are purchasing resources. Sell us all of your resources for two Divine Essence. We will sign an agreement.]

Among the 3,000 students, only 1,000 had gained the powers of the Nine Martial Castes and could not leave. The other 2,000 had the chance to escape. The trio's messages convinced those 2,000 to depart, and they earned two Divine Essence each simply by exchanging their resources.

Many contacted the trio to sign agreements. A few tried to raise prices, but the trio ignored them. They had plenty of clients and could afford to lose a few.

Other students stuck behind attempted to copy the trio's strategy, offering two or three Divine Essence to buy resources. The prices stayed low overall. However, since the trio moved first, they secured the lion's share.

One hour later, the passage closed, leaving only 1,000 people in the group chat. Each remaining member was now bound to face the unknown challenge set forth by the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization. Nervous anticipation filled the air as everyone awaited the mysterious trial.

In contrast, the trio counted their newly acquired resources with satisfaction. The supplies they had secured easily exceeded a value of 5,000 Divine Essence, yet they had spent only 224 Divine Essence. With such an abundance, Han Wu could have upgraded all their shelters to Level 11 or higher.

However, Qin Shuang proposed a different plan. The three were allies who had to depend on one another to survive. They trusted each other completely, so it was a matter of all living or all dying together. She suggested pooling all their resources into upgrading a single shelter to an unprecedented level. This way, the three could stay together and face the challenge united. It was far safer than each occupying separate shelters.

Sun Qingnian agreed. Since Han Wu's shelter was already the highest-ranked, they chose to concentrate all resources there. Before proceeding, Sun Qingnian needed to gather all nine castes and unlock the Nine Martial Castes' powers. This would dramatically improve their survival chances.

He sifted through the resources and selected the castes that matched his fighting style. Once he collected all nine, the lightning tribulation struck. The thundercloud spread over a 50-kilometer radius, mirroring Qin Shuang's lightning tribulation.

Time was of the essence, so Sun Qingnian took out every last dose of medicine he carried to withstand the lightning tribulation. He downed the doses one after another and successfully withstood the lightning tribulation, gaining the Nine Martial Castes' powers. He was now as strong as a High Lord, and their chances of survival soared.

Han Wu then poured all available resources into upgrading his shelter. As if responding to the erratic Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization, the Approval Rating no longer blocked his progress. He needed only to gather the required resources.

He invested hundreds of millions of resources to boost the shelter from a City to a County at Level 11. Then, with 1 billion resources, he elevated it from a County to a Prefecture City at Level 12. Ten billion resources transformed it into a Level 13 Capital City. Unfortunately, they still lacked enough resources to reach Level 14.

Fortunately, they were close. Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian dismantled their own shelters and converted them into resources to support Han Wu's upgrade. They also tore down every remaining shelter in the region and gathered enough resources to complete the transformation.

The Level 14 shelter now stood as a Royal Capital spanning the entire region. Towering fifty-meter-high city walls enclosed the space, isolating it from the outside world.

Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian gazed at the majestic scene in awe. Turning a small city into a thriving royal capital felt like a miracle. The Level 14 Royal Capital boasted numerous facilities and could house 5 million residents.

Naturally, Han Wu was officially recognized as the king of this royal capital. He held absolute authority over this domain. Every citizen and soldier within the walls answered to his command.

His first decree as king appointed Qin Shuang as Grand General and Sun Qingnian as Grand Chancellor. Both wielded command over any soldier in the capital, ranking just below Han Wu in authority.

He then entrusted them with his remaining altars and tokens to upgrade their altars. The combined tokens and altars from over 100 students barely sufficed to elevate all 27 altars to Eternal Altars.

After doing so, the three could use resources to summon soldiers endlessly for battle. Unfortunately, they had already drained most resources upgrading Han Wu's shelter. To replenish their supplies, he ordered his skeletons to gather resources tirelessly from every available facility. These resources were vital for their combat readiness.

The trio started deploying units across the region, preparing for war. The sea around them teemed with Deeptide Whales and Deeptrench Frogmen, all primed for battle. They marshaled every available asset to face the third calamity.

As the units spread out, Han Wu's magic map revealed its true value, becoming an indispensable tool of war. Through the map, he could track how many ruins and altars remained unclaimed beneath the ocean around them. Each ruin promised an Eternal

Altar and a training ground. The Eternal Altar granted a source of infinite soldiers, while the training grounds provided facilities to gather resources endlessly.

Han Wu longed to clear them all immediately, but time was not on his side. The third calamity, the one the Divine Civilization had deemed devastating, arrived that very evening.

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

[ 1,121 words ]

## **Chapter 226 - Polluting Oil**

Suddenly, numerous rifts tore open across the sky above the Warring Kingdom Civilization, and thick streams of black oil poured from them.

One rift appeared near Han Wu's shelter. As the oil hit the sea, it tainted the water. Any living creature that came into contact with the polluted water mutated into a savage beast, driven to slaughter everything in sight. Fish ballooned to ten times their original size, grew limbs, and wielded crude weapons fashioned from fish bones. Shrimp also swelled in size, stood upright, and their antennae transformed into whip-like weapons.

The first to encounter the mutated beasts were the Deeptide Whales and Deeptrench Frogmen. The moment the two sides met, a brutal battle erupted. Fortunately, the fish and shrimp had been weak to begin with, and even after their strength had been amplified by the polluted water, they remained fragile.

The Deeptide Whales and Deeptrench Frogmen crushed the first wave with ease. Once the battle ended, the Deeptrench Frogmen gathered the spoils and handed them over to Han Wu. Alongside useless fish bone swords and shrimp whips, they found a strange material.

The trio examined the countless black crystals, each roughly the size of a grain of rice. Han Wu detected residual energy within them. They experimented but found none of their units could absorb this energy. Instead, the mutated beasts grew stronger whenever they touched the crystals, absorbing their power. Han Wu immediately ordered his troops to collect every black crystal to keep them from empowering the enemy.

Meanwhile, the black oil spread rapidly through the seas surrounding Han Wu's shelter, polluting a vast area. More animals mutated and launched relentless attacks on the shelter. Despite commanding 30 Eternal Altars and tens of millions of soldiers, the trio grew uneasy under the endless tide of beasts.

The sea teemed with sea creatures that could become potential enemies, and the situation worsened as Han Wu realized he could no longer summon new skeletons from the mutated beasts' corpses. He knew that defeat would be inevitable if the crisis continued unchecked, especially since none of the larger sea creatures had yet come into contact with the pollution.

Sun Qingnian had something else on his mind. "We need to find a way to deal with the corpses. They're starting to rot in the water. If this keeps up, we could end up with a plague on our hands."

His Foxmen were skilled healers, but a full-scale epidemic was beyond their capabilities, especially with their numbers still below the hundred thousand mark.

Qin Shuang let out a quiet sigh as she received word from her Thunder Sparrows. "Many of the life forms in the Warring Kingdom Civilization are being corrupted by the pollution. They're turning into mindless beasts. If this continues, they'll start attacking both the native life forms and us. The pollution is wiping out the ecosystem here. No wonder the Will of the Warring Kingdom is spiraling out of control."

Han Wu stayed quiet for a moment, deep in thought. War was on the horizon, and it came with a host of problems. Some seemed minor at first glance, but he couldn't afford to ignore anything that could tip the balance of the conflict.

Suddenly, he had an idea. "Order the units to collect the corpses of the mutated fish and shrimp."

Sun Qingnian looked confused. "What are you planning? Burn them? That'll take a huge amount of Wood. We might manage once or twice, but it's not sustainable."

"Who said anything about burning?" Han Wu replied. "They're food for my units."

"Units? Food!" Qin Shuang caught on immediately. She remembered his locusts carried the Gluttony trait and grew stronger by eating. The Dark Cursed Bugs were variants of his core locust race.

"The Dark Cursed Bugs have the Gluttony trait, and I command the power of Famine. With enough of them, they can devour an entire mountain of flesh without breaking a sweat," Han Wu assured them.

He then ordered his units to gather the corpses and stack them in an empty clearing. Though all of them were dead, their bodies still oozed with black oil. The thick liquid clung to their flesh and dripped steadily, threatening to contaminate the area if left unchecked.

Pinching his nose, Han Wu summoned his Dark Cursed Bugs to devour the remains. Driven by their Gluttony trait, the swarm tore into the corpses with alarming speed. But

the black oil proved difficult to digest. Several locusts had to pause, their bodies overloaded and sluggish. A few pushed themselves too far, exploding from overeating as they tried to obey Han Wu's command.

To solve this, Han Wu unleashed his Famine power, accelerating their digestion rate by several hundred times. They processed matter so quickly they could dissolve digest iron plating within minutes.

The towering pile of corpses shrank quickly as the swarm grew. Their bodies expanded from the size of fists to that of aquariums. Along with their size, their strength increased. Their tough exoskeletons formed sturdy armor, while their muscles bulked up with raw power. Instead of fitting into the Archer caste alone, these locusts now embodied traits of Infantry, Vanguard, Archer, and Heavy Cavalry all at once.

That was when Han Wu noticed something strange. As the Dark Cursed Bugs devoured the corpses, they didn't fully digest the oil. Instead, the residue gathered in their heads and solidified into uniformly shaped dark crystals.

These crystals had the power to mentally corrupt other life forms, turning them into mindless, violent beasts. Yet they had no effect on the Dark Cursed Bugs. They lacked the intelligence to act on their own and responded only to Han Wu's commands.

In that sense, the Dark Cursed Bugs were a natural counter to the invading civilization. Their impact was so effective that Han Wu immediately ordered his skeletons to keep piling up corpses for them to feed on.

They consumed so efficiently that even the corpses scattered across the region weren't enough. Sun Qingnian and Qin Shuang felt a wave of relief to have Han Wu in charge. After all, he had prevented a plague before it could even start. Without him, the growing mound of corpses would have become a massive problem.

Just as they solved that crisis, a new one emerged. After days of pollution, the waters around them had turned completely black. Some Deeptrench Frogmen and Deeptide Whales had been affected by the pollution, and the trio had to put them down.

They understood how dire the situation had become and knew they needed a plan quickly. Without one, they would lose ground and face severe restrictions on their movement. When that happened, defeat would be all but certain.

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

[ 1,266 words ]

## Chapter 227 - The Hidden Danger

Many of the students left behind in the Warring Kingdom Civilization were facing the same issues as the trio. Plagues had broken out wherever they settled, triggered by the rotting corpses of mutated beasts. Countless units fell ill, stricken by the disease.

Mild symptoms included vomiting, diarrhea, and dizziness. In severe cases, the plague crippled the units' ability to fight. Those affected heavily by the plague died, and their corpses became breeding grounds, spreading the plague even further.

To contain the outbreak, many students resorted to burning the bodies, rapidly consuming their supply of Wood. Prices for Wood soared in the group chat, reaching three times the normal rate, yet supply still fell short.

Han Wu sold his Treant Training Ground tickets at a low price to help. Although they sold out quickly, even that wasn't enough to meet the relentless need for Wood to burn the corpses.

After studying the messages and analyzing the situation, Sun Qingnian proposed, "Han Wu, the plague is spreading fast and hitting all the students. Even if it doesn't affect us now, it could become a major threat later. Why don't we announce that we'll handle the corpses? They can pay us in resources, and in return, we'll take care of disposal. You could use those resources to summon more Dark Cursed Bugs for the job. What do you think?"

Han Wu was still focused on solving the polluted seawater issue, but he agreed without hesitation. Sun Qingnian acted quickly, opening a trade channel. Soon, a mountain of corpses flooded their storage.

Sun Qingnian found a large, empty area on the edge of Han Wu's shelter and dumped all the bodies there. The pile grew into a mountain tens of meters tall, rising just above Han Wu's city wall.

Han Wu summoned more Dark Cursed Bugs from his Eternal Altar using the resources the students had provided. Their Gluttony trait, combined with Han Wu's Famine, barely balanced the rate at which the corpses appeared and the bugs' consumption.

Thankfully, as the Dark Cursed Bugs grew stronger, their appetite increased, giving Han Wu confidence they could handle the rising number of corpses. He ordered them to keep feeding when a peculiar message popped up in the group chat.

One elite student from Demonic Imperial College possessed the Physician Cleansing Flower Spirit, which was capable of purifying the pollution. Han Wu privately messaged her, requesting to purchase some units.

She rejected the offer outright. In her long-winded reply, she claimed the Cleansing Flower Spirit was her core race and that every unit was precious after all the care she'd put into nurturing them.

Han Wu frowned, sensing the true meaning behind her words—she wanted a higher price.

Han Wu changed tactics and suggested a trade instead. Ultimately, he offered to exchange 100 Dark Cursed Bugs for a single Cleansing Flower Spirit. She accepted, and soon Han Wu secured 1,000 Cleansing Flower Spirits. She was pleased and hoped he would trade with her again.

Han Wu released the 1,000 Cleansing Flower Spirits into the surrounding ocean and watched as the pitch-black water quickly returned to its original blue. Their effect was undeniable. With the water clearing, the Deeptrench Frogmen gained more room to maneuver and defend the shelter.

The trio had encountered their fair share of mutated fish and shrimp over the past few days, so they weren't alarmed by every strange sight. But while scanning the horizon through his telescope, Sun Qingnian spotted a large group of flying beasts heading toward their shelter.

These creatures were bigger, stronger, and capable of flight—troublesome foes by any measure. Fortunately, the shelter had an expert in aerial combat.

Qin Shuang stepped forward. Her core race, the Thunder Sparrows, had diversified into various castes such as Archer, Light Cavalry, and Heavy Cavalry. She commanded a large force of flying units, which intercepted the beasts and swiftly eliminated them all.

The trio worked seamlessly, tackling every new threat that arose. The shelter faced one challenge after another since the start of the calamity, but they had endured them all.

Nevertheless, Han Wu kept his guard up. He feared the danger had not yet arrived. The Divine Civilization would not have recalled all the students if this was the true calamity. He was sure the threat still lurked somewhere in the shadows, waiting to reveal itself. Determined to survive, Han Wu strengthened his units and stayed alert at every moment.

Ten days later, Sun Qingnian scanned the horizon with his telescope as usual. From the northwest, he spotted a massive fleet advancing toward Han Wu's shelter. Soldiers lined the decks, and large flags fluttered from each ship's mast.

Sun Qingnian recognized the character *Wei* stitched on the flags and immediately sent a message to Han Wu.

[Sun Qingnian: Han Wu, come take a look. That's the Wei Kingdom fleet.]

Han Wu climbed the city wall and took the telescope. Sure enough, the ships cut through the black waters. The scene was somewhat frightening as mutated beasts swarmed around the fleet, launching relentless attacks.

Yet, every assault from the mutated creatures shattered against the shimmering barrier protecting the ships. Archers aboard fired volley after volley, picking off the beasts that dared to circle too close.

Han Wu noted their impressive arsenal and knew this was no ordinary patrol by the Wei Kingdom. A cold dread settled in his chest. These soldiers were likely here to seize control of his region. He could not imagine another motive for their presence.

Sun Qingnian tried to hold onto hope. “Han Wu, do you think they came to help us fend off the mutated beasts?”

Han Wu shook his head. “I doubt it. The Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization has marked us as outsiders too. The Wei Kingdom and its native life forms won’t see us as allies.”

“You’re right. Anyone outside our group could be a threat. We need to be cautious.”

Qin Shuang had also received Sun Qingnian’s message and sprinted to the city walls.

“The Wei Kingdom’s fleet is entering our waters fast,” Han Wu told her. “Use your Thunder Sparrows. Find out what they’re after.”

Qin Shuang nodded and transformed into a Thunder Sparrow. Leading a large battalion of Thunder Sparrows, she soared toward the Wei Kingdom's fleet.

Soon, the two forces faced each other. The Wei generals quickly realized Qin Shuang was neither a monster invading their civilization nor a native life form.

Qin Shuang hovered high above them, her voice sharp with arrogance. “State your business.”

The generals aboard the ships burst into laughter at her insolence. Though she wielded the Nine Martial Castes’ powers, they dismissed her as too young to challenge them.

Some of the more bloodthirsty generals transformed into flying units, encircling her in the sky.

“Little girl, do you think you’re the only one who can fly?”

“We have no qualms about telling you why we’re here. We act on the orders of our civilization’s Will—to drive out all outsiders and restore peace. You are an outsider, so

you must leave this world now. If you refuse, don't blame the Wei Kingdom for bullying you with our numbers."

Qin Shuang understood their purpose clearly. The Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization had spiraled into madness, choosing to exterminate all foreign life to restore order. Ruthless, perhaps, but effective.

Still, she met their threat with defiance. "And what if I refuse to leave?"

One general replied coldly, "Then you will remain here forever as a corpse."

Without warning, the generals launched their attack, aiming to end her life.

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## Chapter 228 - Fish in a Barrel

[ 1,004 words ]

### Chapter 228 - Fish in a Barrel

Qin Shuang was no weakling. She had mastered the powers of the Nine Martial Castes and unleashed her might in the form of the Sonorous Brigade, a powerful fusion of the Giant Thunder Sparrow and the Giant Archer. Soaring through the sky, she fired enormous, lethal arrows with deadly precision. Each shot struck down enemy generals, sending them hurtling into the polluted sea below as their lives ebbed away.

With her Thunder Sparrows in formation, Qin Shuang swiftly broke free from the encirclement and returned to Han Wu's shelter. The Wei Kingdom's generals, stung by their defeat, seethed with rage and vowed to raze the entire region in vengeance for their fallen comrades.

The fleet picked up speed and soon reached the region's outskirts. Han Wu had already withdrawn the Cleansing Flower Spirits and Deeptrench Frogmen from the surrounding lands. The Cleansing Flower Spirits were rare treasures, and he would not allow the Wei Kingdom's forces to destroy them.

As the soldiers and generals aboard the ships caught sight of Han Wu's massive shelter, they erupted with shouts of disbelief and excitement. "A Royal Capital! To think they dared to build such a city in this desolate wilderness!"

To them, Han Wu's Royal Capital was sacrilegious and a direct challenge to their authority.

"We must destroy it for the sake of the Wei Kingdom!" one shouted.

"Yes, we cannot allow this to challenge our sovereign!" another added fiercely.

Driven by righteous fury, they leapt from their ships and stormed toward the capital, determined to tear it down.

Han Wu's skeleton army was already waiting in formation outside the gates. Millions of skeletons stood rigidly, ready for the Wei Kingdom's generals to arrive. When the two forces met, a fierce battle erupted.

The trio watched from a hidden vantage point and quickly realized the generals were absurdly powerful. Each soldier effortlessly cut down hundreds of skeletons alone. Using the Nine Martial Castes' powers, they summoned several other units to fight alongside them. Their fierce attacks shattered countless skeletons, sending bone fragments flying. It seemed inevitable that the millions of skeletons would fall.

Han Wu wasn't worried because this was only the beginning. The soldiers grew more confident as they crushed wave after wave of skeletons and could already imagine the rewards their kingdom would grant for such valor.

They were still lost in that hopeful fantasy when a thunderous sound jolted them back to reality. Heavy, earthshaking footsteps echoed across the battlefield. Several ten-meters-tall bone giants emerged before them. Their overwhelming power and bodies forged from hardened bone fragments made them nearly invulnerable.

"They must be the enemy's trump card. Everyone, attack and bring down those white skeletons! The Royal Capital will be ours!" one general shouted, rallying the soldiers' spirits.

Another brutal battle erupted, but this time the soldiers found themselves pushed back. Their strikes landed solidly yet barely harmed the bone giants. In contrast, the giants' attacks proved nearly always fatal. They broke through the soldiers' formation and forced them to retreat.

The generals at the rear shouted commands, rallying their troops to fight back. Their soldiers shook off their fear and charged at the enemy once more. This time, the generals joined the battle to take down the bone giants. Transforming into their Heavy Cavalry castes, they became as powerful as Lord life forms. They matched the Osteomancers, which stood at the peak of all Heroic life forms. Under their assault, many Osteomancers fell in battle. It was only a matter of time before all of them were defeated.

Fortunately, Han Wu had more than skeletons in his army. While the soldiers and generals battled the skeletons, Qin Shuang and Han Wu circled the edge of the battlefield and slipped toward the docked ships along the coast.

Only a handful of soldiers and generals remained to guard the ships. Working together, Han Wu and Qin Shuang quickly eliminated them and gained access to the vessels.

One dying general managed to pull out a flare and fired it high into the air. The flare exploded and alerted the soldiers on the battlefield.

“Those bastards! They’re stalling us with the skeletons while targeting our ships!”

“Everyone retreat! Protect the ships!”

A group of generals rushed back in panic, only to find their ships gone. The polluted black seawater rippled where their vessels had been, reflecting their dejected faces. Soon, the skeleton army surrounded them from behind.

The Wei Kingdom’s soldiers were trapped like fish in a barrel. They were all captured and thrown into the dungeon beneath the Royal Capital. Han Wu and Qin Shuang stashed the ships safely before returning to interrogate the prisoners.

Having lost the battle, the soldiers had no choice but to keep a low profile. After enduring several harsh interrogations, the generals finally revealed everything they knew.

The Wei Kingdom and the other kingdoms were under assault from strange mutated beasts. At the same time, the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization compelled the kingdoms to send soldiers out to kill all outsiders.

Han Wu already understood that the Will was spiraling out of control because of an invasion from another civilization. If they did not find a way to restore it soon, the Warring Kingdom Civilization would be lost forever.

However, that task was incredibly difficult. First, they needed to stop the pollution spreading from the invading civilization. The Cleansing Spirit Flowers only treated the symptoms, not the root cause. There was also a limited supply—tens of billions would be needed to purify the entire civilization, which made that option impossible.

One general informed Han Wu of a way to permanently seal the rifts that poured in the black oil. Though it would not fully resolve the pollution, it could temporarily slow the spread.

Han Wu discussed the idea with Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian. After careful deliberation, the three agreed to help the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization. Their first objective was to seal the rift near their own shelter.

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

[ 1,321 words ]

## Chapter 229 - Sealing the Rift

The trio searched the ships and uncovered extensive information on how to seal the rifts. It seemed the generals from the Wei Kingdom had come not only to eliminate all outsiders but also to seal off the rifts.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang led a small elite force and set sail. The rift nearest to them lay just outside their shelter. Until now, they had been powerless against it, lacking the knowledge to seal it.

As they approached, they saw the rift still pouring vast amounts of black oil into the Warring Kingdom Civilization. The surrounding waters had turned into thick, sticky tar, ready to solidify.

The ships stalled three kilometers away; the viscous oil made the waters too thick to cross. The oil clung to the water like a living organism, creeping slowly up the ships' hulls in an attempt to contaminate them. Luckily, the vessels had been outfitted for this. The ships' barriers repelled the black oil and kept it from touching the hulls.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang carried the sealing materials with them and took to the air, riding atop a Dark Cursed Bug roughly the size of a pickup truck. From there, they examined the rift up close. As if sensing their presence, the rift ceased spewing oil downward and instead launched goblets of black oil toward the duo in an attempt to corrupt them.

In response, the two transformed—Qin Shuang into a Thunder Sparrow and Han Wu into a half-dragon. They unleashed a simultaneous bolt of lightning aimed straight at the rift.

The wild lightning tore through the black oil, but only managed to shrink its spread. They had less than a minute before the rift would recover and unleash another torrent of oil.

“We need to seal it fast!”

Fortunately, this rift was smaller than those the generals had described. It required fewer resources to close.

Qin Shuang nodded sharply. “You set up the array. I’ll keep it from spewing black oil.”

She then shifted into her Sonorous Brigade form and infused lightning into her arrows before firing at the rift. Han Wu watched her devastating assault and suspected that even his toughest Vanguard Iron Stupa could not withstand three of her arrows.

Luckily, they fought on the same side, so no conflict would arise. Han Wu rode his Dark Cursed Bug and started setting up the array.

Beneath them, the black oil fought back. Goblets of oil slowly approached, shifting into humanoid forms before hurling smaller goblets at him. The massive Dark Cursed Bug used its bulky frame to block the attacks.

At the same time, the black oil spread across the bug's surface, attempting to seize control of its mind and turn it into a puppet. Unfortunately for the oil, it had met its natural enemy. The Dark Cursed Bug lacked intelligence.

The black oil penetrated its body but failed to dominate its mind. Instead, it transformed into pure energy and started crystallizing on the bug's forehead. The crystal darkened as more black oil seeped into it.

Seizing the moment, Han Wu finished setting up the array. Once activated, it fired an energy beam at the rift and slowly closed it.

Just as the rift was about to close for good, something tumbled out. The object dropped into the pool of black oil below and grew rapidly. What had started out the size of a football soon transformed into a towering beast over ten meters tall.

The beast resembled a mutated dinosaur with black scales, blood-red eyes, razor-sharp claws, and teeth. It roared at Han Wu and his Dark Cursed Bug and sent shockwaves that churned the surrounding water.

Han Wu's Dark Cursed Bug reeled from the impact, and the dark crystal on its forehead cracked and shattered. At that moment, the mutated dinosaur opened its mouth to devour the fragments as if they were some rare delicacy.

Han Wu acted swiftly and transformed into a Dark Cursed Bug. He zipped through the air, gathered all the falling crystal shards, and stashed them safely in a bag.

The mutated dinosaur was furious that it hadn't tasted a single fragment and roared numerous times. However, the wide gap between them weakened the shockwave, and Han Wu absorbed the fading force with his powerful body.

He returned to his Dark Cursed Bug's back and healed its broken head. At the same time, he summoned Lightning Lances, each crackling with wild energy, and fired them at the mutated dinosaur below. When the lances pierced its flesh, the lightning detonated from within, tearing into its core and leaving it badly wounded.

Nearly a tenth of the mutated dinosaur's mass was obliterated in the blast. But in seconds, the viscous black oil swarmed over the damage and regenerated the wound. Not only did it recover, but it also looked stronger than before.

Han Wu frowned. Taking it down was far more difficult than he had expected. Its body, made of pure black oil, seemed immortal. If he couldn't find its weakness soon, the consequences would be disastrous.

Unable to harm Han Wu, the mutated dinosaur shifted its focus to the ships. It let out a deafening roar and charged toward them. Han Wu's Lightning Lances and Qin Shuang's lightning-infused arrows slowed the beast but failed to kill it.

The ships were vital to their plans. If Han Wu hoped to expand his territory, he needed them to carry his army beyond the small region they occupied and across the vast ocean.

He had no idea how long he would have to wait for another fleet if the ships ahead of him were destroyed now. He needed to stop the mutated dinosaur at all costs. He transformed into the Frost Metallion, and the air around him dropped several degrees quickly. Using his might as a High Lord, he froze the black oil coating the water's surface in an instant. The freezing shockwave engulfed the mutated dinosaur. Its movements slowed, then stopped entirely. Within seconds, it was locked in a thick sheet of ice—only a hundred meters from the fleet.

Once he confirmed it was fully frozen, Han Wu leapt down from his Dark Cursed Bug to examine the dinosaur up close. To his surprise, he couldn't access any information about it. That meant that the unknown civilization ranked higher than the Divine Civilization. Now he faced a dilemma. He couldn't kill it, yet sealing it forever was not an option either. The frustration gnawed at him!

He noticed that bubbles were already forming beneath the ice as small cracks appeared and vanished. The black oil fought back fiercely to escape its icy prison.

Qin Shuang landed beside him. "I have a plan. Why don't you try using your new Destruction Aspect to deal with it?"

The suggestion struck Han Wu like a spark—simple, yet brilliant. His Skull Guillotine carried a 10% chance of killing an enemy instantly, regardless of rank. He wasn't sure if that kind of attack would work on the mutated dinosaur, but it was worth a shot.

He summoned the Skull Guillotine. The blade rose slowly and marked the mutated dinosaur for death. A skeletal visage materialized above the creature and snapped its jaws shut. The frozen mutated dinosaur shattered into fragments.

Han Wu rushed to confirm the kill. The Skull Guillotine reported a successful execution and revealed that it had absorbed a strange energy from the mutated dinosaur. That

energy somehow deepened Han Wu's grasp of the concept of destruction, and the Skull Guillotine's chance to mark enemies for death had now increased to 11%.

The mutated dinosaur was truly dead, but what caught Han Wu off guard was that the black oil contained such potent energy, one that enhanced his destructive power. If the Skull Guillotine absorbed enough of it, could it reach a 100% chance to mark foes for death? He looked forward to discovering the answer.

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

[ 1,194 words ]

## **Chapter 230 - Purchasing Black Crystals**

Han Wu and Qin Shuang freed their fleet from the clinging oil and hurried back to their shelter. The generals had watched them seal the rift through the narrow dungeon openings, but they never lost sight of their true mission—they had to drive every outsider from their civilization. When Han Wu returned to speak with them, he realized their stubbornness ran too deep, so he abandoned any hope of sending them back to the Wei Kingdom.

When Sun Qingnian discovered that the black crystals held value for Han Wu, he immediately flooded the group chat with messages to buy them. Many of the remaining students were already engaged in conversation when his messages appeared.

[Are you talking about those little black crystals from the monsters' bodies? Why are you buying that junk? You really have that many resources to throw away?]

[How do you even use those crystals?]

[Yeah, what are they for? I've got a bunch of them. I'll pay a good price for the info.]

[I tested them on my soldiers, but none of them could absorb the energy. It's weird stuff. I doubt most life forms could even make use of it.]

[Maybe someone already figured out how to use them?]

...

The group chat buzzed with excitement. Many sent private messages to Sun Qingnian asking how to harness the crystals. He ignored them all. If others discovered their use, prices would skyrocket beyond reason. He wasn't about to sabotage himself for their sake.

After Sun Qingnian declined to share, the students turned on him.

[We are all trapped here together. How could you be so selfish? You won't even tell us that much?]

[You selfish bastard. I'm adding you to my blacklist. I hope you get torn apart by those mutated beasts.]

[I've got a ton of black crystals, but I'm not selling a single one to you. I'm going to make this as annoying as possible.]

Sun Qingnian rolled his eyes and blacklisted every one of them in private. Since they refused to sell their black crystals, he stopped renting out skeletons and shut down the corpse-cleaning service. Now he just wanted to see who would crack under the pressure first.

Just as he predicted, the students who had cursed him now panicked. Without Sun Qingnian's cleanup service, they were left to deal with rotting corpses on their own. They had enough power to slay the mutated beasts, but disposing of their corpses was another matter! Burning them cost a lot of expensive Wood.

The group chat exploded with another flurry of messages.

[Sun Qingnian, you heartless bastard! If the corpses of those mutated beasts start rotting, they'll pollute my shelter and spread disease to my troops. By halting the collection service, you're basically killing me!]

[Sun Qingnian, I know exactly where you are. If you don't restart the service, I'll send my army to wipe you out.]

[My skeletons are gone! I can't harvest resources efficiently without them. Why are you breaching our contract?]

[Brother Sun—no, God Sun—please, send the skeletons back and restart the corpse collection. I swear I'll never badmouth you again.]

Sun Qingnian dismissed their pleas and insults alike. He decided to teach them a lesson by ignoring the messages for a day or two. They needed to understand they couldn't survive without Han Wu's help.

He closed the group chat and noticed numerous private messages offering to trade black crystals. He accepted them all and soon stockpiled a massive cache for Han Wu.

Meanwhile, Han Wu received a notification that a large quantity of black crystals had been deposited in his storage. He suspected Sun Qingnian was behind it and nodded in approval. The man had saved him valuable time.

Unfortunately, the black crystals' quality was subpar. He decided to merge them before putting them to use. He kept merging them until they formed one massive black crystal, as large as a house, then summoned the Skull Guillotine to absorb it.

The enormous skeletal visage appeared above the black crystal and bit down. In a flash, the crystal shattered into countless shards. Moments later, the Skull Guillotine sent him a notification. It had absorbed a large amount of unknown energy and needed time to digest it.

Strangely, it had also gained a trace of awareness. It conveyed to Han Wu that the black crystal contained many impurities. The digestion process would take a long time, and it advised him to purify future crystals before offering them again.

Han Wu let out a dry laugh as he studied the broken fragments. He hadn't expected the Skull Guillotine to be so particular about what it consumed. From now on, he would run every black crystal through the Refinery before feeding them to the Skull Guillotine.

Once the rift had been sealed, the air around the shelter gradually cleared, and fewer mutated beasts roamed the area.

Still, the trio realized staying there offered no long-term benefit. After a brief meeting, they agreed to set sail toward the Warring Kingdom Continent, though not with their entire force. Sun Qingnian, as the Grand Chancellor, needed to oversee daily city affairs. Thus, Han Wu and Qin Shuang would lead the expedition.

Once their arrangements were complete, they brought their elite forces aboard the ships they had seized from the Wei Kingdom and set sail toward the Warring Kingdom Continent.

Their fleet stood out starkly against the dark waters. Over the next five days, they faced wave after wave of mutated beasts. But thanks to their overwhelming power and the strength of their elite forces, they suffered no casualties.

One day, while conducting reconnaissance in her Thunder Sparrow form, Qin Shuang made a surprising discovery.

"Han Wu, I found a small island with several broken shelters. I think we should inspect it and see if we can salvage anything valuable," she reported.

Han Wu nodded. The long voyage had grown dull, so a diversion sounded welcome. The island could also hold resources to give them a break from their monotonous breadfruit diet.

On the sixth day, they docked at the island's shore. Han Wu left half of his elite forces aboard the ships and led the rest onto land.

The two transformed—one into a Dark Cursed Bug, the other into a Thunder Sparrow—and took to the skies. As they circled overhead, they were stunned to see a swarm of black, mutated life forms prowling the jungle, relentlessly hunting and slaughtering the normal life forms. The island had clearly been polluted.

There were several broken shelters across the island. The duo could not tell whether the shelters had fallen to the mutated beasts or other individuals. Han Wu ordered his army to dismantle every remaining base and secured a wealth of resources in the process. Their activity, however, drew the attention of the mutated beasts, which soon launched a deadly pursuit.

Their army fought back valiantly and wiped out every mutated beast within three days. With the island secured, Han Wu officially claimed it. Its terrain appeared on his magic map, now detailed with the island's geography as well as the locations of wild altars and ruins.

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[ 1,204 words ]

## **Chapter 231 - Liang Shanpo's Ruins**

Han Wu and Qin Shuang followed the magic map to the edge of a cliff. According to its markings, ruins lay hidden somewhere nearby. They spent half an hour combing the rocky terrain before discovering a narrow cave whose entrance was slick with black oil.

They had no idea what dangers awaited them, so Han Wu proposed scouting the area first with his units. Qin Shuang agreed. Han Wu stepped inside and was instantly transported to a vast arena perched atop a mountain.

Han Wu frowned when he noticed all his units had vanished. A sense of unease crept in. The place felt strange, and he suspected the black oil had polluted it.

As he tried to anticipate what would come next, a whisper slipped into his ear. "Welcome to my ruins, my dear guest from the Divine Civilization."

His heart skipped a beat. The Will of the Ruins shouldn't have known where he was from. He scanned his surroundings cautiously. "Who are you?"

"Do not worry. I come bearing a proposal," the voice replied, echoing from every direction. "The era of the Warring Kingdom Civilization has ended. This old, corrupted world should have faded away, yet the life it nurtured remains stubborn and resilient. It

is a waste of time. None of them understand the true strength of my master. Only my master can grant them eternal power.”

Han Wu’s eyes narrowed with suspicion. The voice sounded like a zealot preaching the gospel of some dark cult. As an upright youth, Han Wu refused to trust such words.

“Dear sir from the Divine Civilization, you wield the powers of the Nine Martial Castes alongside your own,” the voice continued smoothly. “Everything would be simple if you aided me in completing the invasion. Do not worry. Should you succeed, a great reward will be yours.”

Han Wu scoffed. “What kind of reward could you possibly offer?”

The voice paused for only three seconds to consider before replying, “I could give you the entire Warring Kingdom Continent. You would become the sole emperor of the land, earning the admiration of all its life forms. With their faith, you could quickly grow and become a God in no time.”

Han Wu chuckled. The other party clearly knew how to manipulate, but he wasn’t buying it. No one would hand over the Warring Kingdom Continent to a mere Demigod. That territory covered nearly a quarter of the civilization’s landmass—enough to start a war among Major Gods.

He was only a Demigod. When would he ever have the chance to claim such wealth and power?

The other party detected his doubt. “What’s wrong? Don’t you believe me?”

Han Wu didn’t bother to lie. “*Oops*, you caught me. Fine, I’ll just say it outright. Could you at least try to fool someone properly? I might’ve bought it if you’d offered me an island or something. But an entire continent? Do I look like an idiot? I’ve been in this civilization long enough to know how things work. You really think I’d fall for something that ridiculous?”

The other party pressed on, “I’m telling the truth. If you cooperate, I’ll hand the continent over. We can sign a contract.”

“Contract, my ass! The Warring Kingdom Civilization isn’t yours to give away. Since when do you have the authority to use it as you please? Besides, the Divine Civilization maintains good relations with the Warring Kingdom. They would never forgive me if I teamed up with you against our allies.” Han Wu’s mind was crystal clear as he refuted every claim from the bodiless speaker.

The other party grew distressed and embarrassed that a mere Demigod would scold them. “I thought you were smart, but it seems you are corrupted to the core as well. Since you refuse to work with me, I will kill you. I will torture you to death!”

Something tore through the air, and a massive figure slick with black oil plummeted from the sky and crashed onto the arena floor. Han Wu studied the giant closely as he readied himself for battle. The giant stood nearly three meters tall. Though its body dripped with black oil, Han Wu could still make out thick hair covering its frame and a large beard across its face. The black oil's spread made it clear that it had tainted the life form.

The giant snarled, reached behind its back, and drew two large black axes. With a roar, it charged at Han Wu, swinging the weapons in wide arcs.

Han Wu dodged each slash with nimble precision, but inwardly, he was taken aback. The giant possessed formidable strength and had reached the threshold of a High Lord. Even his Giga Osteomancer would have shattered into fragments within two hours against such a foe.

Nevertheless, Han Wu was at the threshold of a King life form, so the black giant was comparatively weak before him. He tapped into the Nine Martial Castes' powers, transformed into a Fulgur Half-Dragon, and raised his lance to parry the giant's blows.

Lightning crackled along the lance with every strike, sending jolts of electricity coursing through the black oil that covered the giant. Each clash elicited a pained howl as the giant struggled to shake off the numbness creeping through its arms.

Han Wu unleashed a relentless storm of lightning, blurring the giant's vision. Finally, he drove his lance deep into the giant's chest. The lightning surged violently, detonating inside the giant and bursting its chest open.

As the black giant collapsed, the black oil covering its body receded slowly and sank into the earth beneath. With the oil gone, Han Wu could now clearly see the giant's true form—a copper-skinned, hairy man with a thick beard.

A stream of information appeared as he inspected the corpse.

[Soul General: Li Kui, Lord life form. Skills: Whirlwind Axe, Superstrength, Dense Skin, Four Evil Tigers. Liang Shanpo's 22nd Spirit General. Liang Shanpo's 22nd Spirit General. His courage was unmatched, and no one could stand in his path.]

Han Wu froze as he studied the data because this was a ruin for Spirit Generals! That explained why it was different from the usual ruins. Still, he had no idea who Liang Shanpo was or why Li Kui ranked 22nd.

If the 22nd Spirit General already wielded such overwhelming power, Han Wu shuddered at the thought of how formidable the first one would look after being corrupted by the black oil. The thought made him uneasy, but it also stirred a spark of anticipation.

The ruins quickly reclaimed Li Kui's body, and a new notification flashed before Han Wu's eyes.

[First level cleared. Please choose one of the rewards below.]

[Reward 1: A pair of metal axes. The weapons of Spirit General Li Kui. Razor-sharp and deadly.]

[Reward 2: Four Evil Tigers. A skill of Spirit General Li Kui. It summons four malevolent tiger spirits to attack enemies. It can also fuse with the user to boost their physical power.]

[Reward 3: Accumulate and snowball rewards.]

Han Wu dismissed the first two options because they held no value for him. Instead, he selected the third, intrigued to see how his rewards would snowball over time.

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## Chapter 232 - Protection of the Spirit Generals

[ 1,218 words ]

### Chapter 232 - Protection of the Spirit Generals

The trials set by the Spirit Generals were far from over, and soon Han Wu faced the second challenge. Another Spirit General, tainted by the black oil, appeared. Though the viscous substance clung to him from head to toe, his handsome face remained untouched. His weapon of choice was a bow.

Han Wu could tell that the Spirit General before him was from the Archer caste and immediately transformed into his Iron Stupa form to defend against the incoming arrows.

The Spirit General launched a volley of nine arrows, each embedding itself about one centimeter into Han Wu's armor. Fortunately, none penetrated the Iron Stupa's heavy plating.

Han Wu's breathing eased slightly. So far, no enemy had broken through the Iron Stupa's armor. Even Qin Shuang's strongest caste, the Sonorous Brigade, required three arrows to do so.

Still, he hadn't expected this Spirit General's arrows to penetrate so deeply. Relying on his exceptional defense, he withstood the remaining shots until the Spirit General exhausted his quiver and surrendered. After his defeat, the black oil covering his body gradually faded, and Han Wu could finally inspect the Spirit General's data.

[Spirit General Hua Rong. High Lord life form. Skills: Critical Shot, Nine Consecutive Shots, Cloud Piercer. Liang Shanpo's ninth Spirit General. Unmatched in archery. Can strike a willow leaf from 100 steps away.]

For clearing the stage, Han Wu presented three new rewards.

[Reward 1: Wanderer's Bow. Spirit General Hua Rong's weapon. The sound of its bowstring strikes fear into enemies.]

[Reward 2: Critical Shot. Spirit General Hua Rong's secret skill. It can improve the attack and range of arrows.]

[Reward 3: Accumulate and snowball rewards.]

After Han Wu passed the second trial, the strange voice echoed again, this time sounding agitated. "Don't even think about clearing the third trial after defeating two of my Spirit Generals!"

Han Wu chuckled and entered the third trial. Everything shifted as seawater surged into the arena, swallowing him whole. Deep beneath the waves, Han Wu spotted something darting through the water at dizzying speed. It was most likely this trial's Spirit General.

The strange voice echoed inside Han Wu's mind. "Let's see how you clear this."

Han Wu chuckled and transformed. A massive whale emerged at the heart of the ocean. The Spirit General, speeding through the water, couldn't change course in time and slammed straight into the whale's immense body. His oil-slicked face twisted into a look of horror.

Han Wu's Heavy Cavalry caste, the Deeptide Whale, had emerged. It was his strongest caste, excelling in aquatic combat—the undisputed king of the seas. The sudden change to an aquatic fight posed no threat to Han Wu; instead, it worked to his advantage. He unleashed Maelstrom, pulverizing the High Lord Spirit General swimming in the water column into dust.

Han Wu then learned the Spirit General's name was Zhang Shun, the White Ribbon of the Waves. He chuckled, thinking Zhang Shun should be called the Black Ribbon instead, given the black oil covering him.

Han Wu chose to snowball his reward and pressed on, defeating nine trials in a row and enraging the mysterious foe. The other party had believed that polluting all the Spirit

Generals with black oil would deal significant damage to the Warring Kingdom Civilization. They never expected Han Wu to breeze through nine of them at once.

After clearing all nine floors, Han Wu was surprised to find he had not yet claimed Liang Shanpo's Ruins as his reward. He learned the ruins housed 108 Spirit Generals, and he had defeated only nine. He still lacked the approval of the others.

Undeterred, he resolved to clear the ruins eleven more times to win them all and chose to snowball his rewards again. Unexpectedly, after snowballing for the ninth time, he gained the chance to select one Spirit General to protect him. He had witnessed the strength of such protection when he faced Bao Xiren during the second calamity. From then on, he had hoped to gain such protection himself but never expected the chance to come so soon.

He carefully reviewed the Spirit Generals that he had defeated and chose the 9th Spirit General, Hua Rong. From that moment on, only 107 Spirit Generals remained in Liang Shanpo's Ruins.

Han Wu challenged the ruins repeatedly over the next few days. Each time he defeated a Spirit General, the corruption from the voice weakened. By his twelfth run, he had challenged all 108 Spirit Generals.

Each lost their black oil, which purified them and restored them to their original selves. The black oil from all 108 merged into a small humanoid form. Han Wu recognized it as the entity that had tried to sway him into fighting the Warring Kingdom Civilization.

He commanded his twelve Spirit Generals to attack simultaneously. These Spirit Generals were High Lord life forms, reinforced by Han Wu's strength. Working together, they surrounded the culprit that had tainted them. The humanoid could neither escape nor win and was ultimately destroyed. Han Wu tossed its remains to one of his Dark Cursed Bugs to consume.

Now that he had obtained the twelve Spirit Generals, Han Wu's strength increased once more, and he finally became a genuine King life form. Qin Shuang benefited as well. With his support, she cleared Liang Shanpo's Ruins ten times and obtained ten Spirit Generals to protect her.

Together, they had claimed twenty-two Spirit Generals, leaving eighty-six still in the ruins. Han Wu refused to surrender these ruins to anyone else, so he used the trade function to give the tickets to Sun Qingnian first. From there, it was up to Sun Qingnian and his skills to claim the remaining Spirit Generals.

Once they settled these matters, the two departed the island and resumed their voyage. They encountered even more mutated beasts along the way but easily defeated them with their newfound power.

They sailed for a long stretch before finally reaching the Warring Kingdom Continent. They docked at the kingdom closest to their shelter—the Wei Kingdom.

Their arrival did not go unnoticed. As soon as they reached the shore, a huge swarm of mutated beasts noticed them and launched a relentless attack. Han Wu commanded his army to face the numerous but weak mutated beasts.

In the end, he lost seventy-nine Osteomancers but single-handedly defeated 9.2 million mutated beasts. He also raised 150 massive Dark Cursed Bugs by feeding them the mutated beasts' corpses. In a way, this compensated for the loss of his Osteomancers.

The battle drew significant attention, reaching one of the Wei Kingdom's royal palaces. Once the fighting ended, an official arrived to invite Han Wu and Qin Shuang to dinner to discuss strategies for defeating the mutated beasts. They accepted. Their goal was not only to grow stronger but also to help the Warring Kingdom Civilization overcome its current crisis.

That night, they were carried to the Wei Kingdom's royal palace in a palanquin borne by eight men and brought to its reception hall.

Many officials and ministers were already waiting for them. The two received a warm welcome and quickly noticed the large number of attendees. Half the guests wore armor, likely military officers. Then Han Wu spotted a familiar face at the head table—the Thunderfire General, Luo Wulei.

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

[ 1,249 words ]

## **Chapter 233 - A Trade**

Han Wu and Luo Wulei locked eyes. At that moment, Luo Wulei remembered just how terrifying Han Wu was. They had first met during the second calamity, and Luo Wulei had been confident he could defeat him. He had never imagined that Han Wu's Skull Guillotine would strike so swiftly or that it could end his life before he even realized it.

Thankfully, he had only lost some treasures and Life Energy back then—not his life. If they had fought for real, he would have died without even knowing how. The more he thought about it, the angrier he became. He clenched his jaw and cursed Han Wu in silence.

Soon, the officials gathered in the dining hall. Luo Wulei, as the highest-ranking officer present, opened the banquet with a speech focused on uniting to defeat the mutated beasts.

Another official of equal rank, who also held the title of Palace Master, stepped forward to welcome Han Wu and Qin Shuang. "Let me introduce our guests. These two are the experts I personally invited. They possess the power to permanently eliminate the mutated beasts' corpses. They are none other than the saviors the heavens have sent to us."

Han Wu and Qin Shuang rose from their seats. "I am Han Wu, and she is Qin Shuang. We come from the Divine Civilization."

Their brief introductions shocked the officials.

"From the Divine Civilization? Then they must be outsiders. How... How can this be? The Will of our great civilization commands us to drive out all outsiders."

"Palace Master, you are making a grave mistake by working with outsiders. The great Will will punish you when it realizes this."

"Palace Master, there is still time. Give us your order, and we will take them down together."

The Palace Master scowled at the chaotic discussion and slammed the table in anger. "Preposterous! These are the guests I invited. Anyone who harms them will be considered my enemy!"

"I know full well that working with outsiders is a great sin, but our current predicament is dire. More creatures become tainted each day, and plagues run rampant across our kingdom because of their corpses. Is there anyone here who can solve this?"

"You all possess the Nine Martial Castes' powers and can protect yourselves, but what about the common folk? Step outside and look. See the millions of families suffering. Watch as disease claims the weak and helpless. Do their lives mean nothing to you?"

The Palace Master's words silenced the room.

"This crisis demands drastic measures. If this is a crime, then I will bear the blame myself," he declared.

Luo Wulei clapped slowly. "Palace Master, I admire your compassion and your determination to save the people. But are you truly certain that the outsiders you've welcomed can help us resolve our problems?"

The other officials, wary of being dragged into this mess, quickly joined in.

“The Thunderfire General is right. We can’t place our trust in outsiders.”

“This entire crisis began because of them. Palace Master, you must not deceive yourself.”

“We should seize their forces before anything worse happens.”

The Palace Master struck the table again. “Be quiet! They are honored guests whom I personally invited. Show them the respect they deserve!”

He then turned to Luo Wulei. “Thunderfire General, the Warring Kingdom and Divine Civilizations have maintained a cordial relationship for ages. How can you be sure these two friends came here to harm us?”

Luo Wulei chuckled. “It’s simple. I’ve seen one of them commanding an army of skeletons. How could someone who takes life so lightly and even desecrates the dead be virtuous? How can we place our trust in him?”

“What? He commands skeletons? That’s outrageous!”

“Desecrating the dead! That is the most heinous sin one could commit against the dead!”

“Their actions are no different from the demons on the Black Prison continent.”

...

Han Wu and Qin Shuang bristled at the insults. They had not come to endure the officials’ scorn. The two stood up at once, and Han Wu said, “It seems that your palace does not welcome us. In that case, we will leave now. Thank you for your hospitality, Palace Master. Goodbye.”

The Palace Master sprang up to stop them. “Please don’t go. We’re in the midst of a crisis, and your help is indispensable. Do not take offense at the foolish words of these simple buffoons.”

He then turned to the officials and scolded them sharply. “Silence! Our kingdom faces an unprecedented disaster, and our people are dying. How can you treat our allies with such contempt at a time like this? If you’re so wise, then step forward and present a way to deal with the corpses and the plagues right now!”

The officials remained quiet. If any of their suggestions or plans had worked, they wouldn’t be struggling with the plagues.

He excelled in warfare but had no talent for a kingdom's governance. Even with ten clones, he doubted he could compete with the Palace Master when it came to handling bureaucratic affairs.

The Palace Master did everything possible to convince the two to stay, but Han Wu remained angry. "I think I understand the situation now. Palace Master, you want to deal with the plagues, but none of them wants to accept my help because I'm from the Divine Civilization. In that case, I'll charge a fee to handle the corpses.

"That way, we will turn this into a trade agreement. After the crisis ends, we won't owe each other anything. You can issue a warrant or come after me once it's all over. Everyone wins. What do you think?"

The officials agreed without hesitation. Though they claimed to be upright, many were simply cowards desperate to protect their reputations. None wanted to be remembered as the villains who destroyed their civilization. They welcomed the deal as a trade agreement. Once it ended, they could act against Han Wu without guilt, since it wouldn't count as betraying their allies.

Seeing no further objections, the Palace Master gave his approval. "Very well, we shall proceed with what you've suggested."

Han Wu named his price, and the negotiations commenced. In the end, they agreed on a temporary fee: one basic resource to clear 100 polluted corpses.

That night, the Palace Master led them outside the city to a towering mountain of corpses. The stench of rot was so strong it nearly made Han Wu vomit. He forced himself to endure it and ordered his Dark Cursed Bugs to feast on the corpses. The locusts showed no disgust and devoured everything they could digest.

By dawn, they had consumed a fifth of the corpses outside the city. The Palace Master was thrilled by their efficiency. As long as they could eliminate the source of the plague, the rampant diseases in the city would gradually recede. All that remained was to administer proper medicine, allowing the people to recover swiftly. Peace would return.

The Palace Master gladly sent Han Wu 2 million basic resources as payment while Han Wu commanded his Dark Cursed Bugs to continue their grim feast. Meanwhile, he set aside numerous regular animal corpses, summoned skeletons from them, and merged them to create Heroic Osteomancers. The trade was proving so profitable that he secretly hoped for even more corpses.

Yet, Luo Wulei remained fixated on revenge. He ordered his men to monitor Han Wu and Qin Shuang constantly and to report back at regular intervals.

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## Chapter 234 - A Tiger and a Boar

[ 1,146 words ]

### Chapter 234 - A Tiger and a Boar

With ample resources at their disposal, Han Wu and Qin Shuang continued their research into the Nine Martial Castes' powers. The deeper they delved, the more they grasped just how intricate and profound those powers truly were.

At present, they were in their treant forms—Han Wu as a Worker Grovekin and Qin Shuang as a Vanguard Centurion Treant. Though they belonged to the same species, their forms were distinct. The Grovekin bore slender branches and a huge crown that could produce a generous yield of fruit. The Centurion Treant, by contrast, had thick branches and a compact crown that prioritized defense. Each form had its own advantages, though both shared common offensive Skills: Branch Bludgeon, Entangling Roots, and Branch Pierce.

The two focused on exploring different skills, exchanging their discoveries. After three days of relentless research, each mastered a new Skill.

Han Wu's Grovekin acquired the Skill: Grow Nuts. By drawing nutrients from the earth, the Grovekin could produce nuts encased in tough shells. These nuts were not edible but served as ammunition. Swinging their branches, the Grovekins could launch these nuts at foes to deal significant damage. They could also pluck the nuts, coat them in oil, and set them alight, intensifying their destructive power.

Inspired by Han Wu's findings, Qin Shuang developed a related Skill called Sapcoat. A thick layer of sap now coursed beneath their epidermis. When struck, the sap would burst from the wound and adhere to enemy weapons. The sticky residue would drastically slow their enemies' attack frequency.

Once the two mastered their respective Skills, the knowledge was instantly transmitted to the rest of their treant army, bolstering their collective power. With their breakthroughs complete, Han Wu and Qin Shuang ended their research.

At Qin Shuang's enthusiastic urging, Han Wu agreed to accompany her to the market. Like many other young women, she enjoyed browsing small trinkets and decorative pieces. Han Wu indulged her along the way, buying her armfuls of accessories. The market was lively, filled with stalls selling everything from souvenirs and precious ornaments to weapons, pills, and antiques so obscure even the sellers didn't know their value.

They wandered through the market, using insights from the Divine Civilization to secure remarkable treasures at astonishingly low prices. For instance, Han Wu spent only 300,000 Gold Coins on a can of Dragon Bone Powder, vital for upgrading the half-dragons. The price was shockingly cheap, and countless other rare materials were available for similar bargains.

Han Wu purchased so much that he had to admit this little trip was incredibly rewarding. With these resources, he was confident he could upgrade his half-dragons far faster than expected.

As the two happily shopped, they failed to notice a pair of eyes watching them closely from afar. The observer quickly jotted down a report, tied it to a pigeon, and sent it off.

Soon, Luo Wulei received the pigeon at his residence. The message contained only ten words: "The tiger has left the den. Waiting for the boar."

Luo Wulei nodded with satisfaction and summoned one of his subordinates. "It's time for the Palace Master's stupid son to get some fresh air."

His subordinate bowed and went to carry out the order.

Before long, a new figure entered the market. On the wide street, eight strong men carried a fat man in lavish clothes down the wide street in a palanquin. His eyes barely showed, squeezed shut by the overwhelming fat bulging around his face, yet he scanned his surroundings with a greedy gaze.

"Hey, that woman is pretty. Her legs are long and slender.

"Oh, she's good too. Big bosom. I love women like her.

"That little girl looks so pitiful. Why is someone that beautiful begging on the street? Someone, take her to my place and let her warm my bed at night."

Tang Xiaohu, the Palace Master's son, barked orders from his palanquin, scanning the market for more targets. Then he spotted another young woman. Her skin was fair, her simple ponytail understated, but her every move radiated a grace no one else could match.

"Stop, stop!" Tang Xiaohu barked. The eight men halted, exchanging glances. They knew their master had taken the bait.

Tang Xiaohu quickly changed his command. "No, don't stop here. Bring me to that girl in front."

This was the first time he had ever seen such an otherworldly beauty. He swore to keep her in his harem. The men grunted in response and swiftly carried Tang Xiaohu toward Han Wu and Qin Shuang.

Han Wu frowned when he noticed someone blocking their way. Tang Xiaohu struggled to climb down from the palanquin, but his eyes never left Qin Shuang. “Beautiful lady, may I know your esteemed name?”

Qin Shuang bristled. She had been enjoying her shopping, but her good mood vanished the instant this fat bastard appeared. She turned to walk away, only to be blocked by his guards.

Tang Xiaohu chuckled and flaunted his status. “Wait, don’t leave just yet. Come chat with me at my place. I’m the only son of a Palace Master. You could say I’m far above the rest.”

The surrounding crowd watched silently, unwilling to interfere. Some even shook their heads in pity at the scene unfolding before them.

“Aiya, that young lady won’t escape Tiger Tang’s ruthless grasp.”

“How many has he taken this year? None of the girls captured by him ever had a good ending. I heard one of them couldn’t bear the trauma and drowned herself.”

“Who said the son of a dragon would be mighty? Our Palace Master is so well-respected, but his son is so...”

Qin Shuang caught their murmurs clearly and felt her disgust for Tang Xiaohu deepen. “Scram. Don’t block my way!”

“How dare you be so rude to our young master! Do you have a death wish?” one of the guards barked and stepped forward with a raised hand to slap her.

“Young lady, I advise you to listen, or I will stop playing nice.” Tang Xiaohu quickly stopped the guard to prevent him from harming her face. His eyes locked on her with growing excitement. He truly wanted to kidnap her right then and there.

Han Wu chuckled. “I’d love to see you try.”

Tang Xiaohu turned to him with a scowl. “Who the hell are you? And why are you butting in? Get lost while I’m still feeling generous.”

Han Wu stepped forward and positioned himself between Tang Xiaohu and Qin Shuang so that he couldn’t touch her. “What if I don’t?”

Two guards stepped up, shouting, “You imbecile. We’ll take your life right now.”

They then used the Nine Martial Castes' powers and summoned twenty Lancers behind them. The Lancers thrust their lances at Han Wu, showing no regard for his life.

Unfortunately for them, they had chosen the wrong target.

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

[ 1,088 words ]

## **Chapter 235 - Tiger Seal**

Han Wu waved his arm and shattered all of the lances. Even the twenty summoned units crumbled, their fragments scattering like dust in the air.

Tang Xiaohu stared at Han Wu with sharp focus. "You do have some strength. If you hand her over, I'll make you my personal guard. That's a privilege no one else could offer you. Don't make another foolish mistake."

He reached out to push Han Wu's arm away and grab Qin Shuang, but Han Wu wouldn't let him nor would he be swayed by such a small reward. Han Wu tackled Tang Xiaohu and hurled his massive frame several meters away.

The guards panicked, immediately surrounded them, and summoned their strongest force of 300 units. Tang Xiaohu wore the chainmail his father had given him beneath his clothes. Though he looked disheveled after the tackle, his injuries were minor, barely scratching his skin. Two guards hurried to help him up.

"Such insolence! Someone, tear him apart! I want his corpse fed to the dogs!"

The 300 units charged at Han Wu, weapons raised to kill. Without wasting a moment, Han Wu transformed into the Frost Metallion. The temperature around him plummeted to a bone-chilling degree. Anyone close to the Frost Metallion felt the freezing air's bite. The weaker soldiers turned instantly into ice statues. Han Wu controlled the cold with precision and ensured that no civilians nearby suffered harm.

From afar, Tang Xiaohu's eyes widened at Han Wu's transformation. As the Palace Master's son, he immediately recognized that his foe was using the Nine Martial Castes' powers. The Light Cavalry's quality clearly proved just how formidable Han Wu truly was.

"Don't come any closer! I am the only son of the Palace Master. If you kill me, my father will never..." Tang Xiaohu's rolls trembled as he begged for his life, a pitiful contrast to the arrogance he'd shown earlier.

Han Wu lifted Qin Shuang onto his back and charged toward Tang Huxiao without hesitation.

“No, please, don’t...” Tang Huxiao tried to flee, but his bulky frame couldn’t outrun Han Wu in his Frost Metallion form.

Han Wu pressed his icy hooves onto Tang Xiaohu’s broad back and slammed him into the ground with such force that a crater formed beneath him. He ignored Tang Xiaohu’s condition and raced toward the palace.

The onlookers quietly celebrated how Han Wu had dealt with Tang Xiaohu.

“*Aiyo, aiyo...*” Tang Xiaohu’s painful cries echoed from the crater. Thanks to his chainmail, which had absorbed most of the impact, he only sustained some minor injuries and wouldn’t die.

The remaining guards rushed forward to help him out of the crater. Tang Xiaohu’s face was pale, either from the freezing air or sheer humiliation. “Find out who that bastard is and where he comes from! I will make sure they die tonight!”

Meanwhile, Han Wu and Qin Shuang remained unfazed by any threat of retaliation. There was no reason to fear punishment when Tang Xiaohu abused his authority to bully others. Why should Han Wu tolerate that? He had no intention of letting someone like him bully them.

He turned his attention away from what had just happened and instead focused on the empty field stained black with oil. The mountain of corpses had nearly disappeared. The 800 Dark Cursed Bugs left to devour the remains were unusually large. They had eaten so much that they had grown into Lord life forms, though they remained far weaker than proper Lords. In fact, they fell short even compared to Heroic life forms.

Han Wu had to admit that the Dark Cursed Bugs were indeed very weak, but they still held value. Their Life Energy had reached the rank of a Lord, making them rare and valuable sacrificial candidates.

He plucked the dark crystals from their foreheads and then used Sacrifice. All 800 were sacrificed, and their massive Life Energy flowed into the array. Then, three new options appeared before him.

[Option 1: Eternal Altar: Chainsaw Ants. It can summon the Vanguard Chainsaw Ants by investing the corresponding amount of Wood and Food.]

[Option 2: Tiger Seal. Stores a large amount of morale, which can be used on existing Eternal Altars to bypass summoning prerequisites. Usable multiple times.]

[Option 3: Spirit General: Jing Ke. High Lord life form. Infantry caste. Skills: Flowing Gust, Frost Touch, Ten Step Murder. The strongest Infantry unit and assassin. He nearly assassinated an emperor in the past.]

Han Wu dismissed the first option. He already had twelve Eternal Altars, all far stronger than Chainsaw Ants. Choosing that would have been idiotic. The second option, Tiger Seal, would boost his army's strength, while the third, Spirit General Jing Ke, would enhance his personal power. After more than twenty seconds of thought, he chose the second option.

He collected the Tiger Seal and felt the morale stored within. This morale could replace the prerequisites needed to summon more units from his altars, but the cost varied wildly between units. He ran a rough calculation and was stunned by the disparity.

For example, using the Tiger Seal's morale, he could summon five million Dark Cursed Bugs, but only two Deeptide Whales, his strongest caste. The difference between 5 million and two was staggering.

Han Wu needed more Dark Cursed Bugs to control the plagues, so he decided to act immediately. He first placed the Tiger Seal into his storage, then called Sun Qingnian to give him a set of instructions. Soon, he received a trade request for 5 million Dark Cursed Bugs from Sun Qingnian. Han Wu then released them all into the empty field, which quickly swarmed with the massive infestation. He ordered the locusts to feast, and they devoured the remaining scraps scattered across the ground.

Since they didn't have enough food, their overall growth remained slow. Han Wu hoped the palace would send more polluted corpses, as there wasn't enough sustenance for all his Dark Cursed Bugs. As if the heavens had heard his plea, a battalion soon delivered a large pile of corpses to the field.

The 5 million Dark Cursed Bugs eagerly consumed the fresh supply. Then, one of the officials overseeing the delivery approached Han Wu and handed him a dinner invitation from Luo Wulei. Han Wu knew Luo Wulei held no friendly feelings toward them, so the invitation puzzled him. He suspected it could be a trap and considered refusing. Still, curiosity won out, and he decided to attend the banquet to uncover Luo Wulei's true intentions.

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## Chapter 236 - Challenge at the Banquet

[ 1,071 words ]

## **Chapter 236 - Challenge at the Banquet**

That night, Han Wu and Qin Shuang attended the banquet alongside a gathering of high-ranking palace officials.

From the conversations drifting around the hall, Han Wu picked up a few things about Luo Wulei. The latter had been stationed there for three years and was due for a promotion according to palace regulations. Yet, for reasons unknown, he had not received it. Anxious, Luo Wulei frequently hosted banquets, inviting influential officials to drink and soothe his nerves. On the surface, it looked as though Han Wu had been invited simply because one such banquet happened to fall on this day.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang sat side by side, quietly savoring a rare sweet unique to the palace. They watched the officials carefully, sensing strange, probing looks aimed their way.

Qin Shuang whispered, "Han Wu, they're watching us like something's about to happen. It feels like we're the only ones in the dark."

"Stay alert. We must be ready to leave the moment danger arises," Han Wu replied calmly.

They were strong, but they knew this was not the Divine Civilization, so caution remained essential.

Luo Wulei entered a short while later, dressed casually, and raised a glass to toast the crowd. Han Wu, disinterested, quietly drank his tea instead of wine and showed no regard for Luo Wulei's presence.

Luo Wulei looked insulted and winked at his deputy. The deputy general caught the signal and raised his cup to toast Han Wu and Qin Shuang. "You two are outsiders who have traveled far to be here. Let me toast you in celebration."

Han Wu raised his cup with lazy indifference and took a light sip of tea. Many officials nearby bristled with anger at his behavior.

"You're an outsider! How dare you act so disrespectfully!"

"I say we chase them out and save ourselves the trouble."

Han Wu paid no attention and continued eating peacefully. He even picked some of Qin Shuang's favorite dishes and passed them to her.

At this point, the deputy general's patience had worn thin. "I'm offering you wine, and you respond with tea? Don't you think that's a bit arrogant?"

"I prefer tea. If you think it's rude, you can stop toasting me," Han Wu replied flatly.

The deputy general grew more agitated. "So you refuse to drink wine with me because you look down on me?"

Han Wu waved a finger dismissively. "No. I'd still be looking down on you even if I were drinking wine."

The deputy general snapped and drew his sword, ready to strike down Han Wu. In his ten years of service, he had never been so thoroughly humiliated. Yet, Han Wu and Qin Shuang remained composed as if the man before them posed no threat at all.

At that moment, Luo Wulei rose to his feet. "Outsiders, aren't you being a little too arrogant, humiliating my subordinate like this?"

Han Wu glanced at him. "You're only realizing that now? I assumed you already knew we looked down on you."

Luo Wulei fell silent. He finally understood that arguing with Han Wu was pointless. He turned to violence, pointing his weapon at Han Wu. "I see there's no use talking. Come, fight me for 300 bouts."

Han Wu scoffed. "Three hundred? That won't be necessary. I could beat you in just a few. Haven't you already experienced that firsthand?"

Luo Wulei growled at the memory. "Fine. Since you're so confident, fight me one-on-one and prove who is stronger."

At last, he revealed his true motive for inviting Han Wu to the banquet. He had planned to provoke him into a public duel and use his strength to kill him.

Han Wu was at a loss for words. *He invited me all the way to this banquet just for this? Clearly, I overestimated Luo Wulei's cunning.*

Han Wu sighed and decided to indulge Luo Wulei's game. "Fine. I just ate, so some exercise will help with digestion."

Suddenly, Luo Wulei spoke up. "Wait, I have one condition. You can't use that black Skull Guillotine during our duel."

He still remembered how the Skull Guillotine had appeared without warning the last time, killing him instantly. He assumed Han Wu's victory had relied on that deadly item. Now, he felt confident he could defeat Han Wu in a fair fight.

“Fine,” Han Wu agreed.

The others quickly cleared a space, their eyes fixed on the two combatants. A drumbeat echoed through the hall, signaling the start of the duel.

Luo Wulei was the first to transform, shifting into his Lancer caste, the Yellow Lightning Lancer. Flickering yellow lightning crackled across his body with every movement.

Han Wu followed suit. Instead of summoning the skeletons he usually relied on or his core race, the Dark Cursed Bug, he transformed into one of the powerful Lancer half-dragons he rarely used. In this form, he wielded a lance wrapped in bluish-white lightning.

The two clashed in battle. Each time their lances struck, yellow and white lightning flashed before exploding like the fury of sworn enemies.

Their weapons matched in quality, but Luo Wulei’s battle experience far surpassed Han Wu’s. He pressed the attack relentlessly until he flicked Han Wu’s lance aside. Excitement surged through Luo Wulei as he saw Han Wu defenseless. Without hesitation, he summoned a massive ball of yellow lightning at his lance’s tip, ready to obliterate his opponent.

Unexpectedly, Han Wu chuckled. *Does he really believe that half-dragons are helpless without their weapons? The lance is no longer their strongest asset.*

Ever since the half-dragons had mastered Primalize, their weapons had become secondary. Just as Luo Wulei prepared to strike, Han Wu transformed. His half-dragon body swelled explosively, and he turned into a Great Dragon.

While experimenting with new Skills in his transformed state, Han Wu had realized something. If his units could learn the same Skills he acquired, then he could also gain new abilities when they did. His hunch had proven correct. Now, as a Great Dragon, he wielded the power of lightning itself.

Facing Luo Wulei’s charged lance, Han Wu opened his enormous jaws and unleashed a torrent of lightning-infused dragon breath. It swallowed Luo Wulei whole and hurled him through the air. He landed several meters away, his body charred black. No one could tell if he was still alive.

The guests watched Han Wu’s Great Dragon form with a mixture of fear and awe.

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## Chapter 237 - The Palace Master's Plan

[ 1,192 words ]

### Chapter 237 - The Palace Master's Plan

“A Great Dragon! It’s actually a Great Dragon!”

“To think he has a Great Dragon as one of his castes!”

“Such devastation! This Lightning Great Dragon is terrifying beyond words!”

Everyone stared at Han Wu with a mixture of fear and awe. They had expected Luo Wulei to dominate Han Wu, but now their eyes were fixed on Han Wu with reverence. This was the kind of treatment only the truly powerful could command.

Qin Shuang admired Han Wu’s imposing Great Dragon form so much that her love for him grew stronger. This was the man she had chosen—a powerful figure who dominated all around him.

After effortlessly defeating Luo Wulei, Han Wu sneered, reverted to his human form, and led Qin Shuang away from the banquet. No one dared to stand in their path.

The deputy general who had dared to provoke Han Wu moments before collapsed to his knees, trembling with fear. He prayed Han Wu would forget this slight and spare him any future revenge. When he glanced at Luo Wulei’s charred, lightning-scorched body, he nearly fainted. He wanted to slap himself for foolishly provoking such a foe without cause.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the palace, Tang Xiaohu had just received the report about Han Wu and Qin Shuang. His flabby cheeks twitched as he read it. “Those two bastards are actually the guests my father invited to deal with the corpses!”

He knew better than anyone that he could bully anyone in the palace except for his father. The Palace Master was the one person he couldn’t afford to cross. Since his father had personally invited the two, Tang Xiaohu knew he had to back off. He wasn’t about to risk his father’s wrath over a petty grudge.

After brooding over it for a long while, he let out a reluctant sigh. “Damn, you’re lucky this time. I’ll let you go for now.”

What he didn’t realize was that this decision had just saved his life.

In a quiet house nearby, the Palace Master was sorting through documents related to palace affairs. A subordinate had delivered two reports to him moments ago. As he opened them, his expression darkened. The first one detailed Tang Xiaohu's little excursion outside that day and his harassment of the ladies. It also recorded how Tang Xiaohu had tried to attack Han Wu and Qin Shuang.

"That foolish boy! He's utterly useless!" The Palace Master's anger burned so fiercely he nearly wished to kill his own son for his countless sins. Yet, Tang Xiaohu was his only heir. If he killed him now, the Tang lineage would end with him.

He had no choice but to swallow his frustration and keep it locked inside. Though he could not execute his son, he still held the power to punish him. "Someone, come here. Seal off the house of that stupid boy. Imprison him for three months."

His subordinates nodded and rushed to carry out the order. Before they could leave, the Palace Master opened the second report and saw it concerned Han Wu as well. Cold sweat broke out on his forehead as he read the details.

Han Wu had transformed into a lightning-based Great Dragon during Luo Wulei's banquet and inflicted serious injuries. The Palace Master trusted the men who filed this report. That meant Han Wu had held back earlier that morning when Tang Xiaohu dared to attack them.

To prevent further disasters and stop his son from lashing out at Han Wu again in frustration, he changed his orders. "Wait, hold. Stop. Come back."

The men halted and hurried back. "Palace Master, what are your orders?"

"Seal off his house for six— No. One year!"

Even that didn't ease his worry. He stood up and paced toward Tang Xiaohu's house, muttering to himself. "No... One year isn't enough. I need to break his legs. That will teach him."

That night, Tang Xiaohu's agonized howls never ceased.

...

The next day, Han Wu received the Palace Master's summons.

Qin Shuang's expression tensed with worry. "Han Wu, they're calling for you because of what happened yesterday. If they're trying to pin this on us, we should leave. Let's see who dares to stop us."

Han Wu chuckled. "No. If they planned to frame me, they would've done it last night instead of waiting until now."

Qin Shuang nodded. "You're right. Still, we need to be cautious. If anything seems off, tell me right away. I'll back you up."

Han Wu patted her head. "Alright."

He then made his way to the palace. The moment he stepped inside, he saw that every official had already gathered. The atmosphere was heavy. This wasn't just a routine summons—it was serious.

Soon, the Palace Master appeared and opened the meeting. "Everyone, I have called you here to discuss the palace's current situation. Today, I received a letter from the Thunderfire General. It says he injured himself yesterday while drunk and needs time to recover. But the monsters outside continue their assault. How much longer can our defenses hold without him?"

He sighed and fixed his gaze on Han Wu. Everyone in the room knew the truth. Luo Wulei's injuries were not the result of drunkenness but from Han Wu's breath attack. The Palace Master concealed this fact because he needed Han Wu's strength now more than ever.

Silence fell over the room as all eyes turned to Han Wu, waiting for his response. It was clear they expected him to rise to the occasion.

Han Wu cleared his throat. "Hm... I'm not sure if—"

Before he could finish, the Palace Master stepped forward and took his hand. "I have faith you can do this."

Han Wu was rendered speechless. *I haven't even said anything! Nevermind, it's too late for that.*

The Palace Master then directed him toward the front line where they battled the mutated beasts. Han Wu was assigned to defend the most dangerous sector, the one Luo Wulei usually guarded. Now that burden had fallen on him, and he didn't take it lightly.

He summoned his skeleton army and prepared to hold the line. During the fight, he discovered he could now summon skeletons from the mutated beasts' corpses. Without hesitation, he commanded his skeletal forces to raise as many as possible.

That was how the skeleton army launched their infamous warfare strategy once again. At first, only 10,000 marched under his command, but soon their ranks swelled to 20,000, then 30,000, and finally 50,000. In just three days, the army had grown to a staggering 100,000. What had once been the most dangerous area quickly became the safest on the entire battlefield.

Many officials finally recognized the true power of Han Wu's army and sought ways to claim the skeletons for themselves. They couldn't pick new castes for themselves, but they could pass them down to their descendants to nurture and cultivate. They believed such a unique army should not remain hidden from others.

Sadly, Han Wu saw through their intentions and refused to share. His reason was simple: they were not fit to command the skeletons!

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## Chapter 238 - Level 15 Shelter, Imperial Capital

[ 1,213 words ]

### Chapter 238 - Level 15 Shelter, Imperial Capital

The source of the plagues had been eradicated, and reports from the frontlines grew increasingly optimistic. The Palace Master was elated. Among the nineteen royal palaces in the Wei Kingdom, his stood out as the safest, with the highest Approval Rating from the civilian population. In recognition of his accomplishments, the emperor issued a public commendation and sent a generous bounty of treasures as a reward.

Officials from the other palaces soon dispatched men to investigate how the Palace Master had managed to avert the crisis. They sought to learn from his methods and apply the knowledge to their own palaces.

Everyone credited the Palace Master for the swift recovery and prosperity, but he knew the truth. The real reason behind their rapid rebound was Han Wu. That was why he handed over every last reward from the emperor to Han Wu without hesitation.

The pile of treasures was immense, yet Han Wu's attention quickly settled on a particular sword. In the Divine Civilization, it would rank as a 4-star God weapon—something a Demigod like him could wield immediately. Beyond its formidable offensive power, the sword granted effects unique to the Warring Kingdom Civilization. For example, equipping it boosted his Infantry caste's strength by 10%. That sounded modest, but when applied to his army of over 100,000 skeletons, it was a significant advantage.

The pile contained other rare treasures as well. Han Wu gathered them all and tossed them into his storage. He planned to let Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian choose from the leftovers he could not use.

The Palace Master glanced at Han Wu, clearly wanting to say something but hesitating repeatedly.

Han Wu could tell that the Palace Master wanted to ask a favor. “What do you need, Palace Master?”

The Palace Master finally spoke. “Several other royal palaces nearby have suffered attacks from mutated beasts and outbreaks of plague. I was hoping you could help save them as well. I’m sure the other Palace Masters would be grateful. Beyond that, our great Will will surely record your efforts to protect us. Could you do this for us?”

Han Wu had expected a different favor. Clearing the mutated beasts’ corpses from the other palaces was well within his ability. He welcomed the task, as handling the corpses brought him valuable benefits. “As long as the price is right, I can definitely help with removing the corpses.”

The Palace Master’s face lit up with relief and joy. “Is that true? That’s wonderful. You truly are the savior of the Wei Kingdom. I will contact the other palaces and send them to you soon.”

Han Wu’s respect for the Palace Master grew even deeper. The man served his people selflessly, dedicating his life to their welfare. Unlike some selfish officials who would have tried to keep Han Wu locked in place as the city’s protector, the Palace Master understood the broader vision. He was an excellent leader for the city’s administration.

Afterward, the Palace Master reached out to the others, sharing Han Wu’s price for aid. Many of the other Palace Masters, worn down by the relentless plagues, welcomed the chance to pay whatever it took for relief.

For the next few days, Han Wu sent swarms of Dark Cursed Bugs to each palace, clearing away the corpses. He also dispatched his skeleton army in waves toward the gathering mutated beasts, eradicating them before they could grow stronger.

After several large-scale battles, his skeleton army had swelled to one million strong and gained significant power. Whenever he wished, Han Wu could easily use this formidable force to seize control of any city—except for the Wei Kingdom’s Imperial City.

Yet he chose not to. Every city housed millions of civilians, and taking one over meant he would have to find ways to sustain their lives. That burden was too great for him to bear.

Thanks to his efforts, the conditions of many cities and palaces improved rapidly. In gratitude, other palaces sent him valuable gifts. Some offered vast forests for lumber, others granted mining rights to ore-rich deposits, and one even gave him thousands of acres of arable land to cultivate as he pleased.

Han Wu accepted every gift. With such abundant resources, his storage space soon filled to capacity, and he could finally upgrade his shelter again. He contacted Sun Qingnian to upgrade his shelter to Level 15.

Billions of resources vanished in an instant as his shelter advanced to Level 15 and turned into an Imperial Capital. The city walls thickened by ten meters and turned his region into an impregnable fortress

At the same time, the polluted sea surrounding his territory reverted to its pristine state. Everything within fifty kilometers of his shelter became part of the Imperial Capital, and the pollution receded under its protective grace. Now, he could raise Deeptide Whales and Deep trench Frogmen in the surrounding ocean without fearing contamination.

Beyond his shelter, Han Wu noticed a change in himself. With the elevation of his shelter to an Imperial Capital, he had become an official emperor. Though his domain consisted of only one city and a small population, he still gained all the privileges of his new status.

First, he received a custom dragon robe designed exclusively for emperors. While wearing it, he could neutralize the imperial authority radiating from other emperors to preserve the clarity of his own judgment.

Second, he earned the right to build City Cores. Once established, a new city would spring up around each City Core, though its level would always remain below that of his shelter.

Third, he gained the imperial authority reserved for emperors alone. With this power, his words and actions could influence the weather within his shelter. The strength of this authority directly depended on his Approval Rating.

There were many other benefits, each underscoring how exceptional his status was.

Han Wu was carefully examining these advantages when something unexpected occurred. On the Warring Kingdom Continent, every emperor received a notification announcing the birth of a new emperor. The message also made clear that this new ruler possessed only a single Imperial Capital.

The ten emperors immediately started plotting. Their kingdoms remained intact not because they were friendly but because none had managed to overpower the others. Now, a new emperor with an Imperial City had appeared—and more importantly, this newcomer was weak. This presented a rare opportunity to claim new land. All they had to do was conquer it, and an Imperial Capital would be theirs for the taking.

For the kingdoms, gaining an Imperial City meant increasing their fate. This invisible force directly influenced the kingdom's prosperity and strength.

Without hesitation, every emperor ordered their armies to seize the newly formed Imperial City. They dispatched their forces immediately to conquer it.

Three days later, Han Wu received news that his shelter was under attack. Panic surged as he realized that the armies from all ten kingdoms had launched a simultaneous assault without warning or explanation.

Han Wu was justifiably furious. He activated the trade function and sent his entire army back to Sun Qingnian to repel the invaders while he transformed into a Great Dragon. Qin Shuang climbed onto his back, and they soared swiftly back to the shelter.

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## **Chapter 239 - I Shall Personally Lead the Battle**

[ 1,344 words ]

### **Chapter 239 - I Shall Personally Lead the Battle**

As a King life form, Han Wu could travel fast enough to reach his shelter within half a day. From above, he saw the ocean below teeming with tens of thousands of battleships from every kingdom. The Deeptide Whales and Deeptrench Frogmen defending his shelter were only delaying the inevitable.

Back at his shelter, Sun Qingnian had deployed his Heavy Cavalry Fire Dragon Cannons along the walls. They launched massive cannonballs that exploded amid the ships, yet even the blasts failed to halt the invading fleet.

“Everyone, charge! Bring down the Imperial Capital! Our emperor promises great rewards!”

“Our emperor has decreed that whoever first sets foot in the Imperial Capital will receive 10,000 Gold Coins and a noble title!”

“The Qin Kingdom leads the ten kingdoms. We will claim the Imperial Capital!”

“Soldiers of the Tang Kingdom, heed my orders! Full speed ahead—take down that Imperial Capital!”

Each general shouted to rouse the fighting spirit of their troops. Their rallying cries surged through the ranks, their fervor turning into raw energy that allowed them to

summon more of their troops to strike down the Deeptrench Frogmen crawling up the sides of their ships.

Many vessels had already reached the shore of Han Wu's shelter. On command, soldiers summoned their Technician units castes to start assembling ladders and siege equipment to scale the walls.

Sun Qingnian anticipated this and commanded Han Wu's skeletons to leap from the battlements. They crashed into the climbing enemies, knocking them down.

Below the walls lay a vast tangle of broken bones beneath the corpses of fallen soldiers. The grim sight failed to discourage the attackers; instead, it fueled their determination.

"Go and take down that Imperial Capital!"

"We will conquer it, even if it means grinding it down with sheer numbers!"

"We are men of the Han Kingdom. We will fight to the bitter end!"

The combined armies of the ten kingdoms intensified their assault, and some even started using the fallen as footholds to scale the walls. Many generals commanded flying units as one of their castes, yet none transformed into those forms. Numerous Thunder Sparrows were patrolling high above Han Wu's shelter, forming a dense cloud of lightning that would instantly kill any intruder daring to enter their range.

Moreover, swarms of Dark Cursed Bugs were hovering just slightly below them. The locusts could self-detonate to inflict devastating damage, and many of them were the size of aquariums. No one wanted to risk killing them because their falling corpses would crash down like massive boulders from the sky. It was safer to let them live, especially since the only attacks they launched were the harmless Shadow Needles.

Meanwhile, bones continued to pile up on the ground, so Sun Qingnian deployed his second wave of defensive units. This time, the Osteomancers took the field. They leapt from the walls, completing their transformation mid-air and slamming into the ground as ten-meter-tall bone giants.

The towering bone giants demonstrated their immense combat power against the enemy units and quickly gained the upper hand. Their resilience was unmatched; even the gravest wounds healed swiftly, as they absorbed bone fragments scattered across the battlefield. Each Osteomancer could easily hold its ground against 100 units.

In response, the generals stepped up and transformed into their strongest caste.

"Heavy Cavalry Typhoon Crossbowers!"

"Heavy Cavalry Mammoth Riders."

“Heavy Cavalry Giant Warriors!”

The various Heavy Cavalry units charged fiercely at the Osteomancers and sparked a brutal clash. Though formidable, the Osteomancers struggled to withstand the relentless onslaught from the diverse Heavy Cavalry units. Gradually, they were pushed back.

At last, Han Wu took to the battlefield and unleashed a breath attack charged with lightning, obliterating numerous Heavy Cavalry units. The crackling energy tore through ten or more foes before fading away.

The Crystal Lich immediately summoned more Osteomancers from the corpses and maintained the balance of the battlefield.

Han Wu understood clearly that his shelter couldn't withstand the sheer size and strength of the opposing armies for long. They had held out this far only because Sun Qingnian had aggressively expanded their units in both number and size.

The ten kingdoms had poured in overwhelming forces, their diverse units more than capable of crushing the few units Sun Qingnian had managed to summon.

Han Wu landed hard on the city wall. His towering dragon form intimidated many beast-type units, but many more humanoid units charged at him. Some even shouted with glee at the prospect of slaying a dragon today.

Han Wu reverted to his human form and glared at them. At that moment, Sun Qingnian quickly approached him. “Han Wu, those bastards are crazy! If this continues, we will definitely lose the siege.”

He knew that speaking so bluntly would crush their troops' morale, but he still chose to tell the truth.

Qin Shuang looked at Han Wu without pressing him for a decision. She trusted her man and believed he would find a way out. Secretly, she vowed that even if they failed, she would stand by his side and never walk away.

In the end, Han Wu spoke the words that reignited their confidence. “Don't worry, I will personally lead the battle.”

Frankly, he didn't want to attack the generals from the Warring Kingdom Civilization. After all, their civilization maintained strong ties with the Divine Civilization, and a sudden attack could spark a war between the two. Even so, he saw no alternative. He had to defend his shelter, especially under such relentless pressure.

Han Wu shifted into his Great Dragon form once more, soared up high into the air, and unleashed a powerful dragon roar that echoed across the battlefield. “Soldiers of the ten

kingdoms, this is your final warning. Leave my shelter now, and I'll pretend none of this ever happened. Refuse, and your deaths will be on your own heads."

His declaration was met with scornful laughter.

"You're about to die, yet you're still this arrogant? We don't fear death. Go on—show us what you've got."

"Don't you feel that wind up there? Be careful that it doesn't blow out your loose teeth. We, the warriors of the Han Kingdom, will storm your Imperial Capital and crush your City Core."

"You're full of hot air. Do you think we'll fall for that? We were using tricks like yours before you were even born!"

Most of them believed Han Wu was bluffing, trying to fool them into retreating. These were seasoned generals and hardened soldiers who had survived countless battles. They didn't think twice about dismissing him.

Only one general took his words seriously. Bao Xiren stood on the deck of his ship. His naturally dark complexion contrasted with his bright, piercing eyes, which were capable of discerning the hearts of people. He had clearly heard the gravity and sincerity in Han Wu's voice.

Without delay, Bao Xiren approached Zao Cheping, the admiral commanding their kingdom's fleet. "Admiral, there was truth in his words. We should move beyond the range of his Imperial City to prevent any mishaps."

Zao Cheping frowned. Bao Xiren was the Song Kingdom's newest rising star, a general who had stood out during the last mock battle. His strength was well known, and the kingdom had invested heavily in his future.

He was frowning because he couldn't believe someone with such promise would react so timidly—retreating at a single warning from the enemy. How could Bao Xiren achieve greatness if he was so easily shaken?

He looked at Bao Xiren with disappointment. "This is a war between kingdoms. How can we from the Song Kingdom retreat now? We would become the laughingstock of all, and the rival emperors would ridicule us."

Bao Xiren opened his mouth to explain, but Zao Cheping cut him off, "Enough. Stop speaking. Don't interfere with my judgment. Say another word, and I will punish you under military law."

Bao Xiren's expression darkened under the threat. He glanced anxiously at Han Wu in the sky and hoped that he was simply being overly cautious.

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

[ 1,209 words ]

## **Chapter 240 - Skull Guillotine**

Han Wu carefully scanned the fleets of the ten kingdoms, but none responded to his warning. One Qin general even used morale to form a huge lance and hurled it at him. The lance was sharp enough to shear off some of his scales and pierced his body.

Since none had heeded his warning, then he would show them what real destruction looked like. Without hesitation, he yanked the lance from his flesh and crushed it. Then, drawing on his Divine Points, he summoned his Skull Guillotine once more.

Since its last appearance, the Skull Guillotine had spent days digesting the immense energy from the black crystals it had absorbed. Two days ago, it finally succeeded and used that power to upgrade itself dramatically. Before, it could mark only 10% of its victims for death. Now, the rate had jumped to 25%. Each time it appeared, it could annihilate a quarter of the opposing army. It was genuinely a terrifying weapon.

Han Wu hadn't wanted to use it, but the soldiers had pushed their luck too far. He acted swiftly, determined to prove that he wasn't someone they could push around.

He poured Divine Points into the Skull Guillotine, and a ring of black light burst forth, expanding until it encompassed the entire area around his shelter. He stopped only when the light reached that boundary. This defined the area where he would activate the Skull Guillotine's effects. To reach this range, he had to spend several hundreds of millions of Divine Points.

Bao Xiren had been carefully monitoring Han Wu from below and was horrified when he sensed the Skull Guillotine's presence again. Its design resembled his own three guillotines, though the Skull Guillotine operated with far fewer restrictions. He couldn't fully grasp its core mechanics yet, but he knew with certainty that many would die once it activated.

Ignoring his admiral's earlier warning, Bao Xiren pleaded again, "Admiral! The situation is critical. If we stay here, we'll suffer heavy casualties. We must retreat now."

Zhao Cheping's face twisted with anger and disappointment. He never expected the young general to repeatedly challenge his authority. They held the upper hand, so he saw no reason to retreat now.

“Men! Drag this bastard away before he clouds my judgment any further! Beat him with the cudgel, a hundred strikes!” Zhao Cheping barked.

As the soldiers were about to drag Bao Xiren away, he kept pleading, “Admiral, please reconsider! Master!”

Unfortunately, Zhao Cheping was set on taking the Imperial Capital and pressed ahead with his orders to attack.

The Skull Guillotine was ready. Han Wu gave the command without a hint of emotion to mark all enemies within range for death. Instantly, black skulls appeared above the soldiers and generals, snapping shut like jaws. Within seconds, a quarter of the entire combined army perished without warning. Even the units they had summoned using their morale vanished into thin air alongside the fallen. Those who survived faced the harsh reality that a quarter of their forces had been wiped out.

The tide of battle turned again. This time, Han Wu held the advantage.

“The admiral is dead! Can someone tell me what just happened?”

“General, why have you died without a sign?”

“Magic! That brat’s using voodoo magic. Run!”

...

The Song Kingdom had dispatched thirty-two generals and tens of thousands of soldiers, capable of summoning up to 1 million units on their own. Yet, in a single devastating moment, they lost eight generals, 3,000 soldiers, and nearly 500,000 units.

Zhao Cheping escaped death by a stroke of luck, but the grief hit him so hard he could barely breathe. The Song Kingdom had always been weak, and now the loss of eight generals in one strike dealt a devastating blow, weakening their already precarious fate.

He recalled Bao Xiren’s warning and felt the urge to end his own life. If only he had heeded Bao Xiren and had ordered even a partial retreat, their losses would not have been so catastrophic. Sadly, it was too late. The more he replayed Bao Xiren’s words, the heavier his regret became.

“Bao... Bao... Xiren... Listen to me... I command you to bring... our soldiers back home...” Zhao Cheping coughed up blood as rage and despair consumed him. That final order was the last thing he ever spoke.

The same scene unfolded aboard the other ships. Just moments earlier, they had brimmed with arrogance. Now, every one of them was drowning in regret. Though they

could resummon units through morale, the deaths of their generals and soldiers were irreversible.

While they were still wallowing in their regret, Han Wu commanded his army to fight back. The Skeletons Knights charged into the battlefield and raised new skeletons from the corpses of fallen soldiers. Comrades who had died only moments before rose again as hollow-eyed puppets and drove their blades into the backs of the grieving.

Chaos erupted as the skeletons cut down the living without mercy. Many soldiers froze in shock at the sudden turn until one yelled, "Run! Retreat!"

That cry snapped the generals out of their stupor. They had lost. If they didn't flee now, they would all die here. The ships turned, sails rising in haste, but Han Wu had no intention of letting them escape so easily.

He gave the signal to the Deeptide Whales that had been lurking in the deep to unleash Maelstrom simultaneously. The swirling waters blocked any hope of retreat. Numerous ships were dragged into whirlpools and shattered into splinters. Many soldiers drowned or succumbed to the crushing pressure of the water.

Only then did the armies of the ten kingdoms understand the full weight of their defeat. Even so, they refused to die in vain. Their losses dealt a devastating blow to their kingdoms, so many raised white flags in surrender to preserve some of their kingdoms' strength.

It wasn't until every ship had hoisted a white flag that Han Wu gave the order to halt the assault. He commanded all vessels to dock near his shelter, then seized them as they arrived. He stripped the generals and soldiers of their equipment and threw them into his dungeon as captives. He also confiscated every resource they had brought with them.

It took him three full days to clear the battlefield. While he had lost many of his other units, his skeleton army had grown a hundredfold. Now numbering close to 300 million, the undead legions far exceeded the space available in his Imperial Capital. To reduce the burden, he merged them until only 50 million remained. Each one was an elite among elites. The weakest of them had reached the level of Elite Iron Skeletons.

He then gathered all the spoils and told Sun Qingnian to sell them however he saw fit. With the wealth he now possessed, he had enough to construct a single city of the highest quality. Once complete, it would greatly increase his kingdom's fate—and as its emperor, he would share in those gains.

However, a new problem emerged. The region offered barely enough space for his Imperial City, let alone a new city. With no alternatives, he resolved to build his new city on the Warring Kingdom Continent.

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## Chapter 241 - Returning to the Divine Civilization

[ 1,307 words ]

### Chapter 241 - Returning to the Divine Civilization

None of the soldiers had returned from the campaign. Every last one of them had been defeated, and news of their failure quickly reached their respective kingdoms. Already overwhelmed by the foreign civilization's invasion, the kingdoms saw their fates decline even further with this latest loss.

Yet, they soon learned that Han Wu had not killed all their soldiers. Instead, he had imprisoned them. This revelation sparked urgent discussions among the ten kingdoms about how to rescue their captured men. Raising a single soldier to peak condition required tens of thousands of Gold Coins. Training a general cost even more. It made more sense to pay a ransom for the captured soldiers and generals than to lose them completely.

Envoys from the ten kingdoms traveled to meet Han Wu, seeking to negotiate the return of their soldiers.

Han Wu was not one to forgive easily. The soldiers and kingdoms had invaded his shelter with reckless enthusiasm. Now they wanted to recover their men by offering a small sum? That was out of the question.

He laid down his terms. Each kingdom had to cede a piece of land before he would release any prisoners. He warned the envoys that time was short. They had three days to decide. If the kingdoms refused, he would execute the soldiers.

The envoys tried everything—pleas, appeals to morality, veiled threats—but nothing worked. If they hadn't tried to invade him, he would have listened. Frustrated and defeated, the envoys returned home empty-handed.

In the end, to rescue the soldiers and generals they had painstakingly raised, the emperors reluctantly accepted Han Wu's demands. They ceded a vast tract of land at the heart of the ten kingdoms to him.

This territory lay nestled between mountains on three sides, with the ocean guarding the fourth. Its natural defenses made it easy to hold but difficult to invade. Rich in

resources, the land had long been a contested prize among the ten kingdoms. Yet, they had no choice but to surrender it to Han Wu as compensation.

After securing the land, Han Wu dispatched Sun Qingnian to swiftly build a new city. The huge skeleton laborers started construction and gathered resources throughout the region.

Meanwhile, Han Wu offered his services to the surrounding kingdoms, handling the mounting problem of mutated beasts' corpses and the plagues that followed. Most cities in the ten kingdoms struggled with these issues, and Han Wu's new city provided a vital solution, earning him some measure of trust.

As trade agreements multiplied, the city expanded swiftly. The resources Han Wu gathered proved more than sufficient to launch additional cities across his newly acquired territory.

Three months later, Han Wu had established ten cities, creating a small nation nestled firmly among the ten kingdoms.

Naturally, the other emperors, driven by greed, coveted his growing territory. They launched numerous expeditions during those months to seize Han Wu's territory, but every attempt ended in defeat, crushed by Han Wu's vast skeleton army and the devastating power of his Skull Guillotine.

The repeated defeats led to heavy losses that none of the kingdoms had ever experienced before. By then, not one dared to challenge Han Wu's authority. Quietly, they all acknowledged his domain as the eleventh kingdom of the Warring Kingdom Continent.

Han Wu no longer feared the other kingdoms. After all, the bodies of their fallen soldiers had granted him the resources he needed. He wished to leave, but even as the emperor of a small kingdom, departure was impossible. The Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization had to approve it. And as long as foreign civilization continued to invade, that Will remained in a frenzy. Until the invasion stopped entirely, Han Wu had no choice but to wait.

Han Wu's corpse-cleaning services eased the burden on the ten kingdoms. Without the plagues, their main tasks were to hunt down the newly mutated beasts and seal the rifts that leaked black oil into their world. However, the remaining three continents still faced the same threat.

Although the three friends were powerful, their influence barely stretched far enough. They had no clear idea how long the invasion would last with just their efforts. This uncertainty drove Han Wu to expand his services. Beyond renting skeletons as laborers, he also started leasing Dark Cursed Bugs to clear the corpses faster. This move aimed to accelerate the three continents' efforts to repel the invasion.

The remaining students in the chat group naturally supported the idea, cheering him on. They became his ambassadors, renting large numbers of Dark Cursed Bugs in exchange for resources to tackle the crises plaguing the other continents. Han Wu only needed to sacrifice the engorged Dark Cursed Bugs occasionally to secure greater rewards.

This continued for three full years. Under their leadership, their kingdom flourished and rivaled the other great kingdoms of the civilization. Meanwhile, fueled by ample resources, Han Wu reached the peak of a King life form, and his powers of the Nine Martial Castes had improved considerably. Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian had also advanced into late-stage King life forms.

The other continents gradually regained peace as the mutated beast invasions and plagues subsided. The unknown civilization's invasion officially ended when the final rift sealed shut.

Han Wu and his allies finally earned the Will of the Warring Kingdom Civilization's acknowledgment to return home. The trio even received praise from the Will, which granted them an Eternal Gate linking to their divine realms. Through this gate, they could visit the Warring Kingdom Civilization anytime as honored guests.

This gift far exceeded everything they had achieved so far. With the Eternal Gates, they now had the potential to earn far more wealth over time. Even a modest trade deal could make them rich.

After receiving the Warring Kingdom Civilization's blessing, the three returned to the Divine Civilization. Upon hearing the news, Saliya gathered the students to welcome their arrival.

Han Wu felt familiar power flow back into his body as soon as he reached the Divine Civilization. The energy crept upward slowly, and he sensed a bottleneck ahead. He wondered what rank lay above the King life form.

Due to their stellar performance in the major classes, they had earned a strong reputation among the other elites. To reward them, Saliya sent a request to the college, which agreed to grant the trio an appropriate prize. The college allowed them access to the vault to select a single Demigod-rank treasure as their reward.

The three entered and selected what they needed.

Qin Shuang picked a treasure that completed an Evolution Path for her Thunder Sparrows. The Harpy's Diamond enabled them to evolve into Heroic Thunder Harpies, a Heroic life form with enhanced offensive power and greater intelligence.

Sun Qingnian also picked a treasure that advanced an Evolution Path for his core race. He selected the Nine Tail Jade, which allowed his Foxmen to potentially evolve into Nine-tailed Foxmen. To him, it was an invaluable treasure.

As for Han Wu, he already had plenty of Evolution Paths for his locusts, so he passed over anything related to them. Instead, he selected the Rank 5 Divine Aspect: War. While it wasn't as coveted as Death, Life, Destruction, or Creation, it still held considerable value. More importantly, it would help him to comprehend the Destruction Aspect more quickly.

Han Wu absorbed the War Aspect and unlocked all five Divine Skills it held, thanks to his accumulated Divine Essence and extensive experience in warfare. He reviewed his new Divine Skills, and a fierce urge to test them flared within him. He longed for battle once more but knew he had to wait a bit longer.

Just then, Saliya's video call came through. He was confused and had no idea why she was reaching out, but he answered anyway.

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[ 1,100 words ]

## **Chapter 242 - Candidate for Wargame**

The call connected. "Han Wu, due to your stellar performance in the previous major class and your impressive strength, the college has decided to break its rules and select you as a candidate for a very rare game."

Saliya's voice carried excitement, hinting at how rare this opportunity truly was.

"What kind of candidacy is this?" Han Wu asked, curiosity sharpening his tone.

"You have been chosen to represent a Godking in a wargame!"

Han Wu's confusion deepened. Saliya patiently explained the situation, revealing just how precious this chance was.

The Divine Civilization was backed by numerous Godkings—beings of overwhelming power. These Godkings never fought each other directly in war, even if grudges ran deep, because their battles would wreak irreversible destruction on the world around them. Instead, they stepped back and settled their rivalries through wargames.

These wargames occurred almost every year. This year, the contest was between the Life Godking and the Death Godking, two polar opposites who clashed in nearly every aspect. Their opposing natures kept tensions high, so wargames between them were frequent.

The requirements to join were exceptionally strict since the representatives would directly impact the Godkings' reputations. Naturally, they could not settle for just any candidates. The Godkings almost always sought out the elite students from the colleges to represent them.

These top-tier students were usually Demigods, still limited in power but with promising room for growth. Through the wargames, the Godkings could assess their abilities and recruit the most promising candidates into their own ranks. It was a mutually beneficial arrangement.

"Professor, the chance to join this wargame must be very valuable, right?" Han Wu asked.

Saliya nodded. "Of course. This is a rare opportunity to prove your strength in front of a Godking. Many Demigods have tried and failed to earn this chance. Normally, first-year students wouldn't even be considered. Most of you are still new to your powers and lack the necessary experience.

"But Han Wu, you're an exception. You've only taken one major class, yet the college has already recognized your potential. That's why the rules were bent to give you this opportunity. If you perform well, the Godking might even reward you."

Han Wu recalled the bankrupt Godking, whose true title was the True Martial Godking. He had once ordered Hu Hai to kidnap Han Wu but ultimately failed. As compensation, Han Wu received Hu Hai's corpse and divine realm.

Han Wu's recent growth came from exploiting Hu Hai's resources. Without that divine realm and corpse, he would not have reached this stage. In a way, this showed just how wealthy the Godkings were. The more powerful ones, like the Death Godking and Life Godking, were known to be even more generous with their rewards.

Han Wu accepted the privilege the college had granted him. "Thank you. I will work hard and not disappoint the college."

Saliya nodded approvingly and explained, "The wargame will take place in two weeks. You can use this time to improve your strength. I've heard you earned many rewards from the Warring Kingdom Civilization. If you use them well, you should easily become the valedictorian among the first-year students. That said, do you know what rewards come with being valedictorian?"

Han Wu shook his head. He had never bothered to check.

Saliya sighed. *He doesn't even know about the rewards of being valedictorian? What could be on his mind to ignore something so important?*

She then recalled the information she'd reviewed about him. A Godking's subordinate had kidnapped Han Wu, but the latter escaped. As compensation, the Godking had handed over a God's entire corpse and associated resources. That explained why Han Wu had never bothered to look into the valedictorian's rewards. Compared to the remains of a God, they were insignificant.

Curious about the rewards, Han Wu asked, "Professor, please tell me what I will receive if I become the valedictorian."

Han Wu was wealthy and didn't have to worry about money, but now he had a few hundred billion units in his divine realm. If he only spent without earning, his fortune would vanish quickly. Not even a God could sustain such vast resources for long.

"The rewards for being valedictorian must seem small to you. You'll get one Rank 4 Sacred Object each week and 10 Divine Essence per month," she said.

Han Wu's eyes widened. Did Saliya really think 10 Divine Essence was nothing to him? Even the Rank 4 Sacred Object held value, especially if he received one every week. With enough time, he could stockpile them and turn a decent profit.

"Professor, I will become valedictorian. I mean every word," Han Wu grew serious when discussing rewards. He could joke about anything except money.

"I'm confident that you can do it," Saliya encouraged him before ending the call.

Han Wu returned to his divine realm and surveyed its current state. From above, he saw that his units hadn't waged war against each other this time. A breath of relief left his chest. He had hoped that all his units would coexist peacefully.

As if sensing his gaze, every sapient unit in the realm showed him reverence.

Han Wu made a rough assessment of his forces. The locusts remained his largest faction, numbering close to 400 billion. His strongest unit, Dark Locust, had risen to the rank of High Lord.

Next were the Tigermen, totaling around 10 billion. He had indoctrinated them from Hu Hai's divine realm, converting their faith to follow him instead of Hu Hai. Since then, they had been delivering a steady stream of Faith Points daily.

The fiercest Tigermen, Hu Chi and Hu Yong, had both risen to the rank of High Lord. Though battle wounds from a previous fight kept them from front-line combat, they now served as Saints, generating Faith Points equivalent to what 100 million locusts produced in a day.

Third in number were the skeletons. After countless battles, the skeleton population in his divine realm reached a few hundred million, all Unique or higher. The Osteomancer and Skeleton Reanimator stood as their strongest champions at High Lord rank.

The remaining races formed a minority—Epistians, minotaurs, Scorching Dwarves, half-dragons, treants, and others. Even combined, their numbers barely reached 100 million, yet they remained vital components of his divine realm.

As Han Wu was admiring his divine realm, his Saint Steely prayed, “Glorious God, please accept my request and check the Sky Palace.”

Han Wu’s heart pounded. The Sky Palace housed the Origin of Mutation. Had something happened to it? He rushed to inspect what could have gone wrong.

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

[ 1,145 words ]

## **Chapter 243 - Viral Maggot**

Han Wu stepped into the Origin of Mutation’s prison on the eighth floor. The moment he entered, he sensed something watching him. He scanned his surroundings and spotted a strange creature.

Unexpectedly, the Divine Civilization had no record of it. The thing resembled the tentacles of the black octopus and squirmed like a maggot, its rubbery body disturbingly tough and pliant. More unsettling was the faint trace of mental corruption it emitted. Any living being that touched it would fall under its control and become a puppet.

It posed no threat to Han Wu for now, but if the creature evolved into a High Lord life form, it could actually affect him. He realized that this was a new creation born from the Origin of Mutation’s Life Creation, the last Skill it had acquired.

A cold chuckle echoed from the shadows. The Origin of Mutation emerged, bearing Han Wu’s own face and body. After so long, it had become even more proficient in its art.

“Ah, you’re here! What do you think of my cute little creations? I call them Viral Maggots.”

Han Wu shook his head. “These creatures don’t belong in my divine realm. They must be eradicated.”

With a wave of his authority, he wiped out every Viral Maggot on the floor.

The Origin of Mutation showed no reaction. “It doesn’t matter. I’ve already encoded the Viral Maggot’s data into my genes. Once I gather the necessary resources, I can make them again.”

Han Wu said nothing. He had once wielded the powers of the Origin of Mutation himself and knew just how uncontrollable it could become.

In the end, Han Wu said, “I order you to stop creating these dangerous beings. Do you understand?”

The Origin of Mutation chuckled. “Of course. I am but your prisoner. My life and death hang by your will alone. But remember, though you’ve separated me from your body, our Life Energy remains linked. If anything happens to me, you will suffer as well.”

“Are you threatening me? What do you want?” he demanded.

Han Wu had gained significant power when he first merged with the Origin of Mutation. It had even helped him survive several life-threatening crises. Still, the deeper his understanding grew, the more he grasped its terrifying nature. Its danger didn’t lie in raw strength, but in its unpredictability and the fact that it couldn’t be controlled.

The Origin of Mutation consistently exploited Han Wu’s authority, draining his Divine Essence to upgrade itself. Once it evolved, it acted on instinct, mutating everything around it in unpredictable ways. Those caught in its influence mutated into something wholly unexpected.

At first, Han Wu believed he controlled the Origin of Mutation. But as it evolved, he realized he had become part of its design. If left unchecked, the Origin of Mutation could seize his entire divine realm and enslave him in turn. Recognizing the threat, Han Wu wielded the power of the titles to expel it from his body and free himself. Thankfully, he had succeeded.

The Origin of Mutation sneered, “Me? What could I do? What do I want? I’m just a Supergene Soldier, separated from my vessel and currently imprisoned.”

To Han Wu, the Origin of Mutation was both precious and dangerous. Losing it was not an option. “I wouldn’t have to imprison you if you were more cooperative.”

“Then would you reward me for cooperating? Maybe some resources for my research?” It put on a sad face, trying to guilt-trip Han Wu.

Han Wu hesitated when he saw his clone pull that expression. After all, the Origin of Mutation was technically part of him. Maybe he didn’t need to be so strict with it. That thought slipped unbidden into his mind.

He relented. “Fine, but the creatures you research cannot leave the eighth floor, or I will destroy them again.”

The Origin of Mutation chuckled like a child receiving a new toy. “Yay! Thank you, my dear vessel.”

With that, Han Wu left the eighth floor.

The Origin of Mutation dropped its facade and glared fiercely at the spot where Han Wu had just stood. “The Viral Maggots’ effect worked. Turning the mental corruption into mental hypnosis was the right call. It won’t be long before I escape this palace.”

As Han Wu exited the Sky Palace, he shook his head. Something felt wrong with his body. He examined himself carefully but found no obvious issues. Before continuing to issue orders in his divine realm, he informed Steely that he had destroyed all the Viral Maggots.

The Tigermen and Epistians, highly intelligent, took on the role of teachers. They guided the humanoid Locustmen in building a city designed for their kind. The city thrived with Locustmen culture and became a safe haven for newly hatched locusts to grow and thrive.

Meanwhile, the half-dragons threw themselves into researching Primalize with relentless fervor. Soon, three of them transformed into Great Dragons wielding the power of lightning.

Their transformation drew attention not only from Han Wu but also from the black dragon Alpheus, who rejoiced above all.

Han Wu had nurtured Alpheus until he became a High Lord life form. At this rank, Alpheus possessed strength comparable to that of ordinary King life forms. Yet, despite his power, he faced a personal dilemma during his growth: his troubled love life.

In the books, Great Dragons were often recorded as prolific lovers, giving rise to many dragon subspecies and even half-dragons. The enormous Alpheus had not yet mastered the ability to transform into a humanoid form. If he wanted to satisfy his urges, he could only look for the giant locusts that Han Wu had nurtured.

Unfortunately, they were too hideous for Alpheus’s taste, so he had been enduring his desires in silence. That changed the moment he first saw the female half-dragon that had successfully ascended to a lightning Great Dragon. He immediately claimed her as his own.

The half-dragons revered the Great Dragons’ bloodline, so she gladly accepted him as a partner. It wasn’t long before the third half-dragon became a Great Dragon—a female as well. Alpheus gladly welcomed her into his growing harem.

Han Wu didn't know whether to be amused or annoyed. He felt Alpheus should have at least left one of them for the half-dragons. If not, there would come a day when too many single male dragons banded together and ganged up on him. Nevertheless, he couldn't help looking forward to seeing what kind of offspring a black dragon and a lightning dragon would produce.

He was even toying with the idea of organizing an army of Great Dragons in the future when Qin Shuang called him. He picked up the call and heard her soft, hesitant voice. "Han Wu, I am returning to my old house in a couple of days. Would you like to tag along?"

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## Chapter 244 - Returning To the High School

[ 1,164 words ]

### Chapter 244 - Returning To the High School

There were still fifteen days before the wargame, so Han Wu decided to take it easy for a while. "Sure. I want to visit Mr. Tian Wen too when we return."

Three days later, the two teleported back to the Qin Village.

The Qin family greeted Han Wu warmly. After all, it was all thanks to Han Wu's request for Yuan Zhong's help that their God had been saved last time. Without that intervention, the Xu family would have succeeded in their plan to drain the Qin family completely.

Qin Shuang's parents looked at Han Wu with open pride, as if he were already their son-in-law. Their daughter had been telling them all about his exploits in the major class, and they couldn't have been more pleased. In fact, they hoped to settle the matter of his marriage to Qin Shuang that very day.

However, Han Wu gently declined. He said there was still plenty of time and suggested waiting until after graduation to discuss marriage. Qin Shuang huffed angrily at his response. She believed she had made her intentions clear by bringing him home and introducing him to all her relatives.

Han Wu smiled bitterly. He knew exactly how she felt—but he hadn't reached his goal yet. He still had to travel to the Chaotic Starfield in search of his parents. So far, he

hadn't uncovered a single clue about the place. Imperial College had sealed off every scrap of information related to it.

That alone heightened his suspicion that the Chaotic Starfield was extremely dangerous. What if he failed to return? He did not want Qin Shuang to become a widow.

After the family banquet, Han Wu sent a message to Tian Wen, letting him know he planned to visit.

Tian Wen saw the message and quickly informed the school's senior management. They prepared to showcase Han Wu as a model student and introduce him to the newer students.

Naturally, this kind of visit also meant Han Wu would face a challenge from the new students. Tian Wen intended to use the opportunity to humble the more privileged among them and prove that even those just one year their senior could easily outmatch them.

Han Wu agreed eagerly as he enjoyed giving a hard time to the new and inexperienced from time to time. He then informed Qin Shuang, and they headed to their old high school.

Many familiar teachers welcomed them back warmly. Seeing so many familiar faces stirred a touch of nostalgia, reminding them of everything they had accomplished there.

Qin Shuang blushed when she recalled how she once tried to threaten Han Wu into becoming her slave. The weak teen who never fought back when bullied had now grown into a formidable Demigod, far stronger than her.

Xu Mei, the head of student affairs, had assigned them a sprawling field of 10,000 square kilometers for the match. There, Han Wu and Qin Shuang stood waiting to greet the juniors, who were one year below them. This match was set as a virtual battle, meaning all units were virtual replicas identical to their real counterparts. Death in the simulation carried no real consequences.

The school staged the event for several reasons. First, it safeguarded the students' core races. Second, it allowed Han Wu and Qin Shuang to display the full extent of their units freely, setting a clear standard for what stellar students should embody.

After confirming that all students had gathered at the field, Tian Wen asked, "Han Wu, Qin Shuang, are you both ready?"

"We are ready," Qin Shuang answered confidently.

Han Wu chuckled. "We will try our best not to traumatize them."

Tian Wen shook his head. “No, you need to show your true strength and reveal the gap between you and the students. Only then will they be motivated to work harder to close it.”

Han Wu was stunned. “Isn’t that a bit harsh? If I go all out, they’ll never forget my face.”

“Then let them remember you forever,” Tian Wen said firmly. “This will be a match they’ll never forget.”

Han Wu grinned. “In that case, I’ll go all out and show our juniors what true despair and cruelty look like.”

Tian Wen and the other teachers chuckled. Han Wu had only entered college recently, and they couldn’t help thinking, *How strong could he have become?*

They would only realize how much they had underestimated him when he stepped onto the field.

Thousands of students had already gathered, buzzing with anticipation. Xu Mei had told them they’d be facing two seniors from Imperial College in a virtual battle, and the idea had electrified the crowd.

“How strong could our seniors really be? They’re only a year ahead of us. Sure, they got into Imperial College, but there are over 1,000 of us here, with tens of millions of units between us. Why should we be afraid of them?”

“I just hope they can last long enough so we don’t end the match too early.”

“Mr. Tian always praised that senior, Han Wu. I want to see what he’s really capable of.”

“Hey, did you hear? Senior Qin is supposed to be a one-in-a-million beauty. She used to be the prettiest girl at our school.”

“I’ve seen her before. She’s definitely stunning—almost goddess-like.”

“Then let’s not go after her units. Let’s target Han Wu’s and see how long he can hold out.”

“I’m in.”

“Count me in too.”

“Let me join as well.”

The students chattered excitedly as two figures stepped onto the field. Their images lit up in the air, projected high above for all to see.

“Wow! Senior Qin is gorgeous! If we were dating, I’d break my own ribcage to make soup for her if she asked.”

“She wouldn’t want your ribcage. She’d probably be disgusted. She’d definitely prefer someone with strong muscles like me.”

“You musclehead, move aside. Senior Qin is mine.”

“I am Senior Qin’s protector. I’ll crush anyone who dares attack her units.”

Han Wu smiled awkwardly as the students argued over who to challenge. “Looks like our juniors are still squabbling over their targets. Do we really seem that weak to them?”

Qin Shuang laughed. “No, they’re just ignoring you. I’ll always be their most beautiful senior.”

Han Wu pouted. “Then, Miss Most Beautiful, you shouldn’t lift a finger today. Let me give our juniors a real taste of what their seniors can do.”

Han Wu opened a gate to his divine realm, and a torrent of virtual locusts surged out. Though simulated in this space, each one moved in perfect sync with its real counterpart, their senses fully linked to the swarm back in his divine realm.

The students stared in shock as hundreds of millions of locusts poured out of the gate. Their legs weakened at the sheer scale. One junior, who commanded 30,000 Berserk Jaguars—a bloodthirsty and aggressive core race—wanted to flee at the sight of the overwhelming swarm.

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[ 1,104 words ]

## **Chapter 245 - Reasonable**

“There are too many locusts!”

“There must be at least 100 million! How can the gap between us and our seniors be this wide when we’re only a year apart?”

“So this is the strength of our seniors at Imperial College!”

Still, a few students remained skeptical and looked down on him.

“I thought our seniors would be powerful if they made it into Imperial College, but these are just Elite locusts. There are plenty of them, but what can they do if they’re all weak?”

Several teachers frowned at the remark.

“Who said that? What’s his name?” Xu Mei asked the teachers.

One homeroom teacher raised a hand. “Ms. Xu, that’s my student, Xu Ziang. His core race is the Elite Fire Breathers. He ranked ninth on the last test.”

“Fire Breathers?” Xu Mei muttered to herself, finally understanding Xu Ziang’s confidence. Fire Breathers were natural enemies of most insects, but Han Wu’s locusts were different.

The juniors launched their attack, with Xu Ziang’s Fire Breathers charging at the front. The Fire Breathers raised their heads and opened their maws, unleashing flames that scorched the air. The burning streaks raised the temperature around them by several degrees.

Xu Ziang stood confidently within his Fire Breathers’ protective circle, already picturing the scorched locusts raining down from the sky. Sadly, his vision shattered as the Fire Breathers abruptly ceased their flame attacks. The locusts remained alive and turned on him, launching their own assault.

“The locusts are not afraid of fire? What’s happening? Stop! Don’t come any closer!” he cried out in fear.

The locusts ignored his desperate plea. They swarmed down from above, plunging into the mouths of the Fire Breathers before detonating. The resulting explosion obliterated the virtual Fire Breathers instantly.

Xu Ziang reeled in shock. He never expected Han Wu to use his core race as suicide bombers. Even more unsettling, the explosions packed devastating power.

The other students, witnessing the locusts’ strength, scrambled to pull their units back, trying to avoid the chain reaction of explosions that could wipe out clusters of their units.

Han Wu didn’t spare a thought for the losses his self-detonating locusts incurred. He gave the order to attack without restraint, and the locusts poured down in relentless waves. Each time one struck an enemy, it exploded on contact.

Within fifteen minutes, Han Wu had annihilated the combined army of 1,000 students. Their faces turned pale with fear or flushed green with frustration. They’d known from the start that their senior was strong, but none of them had expected this. The power of the self-detonating locusts had left them stunned.

The teachers were no less astonished. They had long been familiar with Han Wu's tactics, but the strength he displayed after entering Imperial College had exceeded all their expectations. The locusts' explosions were now hundreds of times more powerful than before. They doubted any student could withstand that force.

Tian Wen observed his colleagues' stunned expressions and chuckled. *Han Wu has only shown them a glimpse of his strength, and they're already shaken. If they saw his full power, they might just faint.*

Some juniors, frustrated and unwilling to accept defeat, voiced their complaints.

"Senior Han, this isn't fair," one of them grumbled. "You only made the locusts explode because this was a virtual battle. You wouldn't lose anything, so you didn't hold back. We lost tens of millions of units, but you sacrificed hundreds of millions of locusts. In reality, your losses are greater than ours."

Others nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, why didn't I think of that? Our senior may have won, but he took heavier losses. He wouldn't have acted like this in a real battle."

"He's exploiting a loophole to defeat us without losing his units."

"Senior Han, is this all you've got? I'm disappointed."

Many juniors resorted to insults, trying to rationalize their defeat and salvage their pride.

The true purpose of the match had started to slip away, and Xu Mei felt compelled to defend Han Wu.

Han Wu stopped her. "Juniors, I can assure you that what I've shown today is my standard approach to warfare. There's no reason to doubt it."

"Do you think we'll believe that just because you said so? Show us some proof," one student snapped.

"You should summon your real army instead of those bugs," another added. "Don't embarrass yourself with those weak units."

The juniors dismissed his explanation outright, so Han Wu simply smiled and opened another gate.

This time, locusts poured out in such overwhelming numbers that they blotted out the sky. A variety of species followed—far more than before. Alongside the usual Elite Locusts came the terrifying Heavenly Demon Insects, Abyss Bugs, Dark Cursed Bugs,

Locustmen, Primal Locusts, and the enormous Sapper Locusts. Each one gave off a pressure far beyond the threshold of an Elite life form.

The display stunned both juniors and teachers alike, and they all needed time to process what they were seeing.

Silence stretched for nearly thirty seconds before one teacher finally gasped. "Hold on, that's absurd. I think he could destroy our entire school alone."

Xu Mei wanted to reprimand the teacher but held back because every other teacher shared the same thought.

"Han Wu's growth is nothing short of a miracle," Tian Wen said with a sigh. He had once believed he understood the limits of Han Wu's strength, but once again, he was proven wrong.

Xu Mei sighed as well. "Tian Wen, it looks like you've truly nurtured someone strong enough to become our school's pillar this time."

The other teachers exchanged astonished glances. Could they really consider a student their strongest pillar? They glanced up at the dense swarm of locusts and silently agreed that it was possible.

They had believed the hundred million locusts represented the peak of Han Wu's power, but it was only a fraction of his true strength. Their doubts melted into deep reverence.

"Senior Han is ridiculously strong."

"When can I become half as strong? No, even a tenth of his strength would be enough. If I reach that, my father will treat me like a god."

"Are you sure he's only one year older than us? My brother graduated from a lower-ranking college, but he's nowhere near Han Wu's level."

"*Duh*. Senior Han is not just top of his class, he's also a standout at Imperial College. I want to work hard to get in there and be his friend."

"Me too. I want to be the next Han Wu."

...

Xu Mei nodded approvingly as she listened to the juniors' talk. This was a successful match.

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## Chapter 246 - Wargames - Life and Death

[ 1,323 words ]

### Chapter 246 - Wargames - Life and Death

The match had officially ended. Han Wu and Qin Shuang found themselves surrounded by their juniors, who bombarded them with questions. Many sought advice or solutions for the challenges they faced while training their own units.

Han Wu answered each question patiently. A few of the bolder female juniors even asked if he already had a girlfriend. Qin Shuang, clearly feeling the pressure from the younger girls, grabbed Han Wu's arm to signal that he was taken.

Han Wu chuckled softly and glanced at her. The female juniors pouted in disappointment. Meanwhile, the male juniors chatted happily among themselves, and Han Wu couldn't help but eavesdrop.

"See that? Even the ladies chase after a guy as long as he's strong."

"I heard Senior Han was bullied back in school. His homeroom teacher looked down on him, and he nearly got expelled. He only started his journey of revenge once he got his divine realm. There's still time for us to change our fate."

"Someone told me his family's dirt poor..."

Han Wu frowned as he caught their words. In this age of easy access to information, hiding one's past was nearly impossible. He hadn't expected his juniors to dig up so much about him so quickly. He even suspected the story of his bullying would soon spread throughout the school, exaggerated with sayings like, "Fortune changes with time. Never underestimate a poor young man."

Embarrassment threatened to overwhelm him as he stood surrounded by his juniors. Just then, Tian Wen rushed over to rescue him. "Han Wu, Qin Shuang, Ms. Xu wants to see you. She's waiting as the representative of the school's management board."

The two followed Tian Wen to the meeting room, where Xu Mei and the other senior managers awaited. Warm smiles greeted them as they entered.

Xu Mei let out a heartfelt sigh. “Han Wu, Qin Shuang, the two of you are the finest students our school has ever produced. It’s been our honor to teach you.”

Han Wu chuckled. “You’re mistaken. I should be the one thanking you. Without your guidance, I wouldn’t have graduated. We’ve come not only to visit but also to donate resources, hoping the school can use them to nurture future students.”

Han Wu had made up his mind before arriving. His divine realm now contained numerous units that generated a steady flow of Faith Points. He was eager to share some of these to help his juniors grow.

Besides, his many trades and businesses within the divine realm produced resources he did not need. Donating these to the school was his way of expressing gratitude for all it had done for him. Qin Shuang followed suit, offering some of her own resources and treasures to support their juniors.

The school’s management deeply appreciated their generosity. After some discussion, they established a new fund named the *Han Wu Scholarship*. Han Wu chose not to participate in allocating the funds, trusting that the teachers and administration would distribute them fairly.

At their departure, Tian Wen personally saw them off. Along the way, he cheered for Han Wu and shared that he would soon ascend and become a God. Once he did, he would be appointed as the new deputy headmaster and dispatched to the Demonic Civilization to support the headmaster in the war effort.

It would be difficult for the student and teacher to meet again once that happened. Han Wu felt a pang of sadness because Tian Wen would leave for such a distant place, but he understood this was Tian Wen’s dream. As his student, all he could do was wish him well.

After leaving the school, Han Wu returned to his old home for the night. He only went back to Imperial College the next day.

Over the following days, Han Wu devoted himself to nurturing his units whenever possible. During breaks, he chatted with Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian or sought out Xiang Meng, Xia Tian, and Ye Ling to gather more information about the upcoming wargames.

Time passed, and the final night before the wargames arrived. Han Wu studied the Skull Guillotine with anticipation. He had just fed it a large quantity of refined Black Stones, which he had crafted by processing every black crystal he’d gathered in the Warring Kingdom Civilization through his Refinery.

The Skull Guillotine was finishing the absorption of the energy contained within the stones. Minutes slipped by until midnight struck. As the last of the energy was

absorbed, the Skull Guillotine finally lit up. Its power had risen again. It could now mark 50% of Han Wu's opponents for death. That was the upper limit of the power granted by his Destruction Aspect. With this, Han Wu completed the awakening of his Destruction Aspect.

He now possessed three fully completed Divine Aspects: Defiance, Destruction, and War. Together, they dramatically enhanced his strength and propelled him one step closer into becoming a God.

Morning came swiftly, and Han Wu received a call from Saliya, summoning him to the teleporter at Imperial College. Upon arrival, he found a crowd of elites from every year already waiting. Thirty students from the fourth year, twenty from the third, and nine from the second had gathered. Han Wu was the only first-year student present.

Among the second-years, Han Wu spotted familiar faces, such as his friendly seniors Xiang Meng, Xia Tian, and Ye Ling. He also saw his enemy, Huang Shengjun, the valedictorian of the second years.

He didn't recognize anyone from the third or fourth years. Most of them were usually stationed at warfronts across various foreign civilizations throughout the year. Even so, Han Wu could clearly sense the presence of Gods among them—and there were many. They had all ascended before graduation, and the word *genius* barely captured their level. Han Wu reminded himself yet again to work hard and close the gap between him and his seniors.

Once everyone had gathered, the professor in charge of teleportation initiated the activation sequence.

Suddenly, Han Wu saw a flash and found himself floating high above an empty space. Below him lay a massive piece of land, divided into a grid that resembled a chessboard, with alternating black and white squares.

The professor in charge slowly explained, "This is the site of the wargames. It's called the Life and Death Match."

The name startled Han Wu. It sounded too serious, but then again, this was a wargame fought in the name of the God King of Life and the God King of Death. A name like that made sense.

The professor continued the explanation. Each student would choose a God King to represent, though not all would end up on their preferred side. A fairness mechanism maintained balance between the two factions. If one side gathered an overwhelming majority, some representatives would be transferred to the opposing faction until both sides balanced equally. Ultimately, luck would decide which side each student represented.

Soon, the students began selecting their factions. Han Wu longed for the Death Aspect held by the God King of Death, but sensing his powers leaned toward Life, he chose the God King of Life. Many others made the same choice. In the end, forty-two out of sixty students sided with the God King of Life. The imbalance was severe, triggering the fairness mechanism.

Han Wu didn't know whether to feel fortunate or not, but he was reassigned to the God King of Death. Once the numbers were balanced, the students were transported to the battlefield below to start the wargame.

He blinked and found himself on solid ground. His starting zone was a flat, black square stretching across roughly 10,000 square kilometers. This was his starting point, and his mission was to build towers to defend it.

He was still trying to grasp the rules when a glowing interface appeared before him, listing the types of towers available for construction.

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## **- Chapter 247 - Towers and Prey**

[ 1,072 words ]

### **Chapter 247 - Towers and Prey**

[God King of Death Faction – Selectable Towers:

#### **Option 1: Locust Tower (Elite)**

Armor: 100

Attack: 10

Defense: 5

Attack Method: Acid Spit

Range: 10 km

Attack Rate: 1 second

Skills: None

Sacred Object Slot: 2

Energy Required: 100 (Core race. Requires 50% less Energy to build.)

### **Option 2: Scorching Dwarf Tower (Elite)**

Armor: 1,000

Attack: 200

Defense: 100

Attack Method: Hammer Blow

Range: 20 km

Attack Rate: 2 seconds

Skills: Forge Equipment. Can forge Sacred Objects into equipment to increase Armor, Attack, or Defense.

Sacred Object Slot: 3

Energy Required: 2,000

### **Option 3: Swordwind Tower (Unique)**

Armor: 5,000

Attack: 800

Defense: 400

Attack Method: Swordwind

Range: 20 km

Attack Rate: 0.5 seconds

Skills: Whirlwind Slash. Unleashes a whirlwind that shreds enemies and deals AOE damage.

Sacred Object Slots: 7

Energy Required: 50,000

#### **Option 4: Skeleton Tower (Common)**

Armor: 100

Attack: 10

Defense: 20

Attack Method: Bone Fragment Toss

Range: 10 km

Attack Rate: 1 second

Skills: None

Sacred Object Slots: 1

Energy Required: 200

**Option 5: Minotaur Tower...**

**Option 6: Epistian Tower...**

**Option 7: Tigermen Tower...**

**Option 8: Treant Tower...**

**Option 9: Half-Dragon Tower...**

**Option 10: Great Dragon Tower...]**

...

All of Han Wu's units had been converted into towers that he could build. He only needed to spend Energy to build the corresponding ones. Scanning the Energy costs, he realized he started with just 1,000 Energy. That limited his early options to the Locust and Skeleton Towers. Both were cheap but painfully weak.

"I have no choice but to use them first. I'll build the others once I've gathered enough Energy," he muttered.

His territory spanned an enormous 10,000 square kilometers, yet even if he spent all his Energy on Locust Towers, he could only erect ten to defend it. Each Locust Tower could cover a maximum area of 314 square kilometers. Ten towers combined would protect just 3,140 square kilometers at best—a fraction of his entire territory.

Han Wu decided against spending his Energy right away. He wanted to observe what would happen once the wargame began.

He wasn't sure how much time passed before a notification appeared, announcing the start of the wargame. Looking up, he saw two numbers floating above his head.

[Current Land Size: 10,000 square kilometers]

[Current Energy: 1,000]

He noticed his Energy steadily increased by 1 unit per second. In less than two minutes, Han Wu had gained 100 Energy, bringing his total to 1,100. He was about to celebrate when the numbers changed.

[Current Land Size: 9,999 square kilometers]

His Energy gain had also dropped to 0.9 points per second. Quickly scanning his land from above, he spotted a small group of goblins invading his territory. Wherever the goblins walked, the land beneath them turned white. His perfect square of black was slowly fragmenting into streaks of white.

Han Wu finally grasped the rules of the wargame. "The win condition is to have as much land as possible by the end of it!"

He then inspected the goblins and was surprised to find that he could read their data as well.

[Goblins (Common)

HP: 50

Attack: 5

Defense: 3

Attack Method: Wooden Club Hit

Range: 1 meter

Attack Rate: 1 second

Movement Speed: 30 km/h

Skills: None]

Han Wu quickly realized the goblins were pitifully weak. Their Attack was low, and their Defense even worse. He doubted they could bring down a single Locust Tower. They were nothing more than cannon fodder.

Still, he had no intention of letting them roam freely through his territory. He spent 100 Energy to construct a Locust Tower near their position. As soon as the structure rose, the locusts perched on it started spitting acid globs with uncanny precision. Each shot hit its mark, and none of the goblins could survive more than eight strikes.

After killing his first goblin, Han Wu received a new notification.

[Killed a goblin. Obtained 0.1 Energy]

He also noticed that the ground, once white where the goblins had stepped, gradually blackened within the tower's attack range.

After wiping out the goblins, Han Wu gained 6.5 Energy and restored his territory to 10,000 square kilometers. With his land reclaimed, his Energy gain per second returned to 1 unit, and it swiftly accumulated.

Unfortunately, the calm was brief. A small group of Wind Sparrows soon invaded his territory after the goblins.

Han Wu examined the Wind Sparrows to assess their threat

[Wind Sparrows (Elite)]

HP: 70

Attack: 12

Defense: 6

Attack Method: Wind Blade

Range: 1 km

Attack Rate: 5 seconds

Movement Speed: 300 km/h

Skills: Consecutive Wind Blades. Releases five wind blades in quick succession, though each blade deals only 70% of its original power.]

The Wind Sparrows moved swiftly, claiming three square kilometers of his territory within a single minute of their invasion. Han Wu quickly erected more Locust Towers

around them, but the birds showed no fear. Instead, they launched furious attacks against the towers.

Each time they struck a Locust Tower, they shaved off 7 Armor. After just fifteen hits, a tower would collapse. Sometimes, they unleashed Consecutive Wind Blades, stripping away 23 Armor in a single burst.

Han Wu watched one of his freshly built towers crumble under their assault and knew he had to change tactics. He spent 200 Energy to construct a Skeleton Tower. The decision paid off. The Wind Sparrows' attacks, including their skill, lacked the power to break through the Skeleton Tower's higher defense.

The Skeleton Tower retaliated with a barrage of Bone Fragments, gradually whittling the Wind Sparrows down. Each kill earned Han Wu 1.2 Energy. With fifty eliminated, he gained a total of 60 Energy—still not enough to make up for the cost of a single lost Locust Tower.

Thankfully, the Wind Sparrows also dropped two Elite Sacred Objects, the Wind Sparrow Feathers.

[Wind Sparrow Feather (Elite): Grants +20 Armor and increases Attack Rate by 10% when equipped.]

Unfortunately, his Skeleton Tower had only one Sacred Object Slot, which meant he could equip just a single Sacred Object at a time. If he wanted to make use of both, he would have no choice but to use Merge.

He successfully merged them and created something entirely new.

[Wind Sparrow Feather +1 (Elite): Grants +40 Armor and increases Attack Rate by 15% when equipped.]

This marked a significant improvement over the original objects. He equipped the new item onto his Skeleton Tower and waited for more prey to invade his territory.

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## Chapter 248 - Upgrade Path of Towers

[ 1,162 words ]

## Chapter 248 - Upgrade Path of Towers

Time crawled by as Han Wu steadily accumulated more Energy. So far, four enemy races had invaded his territory: goblins, Wind Sparrows, Abyss Demons, and Armor Crackers.

The goblins and Abyss Demons served mainly as cannon fodder, used for scouting. Neither posed a real threat to Han Wu's towers; at worst, they temporarily slowed his Energy gain per second.

The Wind Sparrows and Armor Crackers presented greater challenges.

The Wind Sparrows moved fast and focused exclusively on his Locust Towers. Since they ignored all other defenses, Han Wu had no choice but to build only Skeleton Towers in the direction they always came from.

The Armor Crackers were the opposite—slow-moving but packed with high HP and Defense. Skeleton Towers struggled to damage them, and even when they did, it took too long. Every encounter cost Han Wu significant territory.

Fortunately, Han Wu had Merge on his side, which gave him an edge in this wargame. He gathered Sacred Objects, merged them into more powerful ones, equipped them on his towers, and watched them take down enemies faster and more efficiently.

Han Wu also used the lull between waves to accumulate more Energy. Once he reached 10,000, he rapidly built a large number of Locust Towers at once. He wasn't reckless; he intended to test his Merge.

He knew he could merge Sacred Objects, but what about towers? To find out, he built 100 Locust Towers and started merging them. First, he merged 100 into ten towers. After that, a notification popped up.

[Locust Tower can be upgraded. Please choose the upgrade path.]

[1: Heavenly Demon Insect Tower. Details can be seen after confirming.]

[2: Abyss Bug Tower. Details can be seen after confirming.]

[3: Dark Cursed Bug Tower. Details can be seen after confirming.]

[4: Primal Locust Tower. Details can be seen after confirming.]

The four upgrade options mirrored the Evolution Paths of his locusts. He studied the ten towers in his hand, uncertain which path to take for all of them. To make a more informed decision, he chose one of each upgrade to compare their stats before committing the remaining six.

### **[Heavenly Demon Insect Tower (Unique)**

Armor: 300

Attack: 20

Defense: 10

Attack Method: Horn Stab

Range: 5 km

Attack Rate: 0.5 seconds

Skills: Consecutive Thrust. Stabs a single target three times in one second. Each stab deals 80% damage.

Sacred Object Slot: 4

### **Abyss Bug Tower (Unique)**

Armor: 300

Attack: 15

Defense: 15

Attack Method: Acid Spit

Range: 10 km

Attack Rate: 1.5 seconds

Skills: Abyss Defense. Halves all elemental damage for 100 seconds.

Sacred Object Slot: 4

### **Dark Cursed Bug Tower (Unique)**

Armor: 200

Attack: 10

Defense: 10

Attack Method: Shadow Nail

Range: 20 km

Attack Rate: 0.1 second

Skills: Passive: Shadow Stun. 10% chance to immobilize enemies for 1 second.

Sacred Object Slot: 4

### **Primal Locust Tower (Unique)**

Armor: 300

Attack: 20

Defense:15

Attack Method: Acid Spit

Range: 15 km

Attack Rate: 1 second

Skills: None

Sacred Object Slot: 4]

Each tower's upgrade path and attack style differed greatly.

The Heavenly Demon Insect Tower prioritized Attack, sacrificing Range for a rapid, powerful assault. The Abyss Bug Tower leaned on Defense, trading Attack Rate for durability. The Dark Cursed Bug Tower offered support with a high Attack Rate but weaker Attack and Defense, relying on luck to immobilize foes. Finally, the Primal Locust Tower lacked Skills but boasted balanced improvements across all stats.

Han Wu weighed the strengths and weaknesses of each tower before settling on a strategy. He wanted tighter control over his territory and chose the Dark Cursed Bug Tower for its wide area of effect.

Each of these towers could cover 1,256 square kilometers. With just seven of them, he could guard over 8,000 square kilometers. The remaining section could be secured using his three other towers and a few Skeleton Towers, completing coverage of all 10,000 square kilometers under his territory.

He had just finished building his towers when the data floating above him changed again.

[Current Land Size: 10,005 square kilometers]

[Current Energy: 3]

His Energy generation remained steady at 1 per second.

“I can expand my territory? That’s good news!” Han Wu remarked as the Locust Tower he had placed at the edge slowly enlarged the border. The neighboring white tile showed a section bitten away, evidence of this expansion.

His actions seemed to provoke his neighbor, who responded by sending more goblins to reclaim their territory.

At first, Han Wu ignored them. The goblins were too weak to pose a real threat, and their only fate was death upon entering his territory. However, Han Wu failed to notice a single Elite goblin hidden among the thousands.

[Goblin Slinger (Elite)]

HP: 150

Attack: 20

Defense: 8

Attack Method: Slingshot

Range: 200 meters

Attack Rate: 1 second

Movement Speed: 30 km/h

Skills: Consecutive Slingshot. Fires three stones in rapid succession, each dealing 80% of base damage.]

The Goblin Slinger advanced under the cover of its fellow goblins, sneaking up on one of the Dark Cursed Bug Towers. Once it came within 200 meters, it opened fire with a flurry of shots.

Each hit stripped 10 Armor from the tower. When the Goblin Slinger used its Skill, it tore away 18 Armor in a single burst. The tower had only 200 Armor to begin with, and under the relentless assault, its protective layers cracked and began to fall apart.

Han Wu noticed just in time and equipped four Beast Hides—Sacred Objects dropped by the Armor Cracker—which boosted the tower’s Armor by 200 and its Defense by 8. He barely saved the tower from collapse.

The Dark Cursed Bug Tower responded with a fierce volley of Shadow Nails, wiping out the goblin forces just as the tower’s Armor hit a critical low.

Han Wu exhaled in relief when the last goblin fell. The battle had been dangerously close. Without the timely use of the Sacred Objects, he would have lost the tower.

To build a single Dark Cursed Bug Tower, he had to merge ten Common Locust Towers, spending a total of 1,000 Energy. Losing it now would have been a devastating blow. Thankfully, the Dark Cursed Bug Tower had emerged victorious.

Defeating the stronger enemies brought even greater rewards. Among the spoils were six Common Sacred Objects known as Goblin Arm Bones, each increasing a tower’s Attack Rate by 1%.

They looked unimpressive, but Han Wu had plans for them. As long as he gathered enough duplicates, he could merge them into something far more valuable. He tucked the Sacred Objects away, then turned his attention to the loot dropped by the Elite Goblin Slinger.

[Slinging Manual (Elite): Increases Attack Rate by 20% when equipped.]

He also obtained another treasure, the Upgrade Stone.

[Upgrade Stone (Elite): Upgrades Common Tower. Can be combined into a Unique Upgrade Stone using 5 Elite Upgrade Stones.]

Han Wu reviewed his haul, then glanced at the Skeleton Towers on his territory. These items were made for them!

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

[ 1,270 words ]

## **Chapter 249 - Death’s Gaze**

Han Wu applied the Upgrade Stone to his Skeleton Tower, transforming it into an Iron Skeleton Tower.

[Iron Skeleton Tower (Elite)]

Armor: 300

Attack: 20

Defense: 30

Attack Method: Bone Fragment Toss

Range: 10 km

Attack Rate: 1 second

Skills: None

Sacred Object Slot: 2]

The upgrade boosted the tower's base stats, raising its Armor, Attack, and Defense beyond those of the Common Skeleton Tower. Still, Han Wu felt disappointed that the upgrade didn't unlock any new Skills. To compensate, he equipped the Wind Sparrow Feather and Slingshot Manual onto the tower.

This boosted the Iron Skeleton Tower's Armor by 40 and raised its Attack Rate by 35%. It could now strike three times within two seconds. The moment the Iron Skeleton Tower was built, Han Wu noticed the blackness marking his territory slowly spreading along one side.

His land expanded gradually—from 10,020 to 10,050, then to 10,090—as he seized parts of the adjacent white land. Then something caught his eye. At the edge of his spreading territory, a tower emerged!

The tower resembled a bird's nest, and every five seconds, a Wind Sparrow fluttered out from it. Han Wu realized this tower belonged to one of the God King of Life's representatives. Curious, he checked the data on the nest-shaped tower for more details.

[Wind Sparrow Tower (Elite)

Armor: 700

Defense: 18

Attack Method: Summon Wind Sparrows

Attack Rate: 5 seconds

Skills: None]

Han Wu's eyes widened as he examined the Wind Sparrow Tower's data. The towers of the God King of Life and the God King of Death showed clear differences, but that detail meant little to him. He planned to attack regardless.

He commanded his Iron Skeleton Tower to launch an assault. Each strike dealt just 2 Damage, barely scratching the Wind Sparrow Tower, but Han Wu stayed the course. Four minutes of steady attacks would be enough to bring it down.

He couldn't see what was happening deeper inside the white territory, but he knew the Wind Sparrow Tower's owner was furious. A massive swarm of Wind Sparrows surged toward Han Wu's territory, reclaiming much of the land.

Han Wu held his ground. He ordered the Iron Skeleton Tower and the remaining Skeleton Towers to counterattack. The towers tore through the Wind Sparrows with ease while Han Wu gathered the Energy and Sacred Objects they dropped.

In the end, he gathered five Elite Wind Sparrow Feathers and merged them all into a single Wind Sparrow Feather +4. This upgrade granted the equipped tower +100 Armor and boosted its Attack Rate by 25%.

He replaced the Wind Sparrow Feather +1 on the Iron Skeleton Tower with the new +4 version, and the tower's Attack Rate surged to an astonishing +45%, nearly doubling its previous speed.

With this power, the Iron Skeleton Tower shredded the Wind Sparrow flock effortlessly, and the black territory gradually expanded toward the Wind Sparrow Tower again. This time, the Iron Skeleton Tower took less than two minutes to bring it down.

After demolishing the Elite Wind Sparrow Tower, Han Wu gained 1,000 Energy, two Elite Upgrade Stones, and a Unique Wind Sparrow Feather. The reward made him realize just how quickly and efficiently he could earn by destroying enemy towers. If he had waited for his Energy to accumulate naturally, it would have taken sixteen full minutes to collect the same amount. At that rate, building higher-ranking towers would've taken forever.

With that realization, he immediately constructed two additional Skeleton Towers along the edge of his territory and used the Upgrade Stones to enhance them. The Iron Skeleton Towers locked onto enemy towers within the white territory and hurled volleys of bone fragments their way.

Now, his rate of territorial expansion surged.

Meanwhile, far from the battlefield and hidden from all eyes, Death dressed in black and Life clad in white sat facing each other. Between them lay a black-and-white chessboard. If one looked closely, the black and white squares changed constantly.

Han Wu would have been shocked to see it—its movements mirrored the ongoing battles on the ground. The chessboard served as the true battlefield where the wargame unfolded.

Life spoke with a confident edge. “Death, you should concede now. It’s barely been three days, and already 200 black squares have fallen to white. The rest are slowly being purified by my faction. You have lost.”

Their opposing Divine Jurisdictions bred constant conflict, fueling a grudge that had sparked over 800 wargames between them.

Now, the momentum clearly favored Life. At this pace, Death’s defeat seemed inevitable.

Yet Death remained unfazed as he met his rival’s gaze. “We have only passed the early stages of the wargame. It is far too soon to declare a winner.”

His eyes then fixed on a rapidly expanding black square. “This child... intriguing...”

Life studied the spreading black tile with keen interest as well. He grew perplexed watching Han Wu merge lower-quality Sacred Objects into higher-quality ones. He then used his authority and checked what powers Han Wu had used.

“His talent... It’s outstanding. I must nurture him!” Life exclaimed. “His skills are tied to the very essence of energy and life. He’s destined to be with me. Once this wargame ends, I will personally invite him to join my faction.”

Death growled, “No. He belongs to my faction. Don’t you dare try to take him away.”

“He’s still a student,” Life replied calmly. “He hasn’t officially joined any faction yet. Besides, he shows no trace of the Death Mark. How can you claim he belongs to yours?”

Death’s eyes flashed with alarm. Life’s reasoning was sound, but it did not stop him from trying to recruit Han Wu. He examined Han Wu carefully, then used a fragment of his authority as a God King to access Han Wu’s information. Methodically, he scanned through the profile until he uncovered a detail that worked in his favor.

“Who said this child lacks my mark?” He pointed with slender white fingers, and a video recording materialized.

The footage showed the moment Han Wu struck a pact with the Wisdom Tree. It revealed the Wisdom Tree handing Han Wu a recommendation pendant to meet the God of Death. Since the God of Death answered to the God King of Death, that pendant served as an official invitation from the God King to recruit Han Wu into his faction.

Life's expression darkened with disappointment. A candidate of incredible potential had slipped into his rival's grasp so easily. Still, he didn't consider it a devastating loss. Han Wu was only a Demigod, and Life already had many others of equal strength in his ranks.

Life chuckled quietly, pleased to see Life's enthusiasm so thoroughly snubbed. He gestured toward the black tile that belonged to Han Wu and said, "Since this child is part of my faction, I see no harm in granting him a bit of my blessing."

Han Wu was absorbed in commanding his towers when a notification echoed in his mind.

[The Great God King of Death is watching you. Obtain special status: Death's Gaze.]

[Death's Gaze: Large Domain

Effect 1: Increases Energy, Sacred Object, and special object acquisition within the domain by 50%.

Effect 2: Infuses towers with Death's Breath. Grants a 20% chance to execute lower-ranked enemies, 5% chance to execute same-ranked enemies, and 0.01% chance to execute higher-ranked enemies.

Effect 3: Towers have a 1% chance to permanently increase one of their stats after killing a target.

Effect 4: Towers have a 10% chance to unlock a special upgrade path.]

Han Wu stared at the four effects, stunned by their overwhelming power.

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

[ 1,571 words ]

## **Chapter 250 - Trade Channel**

The four effects from Death's Gaze were extremely powerful and versatile. The first effect increased his chances of obtaining resources, while simultaneously boosting the amount of Energy he would obtain. In essence, this particular effect granted him the capability to rapidly erect powerful towers.

The second effect of Death's Gaze greatly enhanced the efficacy of his towers in eliminating their targets, proving particularly lethal against enemies of a lower rank than

the tower itself. The additional 20% chance to instantly execute their targets was a massive boost to their destructive capabilities.

The third effect granted his towers the potential for growth. It provided an entirely new method for his towers to grow stronger, beyond merely ranking up. Furthermore, the fourth effect diversified his towers' paths, essentially increasing their overall potential.

With the combined power of all four effects, Han Wu's towers experienced a dramatic increase in power, almost doubling their overall strength. This surge in power enabled him to rapidly expand his territory by systematically taking over his neighbors' lands. He encountered little resistance, effortlessly conquering new regions until his own territory swelled to 11,000 square kilometers in size. However, he showed no signs of slowing his relentless expansion, continuing to seize more than 0.5 square kilometers every single second.

The rapid expansion of his territory incensed the surrounding white tiles, which were aligned with the God King of Life's faction. In retaliation, they began summoning large numbers of units to attack him. Soon, hordes of goblins and Abyss Demons surged into his domain, advancing with the unstoppable force of a tidal wave.

The Common life forms consistently prioritized shielding the Elite ones, aiming to ensure the latter could survive long enough to bring Han Wu's tower within their attack range. Han Wu, observing this, let out a soft chuckle. He did not see the incoming Elite life forms as a threat, but rather an opportunity that would help him to grow even more rapidly.

The Dark Cursed Bug Tower was capable of attacking ten times per second, though its individual attack damage was quite low. In the past, Han Wu had exclusively set up these towers to target the cannon fodder. However, with the added benefit of Death's Gaze's execution effect, his Dark Cursed Bug Towers had now become considerably more powerful.

A single devastating wave of Shadow Nails swept through the enemy lines, instantly wiping out a full fifth of the cannon fodder. With each death, the Dark Cursed Bug Towers gained an increase in their basic stats, receiving bonuses such as +2 Armor, +1 Attack, or +1 Defense.

The Dark Cursed Bug Towers upgraded their stats at an astonishing rate as they continued to eliminate more and more of the cannon fodder units, quickly reaching a point where they became almost as formidable as the Iron Skeleton Towers. As a result, Han Wu benefited immensely, managing to gather a large quantity of Energy from the skirmish.

With the impressive amount of Energy at his disposal, Han Wu summoned even more Locust Towers and swiftly merged them, continuously expanding his force of Dark Cursed Bug Towers. As he completed the seventh such tower, he discovered he now

possessed the capability to upgrade that particular tower into an entirely new and different type.

[Death Aura Bug Tower (Elite)

Armor: 300

Attack: 5

Defense: 10

Attack Method: Death Aura (Ignores Defense)

Range: 10 km

Attack Rate: 0.2 seconds

Skills: None

Sacred Object Slot: 5]

Han Wu was immediately captivated by its unique attacking method method, one that completely ignored the defenses of its targets. This was clearly a powerful offensive capability that he absolutely had to acquire at any cost! He proceeded to upgrade the tower into the Death Aura Bug Tower, then strategically positioned in the area where the troublesome Armor Crackers consistently made their appearance.

Soon after, a small group of Armor Crackers marched directly into the attack range of the newly placed Death Aura Bug Tower. Han Wu had initially believed that the tower's most formidable aspect was its ability to bypass the defenses of its targets entirely. However, to his surprise, he discovered there was something even more impressive about it—its attacking method, the Death Aura, was also an AoE attack! This meant that the number of enemies was irrelevant; every single one of them would be steadily eroded by the Death Aura as long as they remained within its range.

Despite being famed for their exceptionally heavy armor and robust defenses, the Armor Crackers met their demise almost as soon as they approached the tower. Their deaths served as a catalyst, providing energy necessary for the Death Aura Bug Tower to grow even stronger.

Once the Armor Crackers were defeated, the Death Aura Bug Tower received a permanent +2 increase in its Attack stat. As a result, the Death Aura itself became even more powerful, effectively halting the advancing Armor Crackers in their tracks.

Upon discovering that all the Armor Crackers dispatched to Han Wu's tile had been wiped out, their owner completely lost hope and ceased sending any more Armor Crackers in Han Wu's direction.

Han Wu, however, was utterly relentless. He continued to aggressively spread his territory further into the Armor Crackers' owner's domain, eliminating every unit he encountered and razing every tower he came across. His actions were, without a doubt, a blatant and direct provocation. Yet, from his perspective, this relentless aggression was simply a means to an end—the more enemies he eliminated, the greater the amount of Energy and Sacred Objects he obtained.

It wasn't until he successfully destroyed the fourth Armor Cracker Tower that he finally acquired his very first special object. This item resembled a tablet, and upon pressing a switch on its surface, five glowing words illuminated its screen: *Life and Death Trade Channel*. With this new object, he could now trade various items unique to this realm.

Within the channel, a diverse but limited range of goods was visible: various Sacred Objects that enhanced different stats, several special objects, and even some players listing their own towers for sale. Given that the wargame was still in its early stages, it was understandable that very few items were circulating on the trade channel.

The trade channel was predominantly filled with low-quality items, primarily at the Common rank. There were, however, a noticeable number of Elite items available, but Unique items were few and far between. Furthermore, these Unique items were prohibitively expensive, often priced at 10,000 Energy or even more, a cost that even Han Wu currently couldn't afford. However, Han Wu had his Merge ability, meaning he didn't need to purchase those high-quality, expensive items to upgrade his towers—instead, he could buy the cheaper items and merge them together to create more powerful ones.

He soon found a suitable Sacred Object to fulfill his goal.

[Wolf Fang (Common): Grants +1 Attack when equipped.

Selling price: 80 Energy

Stock remaining: 108]

This particular Sacred Object was utterly useless for both factions. Given that tower slots were limited, every choice of a Sacred Object was incredibly important and had to be strategically chosen for maximum impact. While a tower's Attack stat was undeniably vital, the Wolf Fang only gave a +1 increase. This minimal boost rendered it borderline useless in any practical application.

In Han Wu's opinion, however, the Wolf Fang was an indispensable treasure. After spending 7,200 Energy to purchase 90 of the Wolf Fang Sacred Objects, he activated

Merge, combining them together. It soon became apparent that merging 10 of them into a single version was the limit of the Sacred Object's merging capability. Nevertheless, through this process, he successfully obtained 9 upgraded versions of the Sacred Object.

[Wolf Fang +9 (Common): Grants +10 Attack when equipped.]

The effect was remarkably simple and straightforward. Han Wu had no intention of selling this valuable item to others; he intended to use it himself. He proceeded to equip the Dark Cursed Bug Tower situated at the furthest edge of his territory with four of these upgraded Sacred Objects, effectively transforming the tower into a rapid-fire gatling gun.

The modified tower fired off a barrage of ten attacks per second, utterly decimating hordes of goblins and Abyss Demons. Its destructive capacity was so immense that even specialized units like the Elite Goblin Slingers and the Elite Abyss Wizard were eliminated within a second.

The Death Aura Bug Tower initially possessed an Attack stat of just 5, but through its relentless extermination of numerous enemies, that stat had already increased to 8. Han Wu then proceeded to equip the tower with five of the Wolf Fang +9 Sacred Objects, instantly boosting its Attack stat to an astounding 58!

The tower's Attack stat had reached a genuinely monstrous level, made even more terrifying by its inherent ability to completely ignore the defenses of its targets. Even the notoriously bulky Armor Crackers were swiftly brought down and killed within mere seconds. The Death Aura Bug Tower had essentially transformed the entire area around it into a forbidden zone, swiftly pulverizing anything that dared to wander into its effective range.

Han Wu, witnessing the incredible power his towers now possessed, suddenly let out a sigh. *It's so lonely being so strong*, he thought.

With his upgraded Death Aura and Dark Cursed Bug Towers, he effortlessly steamrolled the four representatives from the God King of Life's faction whose tiles surrounded him.

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

[ 1,553 words ]