

The People's God: Sacrificing Trillions to Ascend

[1,310 words]

Chapter 351 - This is Love

The icy scales on Leng Ning's body finally faded as her three-hour transformation came to an end. She immediately collapsed from the excessive strain on her mind, and Han Wu considerately asked Su Mei to carry her into the tent to rest.

The three exited the Life Dimension and continued their journey, facing constant attacks from demons. After eight grueling hours, they had only advanced 8 km. Exhausted, they returned to Han Wu's Life Domain to rest.

Soon after they returned, Meng Qi and Leng Ning finally woke from their sleep, still looking visibly fatigued from the transformation. "This must be because you used up a lot of energy just to endure the transformation," Han Wu speculated. "You'll probably need several days to fully recover."

The two were startled to discover the changes their bodies had undergone. They quickly realized they had gained a brand new skill, separate from their current system, which allowed them to transform into demonoids at will.

When Meng Qi transformed into his demonoid form, his body grew even larger and sported bulging muscles. His defense and offense were greatly enhanced, and he could still use his original skills, which were also strengthened in his new form.

While Leng Ning's demonoid form wasn't as flashy as Meng Qi's, the ice-blue scales that covered her body provided a defense as strong as his Imperial Yellow Jacket, allowing her some leeway against ambushes. On top of that, her mental strength had improved so much in her demonoid form that she could form ice blades with just her mind alone, without using any skills.

"Oh, it seems we've also gained the ability to sense enhanceable organs compatible with us," Leng Ming announced to the group. With an affirmative nod from Han Wu, Leng Ming and Meng Qi used their new senses to go through the organs they had collected and quickly found a few suitable ones.

Leng Ning found three compatible organs—a pair of horns and a tail—and grafted them onto herself. When she activated her demonoid form, the horns and tail grew at their corresponding spots, greatly improving her melee combat abilities.

Meng Qi's demonoid form was more complete than Leng Ning's, and he was able to find more compatible organs. In just ten minutes, he had grafted seven organs onto his body. The organs were mostly exoskeletal and shell-like, which further improved his defenses.

Su Mei and Xue Qian stared enviously at the two. Su Mei asked Han Wu to make elixirs for them as well, but he flatly refused. He didn't want to waste his energy, not when they could already activate their demonoid forms. He reasoned that since they could sense and graft the organs perfectly well on their own, there was no need for elixirs.

The two sighed and gave up on getting the elixirs. As a result, they were more proactive during their next expedition, killing more demons and searching more thoroughly for compatible organs to graft onto themselves.

Han Wu almost laughed numerous times on their journey, seeing how the two acted. However, it was precisely their zeal that led them to find five more enhanceable organs, two of which were compatible with Xue Qian and Meng Qi.

Since the remaining three organs weren't compatible with anyone else, Han Wu gave them to Erebard as food. The little creature happily ate its snack and visibly grew in size.

The group finally reached the seal after a quick three-day journey. After a moment of observation, Xue Qian spotted some strange activity and swiftly alerted the others, who headed directly for the disturbance.

"Well, the seal's still active, but it looks like there's a hole in the middle," Meng Qi stated. Through the breach, demons and demonoids were constantly crawling out.

"Yeah, we can see the hole, Meng Qi. We're here too," Su Mei said with a dry tone, rolling her eyes as she casually killed a demon. "Han Wu, I'm checking out the hole to see if we can seal it again."

Han Wu narrowed his eyes. The hole was obstructed by a demonic aura and miasma so thick that it seemed almost solid. He couldn't see past it, but his senses told him that a powerful entity was hidden inside, ready to kill anyone who tried to approach the hole.

"Hold on, Su Mei," Han Wu said. "Send an imp to test the area first." He wanted to find out what kind of demon was guarding the place.

Su Mei cautiously sent a swarm of imps toward the hole. They didn't even get close before a long, lightning-fast tongue shot out of the darkness, striking before anyone could react. It retreated just as quickly, leaving the dead imps scattered on the ground, each with a neat hole drilled through its skull.

The team was stunned by how fast everything ended. Su Mei realized the error in her initial plan. *If I hadn't listened, I would have died without ever knowing why,* she thought, terrified.

"Wh-What do we do now? You have a plan, right?" she asked, trusting that her savior, Han Wu, would surely think of a way to lure the owner of the tongue out to kill it.

Han Wu's brow furrowed with frustration. *We literally just got here! I don't even know what that accursed thing looks like! How on earth am I supposed to have a plan? Does she think I'm a machine or something?*

After internally cursing Su Mei, he finally said, "Judging by the speed of that tongue, it's clear that its owner is very powerful. That's not an attack regular people can withstand. To defeat it, we'll need something abnormally tough to hold the tongue in place."

"Yeah, sure, but where are we going to find something like that in this wilderness?" asked with a groan.

The words had barely left his mouth when he felt a sudden chill. He turned to see Han Wu staring at him, his eyes unnervingly gleaming.

Han Wu smiled at Meng Qi while thinking, *As a powerful tank with six defensive skills and the ability to transform into a demonoid, Meng Qi is probably the hardest to kill on our team.* To Meng Qi, however, that smile felt as terrifying as a hungry predator's.

Han Wu chuckled. "Meng Qi, it's time to show it your full strength! I'm rooting for you!"

"W-Wait a moment. Are you asking me to lure the tongue into attacking me?"

"Hm? I'm not asking you to do anything. You just want to avenge Su Mei! After all, she would've been killed had she gone to check the seal instead, right?"

"I guess... Wait a minute! You're just trying to gaslight me!"

"My, Meng Qi, you are very smart!"

The moment he realized the plan, Meng Qi wanted to run. He had seen how easily the tongue killed the imps, which was enough to know that it was abnormally sharp. He would die instantly if he failed to stop it.

Shaking his head vehemently, he protested, "No, I won't do it! I may be a simple-minded tank, but I'm certainly not suicidal!"

Seeing his reluctance, Han Wu leaned in and whispered, "My dear friend, isn't this the perfect chance to show off your strength in front of the girl you like? Look, Su Mei's waiting for your help!"

The moment Meng Qi glanced at her and saw the anticipation in her eyes, a surge of power immediately coursed through his body.

“Fine, I will do it!” Meng Qi declared with a pat to his chest, trying to reassure himself. “I was born tough so I can take on any creatures’ aggression!”

Approving of his change in attitude, Han Wu gave him a firm thumbs up.

Kekeke! Such is the power of love! Ah, I shouldn't laugh like that; I'm not some third-rate villain.

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[992 words]

Chapter 352 - The Tongue's Owner

Under Su Mei's gaze, Meng Qi stomped toward the hole with exaggerated bravado. His love for her filled him with unyielding strength, and he resolved to face every threat head-on.

Han Wu remained only an observer, yet he bolstered Meng Qi with the Silver Strength buff to heighten his defense. He also unleashed the Life Dragon Domain, channeling Life Energy into Meng Qi in case he sustained injuries.

Though swept up by love, Meng Qi had not lost his reason. He unleashed his demonoid form to heighten his potential, then activated every defensive Skill at his disposal—Golden Bell, Yellow Imperial Jacket, Dragon Armor, Bronze Skin, Iron Bones, and Indomitable Vajra. Layer upon layer of protection transformed him into a walking fortress. With deliberate steps, he approached the hole and signaled for the others to prepare.

The tongue's owner struck the instant Meng Qi entered its range. The tongue whipped forward like an arrow, aiming straight for his chest.

A sharp chime rang out as the tongue collided with the Golden Bell barrier. The impact was so powerful it cracked the bell and pierced through it, each reverberation echoing as the tongue drove deeper. Only when it slammed against Meng Qi's chest did it meet true resistance.

His body was harder than the Golden Bell itself, and the collision rebounded the force. The damage snapped back at the attacker and tore open several gashes along the

tongue. Numbness spread through the wounds, and the tongue slumped heavily to the ground.

Han Wu and the rest finally saw their chance and attacked at the same time. Su Mei used Succubus Descend and released a heart-shaped burst of energy that ensnared the tongue. Its owner faltered, sluggish under the sudden seduction. Leng Ning transformed and used the Eight Path Frost Domain and sent a storm of razor ice that froze the tongue solid. Xue Qian followed with Shadow Demon Descend, conjuring ropes of shadow that coiled around the tongue and held it fast.

Sensing the strength of its foes, the demon fought to retract its tongue into the cave. It shook off the enchantment and ice, then pulled the tongue back inch by inch.

Han Wu answered with a barrage of Dragon Fireballs. Black flames spread across the tongue as it caught fire. Already wounded from their earlier strikes, the tongue now writhed in agony under the searing torment. Like a black whip, it thrashed wildly and struck everything nearby.

Han Wu used Dragon Shield and blocked every strike as he advanced toward the hole. He peered inside but found his sight still obscured by the demonic aura and thick miasma.

Even so, he sensed the faint outline of his black flames. They had stopped spreading and now consumed the demon's entire body. From what he could discern, the demon was humanoid with no distinct features apart from a tongue that stretched nearly 100 meters.

In the Hell Civilization, a demon's power usually matched its size, and smaller ones were generally weaker. Nevertheless, Han Wu had not expected the Hell Civilization to assign only a single demon of this level to guard the entrance during its invasion.

The flames had already engulfed the creature, and Han Wu knew he only needed to wait. After half a minute, the demon was finished. Its immense tongue dropped to the ground, charred and twisted like a blackened wooden club.

"It's done," Han Wu announced.

His companions erupted in cheers. Only then did they move closer to the hole. They studied the burnt tongue with unease, knowing it had taken nearly their full strength to subdue it.

Meng Qi chuckled. "I am invincible! That tongue couldn't pierce me!"

Leng Ning rolled her eyes, while Su Mei offered tempered praise. "Meng Qi, you've truly changed my opinion of you."

Meng Qi grinned like a fool. Xue Qian peered into the hole, but the darkness revealed nothing. His curiosity sharpened, and he knew that if they meant to restore the seal, they would have to investigate further.

“Let me check first. I can turn invisible and even transform into a Shadow Demon to blend into the shadows. I’m confident I can escape if anything is waiting inside,” Xue Qian offered.

After spending days with Han Wu, Xue Qian had grown thoroughly impressed by his strength and willingly accepted him as their leader.

Han Wu considered the proposal and nodded. Xue Qian was right: an assassin or rogue was best suited for reconnaissance.

With his approval, Xue Qian leapt into the hole to begin his investigation, while the others waited above.

During the lull, Han Wu turned to Su Mei to learn more about the history of the Demonic Miasma Forest. She spoke candidly. Legends claimed the forest and the Violet Demon Academy had existed for nearly 1,000 years. More precisely, the academy had been constructed to contain the Demonic Miasma Forest.

As a Survival Site, the forest teemed with danger and opportunity. It nurtured rare herbs and treasures found nowhere else. These resources enabled the Violet Demon Academy to cultivate exceptional students who could evolve into demons. This advantage had kept the academy the strongest of its kind.

Su Mei spoke without pause. “According to legend, the academy’s first principal is buried here...”

Her innocent remark set off alarm bells in Han Wu’s mind. “Wait! Do you know exactly where he’s buried?”

Su Mei unfolded a map and indicated the principal’s tomb—just a few hundred meters from their position.

Han Wu felt a chill run down his spine. The tomb’s proximity to the hole unnerved him, and his concern deepened when he realized Xue Qian had been inside for over an hour without returning. Could the space beneath the hole really be that vast?

He shared his concern, and the others grew uneasy. Something was definitely wrong.

“It seems we’ll have to go down and investigate ourselves,” Han Wu decided, setting the next course of action.

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[1,047 words]

Chapter 353 - First Principal

The four tied a rope to the corner of the hole and slowly lowered themselves down. The demonic aura and miasma inside were thinner than at the entrance. Even without using Skills, they could barely see fifty to sixty meters ahead.

Only Leng Ning, with Frost Dragon Eyes, could peer deeper into the darkness. “There’s something 200 meters ahead. From its form... it’s a demon.”

Su Mei scanned the ground for Xue Qian’s footprints. As allies, they had established a system of information encryption using physical clues. Footprints left behind were messages for Su Mei to decrypt. Among the trail, she spotted a single footprint pointing in the opposite direction.

“He went that way,” Su Mei said, gesturing toward the demon.

Han Wu nodded and raised Dragon Shield to cover the front as they approached. Meng Qi activated all his Skills to guard the rear, while Su Mei and Leng Ning stood between them, their defenses at the ready.

They moved cautiously toward the demon, keeping as quiet as possible. When they were fifty meters away, the creature’s figure came into view: black hair floated in the still air, and dark blood dripped onto the cave floor with a chilling sound that echoed through the silence.

“Help... Help... me...” A faint whisper came from the figure. Shock rippled through them.

Meng Qi frowned. “Wait... why does that voice sound familiar?”

Su Mei ran forward and reached the figure. Her heart dropped. It wasn’t a demon—it was Xue Qian, who had volunteered to inspect the cave. He was hanging there.

“Wait, let me take you down,” she said, but her hands passed through his body. Only Xue Qian’s face remained tangible. The rest of him existed as a fragment of his original soul, somehow rendered visible.

Su Mei’s fury erupted. “Who... Who did this to you?”

Killing someone was one thing, but the culprit had gone further: they had flayed Xue Qian's body, leaving only his facial skin hanging, and infused just enough of his soul to preserve his consciousness so the face could speak.

The method of torture was unimaginably cruel, far beyond anything Su Mei could conceive. Whoever devised it was undeniably insane—or a merciless psychopath.

Han Wu stopped her from touching Xue Qian further. "Wait. Don't touch him. Only a tenth of his soul remains. If you handle him recklessly, even that fragment will vanish."

"What should I do then? I shouldn't have let him go in alone. None of this would have happened if we had entered together," Su Mei cried, her grief deepening with the loss of another companion.

Han Wu examined the remnants of Xue Qian's facial skin. There was no denying that he was dead. Not even Han Wu, at full strength, could have revived him. Yet the question gnawed at him. *Why flay Xue Qian, remove his facial skin, and leave only a tenth of his soul? It's far more meticulous than simply killing him outright.*

Leng Ning approached Su Mei, offering her own brand of consolation. "Stop crying. It won't help you catch the culprit."

Hearing the word *culprit*, Su Mei abruptly stopped crying and turned to Leng Ning with hesitant hope. "Can you help me find them?"

Leng Ning shook her head. "Since when did I claim I could?"

Meng Qi stepped forward and patted his chest proudly. "I will help you find the culprit. Don't worry. I swear it."

Su Mei knew Meng Qi lacked the capability, yet his words offered a sliver of comfort.

Han Wu finished examining the facial wounds. The cuts were unnaturally precise, as if Xue Qian had not resisted at all. It almost looked voluntary, but Han Wu knew he would never surrender so easily. Something else was at work. The only way to uncover the truth was to press on.

Leng Ning scouted the way ahead as the group advanced deeper into the cave. The rough, jagged stones beneath their feet gradually gave way to neat rows of bricks, and the uneven passage smoothed into a proper path.

At its end stood a massive stone gate carved with the emblem of the Violet Demon Academy. Su Mei's eyes widened in recognition. This was the entrance to the tomb of her academy's first principal, but why had it appeared here?

Han Wu had a suspicion, though he kept it to himself. He placed his hands against the stone and pushed. The gate groaned open, revealing the tomb within.

A lone figure sat atop a stone coffin within the tomb, clutching a blood-soaked skull and gnawing at it. The flesh was raw and wet, torn so recently it could only have come from a living body. No one here fit that fate but Xue Qian. The ghastly truth was clear—Xue Qian's head was in the figure's hands, and it was feeding on him.

Rage consumed Su Mei. She unleashed Succubus Descend and charged. "You killed my companion! I'll kill you!"

The figure lifted its head with lazy indifference. Its skin was ghostly pale, its expression empty, yet bright streams of blood ran down its lips, searing the image of Xue Qian's death into Su Mei's mind. Her resolve hardened to vengeance.

Her strike landed with crushing force, powerful enough to shatter stone, but the figure remained unscathed. Stunned, Su Mei faltered, unable to grasp what had just happened.

Han Wu, however, understood at once. The creature with the long tongue had not been the true guardian of the passage. The figure before them was!

If his deduction was correct, this body once belonged to the Violet Demon Academy's first principal. Now, though, it was nothing more than a puppet. The Will of the Hell Civilization had seized the corpse, broken the ancient seal, and forced open a gateway for its invasion.

With ease, the reanimated principal tossed Su Mei aside and fixed his gaze on Han Wu. The Will of the Hell Civilization sensed the familiar resonance of Han Wu's soul. The reanimated principal's eyes widened, and a telepathic roar filled Han Wu's mind. "It's you! Give me back the sliver of my own Will!"

The tomb quaked under the force of the Hell Civilization's wrath, and the oppressive aura of a Founder pressed down on everyone within its walls.

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Chapter 354 - None of your Business

[1,018 words]

Chapter 354 - None of your Business

Han Wu froze, stunned that the Will of the Hell Civilization had recognized his soul. He had previously relied on the Will of the Divine Civilization to suppress and seize a fragment of the Hell Civilization's Will—a grudge equivalent to murdering a child's parents.

Sensing imminent danger, Han Wu shouted, "Everyone, leave now! Stop daydreaming!"

He summoned Dragon Shield to intercept the incoming attacks before retreating.

The Will of the Hell Civilization refused to let him escape. It controlled the principal's corpse and unleashed his innate Skills. An Inferior Founder possessed sixteen Skills, each reaching terrifying levels. He was indisputably one of the strongest figures in the Assist Civilization.

The reanimated principal activated his fastest Skill, firing a wooden spike. It seemed ordinary, but it was actually a Level 159 Skill with fifteen different effects.

The spike tore through the Dragon Shield, leaving a fist-sized hole. The shield began siphoning Han Wu's Life Energy to repair itself, but his face had already turned pale. That single strike had drained one-twentieth of his Life Energy. If the reanimated principal continued using that Skill, Han Wu's survival was in grave jeopardy.

"Run!" Han Wu yelled, urging Meng Qi and Leng Ning to escape.

Leng Ning nodded and sprinted away. On the other hand, Meng Qi hesitated, his eyes fixed on Su Mei, who had been flung aside by the reanimated principal. Love still ensnared him, and he could not let her go. After a moment of indecision, he dashed toward her, determined to rescue her even at the cost of his own life.

Han Wu nearly fainted from a mix of shock and embarrassment at Meng Qi's reckless charge. He couldn't tell if Meng Qi was foolish or fiercely loyal. Still, having been friends for so long, Han Wu knew he had to intervene. Without his help, Meng Qi would certainly die.

He could have ignored Su Mei, given their limited time together, but abandoning Meng Qi was unthinkable. Han Wu understood that, as a transmigrator, lives here held little meaning for him, yet there were some lines he couldn't cross. He would not leave a teammate to perish.

Spurring himself forward, Han Wu raced toward Su Mei with even greater speed. The reanimated principal targeted him relentlessly, unleashing a barrage of wooden spikes. A direct hit on his Dragon Shield would instantly drain all of his Life Energy. As such, Han Wu countered by launching a volley of Dragon Fireballs, reducing the spikes to ash.

Seeing the wooden spikes destroyed, the reanimated principal switched tactics, unleashing a mass of deadly vines. The vines could strangle or dismember their prey, and there were far too many for Han Wu to incinerate completely.

Han Wu had no choice but to use Dragonfall, his most powerful Skill. Four meteors of different attributes plummeted from the sky, striking the vines.

The following explosions sent energy surging through the chamber. The wind pressure threw Han Wu against the wall. Pain radiated through his body, but he was a few steps closer to Su Mei. In just two strides, he reached for her, ready to escape.

At that moment, a thin vine snaked around his ankle without warning, stabbed into him, and started to drain his blood and Life Energy.

Meng Qi arrived just then. Han Wu tossed Su Mei to him and shouted, "Run!"

Meng Qi caught her but froze. He realized Han Wu had risked himself to save Su Mei because of him.

"Get away!" Han Wu bellowed, his voice edged with fury.

Meng Qi knew he would die if he hesitated. At Han Wu's angry command, he bolted instinctively, yet guilt weighed on him like a soldier forced to abandon a comrade.

As Meng Qi fled with Su Mei, a figure brushed past Meng Qi, heading back toward the chamber. It was Leng Ning. She had initially retreated but noticed no one was following her and turned back out of concern.

Han Wu had just succeeded in pushing Meng Qi away when Leng Ning reappeared. He thought she was suicidal and shouted again, "Go! Run!"

Leng Ning ignored him and activated all of her Skills. Frigid frost spread across the reanimated principal. Unfortunately, her Skills were no match for an Inferior Founder. At best, her attacks barely tickled him.

The reanimated principal didn't even need to move. A thin vine sprouted, shielding its body and nullifying all of Leng Ning's assaults. Simultaneously, a vine like the one draining Han Wu's Life Energy shot outward and wrapped around her body. It pierced her flesh and siphoned both her Life Energy and blood as well.

Han Wu saw her face drain of color and asked urgently, "Why did you come back?"

Summoning the last of her strength, Leng Ning whispered, "None of your business..."

She barely finished before all her blood and Life Energy were consumed. She perished at the height of her power.

Han Wu's body was deteriorating, teetering on the brink of collapse. Despite wielding powerful Skills like Silver Strength and his Life Aspect, he could not resist the reanimated principal.

In the final moments of his life, he showed no fear or regret. Instead, he laughed. "You want your sliver of Will? Come and get it."

With his remaining strength, Han Wu activated Life Dimension. Inside, Erebard received his command and opened his mouth to pull the reanimated principal into the Life Dimension. Han Wu then sealed it and closed his eyes for the last time.

In the next instant, his eyelids fluttered open. He had returned to his divine realm, and his soul had merged back with his original body.

Han Wu tore off the Transmigrate Helmet and dashed to the center of his divine realm before activating Life Dimension. The reanimated principal tumbled out, while Erebard also emerged, already battered and wounded.

The Will of the Hell Civilization sensed Han Wu's soul and struck again, intent on killing him permanently. Unfortunately for it, they were not in the Assist Civilization or Hell Civilization—this was Han Wu's divine realm, and here, he was God.

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Chapter 355 - Will of the Divine Civilization

[1,110 words]

Chapter 355 - Will of the Divine Civilization

"Come to my aid!" Han Wu hollered, and his units rushed to his side.

Steely arrived first, swinging all four arms as he shattered the reanimated principal's vine shield with ease. Alpheus followed with the lightning Great Dragons. Together, they unleashed a storm of combined breath attacks that drove the reanimated principal deep into the soil of Han Wu's divine realm.

Hu Chi and Hu Yong descended next, wrenched the reanimated principal from the earth, and struck him with such force that his body was left battered and broken before they hurled him into the sky.

In midair, Dark Locust led a vast swarm that engulfed the enemy, their bodies exploding as they tore chunks of flesh away. Other King units joined the assault, steadily wearing down the principal's strength to prepare him for Han Wu's final strike.

Once his units had finished their assault, Han Wu attacked. Now that he had fully recovered his strength, he activated his True Demon King Transformation. His body reached 1,000 meters, while his presence dominated the area.

Xun, Han Wu's loyal subordinate, emerged from hiding within his master's shadow. Under Han Wu's direction, he lunged at the reanimated principal with frenzied aggression, but his strikes lacked the strength to inflict any significant damage.

Han Wu raised his Swordwind Arms, fused them into a colossal blade, and cleaved through his foe with one downward sweep. The reanimated principal crumbled to ash, and with the corpse gone, the Will of the Hell Civilization was left bare within Han Wu's divine realm.

Han Wu called upon the Will of the Divine Civilization. A bolt of lightning crashed from the heavens and annihilated the sliver of the Hell Civilization's Will, leaving only a hollow remnant behind.

Han Wu picked it up and discovered it carried more than the hollow Will of the Hell Civilization. It also contained half of the Will of the Assist Civilization. The Hell Civilization's quintessence had been erased completely, but the quintessence of the Assist Civilization's Will remained intact.

Ecstasy surged through Han Wu as he held it. With the hollow Will he had obtained previously, he now possessed the foundation to craft a bespoke Will for his divine realm.

This would mark a monumental advance for his divine realm. He had studied countless civilizations, including the Assist Civilization he had just visited. With a fragment of its quintessence embedded in the Will, he could harness its unique laws and integrate them into his domain. He had no doubt it would succeed.

Han Wu resolved not to delay further and concentrated on the sliver of Will in his hands, channeling his own quintessence and ideas into it, including the fundamental rules of the Assist Civilization.

The process consumed an entire realm-month. To integrate his own laws, he spent 20 Divine Essence forging the unique Will of his divine realm.

The sliver's tiny size allowed only two new laws to be etched. The first mandated that every life form within his divine realm would benefit from the Assist system, as in the Assist Civilization. The second quantified each life form's data numerically and allowed

them to level up through Assists. The laws were simple, but their integration had demanded significant resources.

Han Wu activated the sliver as the Will of his divine realm and completed the incorporation of the new laws. Immediately, all his units realized they could now access the Assist Civilization's system. They could Assist others based on potential and aptitude.

Steely, for instance, stood as the divine realm's strongest unit. Among the seven basic potentials, his Agility and Wind potential ranked highest at 129 and 160, respectively. With such attributes, he would easily dominate within the Assist Civilization.

Steely knew he owed his current strength entirely to Han Wu's resources. In any other divine realm, he could not have accessed the refined Energy Stones produced by the Refinery. Even the core races of those realms would be denied such luxury.

Han Wu's divine realm was different. He allowed them full use of these resources, ensuring they never went hungry. By investing so fully in their growth, Han Wu strengthened his own realm through the resulting feedback.

Thanks to his strength, Steely could Assist others eighteen times a day, a feat rare even among the strongest. Yet, despite Steely's prowess, Han Wu's focus remained on his core race, the locusts. Their numerical advantage promised greater potential. With the Assist Civilization system in place, he was confident he could cultivate even more formidable units. Each day, his divine realm would only grow stronger.

After tending to his units, he recalled the exceptional souls he had harvested from the Assist Civilization. Their power was extraordinary, so he decided to preserve their previous memories before reincarnating them in his divine realm. He knew that doing so would accelerate their growth and integrate them into his elite force.

As he allocated souls for reincarnation, he realized he had unconsciously absorbed Leng Ning's soul, likely in her final moments. He gently cupped her soul and whispered, "Thank you for taking care of me in the Assist Civilization. Now, it's my turn."

Han Wu had a lot of units in his divine realm, but Leng Ning was a reliable companion, so he wanted to reincarnate her into a powerful race. He decided to reincarnate her as a Great Dragon.

Although Han Wu had countless units in his divine realm, Leng Ning had proven herself a reliable companion. He resolved to reincarnate her as a Great Dragon. Apart from Alpheus and the lightning Great Dragons, he also had the silver dragon Erebard.

Since Leng Ning's primary attribute was ice, and none of his existing Great Dragons had that affinity, he'd arrange for Erebard to mate with the lightning Great Dragons. He

hoped that their offspring would inherit the water or ice affinity, creating a suitable vessel for Leng Ning's soul.

Unfortunately, this process would take time. Erebard needed to bond with the female dragons before mating could occur.

Once the arrangements were set, Han Wu received several urgent notifications from Qin Shuang. He called her immediately to find out what had happened.

Qin Shuang's voice trembled over the screen. "Han Wu, come quickly. Jing Jing just did something bad."

Han Wu frowned. Qin Shuang had taken Jing Jing shopping, yet something had clearly gone wrong. Jing Jing had saved him before, and he would not hesitate to save her in return.

He asked Qin Shuang for the coordinates and teleported there. When he opened his eyes, he saw the beautiful female skeleton gazing down at Elina, who was bathed in holy light.

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[1,073 words]

Chapter 356 - Jing Jing's Loyalty

As the daughter of the God King of Light, Elina had inherited his talent and commanded vast resources. She had also recently ascended into a God.

"You lowly undead! How dare you strut through the streets of the Divine Civilization and sully my faction? I will purify you," she shouted at Jing Jing.

Her Divine Authority flared with blinding sacred light. Pure Light Energy coalesced in her hands as she prepared to end Jing Jing permanently.

Jing Jing showed no fear in the face of the lethal attack. "*Hmph.* We skeletons do not fear death, much less mere light."

She invoked her Divine Authority. Bones sprouted from her back, fusing into thirteen razor-sharp spikes that hovered menacingly behind her. Each spike held enough power to kill a God.

“You are merely an undead, and yet you dare insult Princess Elina? Do you truly believe the Light faction is weak?” one of Elina’s followers barked.

Her followers unleashed their Divine Authorities and Divine Aspects to support her. Most were Demigods; only two were Gods. Still, their numbers were overwhelming.

Elina’s Divine Authority pressed Jing Jing back and cracked the bone spikes she had summoned. Jing Jing’s Divine Authority teetered on the brink of shattering.

Jing Jing was still Han Wu’s unit, so Qin Shuang had to protect her at all costs. She had already contacted Han Wu at the first sign of danger before unleashing her own power to help Jing Jing withstand Elina’s assault.

Elina’s frustration with Qin Shuang deepened. She believed that Han Wu’s refusal to join the Light faction was the result of Qin Shuang’s seduction and assumed that once Qin Shuang was out of the way, Han Wu would embrace the Light faction.

Determined, Elina intensified her Divine Authority and targeted Qin Shuang as well. She absorbed the power of her followers to amplify her strength.

Jing Jing and Qin Shuang were moments away from being smitten when Han Wu arrived. Seeing them in immediate danger, he became furious. He would allow no one to harm those close to him.

Without hesitation, he shot forward and unleashed his Divine Authority. The power of Death, Darkness, Destruction, and War erupted with unrelenting force. Its invisible, boundless energy severed Elina’s Divine Authority from suppressing Jing Jing and Qin Shuang. Han Wu alone pushed back the overwhelming power fueled by three Gods and several Demigods.

Shock rippled through the onlookers as well. Han Wu was still so young, yet his strength already surpassed that of his peers.

Elina kept her Divine Authority active, snarling, “Han Wu, how could you pity that bitch and that undead?”

Han Wu frowned. He could not understand her logic. Why should he abandon his own unit and friends? Was he expected to betray them for strangers? The idea was absurd.

He resolved to end it with True Demon King Transformation. His form towered above them, and his Divine Authority grew stronger until it obliterated Elina’s. The backlash injured her and her followers. Many staggered, dizzy, while some fainted instantly, blood trickling from their mouths.

Elina bore the brunt of the attack, but as the God King of Light’s daughter, she possessed Sacred Objects that softened the impact. Ignoring her fallen comrades, she

pressed, “Are you really going to make the entire Light faction your enemy for an undead and the daughter of a minor family?”

Han Wu scoffed. “I am the Holy Son of Death. I am meant to be your enemy. Cross them again, and I will make you pay.”

Grasping both Qin Shuang’s and Jing Jing’s hands, he teleported back to his divine realm.

Elina watched Han Wu leave, her dissatisfaction simmering. Why did a man as extraordinary as him always treat her so coldly? Her beauty and talent far surpassed Qin Shuang’s, yet she could not capture Han Wu’s heart. She refused to acknowledge her own flaws, too proud and stubborn to reflect. In the end, she departed with her followers in defeat.

Han Wu returned to his divine realm with Jing Jing and Qin Shuang in tow. Qin Shuang basked in the familiar aura of his domain, but Jing Jing sensed something had changed. Though she had not officially returned as Han Wu’s unit, she detected the faint presence of a Will within his divine realm. It was so weak and delicate that it could not even suppress her own power.

“God, is this your Will?” she asked.

Han Wu was surprised at how easily she had perceived it. He recalled that Jing Jing had waged long campaigns in another civilization, establishing a foothold there, so sensing a fragment of his Will was hardly a challenge for her.

“Yes, that’s my Will. I obtained two tiny slivers from another civilization and have been using them for practice,” he explained.

Jing Jing’s eyes sparkled with excitement. “God, may I summon my companions into your divine realm to benefit from your Will?”

Han Wu frowned. His divine realm already held a vast number of skeletons, yet Jing Jing’s army was undoubtedly several times larger. As the God of Skeletons, she naturally commanded a massive force.

Another concern weighed on him. An overabundance of undead could destabilize a divine realm—the lifespans of other races might shrink dramatically, or the realm itself could regress under the undead aura’s corruption. If possible, he preferred not to allow her skeletons inside.

He changed the subject. “Jing Jing, let’s set that aside for now. There’s something more urgent you must handle first.”

After today's events, Han Wu realized the streets of the Divine Civilization were perilous for a foreign God. To the native population, foreign Gods existed only to remain in their divine realms, exploited like labor slaves to fight for other civilizations. They believed foreign Gods should not enjoy the privileges granted to those born within the Divine Civilization.

"God, what do you intend to do about this?" she asked.

Han Wu scratched his head. He was a God, yet still only a first-year student. He was uncertain of what he could do.

Qin Shuang stepped in. "Han Wu, I think I might have a solution. I wonder if it could help."

"Speak," he said, swiftly and deliberately caressing Qin Shuang's hands.

Though it appeared flirtatious, he was actually using Replicate to copy Qin Shuang's Nine Martial Castes. With her power integrated, his own transformed into the Twenty-Seven Martial Castes, granting him nine additional forms.

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[926 words]

Chapter 357 - Transfer Student Test

"Can we do that?" Han Wu exclaimed. He had never considered it before. "Jing Jing is a God, collecting Faith Points from her own race, but she isn't native to the Divine Civilization. Can she really pass the test?"

Qin Shuang replied, "Of course she can. Remember Bao Xiren, the general from the Warring Kingdom Civilization? How do you think he became a transfer student here?"

Han Wu pictured Bao Xiren with his signature darker skin tone. He had managed the transfer because the Warring Kingdom and Divine Civilizations maintained friendly relations. He made a good example.

Inspired, Han Wu decided to call Saliya to see if the same could work for Jing Jing. If it did, Jing Jing would not only become a student at Imperial College but also remain his loyal unit.

He called Saliya, and she answered promptly.

“Han Wu, is something wrong?” Her voice retained the same melodious tone he remembered from the first time he heard her.

“Professor Saliya, I need to ask about a transfer student...” He explained the situation, stressing how important it was for Jing Jing to gain transfer-student status and requesting her help.

Saliya offered a solution, though it required the involvement of Han Wu’s professor, Major God Xu Hai. The plan was straightforward: Han Wu had to convince Xu Hai to apply on his behalf and vouch for Jing Jing. Imperial College would then administer a test, and if she passed, she would officially become a transfer student despite being a foreign God.

Han Wu thanked her and immediately called Xu Hai.

Xu Hai listened to the proposal and asked, “Do you trust this person? Technically, you exiled her. She isn’t supposed to be your unit anymore.”

Han Wu turned to Jing Jing and met her gaze. Her eyes were calm, unwavering. She still seemed loyal, and he resolved to trust her one more time. “I believe she remains loyal to me.”

“Very well. I will apply for her transfer,” Xu Hai said.

The application was processed swiftly and soon approved. The last barrier between her and life at Imperial College was a grueling test. They quickly learned the rules, and the trio studied them with interest.

Qin Shuang’s eyes blazed with fury when she finished reading. “Wait! They expect Jing Jing, an undead, to survive ten days in the Scorching Sun Civilization? Their suns never set! This is torture for a skeleton. Killing her outright would have been mercy.”

Han Wu frowned at the test’s brutality. Exposing a skeleton to relentless sunlight for ten days was like roasting meat over an open fire for the same period. To pass, the meat would need to remain tender and fresh. It was preposterous.

“Let me negotiate with Professor Xu.” He rose angrily, but Jing Jing stopped him.

“God, I am willing to endure the trial to prove my loyalty,” she said solemnly.

Han Wu’s expression darkened. “This isn’t something a skeleton like you can endure. The Scorching Sun Civilization is filled with light and fire. Almost no undead survive there. This isn’t about loyalty anymore—I don’t want you to die.”

Jing Jing was dead[1] serious on taking the test. “What use is my existence if I cannot serve my God?”

Her loyalty to him was unmatched, so absolute that she could not tolerate Han Wu raising any units beyond herself and the skeletons under her command. Thankfully, her exile had tempered her extremes. At least now, she would not attempt to shatter his Core just to make him depend entirely on her because other races existed in his divine realm.

In the end, Han Wu agreed to let her take the test. Jing Jing tore up the rule sheet and was transported to the Scorching Sun Civilization. Before her departure, Han Wu provided her with equipment that allowed him to monitor her progress from the Divine Civilization. He prepared to intervene if the pain became unbearable and the test threatened to end prematurely.

Jing Jing appeared in the desert. Sand dunes rolled endlessly toward the horizon, and ten suns blazed in the sky. The sunlight was merciless. Her skin felt as though it were being seared by holy water infused with boundless Light and Life Energy.

She ran frantically, seeking any shelter from the relentless sun, but the desert offered none. Trees or shade were nonexistent; only the wind-driven sand surrounded her. She couldn't afford to maintain her regal appearance as the queen of skeletons now. Thus, she dug a pit with her hands and buried herself beneath the sand, shielding her body from the searing sunlight.

Unfortunately, the weather proved mercilessly unpredictable. Jing Jing had barely rested for ten minutes when a sandstorm swept in. Winds whipped across the dunes and shifted the sand above her. The protective layer she had buried herself under was blown away in an instant, forcing her to seek shelter once more.

By luck, she spotted a small grass hut in the distance. She had endured the scorching sunlight as she pressed forward into the unknown, and now she discovered a haven. The hut was abandoned, shabby, but in her current condition, it was a treasure. She stumbled inside, sighing in relief at the shade that finally shielded her from the punishing sun.

Yet the Scorching Sun Civilization offered no reprieve. Just as she was about to rest, a tremendous crash echoed from above. The wind had torn away the roof. Once again, she was exposed, and the sunlight seared her bones.

1. Pun intended 📖

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Chapter 358 - Jing Jing's Divine Realm

[1,594 words]

Chapter 358 - Jing Jing's Divine Realm

Han Wu and Qin Shuang were sick with worry, watching Jing Jing's suffering in the Scorching Sun Civilization. Han Wu thought angrily, *If I ever find out who came up with this shitty test, I'll beat the sick bastard to death!*

Thankfully, Jing Jing was a Crystal Skeleton, the strongest species of skeleton, which gave her a higher resistance to light damage compared to regular skeletons. She painfully endured the next ten days, continuously shifting between looking for shelter and dealing with unexpected problems.

When the tenth day passed, Jing Jing was finally transported back, but she was extremely feeble from the test. Han Wu quickly gave her several Bone Stones produced by his Refinery, but it still took her half a day to recover enough to slowly sit up.

"Jing Jing, you did an amazing job!" Qin Shuang praised. "You passed the test and are now officially a transfer student!"

A stiff smile appeared on Jing Jing's pale face. She also thought it was good news, since becoming a transfer student meant she could spend more time beside Han Wu to grow as Gods.

The group was getting ready to celebrate, but a visit from Saliya cut their plans short.

"Professor, thanks so much for your help!" Han Wu said in gratitude. "Is something wrong, by any chance?"

With a smile, Saliya said, "The academy sent me a notification recognizing Jing Jing as a transfer student. I have her rewards here; would you mind passing them on in my stead?"

She handed a large wooden chest to Han Wu and left with a smile. After her departure, he passed the chest to Jing Jing and said, "This is the reward from the academy. Go on, open it."

Jing Jing opened the chest, her curiosity piqued. It was far from full, but the few items inside were clearly very precious. Among them were a few sets of uniforms, a set of 1-Star God equipment, a student card, and a peculiar crystal.

Han Wu immediately recognized the student card, knowing it was used to record points. However, the peculiar crystal baffled both him and Qin Shuang; they had never seen anything like it.

Jing Jing picked up the crystal, and it suddenly released a blinding white light. Immediately, strings of notifications began to ping from within Jing Jing's soul.

[Examining host's skeletal structure... Approved.]

[Confirming host's species... Crystal Skeleton.]

[Confirming host's strength... God.]

...

[All verifications complete. Initiating divine realm.]

The stream of information ended, and the crystal sank into Jing Jing's body. Han Wu and Qin Shuang looked at her curiously, and Qin Shuang finally asked, "Did anything change with your body?"

Jing Jing's eyes grew wide with shock. Without warning, she grabbed both of them with her slender hands and teleported them into her own divine realm.

The scenery shifted rapidly, and Han Wu and Qin Shuang were suddenly in Jing Jing's divine realm. It was a dark place filled with a deathly silence, and it was completely different from their own divine realms.

This was Jing Jing's new divine realm, a space for the undead. It was tiny, only 1 sq km since it had just been formed, but she wasn't too worried. As a God, she could simply purchase pieces of other divine realms from the market to expand her own.

Moreover, undeads had no need for lush environments to live; in fact, the death aura they constantly exuded turned any land into a desolate wasteland, and they didn't need to be fed, allowing them to survive perfectly fine in the cheap barren desert.

Jing Jing, however, was more interested in her new Core. She had learned how important it was during her time as Han Wu's unit, especially since she had even tried to destroy his. Now, after passing the Imperial College test, she finally had a Core of her own, officially making her a member of the Divine Civilization.

Although her Core level could reach Level 30 as a God, her newly formed divine realm limited her to a starting level of 1, allowing her to equip only one Rank 1 Sacred Object. Conveniently, Han Wu hadn't increased his Core level yet. So, after recognizing Jing Jing's situation, he decided to invite the two girls to the Blood Coliseum to get Core fragments.

The Blood Coliseum was as busy as ever. As he looked around at the powerful life forms loitering around, Han Wu realized that most of them were from the Divine Civilization. *The rewards here must be very compatible with the inhabitants of the Divine Civilization*, he thought to himself.

Feeling a hint of nostalgia, Han Wu brought them to register, and the two officially became novice contenders. From now on, they could simply register for a match and be automatically paired with a fighter.

The trio had very different experiences in the arena. Qin Shuang, still a Demigod, was quickly paired with an opponent. Jing Jing had to wait longer for a match, as Gods were far less common than Demigods. Meanwhile, no one dared to challenge Han Wu due to his status as a Blood Coliseum candidate. He had to wait for half a day before he finally received a challenge from another candidate.

Han Wu had no choice but to accept the challenge. He had already used up his chances to decline a match and knew that refusing this one would result in him being stripped of his candidacy.

He didn't want to lose access to the Blood Coliseum now that he knew how valuable it was. Using his moniker as the Locust Plague, he stepped into the arena to face off against a middle-aged person from the Divine Civilization.

Han Wu immediately put his guard up. The age of a Divine Civilization inhabitant was a telling sign of their strength. For example, while he was officially 19, the time he had spent in his divine realm and other civilizations added up to several hundred years. The middle-aged man before him definitely had a lot more experience and had accumulated more resources.

"Lightning faction, Purple Heaven," the middle-aged man said. He introduced himself with his faction to prevent any incident of accidentally hurting an ally.

"Death faction, Locust Plague."

The moment he heard Han Wu's faction, Purple Heaven's breathing quickened. The Death, Life, Destruction, and Creation factions were all top ranking factions within the Divine Civilization and were categorized as tier one, while the weaker elemental factions like Lightning, Fire, and Ice were categorized as tier two.

The strength of their respective factions put Purple Heaven at an immediate disadvantage against Han Wu. However, in the Blood Coliseum, personal strength mattered most. They were both candidates and far stronger than regular Gods.

Purple Heaven decided to take a chance, banking on Han Wu's youthful appearance. "Locust Plague, how about we do it this way? We each summon half of our units and fight to the last one, or until one of us surrenders. What do you think?"

After a moment of silence, Han Wu shrugged and nodded. He didn't mind the proposal at all. "Sure," he agreed. "Let's do it that way, then."

The gate to his divine realm opened, and a massive swarm of locusts flew out, completely blotting out the sky. Purple Heaven paled and then frowned. *Even though the locusts are individually weak, there are just too many of them! Is this really just fifty percent?*

As Purple Heaven was still in a daze, a massive troop of 10 billion Tigermen marched out of Han Wu's divine realm. They were followed by a diverse army of Epistians, half-dragons, skeletons, minotaurs, treants, Scorching Dwarves, and many others.

What in the @€@?! Purple Heaven screamed internally. This is clearly not fifty percent! I've been a God for years, and even I don't have this many units in my divine realm!*

"Locust Plague... We promised to summon half our units, but you..."

"Ah, I apologize. The locusts aside, the rest are truly just fifty percent of their total numbers in my divine realm."

Purple Heaven was slightly upset, having caught the first half of Han Wu's sentence. He hated it when someone went against their word in the arena. "We said fifty percent, no more, no less," he stated. "Please respect your agreement."

From what he could tell, there were at least 150 billion locusts in the air. Purple Heaven realized that if he could reduce their numbers, he would have a much easier time in the fight.

Han Wu sighed at the scolding. "Alright," he said. "I'll do as you've said. I'll summon exactly half my locusts, which should be around... 230 billion."

Purple Heaven's mind went blank. He had previously believed that Han Wu was using more than half his units to intimidate him, only to realize Han Wu had been holding back. As another 80 billion locusts flew out from the gate, Purple Heaven wanted to slap himself for jinxing the situation.

"I'm done," Han Wu said with a nod. He then noticed that Purple Heaven hadn't moved. "Hmm? Why aren't you summoning your units?"

Purple Heaven continued to curse himself. He couldn't possibly contend with the number of units before him. There were close to 300 billion enemy units on the field, and his core race, the Lightning Beasts, only numbered 9.7 billion. He was helpless against them.

However, he refused to back down. He chose to face the impossible with dignity rather than flee, and he summoned 100 million of his core race, the Lightning Beasts.

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[1,108 words]

Chapter 359 - Overwhelming Victory

Resembling rhinos, the Lightning Beasts were a race whose strength was vouched for by many. Their thick skin, overpowering strength, and powerful lightning made them creatures that embodied violence. Moreover, when trained in arrays and formations, they became even more dangerous, capable of mowing down their enemies with ease.

The 100 million Lightning Beasts Purple Heaven summoned were naturally the trained ones. As they hit the field, their powerful presence overshadowed the locusts. Among Han Wu's units, only his Tigermen could match the Lightning Beasts in presence.

However, despite their strength, the Lightning Beasts were vastly outnumbered by Han Wu's immense army of 300 billion. The locusts flew freely and could easily cover the Lightning Beasts with their bodies.

The audience was visibly upset by the number of Lightning Beasts that Purple Heaven had summoned. They had seen the man summon a billion of them to stomp enemy units to death before, and the spectacle had been enough to make everyone cheer for him.

He had only summoned 100 million this time, obviously limiting himself. The audience wanted a balanced match with plenty of violence and entertainment, not one that was overwhelmingly in favor of one side.

"Purple Heaven, where are the rest of your Heavy Lightning Beasts? Summon them out too!"

"Purple Lightning, where is the ruthlessness you showed me when you were beating me black and blue? Summon all of your units to fight!"

Of course, there were some that cheered Han Wu on.

"Locust Plague, he has about 10 billion Lightning Beasts, but he has summoned only 100 million of them. He's clearly looking down on you!"

"Locust Plague, we're definitely not trying to incite you, but as a man, I would never forgive him for looking down on me!"

"Locust Plague, blow his Lightning Beasts into submission!"

“Don’t you mean *blast*?”

“Oh, shut up!”

...

Purple Heaven felt so embarrassed that he lowered his head, yet he still refused to summon any more units.

I cannot get influenced by the crowd, he thought resignedly. My opponent has too many units on his side; even if I summon all my Lightning Beasts, they’ll all ultimately be wiped out. It’s best to sacrifice just 100 million of my precious Lightning Beasts as the price for underestimating my opponent. It’s a hefty price, but it’s a loss I can tolerate.

After seeing Purple Heaven refuse to summon any more units, Han Wu gave a slight, respectful nod. Without a moment’s hesitation, he commanded his locusts to launch the first attack.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The locusts exploded with zeal, and many Lightning Beasts suffered agonizing deaths from the magma. This, however, was not the end of it. Han Wu’s Skeleton Knights began to summon skeletons from the corpses of the Lightning Beasts, and they turned on their former, living companions. Many of the Lightning Beasts perished from this initial wave of attacks.

Not long after, the Tigermen, half-dragons, and minotaurs charged into the fray, and the massacre began. In just a few minutes, Purple Heaven had already lost 60 million of his Lightning Beasts.

Looking at the horrifying scene, he felt even more confident in his decision not to summon more Lightning Beasts. *I would’ve lost way more than my little heart can tolerate had I summoned any more, he thought to himself. This way, I’ll only lose 100 million of my Lightning Beasts at most.*

Of course, the Lightning Beasts weren’t just being beaten passively—they were actively fighting back. Their stampede stomped many of Han Wu’s life forms to death.

Also, showing their exceptional talent in warfare, they battled in their numbers, each one discharging lightning like a massive battery. The discharged lightning fused together to form a huge lightning web that fried anything it touched.

This lightning web became more like an electric fly swatter, instantly stunning or incinerating a huge number of Han Wu’s locusts. The lightning also arced off the web and killed many of the Tigermen, minotaurs, and Scorching Dwarves. However, as

powerful as the lightning web was, Han Wu still managed to kill all the Lightning Beasts with his overwhelming numbers.

The administrator of the Blood Coliseum asked if the two wished to continue their fight. While Han Wu was quick to nod, Purple Heaven instantly surrendered. Having just lost 100 million of his Lightning Beasts, he was more certain than ever that continuing the fight would lead to him losing all the units and resources he had painstakingly collected over the years.

In the end, Han Wu obtained the final victory. He received not only Core fragments, but also Purple Heaven's candidacy. The energy from the mark improved Han Wu's Blood Coliseum structure in his divine realm, expanding it and allowing his units to improve more quickly.

After the match, Han Wu chose to inspect his units in his divine realm while waiting for the girls to return. Due to his new Will, the strength of his powerful units was accelerating.

For example, his first Heroic unit, Steely, was now a Sage life form. Even though Steely's official rank was Novice Sage, he possessed the strength of an Intermediate Sage life form.

The massive numbers were due to the Assist system Han Wu had implemented. With 460 billion locusts, 20 billion Tigermen, and another billion units, the sheer number of Assist Points caused Steely's strength to skyrocket. Even his weakest skill, the Whirlwind Slash, had been improved to be several times more powerful because of the system.

Units that couldn't gain many Assist Points could choose to improve their strength by training in the Blood Coliseum. Ultimately, every unit in his divine realm had at least one way to get stronger. As long as they were hardworking enough, they would have no problem becoming powerful life forms.

The matches of Jing Jing and Qin Shuang soon came to a close. As they were both powerful geniuses, they had naturally won their respective matches.

The single fragment of a Demigod Core that Qin Shuang received was not enough to make her Core level up even once when she became a God. She needed to win more. Jing Jing, on the other hand, received a Core fragment that was at least ten times larger than Qin Shuang's.

Since her Core was at Level 1, the Core fragment was enough to increase its level to 13. As a God, her Core level had an upper limit of 30, and the highest-ranking Sacred Object she could equip was Rank 6.

Having never used a Sacred Object before, Jing Jing insisted on purchasing one immediately and dragged Qin Shuang and Han Wu along with her.

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Chapter 360 - Choosing a Sacred Object

[1,301 words]

Chapter 360 - Choosing a Sacred Object

Only Gods could use Rank 5 and 6 Sacred Objects. They weren't usually sold online, and even if they were, their effects were bad. Jing Jing absolutely did not want those kinds of Sacred Objects.

The truly good Sacred Objects were kept in the vaults of various factions or sold in small quantities in shops for VIPs. Thankfully, there was one such shop within the Blood Coliseum that sold a variety of Sacred Objects, and it was rumored that they even had some Rank 8 ones in their inventory.

The trio went to the shop to try their luck, hoping to find a suitable Rank 6 Sacred Object. An attendant greeted them warmly as soon as they walked in.

"Welcome, esteemed guests. Is there something you require from us?"

Han Wu was stunned to sense the Divine Essence from the attendant. He realized all the attendants were Demigods! A shop that had Demigods as attendants was definitely a high-ranking one with valuable items. *We have a very good chance of finding something here*, he thought.

"We're here to purchase some Rank 6 Sacred Objects, if you have any on sale. If not, we'll take Rank 5 ones too," Qin Shuang responded politely. She had also sensed the attendant's power level, realizing they were in the same rank.

The attendant smiled. "To think you three are so powerful at such a young age! It is an honor to serve such talented guests here! Please, follow me."

The trio followed the attendant further into the shop. Using his authority, he handed each of them a list of Rank 5 and 6 Sacred Objects. They were surprised by the shop's diverse selection, which included some 239 Rank 6 Sacred Objects and 19,847 Rank 5 Sacred Objects, each with a different effect.

Han Wu used the Filter option and typed in “Self-Detonation.” Even though he had been finding ways to reinforce his locusts, their average strength was still weaker than other life forms of the same rank. He had decided to focus on improving their Self-Detonation skill, as it was what allowed them to fight on somewhat equal grounds with other talented races.

Han Wu slowly went through the list of Sacred Objects that could amplify the effects of Self-Detonation. After a lengthy search, he found just one Rank 6 Sacred Object that fit his criteria: Nuclear Detonation[1].

The Sacred Object, once equipped, would allow his core race to learn the Nuclear Detonation skill. Upon detonation, the locusts would release highly radioactive materials into their surroundings, causing any nearby life forms to mutate.

Even though the Sacred Object was terrifyingly powerful, it had very severe side effects. After a brief internal struggle, Han Wu chose not to buy it, despite its power. He sighed in regret and crossed it off the list.

He had hoped to find a Rank 6 Sacred Object instead of a Rank 5 one, as there was a significant difference in power between the ranks. Nevertheless, he decided to continue his search through the list of Rank 5 Sacred Objects.

There were quite a lot of Rank 5 Sacred Objects related to Self-Detonation. Most were elemental, such as Fiery Detonation, Magma Detonation, Icy Detonation, and Lightning Detonation, so Han Wu quickly eliminated them.

It was common for Gods to train their units to be resistant to elemental damage. It was also a known fact, from research and countless observations, that most units belonging to them were already resistant to fire.

Han Wu ignored all the elemental detonation Sacred Objects and instead searched for an unusual one that could bypass the elemental resistance of most units. After a long search, he finally found one.

[Rank 5 Sacred Object: Void Speck. When equipped to the Core, it grants the user’s core race the Void Detonation skill.]

[Void Detonation: Upon detonation, a crack in space proportional to the energy of the user is formed, which proceeds to absorb all matter in its vicinity.]

Han Wu could already imagine the Sacred Object in action. Each detonating locust would form a crack in space, and the suction would rip the surviving enemy units apart. The edges of a crack in space were much sharper than Divine weapons and were second only to God weapons.

The thought of how easily he could eviscerate his opponent's units with the Sacred Object made Han Wu smile. He excitedly purchased the Sacred Object, already looking forward to upgrading it with Sources in his divine realm. He had a very high chance of upgrading it to Rank 6 but was unsure how many Sources he would need.

Regardless, he was satisfied with his new Sacred Object. He then glanced over at Qin Shuang and Jing Jing to see how they were doing.

Qin Shuang, though still a Demigod, was already close to ascension. It was the perfect time to browse through Rank 5 and 6 Sacred Objects. Her core race, the Lightning Sparrows, had a high affinity for lightning, so she was looking for Sacred Objects that either stored or released lightning.

Since lightning was a relatively common attribute, there were many Sacred Objects related to it. Qin Shuang was currently considering purchasing the Rank 6 Bottle of Plasma Sacred Object.

[Rank 6 Sacred Object: Bottle of Plasma. When equipped to the Core, it grants the user's core race the Plasma Body skill.]

[Plasma Body: Temporarily turns the user's body into plasma, which increases their outgoing lightning damage and renders them immune to physical damage.]

The Sacred Object was an incredible fit for her Lightning Sparrows, but since it was so powerful, it naturally came with a high price tag. It cost 100 Divine Essence, which was enough to nurture an excellent Demigod!

Qin Shuang hesitated, considering her family's financial situation. Though they were rich thanks to her grandfather, a God, their wealth had its limits. She couldn't take too much money, as her family still needed to nurture other children. It was impossible for them to spend so much to buy a Rank 6 Sacred Object just for her.

Qin Shuang shook her head in disappointment. However, just as she was about to close the interface, Han Wu stopped her. "She'll take this one. Please bring it to us," he said to the attendant, gesturing to the Bottle of Plasma.

Qin Shuang tried to stop him. "Are you insane? That costs 100 Divine Essence!" she exclaimed in disbelief.

Han Wu looked at her with a serious expression. "I'll gladly pay six times more, so long as you like it."

The large number of units he had in his divine realm was the source of his confidence. These units not only improved his combat capabilities but also generated a significant amount of Faith Points for him.

Having accumulated numerous Faith Points for a long time, he now had 826 Divine Essence in his account, making him one of the richest Gods out there. Purchasing a Sacred Object that cost 100 Divine Essence for a loved one was nothing to him.

Qin Shuang blushed and nodded shyly. She moved close and whispered in his ear, “I will pay you back. If not with Divine Essence, then I am willing to pay with my body and lifelong companionship[2].”

Han Wu was stunned, his eyes wide. A slight blush spread across his face as his heart began to race. He thought to himself, *When did she get so good at flirting?*

After buying the Sacred Object, he cleared his throat awkwardly and turned to Jing Jing. Her Level 13 Core could equip two Rank 6 Sacred Objects, but she had already chosen her first one and was hesitating on the second, so Han Wu decided to lend a hand.

1. Mini cluster nukes 📧

2. AYO LETS GOOOOO! 📧

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[1,275 words]

Chapter 361 - Forbidden Bone Flute

Han Wu noticed that Jing Jing had already chosen her first Sacred Object.

[Rank 6 Sacred Object: Death’s Sigh. When equipped to the Core, the death aura on undead life forms is increased.]

[Death aura: Corrodes living bodies and drains their Life Energy.]

After reading the description, Han Wu began to picture what would happen when Jing Jing equipped the item.

He envisioned a huge wave of skeletons bursting from the gate, their death aura so thick it was almost solid. Those buried by the skeleton army would be wrapped in the death aura, killing them almost instantly. Moreover, Jing Jing could then summon even more skeletons from their corpses to join her army.

Han Wu shivered at the thought. Even though he had a lot of skeletons in his divine realm, they were definitely weaker compared to Jing Jing’s skeletons because they were not his core race.

Jing Jing, meanwhile, was deep in thought. *Death's Sigh will only serve to enhance my skeletons' strength further. However, I have no idea which to choose for my second Sacred Object*, she thought, troubled. *I've selected three more Rank 6 Sacred Objects, but their effects were quite similar! Which one should I pick?*

Han Wu took a look at her list:

[Rank 6 Sacred Object: Evil Spine. When equipped to the Core, it increases the density of the core race's bones and grants them the Evil trait.]

[Evil trait: Attacks have a set chance to inflict specific debuffs, including Rot, Bloat, Dehydration, and Stun.]

[Rank 6 Sacred Object: Guilty Ribs. When equipped to the Core, it increases the density of the core race's bones and grants them the Guilty trait.]

[Guilty trait: Attacks have a set chance to inflict specific debuffs, including Bleed, Pain, Asphyxiation, and Faint.]

[Rank 6 Sacred Object: Vicious Skull. When equipped to the Core, it increases the density of the core race's bones and grants them the Vicious trait.]

[Vicious Trait: Causes core race's bones to grow thicker, larger, and have protruding bone spikes.]

Han Wu noticed that all three had the effects of improving the core race's bone density. As skeletons, they would become stronger the denser their bones were.

Jing Jing couldn't decide. All three traits—Evil, Guilty, and Vicious—were quite excellent and would be very useful for her skeletons, so she was hesitant to make a choice.

After comparing them himself, Han Wu couldn't decide either. Had her Core at least been at Level 24, she could have equipped all three, but currently, she could only choose one.

As Han Wu was trying to decide on the best option, his eyes suddenly fell upon a peculiar Rank 5 Sacred Object on the list.

[Rank 5 Sacred Object: Forbidden Bone Flute. When equipped to the Core, it forms holes in the core race's bones, reducing their density and increasing their speed. When extracted, the bones can be used as a flute to play a forbidden tune which controls and manipulates death aura to attack their enemies.]

Seeing how well it complemented Jing Jing's first choice, Han Wu told her to choose it. "The two Sacred Objects work well together. You can use the forbidden song to control Death Sigh's death aura to attack your enemies."

Jing Jing glanced at it and lost interest. "I would have chosen it if it were a Rank 6 Sacred Object, but it's only a Rank 5. There's a visible gap in power between the ranks."

Han Wu chuckled. "What if I told you I had the power to upgrade it to Rank 6?"

Jing Jing was completely shocked. "I knew my God was omnipotent!" she exclaimed excitedly, her alluring, crystal clear eyes holding a charm that made everyone's heart melt.

Though Han Wu was prepared to pay for the Sacred Objects, Jing Jing chose to pay herself. She didn't have much Divine Essence as she had only recently obtained a divine realm, but she had accumulated a lot of God equipment over her many years of fighting in the Class Civilization.

Jing Jing took out a hundred various God-ranked weapons and equipment and placed them on the counter, much to the shock of the attendant. After many years of working in the shop, he had never encountered a customer paying with God equipment. However, maintaining his professionalism, he quickly overcame his shock and called for a Demigod with the Appraisal Aspect to help him.

Soon, an elderly man walked into the shop. His eyes went wide in stunned disbelief at the counter filled with God-ranked equipment. He shook his head to clear it, then composed himself professionally before beginning to appraise the items.

"God Longsword, 1-Star. Wind attribute. In good condition, with a lot of Divine Essence imbued in it. Valued at 4 Divine Essence."

"God Armor, 2-Star. Earth attribute. Can block a direct hit from a God's Divine Authority. Valued at 12 Divine Essence."

...

After appraising all the God equipment, the elderly man valued the entire stock at 312 Divine Essence. Although it wasn't as much as Han Wu's savings, it was definitely a huge sum.

After paying for the Sacred Objects, Jing Jing still had 32 Divine Essence leftover, which she planned to use to upgrade her units in the future. With their shopping complete, the trio returned to Han Wu's divine realm with their newly-bought Sacred Objects.

Immediately upon his return, Han Wu headed to the Refinery and tossed in a huge amount of lower-ranking Sacred Objects. The resulting Source stones were thankfully enough to upgrade his Void Speck and Jing Jing's Forbidden Bone Flute to Rank 6.

The effects of the Rank 5 Sacred Objects were amplified by ten times after their upgrade. Han Wu then removed his remaining Sacred Objects from his Core, with the exception of his Rank 6 Law of Gluttony Sacred Object, to equip the Void Speck.

The Rank 6 Sacred Object took three days to be successfully equipped to his Core. At that very instant, 70% of his locusts gained the powerful Void Detonation skill.

Out of curiosity, Han Wu summoned an Unique locust and ordered it to use Void Detonation. The detonation left a 15-cm-long crack in space that caused a powerful suction force which pulled in matter from its surroundings. The crack finally repaired and closed after about 15 seconds.

The results satisfied Han Wu greatly. The edges of the spacial crack were so sharp that nothing could protect itself with just its physical body.

My locusts finally have a way to fight against tough enemies with thick hides and muscles! Of course, the spacial crack is a bit too small, but if many of my locusts detonate at the same time, that probably wouldn't be a problem, he thought excitedly.

Calming himself down, he noticed that he could still equip a Rank 9 Sacred Object, or in his case, a Rank 6 and a Rank 3. He was thinking of getting another Rank 6 Sacred Object to improve his locusts, but there wasn't any left in the shop at the Blood Coliseum, so he thought of Imperial College's vault.

If I want to get a good Sacred Object from the vault, I'll needed my professor's help, since I can't do so with his identity as a student.

Han Wu submitted an application to Xu Hai and received a response almost instantly. His teacher wanted him to visit his office.

After informing Qin Shuang and Jing Jing that he was going to meet Xu Hai, he immediately departed, soon arriving at Xu Hai's office.

To his surprise, Su Lan was also present, and the two appeared to be discussing something important.

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[1,280 words]

Chapter 362 - Armor Civilization

Xu Hai said, "Han Wu, I've already learned about your situation. You need a Rank 6 Sacred Object as soon as possible, don't you? As a Major God, I have plenty of Rank 6 Sacred Objects suited to your core race. But as your professor, I can't hand you one without conditions. You'll have to earn it.

"Coincidentally, there is something you can do to convince me. Su Lan and I share ownership of a certain civilization, and unrest has broken out there. I want you to go and pacify the riots. If you succeed, you may choose a Sacred Object from my personal collection."

Han Wu understood the implication. Though Xu Hai claimed he couldn't openly grant his request for fear of the other professors' disapproval, this mission created a loophole. If Han Wu quelled the riots and restored order, he would receive a Sacred Object.

The task itself was hardly necessary. Xu Hai commanded hundreds of Gods under his authority, any of whom could have resolved the situation with ease. Sending Han Wu was nothing more than a pretext to grant him a Rank 6 Sacred Object.

Han Wu felt a warm sense of gratitude at being looked after. He bowed his head slightly and said, "Thank you, Master. I will handle it at once."

Xu Hai nodded approvingly, but Su Lan cut in. "Wait. You have two girls with you, don't you? Qin Shuang and the Crystal Skeleton God?"

"Yes, that's correct," Han Wu replied, uncertain what Su Lan intended with the question.

"I favor female students," Su Lan said. "Bring them with you on this mission. They will receive the same reward. When it is finished, each of them may choose a Rank 6 Sacred Object from my personal collection."

Han Wu's face lit with delight. He clasped his hands and said eagerly, "Allow me to thank you in advance on their behalf, Ms. Su!"

He returned to the dorm with the good news and shared it with the two of them. Qin Shuang was delighted. Although Su Lan belonged to the Darkness faction, her reputation at Imperial College remained untarnished, so Qin Shuang gladly accepted her gift.

Jing Jing refused. "I do not need her pity. I will take what I need."

Jing Jing was still a skeleton, and she had had to earn everything through her own hard work before obtaining her divine realm.

Her rigid, old-fashioned way of thinking, though, would hinder her path to ascension. Han Wu wanted to ease her burdens, which meant finding a way to reshape her mindset.

In the end, he enlisted Qin Shuang to help persuade her. After some effort, Jing Jing finally agreed to travel to another civilization and assist Xu Hai in quelling the riots.

Han Wu soon received the coordinates from Xu Hai, along with three tokens that identified them as his envoys. A letter arrived as well, providing details about the civilization they were about to enter.

It was known as the Armor Civilization. Xu Hai and Su Lan had discovered it back when they were still Gods and conquered it together. Each held a 40% stake, while the remaining 20% went to the native Gods who had been left to oversee the civilization's development. Those natives managed the day-to-day affairs and submitted regular reports to Xu Hai and Su Lan.

Lately, however, profits from the Armor Civilization had dropped sharply. An investigation revealed the cause: rebellion. The native life forms, aided by a foreign civilization, had risen against their Gods, and the unrest had crippled the once-steady flow of earnings.

Although the Armor Civilization accounted for less than 1% of Xu Hai and Su Lan's portfolio, they treated it with utmost seriousness, as their pride was at stake. They had initially planned to send two of their own units to handle the situation when Han Wu sent the message to Xu Hai. Ultimately, the two decided to send Han Wu, turning the assignment into both a solution and a training opportunity for him.

Han Wu relayed the information to Qin Shuang and Jing Jing so they could grasp the basic situation. The three then met at the teleporter of Imperial College. Using the token provided by Xu Hai, they could access the teleporter free of charge and travel to the Armor Civilization.

The teleportation process lasted a full two hours due to the vast distance. When they opened their eyes, they found themselves within the Armor Civilization.

Their arrival immediately drew the attention of the Armor Civilization's Will, or more precisely, it registered the token they carried.

"Welcome, esteemed envoys from the Divine Civilization. I have connected you to God Ban Tu's communication channel so you may speak with him directly."

Once the Will of the Armor Civilization linked them to the other party, a man's voice entered their minds. "Hello? Are you the envoys sent by Xu Hai?"

"Yes, we are. You must be God Ban Tu, the one overseeing the Armor Civilization, correct?"

Ban Tu's voice brimmed with delight at their arrival. "Yes! You can call me Ban Tu. I've already sensed your location and dispatched some warriors to welcome you. Just remain where you are and wait patiently."

Han Wu said, "We will wait here."

Even though they were waiting, boredom crept in, and they decided to test whether they could connect to their divine realms. Normally, attempting such a connection in a foreign civilization would trigger immediate expulsion as the Will of that Civilization would detect the intrusion.

However, they faced no such risk here. As Xu Hai's envoys, the Will of the Armor Civilization would not interfere with their attempts.

They quickly received feedback from their divine realms. Connection was possible, and they could summon units, but the distance between the two civilizations imposed strict limits. They could not summon units freely. Currently, they could connect only once at a time and summon at most one ten-thousandth of their divine realm's forces. Attempting to summon more powerful units would reduce this quota even further.

The restriction did not discourage them. Such limitations were common, much like how an internet connection slows drastically in a remote area. Once the rebellion was quelled and a transponder built, the signal and their summoning capacity would improve.

The trio waited for a while before noticing something unusual nearby. At first, they assumed that the warriors Ban Tu had sent had arrived, but they quickly realized these were enemies.

They were neither Epistians nor members of the Darkness faction. Instead, six towering monsters, each standing around two meters tall with distinct and terrifying appearances, emerged. The moment the creatures spotted Han Wu, they lunged, intent on killing all three.

Even without accessing their divine realms, the trio remained formidable. The Divine Essence coursing through their bodies had already enhanced their strength dramatically.

Han Wu leapt forward, activating Black Dragon King Transformation, and unleashed his dragon breath. All six monsters were engulfed, and three were corroded to death almost instantly. The remaining three either possessed high resistance or had defenses strong enough to withstand the attack.

Jing Jing and Qin Shuang swiftly used their own Skills to finish them off. To their astonishment, the fallen creatures changed form. Their grotesque, monstrous bodies dissipated, revealing humanoid figures beneath.

Han Wu was confused. As he examined the humanoid corpses, new noises drew his attention from the side.

“You dare murder civilians in broad daylight? You three, drop to the ground and don’t move, or we will use force to subdue you!”

Han Wu turned toward the voice and saw three humanoids clad in full armor, each exuding a strikingly heroic presence.

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Chapter 363 - The Tumor called Monster Armor

[1,018 words]

Chapter 363 - The Tumor called Monster Armor

The trio stood in confusion. Judging by the three humanoid armors, the warriors before them were clearly different from the six who had transformed into monsters.

Han Wu opened his mouth to explain, but the warriors assumed he intended to attack. In response, they used their most powerful attacks in an attempt to subdue him.

“Burning Kick!”

“Demon Sealing Slash!”

“Shadowless Punch!”

The strikes landed, but Han Wu remained unscathed. Their force, at most equivalent to a blow from a Heroic life form, could not pierce his defenses.

Shock registered across the warriors’ faces as they realized that their strongest attacks had failed. If these were ineffective, everything else would be equally useless.

“You two, run! I’ll hold him back. We must complete Ban Tu’s mission at all costs!” one shouted, throwing himself in front of Han Wu with the resolve of a selfless hero. He launched a relentless barrage of attacks, but Han Wu shrugged them off effortlessly.

The other two longed to fight but hesitated, unwilling to let their companion’s sacrifice go to waste.

“We will avenge you!” they cried.

They attempted to flee, but in Han Wu’s eyes, they moved far too slowly. Qin Shuang sighed, caught the two, and tied them up. She then dropped them alongside the would-be sacrificial warrior.

Han Wu released his Black Dragon King Transformation and fixed them with a piercing gaze. “Did Ban Tu send you here?”

“*Hmph!* Mere Monster Armors. Don’t think you’ll get any information from us!” one spat defiantly.

Han Wu smiled bitterly, certain that the three before him were likely the warriors Ban Tu had sent to meet them. He drew out the token and held it up. “Do you know who we are?”

One of them recognized the token and glanced at the six corpses with a mix of shock and confusion. “You... You are the envoys! But... if you are the envoys, why did you attack innocent civilians?”

“Civilians? They turned into monsters and attacked us. How could they still be civilians?”

“They turned into monsters? I see now! We are deeply sorry, O Great Envoy. We acted without verifying the truth and attacked blindly. Once we return, we will ask Ban Tu to mete out punishment as he deems fit.”

Han Wu waved them off. He did not care about their punishment. He only wanted to meet Ban Tu and understand what was happening here.

The three warriors led them to Ban Tu’s base. Calling it a base seemed insufficient—it was more accurate to describe it as a city. This was Ban Tu’s home, and his headquarters lay at its center. They entered and finally came face to face with Ban Tu himself.

Ban Tu was a native God of the Armor Civilization. Roughly 1,487 years ago, he had lost to Xu Hai, who was then still a God. To protect the people, Ban Tu had chosen to lead them into surrender.

Xu Hai and Su Lan had accepted his capitulation out of respect for his strength and granted him 20% of the Armor Civilization’s annual profits as compensation. From that day forward, Ban Tu became the manager of the Armor Civilization on behalf of Xu Hai and Su Lan. His role was straightforward: spread their faith, collect the resulting Faith Points, and transfer them through a special channel to the two Gods.

In recent years, however, the situation had changed. A new civilization had emerged, disturbing the peaceful lives within the Armor Civilization.

The Armor Civilization's core system revolved around summoning armor to enhance personal strength. Every life form had a chance to awaken a unique set of armor and become an Armored Warrior, though the odds were slim, roughly 5%. Those who failed to awaken their armor led ordinary lives, while the awakened were dispatched to various cities as peacekeepers. There, they not only honed their abilities but also maintained order.

Life had remained peaceful in the Armor Civilization for 1,487 years until the new civilization invaded. Ban Tu called them the Monster Armor Civilization. There, individuals could transform their bodies into monsters to amplify their strength. The system resembled the Armor Civilization, but a critical difference set it apart.

The Monster Armor Civilization could defy the laws of the Armor Civilization because the chances of awakening a Monster Armor were extraordinarily high—up to 90%.

Those who failed to awaken their own armor yet craved power often defected to the Monster Armor Civilization. However, their expectations rarely matched reality. Once their new powers awakened, they were bound to complete missions assigned by the Monster Armor Civilization, most of which involved sowing chaos and undermining the faith of the Armor Civilization's life forms.

Ban Tu and the strongest members of the Armor Civilization struggled to contain these threats, but new ones emerged constantly. A Monster Armor user at the God rank had even gathered numerous Monster Armor users at the Demigod rank to establish the Monster Armor Association. Ban Tu had no means to counter them.

Han Wu frowned as he absorbed the new information. The situation was far graver than he had imagined. The Monster Armor Civilization had already planted deep roots. Removing them entirely would require both force to suppress their numbers and a strategy to eliminate the believers' faith in the Monster Armor Civilization.

The latter task seemed nearly impossible. Han Wu weighed his options and resolved to first understand the nature of the Monster Armor itself before acting against the Monster Armor Association.

"Ban Tu, do you think we can awaken our armor?" Han Wu asked. "We want to learn more about these powers and see what we are capable of."

Ban Tu nodded. "Of course. Follow me."

He led the three to a plaza dominated by a tall stone column. Even from a distance, Han Wu sensed its unique presence.

“This is the Profound Armor Pillar, a special stone column that helps one awaken their armor,” Ban Tu explained. “Envoys, place your hands on it and follow its guidance. You should be able to awaken your armor that way.”

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[1,177 words]

Chapter 364 - Declaration of War

Han Wu followed Ban Tu’s instructions. He placed his hands on the stone pillar and focused, trying to sense everything around him. A strange energy seeped from the pillar and flowed into his body. He fixed his awareness on the glowing core of that energy and circulated his own in rhythm with its movements. In the next moment, his consciousness shifted into an empty space. In the next instant, a locust appeared without warning and merged with him.

From the side, Qin Shuang and Jing Jing watched as thick black matter oozed from Han Wu’s body, wrapping around him until it hardened into armor.

“It’s done.” Ban Tu clapped his hands. He had witnessed many awakenings, yet each time the process struck him as profound.

Han Wu lowered his hands from the pillar and looked down. The tight, black armor clung to his body and gave him a sharper, more imposing presence. At the same time, information about the armor appeared before his eyes:

[Flying Locust Armor: Organisma (Grade: Yellow); Skills: Hyper Jump, Flight, Black Locust Might]

“Congratulations on awakening your armor,” Ban Tu said.

Han Wu felt raw power coursing through it and turned to him for an explanation.

Ban Tu nodded and spoke slowly. These suits of armor were divided into three categories: Organisma, Potentia, and Elementa. Each had its own distinct strengths.

Organisma armor drew on animal traits. For example, the Tiger Armor granted razor-sharp claws, while the Bull Armor vastly increased physical strength.

Potentia armor bestowed versatile powers. For instance, the Steel Armor hardened the body like iron, while the Rubber Armor allowed the user to stretch and bend at will.

Elementa armor were the most coveted, granting mastery over elemental forces. At their highest grade, users could merge entirely with their element, rendering them immune to physical attacks.

Beyond categories, these suits of armor were ranked by grade: Yellow, Black, Earth, and Heaven. Each upgrade multiplied the armor's strength tenfold or more, though the actual power varied with the individual.

Han Wu absorbed the explanation and gained new insight into his armor. Jing Jing and Qin Shuang, eager to test their own luck, reached out to touch the Profound Armor Pillar. Their exceptional talent allowed both to awaken armor of their own.

Jing Jing received the Skeleton Armor, a Yellow Potentia armor equipped with Bone Bullet, Bone Shield, and Iron Bones.

Qin Shuang awakened the Lightning Armor, a Yellow Elementa armor so rare that even Ban Tu felt a stab of envy. Her armor granted only two Skills, Thunder Sparrow Wave and Heavenly Thunder, but both carried devastating power.

The three now stood armored, yet their Yellow grade remained too low. The path to the Heaven grade still stretched far ahead.

Han Wu asked how they could upgrade their armor, but Ban Tu only replied that they would have to fight in it to discover the method themselves. Each set of armor had its own way of evolving, and the truth usually revealed itself only in real battles.

The trio felt dissatisfied with such a vague answer, yet they kept silent. As outsiders brought in to suppress the rebellion, they preferred not to provoke the man in charge.

Han Wu then requested a map showing the locations of the Monster Armor Association's bases. After receiving it, he left with Qin Shuang and Jing Jing.

Ban Tu watched them go with a vicious smile.

The three companions entered the quarters Ban Tu had prepared. Han Wu spread out the map and studied the bases' locations. The Armor Civilization spanned an enormous territory, but half of it had already fallen to the Monster Armor Civilization. Worse still, many enemy operatives disguised themselves as ordinary civilians, living undetected in cities under Ban Tu's rule.

How many more were hiding in those cities? Han Wu had no time to track them down one by one. His most urgent task was to prevent open rebellion and the outbreak of war, and the only way forward was to dismantle the enemy bases. However, he had only Qin Shuang and Jing Jing at his side. The three of them, powerful as they were, could not hope to destroy so many bases alone. Fortunately, they had their units to summon.

Han Wu quickly devised a plan and chose to strike the nearest base that night. The three waited until darkness fell, then activated their armor and set out for battle. Within ten minutes, they reached the base, where two dog-like monsters stood guard.

The sight almost made Han Wu laugh. He had never imagined they would rely on dogs for security. Suppressing his amusement, he motioned to the others. "Let's move."

They nodded and linked to their divine realms. Qin Shuang summoned her Thunder Sparrows, which soared into the night sky with arcs of lightning flashing across their wings. Jing Jing brought forth a skeleton legion numbering in the hundreds of thousands, led by several Unique Skeleton Knights. Han Wu unleashed the largest force, calling forth nearly 50 million locusts, a swarm that dwarfed his companions' armies.

Everyone in the Monster Armor base noticed the approaching tide of enemies. They froze in shock as countless Thunder Sparrows, skeletons, and locusts appeared at their gates.

The alarm blared, and nearly everyone within the base prepared for war. Warriors summoned their Monster Armor and charged into battle as lightning poured from the skies.

The members of the Monster Armor Association had skin tough enough to withstand direct strikes. Even so, the Thunder Sparrows' lightning left them paralyzed. Fortunately, Han Wu's locusts swept in at the critical moment. At the start of the fight, they dove from the skies and detonated on impact. Each explosion tore open a rift in space where the locust had perished and left jagged cracks that slashed through the battlefield.

The association warriors fought with courage, but most lacked the awareness to avoid the spatial tears. Many fell victim to the invisible blades cutting through the air.

Jing Jing's skeleton army fought just as fiercely. Armed with the Rank 6 Death's Sigh and Forbidden Bone Flute, she had elevated her undead troops into something extraordinary. Circular holes now marked their bones, a transformation caused by the flute's power. These openings allowed them to pull free pieces of their own frames and play them like instruments to release forbidden songs that stirred death aura.

The army advanced like a host of living bone flutes, and their hollow melody echoed across the battlefield with chilling resonance. Death aura gathered around them and wove into black veils that draped their skeletal forms. The shrouds hardened their defenses and made them unnervingly resilient.

The death aura also spread across the base, gnawing at the Life Energy of every living thing it touched. Those who fell to it or who died in combat rose again as skeletal soldiers under the command of her Skeleton Knights.

With Han Wu's locusts tearing open space itself and Jing Jing's death-shrouded army pressing forward, the outcome of the battle was already decided.

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[930 words]

Chapter 365 - Upgrading Armor

The battle was turning in the trio's favor, and victory was within their grasp. The base before them was only the beginning; they planned to strike every remaining base until none remained standing.

As they pictured the flawless outcome of their plan, a monstrous howl tore them from their reverie. They spun toward the sound and saw a chimera-like creature—lion's head, tiger's body, wolf's claws, and eagle's wings—ripping through the horde of locusts with ruthless efficiency.

Unfazed by the locusts or the Thunder Sparrows' attacks, the monster soared on its wings, slaughtering the two units effortlessly. Even the skeletons shrouded in death aura failed to bring it down.

Han Wu focused his senses and confirmed that the creature possessed Demigod-level strength. In its monster form, it rivaled a High Lord life form. It was a fearsome opponent for their forces, but the trio's power surpassed it. Han Wu activated his armor and combined Hyper Jump with Flight to appear directly before the chimera.

The chimera had just mauled a Thunder Sparrow and was feasting on its innards with a brutal appetite. Blood trickled from its jaws as it laughed. "That's only a Yellow Organisma armor. Do you think you're unbeatable?"

Han Wu ignored the mockery and activated Dark Locust Might. His energy coalesced into a single locust, which lunged at the chimera with mandibles agape.

The chimera swatted it aside with a paw and tore it apart effortlessly. The frailty of the Skill only fueled its arrogance. "Your Skills are too weak. Stop embarrassing yourself and die."

With a powerful flap of its wings, the chimera appeared before Han Wu and swung its wolf-like paws to strike. Han Wu twisted his body aside to evade the blow and countered with a punch to its neck.

The strike briefly knocked the chimera unconscious, but as a Demigod, it had multiple ways to recover from such debuffs. Channeling the strength of its Divine Aspect, it quickly dispelled the effects.

Han Wu wasn't going to let it go so easily. While the chimera remained momentarily stunned, he launched a rapid series of punches. Thirty seconds later, the chimera's neck was twisted beyond recognition. Still alive, it faced another attack as Han Wu raised his fist and unleashed Dark Locust Might again. This time, the locust latched onto the chimera's body and gnawed into it relentlessly.

Because it had fainted, the chimera could not stop the locust from devouring it. By the time it realized its body was already riddled with bite marks, it was too late. Han Wu could clearly feel a surge of energy flowing from the flesh that Dark Locust Might consumed. He sensed that if he fed Dark Locust Might five more Demigods, he could upgrade his armor.

"So this is how I can upgrade my armor!" Han Wu exclaimed.

The chimera was in no mood to celebrate his discovery. It endured the pain and tried to claw at him again.

However, Han Wu was significantly stronger than it and twisted his body and dodged the chimera's attack once more. This time, rather than striking its neck, he drove a punch directly into its skull, and it collapsed instantly. Han Wu then used Dark Locust Might to consume the Demigod chimera's body.

Meanwhile, Qin Shuang and Jing Jing had defeated the remaining monsters in the base. Han Wu shared his discovery with them. They attempted to replicate it, but it seemed his method worked only with his Flying Locust Armor. Qin Shuang and Jing Jing would need to discover their own unique paths to level up their armor.

After clearing the base, the three returned to their base. Ban Tu praised them for the remarkable feat of destroying an entire base in such a short time.

Naturally, their success drew the attention and ire of the Monster Armor Association. That day, a leader from another base sent a message, challenging them to a duel with their lives at stake.

If Han Wu refused, the leader threatened to escalate their rebellion, even targeting ordinary civilians to force his compliance. Meanwhile, Han Wu had been contemplating how to find more Demigod monsters to feed his armor when the challenge arrived at his door.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing agreed that Han Wu should accept the duel. They also saw it as an opportunity to learn how to upgrade their armor through combat. With stakes on both sides, the duel moved forward.

The location was set at the boundary between two bases—one belonging to the Armor Civilization, the other to the Monster Armor Civilization. Both sides chose this neutral ground to prevent surprise attacks. If anything went wrong, they could retreat to their respective bases and avoid unnecessary losses.

Rules held little interest for Han Wu. His focus was on battling a Demigod to level up his Flying Locust Armor.

Soon, the time of the duel arrived, and Han Wu stepped into the arena. Sizing up his opponent with his senses, he realized he would be facing a highly experienced Demigod—exactly the challenge he wanted.

The Demigod monster introduced himself with the poise of a gentleman. “I am Fei Si. I invited you three here for one purpose: to defeat you, or be defeated!”

Han Wu nearly laughed at Fei Si’s arrogance. “In that case, I will honor your wish by killing you.”

Fei Si bristled at the remark, which implied he was foolish. Nevertheless, he quickly realized words were irrelevant against an opponent wearing Yellow Organisma armor. What mattered was unleashing his full strength to crush Han Wu.

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Chapter 366 - Caught with a Single Hand

[1,059 words]

Chapter 366 - Caught with a Single Hand

Fei Si stepped forward, and his body swiftly changed as he transformed into a three-headed monster. One head resembled a goat, another a cow, and the third a horse.

Han Wu nearly laughed at the bizarre sight. He could sense Fei Si’s strength in this form, but the monstrous combination was absurdly comical. Fei Si, aware of how ridiculous he looked, seethed with annoyance. The goat head emitted a white beam of light aimed at Han Wu.

Han Wu activated Mighty Jump and narrowly evaded the attack, watching a massive crater form where he had stood. The strike was powerful enough to obliterate Heroic life forms.

Fei Si sneered. “I never imagined an insect like you could move so fast. I’ll savor killing you.”

He shot another beam, which Han Wu dodged effortlessly. This time, Han Wu channeled energy into his fist and used Dark Locust Might. A glowing locust formed from the energy, lunged forward, and tore a chunk of flesh from Fei Si.

Han Wu noted the impressive musculature beneath the wound. To his surprise, the exposed muscle fibers stitched themselves back almost instantly and left no trace of injury.

Fei Si massaged the previously wounded area. He hadn’t dodged the attack to test Han Wu; he simply wanted to gauge it. The strike posed no real threat; he could endure a thousand hits like that without lasting damage.

“Is that all you’ve got? Are you really the one who destroyed the previous base?” Fei Si scoffed. He suspected that the trio were mere scapegoats Ban Tu had planted to confuse them.

Han Wu started swinging his limbs to warm up. It was time to reveal his true strength. He stepped forward and drove a punch with his full weight, a strike delivered without the aid of any Skill.

Demigod Fei Si didn’t even bother to dodge. In his monstrous form, he could withstand strikes that would shatter an Earth armor, and he was confident he could survive an assault from a Heaven armor. He intended to take the hit and strike Han Wu down immediately.

A sudden sound cut through the moment. Han Wu’s fist tore through the air with a force that stunned Fei Si. He tried to dodge, but it was too late.

Han Wu’s fist struck Fei Si squarely on the goat head. The impact was devastating—the goat head shattered, and Fei Si was thrown backward, severely injured.

“You actually hid your strength!” Fei Si howled.

Han Wu ignored him. In the Armor Civilization, an armor’s grade determined its wielder’s strength. In the Divine Civilization, strength had many measures. Even without Skills, Han Wu’s physical body was formidable. If he activated True Demon King Transformation, his power would reach Sage level. No one in the Armor Civilization could have stopped him if he had.

Fei Si seethed at Han Wu’s deception. His goat head remained injured and could not recover for now. Humiliated, he decided to end the duel quickly, so he activated his strongest Skill to strike Han Wu down.

The remaining horse and cow heads emitted low, guttural moans as an array materialized beneath Fei Si. Energy surged through it, enlarging his body from two meters to two-and-a-half meters as his muscles swelled. At the same time, the cow and horse heads twisted into more sinister, bestial forms.

This was Fei Si's ultimate Skill: the Three Beast Howl Array. It could increase his strength tenfold. However, with the goat head injured, the Skill was weakened and boosted his power only fivefold.

Even so, Fei Si now matched the strength of a King life form. The Armor Warriors and monsters gaped in shock. To them, a King life form represented unparalleled power.

On the other hand, Han Wu remained calm. Hundreds of King life forms served under him in his divine realm, each capable of defeating Fei Si with ease.

Fei Si assumed Han Wu was afraid when he saw no reaction to his transformation. "Brat, you've angered me. I will show you true terror."

Fei Si lunged at Han Wu with even greater speed and threw a punch that shattered the sound barrier and seemed strong enough to crack the space around it.

Han Wu lifted a single palm to block the blow.

Fei Si's fist slammed into Han Wu's palm with a thunderous thud. Instead of Han Wu being pushed back, his hand held firm, and Fei Si felt as though he had struck solid iron. Han Wu's palm was an unbreakable wall.

Fei Si murmured in disbelief, "What? How could this be?"

He could not accept that anyone could block his strongest attack with one hand. The realization humiliated him.

Bored, Han Wu seized Fei Si's fist and swung his arm upward. A sickening tearing sound split the air as Fei Si's arm was ripped from his body, blood spraying in all directions.

The defeat was absolute. Both Fei Si and the onlookers recognized it immediately. Han Wu fed the severed arm to Dark Locust Might and slightly enhanced his armor in the process.

Fear replaced Fei Si's fighting spirit. "I've lost... Please... let me go..."

Han Wu crushed Fei Si's remaining two heads with precise strikes. "The loser forfeits their life. Isn't that what you demanded?"

Fei Si was already dead and could no longer hear the words.

Han Wu secured a swift victory in the first match. The two Demigods slated for the following battles fled toward their base. Facing Han Wu meant certain death. Only by retreating now did they cling to a slim chance of survival.

Seeing the monsters retreat, Han Wu gestured to Qin Shuang and Jing Jing. They tapped into their divine realms and summoned their forces once more. Thunder Sparrows, skeletons, and locusts poured from their respective gates, assaulting the enemy base. Today, the trio intended to annihilate it completely.

Ban Tu watched from the rear, his expression unreadable while his heart raced. He had personally witnessed the terrifying might of the Divine Civilization thousands of years ago. Summoning millions, even billions, of units for war was commonplace for them; they could have obliterated the Armor Civilization at will.

Now, seeing the familiar spectacle unfold, Ban Tu felt that same crushing sense of powerlessness. A low grumble escaped his lips. "I am envious of you..."

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[1,253 words]

Chapter 367 - Armor Upgrade

The trio destroyed another base of the Monster Armor Civilization that day. Ban Tu ordered his Armor Warriors to build a bonfire and roast an entire lamb to celebrate their victory.

After the feast, Han Wu summoned Qin Shuang and Jing Jing to leave the base temporarily. He led them to a secluded spot near the city where he and his units had hidden the loot taken from the destroyed Monster Armor Civilization base.

Before them lay a small mountain of treasures: gold, silver, assorted antiques, and numerous Sacred Objects. Though it represented only a fraction of their haul, the pile still contained hundreds of Sacred Objects. Yet Han Wu felt no satisfaction as none surpassed Rank 4, rendering them useless to him.

Beside the treasure lay the corpses of Demigods, carefully transported by his units to enhance his Flying Locust Armor. Han Wu used Dark Locust Might and devoured the corpses. Their flesh was digested and transformed into energy, which coursed directly into his armor.

As the influx of energy surged, he felt change within the Flying Locust Armor. It had reached the threshold and was ready to upgrade. He only needed to permit it.

“Upgrade. Show me your full strength,” he uttered.

The armor responded instantly and waves of energy rippled outward. A black, viscous substance spread over the Flying Locust Armor and wrapped around Han Wu until he was sealed inside a cocoon.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing shielded him and waited.

During that time, Qin Shuang brushed against a Sacred Object infused with lightning, and her armor flared in response. She realized at once that it required lightning-attribute Sacred Objects to evolve. Searching carefully through the pile, she uncovered three Rank 1 Sacred Objects that matched her needs. After absorbing them, she judged that her armor still lacked about 70% of the energy required to advance.

Determined to accelerate the process, she resolved to find more lightning-attribute Sacred Objects. At midnight she entered her divine realm again, summoned her Thunder Sparrows, and ordered them to retrieve lightning-based Sacred Objects from her own stores.

Qin Shuang was already a Demigod, only a single step from becoming a God. Normally, Imperial College would have sent someone of her level to a foreign civilization to cultivate and undergo ascension there, before returning to the Divine Civilization for her formal ascension into a God. This practice granted students an additional Divine Power through a single ascension. While that extra power seemed insignificant now, it would become a valuable advantage once they grew stronger.

She weighed her options and chose a different path. She would ascend in the Armor Civilization rather than risk being dispatched to an unknown foreign civilization. At the very least, she already knew the potential of her armor, and strengthening it further would serve her well. With her decision made, she absorbed all the Sacred Objects her Thunder Sparrows had delivered.

Soon, her armor reached its limit. She triggered the upgrade without hesitation, and a cocoon of lightning engulfed her. It spanned three meters across, far denser and brighter than Han Wu’s cocoon of darkness.

“I need to grow stronger!” Jing Jing was frustrated. The others had already discovered how to upgrade their armor, but she still had no idea where to begin. Determined, she studied their cocoons in detail and searched for clues that could help her upgrade her own.

At dawn, both cocoons split open at once. Han Wu and Qin Shuang opened their eyes, excitement flashing in them as they discovered their armor had advanced to the Black grade. Han Wu’s Yellow Flying Locust Armor had transformed into the Black Locust Armor. He now had four Skills too: Dark Leap, Flight, Dark Devour, and Locust Egg.

Dark Leap replaced Mighty Jump. The height remained unchanged under normal conditions, but if his feet touched a shadow before jumping, the leap became drastically higher.

Flight retained its original function, allowing him to soar on locust wings, though its speed had now improved. Dark Devour replaced Dark Locust Might and granted him the power to summon ten locusts to devour his foes.

Locust Egg was entirely new. It allowed him to implant eggs into his enemies' bodies. The eggs absorbed energy until they swelled and burst forth. This worked on both the living and the dead. An ordinary human body contained enough energy to produce 100 locusts, while those wearing Monster Armor could yield 10,000. A Demigod's body could spawn several million.

With this Skill, Han Wu overcame his greatest limitation—the restriction of summoning only a fixed number of locusts once per day within the Armor Civilization.

Qin Shuang had also upgraded her Lightning Armor to the Black grade. She now had three Skills: Thunder Sparrow Chaos Wave, Heavenly Thunder, and Lightning Instincts.

Thunder Sparrow Chaos Wave let her unleash a greater storm of lightning in the form of Thunder Sparrows arcing through the air, and Heavenly Thunder had grown five times more powerful. As for Lightning Instincts, it was not a new attack but a movement Skill. By channeling electricity through her nerves, she could sharpen her reflexes until they felt like pure instinct. The enhancement compensated for her lack of proficiency in close combat.

Jing Jing eyed their upgraded armor with envy.

Han Wu noticed and reassured her. "Don't worry. I'm sure you'll discover a way to upgrade your armor as long as we keep fighting."

Jing Jing gave a quiet nod.

The three then stored their spoils in their divine realms, sealed the gates for the day, and headed back to Ban Tu's base.

They had just entered the city when noises erupted from the plaza. Stepping forward, they saw Ban Tu being beaten by a stranger, pinned to the ground under the man's boot. The surrounding crowd scolded the attacker but did nothing to stop him.

Using his senses, Han Wu noticed that the man before them was a God. Still, it was baffling how effortlessly he pinned Ban Tu to the ground, pressing his leg against Ban Tu's head.

Han Wu coughed. "Let go of Ban Tu."

All eyes, including the stranger's, turned toward the trio. The man glanced at Han Wu for a single second before shifting his attention to Qin Shuang and Jing Jing.

"My goodness! Such beauties. Envoy, I will trade twenty— No, 200 women for the two of them. Think of the profit you'd gain from this exchange."

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing bristled. They had never imagined anyone daring to tease them so brazenly.

Han Wu sighed. *Well, you've just made a critical mistake by angering them. No saving you now.*

Oblivious, the man stepped over Ban Tu's body and advanced toward Qin Shuang and Jing Jing. "Ladies, tonight I will allow you to serve me and experience the ecstasy you deserve."

The two snapped. They activated their armor and struck, but the man effortlessly blocked their attacks without sustaining any harm. Dense Light Energy radiated from his body and illuminated the entire plaza.

"Ladies, are you embracing me of your own volition? I am Lie Guang, and I will accept your love." Lie Guang reached to pull them into his embrace, but a black arm intercepted him.

"Lie Guang? You are disrespecting me. I will teach you a lesson so you dare not do this again." Han Wu's voice grew fainter with each passing millisecond—not because he spoke more softly, but because Lie Guang was being hurled backward at incredible speed. Han Wu had hit him!

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[1,127 words]

Chapter 368 - Ban Tu's Son

Lie Guang landed heavily on the ground and struggled to steady himself. Shock spread across his face as he looked at Han Wu. Lie Guang wore the Heaven Light Armor and maintained an elemental form that made him immune to physical attacks while granting high resistance to elemental damage.

So how had Han Wu struck him back so forcefully and even managed to injure him? The answer became clear when Lie Guang noticed Han Wu's fist shrouded in Darkness

Energy. The darkness attribute directly countered his own light attribute, allowing Han Wu to bypass his defenses.

“Envoy, it seems I’ve underestimated you. I won’t hold back now,” Lie Guang said and braced himself for a serious fight.

Han Wu’s anger flared. He would have ignored Lie Guang’s rudeness toward himself, but the threat to Qin Shuang and Jing Jing was intolerable.

Just as the two were about to clash, Ban Tu leaped between them and urged, “Could you two just listen for a moment?”

As Ban Tu spoke, the bruise on his face, where Lie Guang had stepped, healed at an astonishing rate. Han Wu paused out of respect for Ban Tu, who had been appointed by Xu Hai to oversee the Armor Civilization. However, Lie Guang refused to show respect. He condensed Light Energy into his fist and lunged at Ban Tu.

In response, Ban Tu’s body quivered, and jagged armor materialized around him—the Heaven Tyranno Armor. Though not as formidable as Lie Guang’s Heaven Light Armor in nullifying physical damage, Ban Tu’s recovery speed was far beyond Lie Guang’s ability to overcome.

Lie Guang’s fist hit the Tyranno Armor and sent sparks flying. Ban Tu stayed motionless like a massive iron wall that blocked Lie Guang from harming Han Wu.

“You old fart! You’re in the way!” Lie Guang shouted and drove more force into his punch.

It was useless. No matter how much strength he poured into his fist, it was still far too weak to breach Ban Tu’s Tyranno Armor.

Han Wu realized Ban Tu was actually stronger than Lie Guang. Yet why had Lie Guang pinned him down earlier?

Ban Tu endured the attack and grumbled, “Lie Guang, enough.”

“No! It’s not over! Taste my Smite!” Lie Guang snapped, too agitated to stop. His strongest Skill flared to life, surrounding him with a blinding white zone as Light Energy coalesced around his body.

Han Wu and the others braced for the attack. Ban Tu grunted and stomped the ground with a force that made the earth quake. The Tyranno Armor amplified the impact and produced a shockwave that their own armor could not withstand. As such, Han Wu had to activate Flight and lift Qin Shuang and Jing Jing into the air, away from the shaking ground.

Lie Guang couldn't fly and toppled to the ground due to the tremor. His Smite was also interrupted due to the lack of energy.

"What? How is this possible? How are you stronger than me?" he exclaimed.

Lie Guang had always believed he was unstoppable ever since his armor had reached the Heaven grade. Except for a few experts from the Monster Armor Civilization, he assumed no one could defeat him—not even the eldest Armor Warrior, his father, Ban Tu!

"Lie Guang, I am disappointed in you." Ban Tu's eyes reflected genuine disapproval before he struck. His palm landed with undeniable force, sending Lie Guang flying across the distance. Though he hadn't aimed to harm him, the blow's sheer power made it impossible to ignore.

Ban Tu then turned to Han Wu. "I deeply apologize, my dear envoys. You've witnessed something embarrassing today. I wasn't by his side while he was growing up, and his behavior clearly suffers for it. Please accept my apologies for his transgressions."

"Oh. So he's your son."

That explained why Ban Tu hadn't struck Lie Guang in retaliation and even allowed him to step on his face. If Han Wu hadn't been present, the situation would have escalated further.

"What did you want to talk to me about before this?" Han Wu asked.

Ban Tu sighed. "Because you've destroyed two of their bases, the Monster Armor Civilization is preparing to strike back. My spies report that they intend to send assassins after the envoys. I wanted to warn you to be careful."

Han Wu smiled lightly. "Assassins? I'll kill any who cross my path."

He wasn't exaggerating. He knew his current strength well enough to be certain that no one in this civilization could stop him. He had held back some of his Skills and powers. Doing so would likely provoke the Monster Armor Civilization to unite and attack him simultaneously.

Han Wu was powerful but couldn't fight nonstop for twenty-four hours. A drawn-out battle of attrition would be his undoing. Moreover, he had only recently arrived and wanted to summon more locusts before launching attacks on all the bases at once.

Ban Tu watched Han Wu's confident demeanor and noticed a flicker of hesitation in his eyes. Han Wu appeared too relaxed, confirming Ban Tu's suspicion that he still had hidden cards. *Then I will wait a little longer. Let's see how long you can last.*

Back in their room, Qin Shuang focused on absorbing lightning-attributed Sacred Objects into her armor and steadily enhanced its power. In contrast, Jing Jing grew restless. As the queen of skeletons, her mind was wired solely for war, and idleness felt unbearable.

Han Wu chuckled, surprised to see her so unsettled. He resolved to help by figuring out how to upgrade her armor. Jing Jing agreed, and the two ventured into the forest near the city. Her armor fell into the Potentia category, and according to Ban Tu, such armor upgraded more effectively when fed high-quality materials.

Jing Jing wore the Bone Armor, renowned for its exceptional durability, so ordinary bones offered little promise for an upgrade. As such, Han Wu turned his attention to ores as many high-quality varieties could serve the purpose.

He soared into the sky and scanned the terrain below. Drawing on his knowledge from Imperial College, he soon spotted an unusual stone: Aquadine. This rare ore could be smelted into ingots of remarkable strength, though most people used it to craft blunt weapons.

Tentatively, Jing Jing touched the ore. It pulsed with a bright glow, and a blue light seeped into her palm, which then tinted a small section of her pinky. The ore shattered into fragments, as if its energy had been fully drained.

Han Wu's eyes lit up with excitement. "Wait, are ores really the key to upgrading your armor?"

Jing Jing studied her finger and noticed how vivid the blue mark was. "Yes. I'm going to need a lot of it."

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Chapter 369 - Upgrading the Bone Armor

[1,053 words]

Chapter 369 - Upgrading the Bone Armor

Back in the city, Han Wu leveraged his position as an envoy to request that Ban Tu gather as many ores as possible.

Ban Tu was puzzled. In the Armor Civilization, armor served both defensive and offensive purposes, so mining ores to forge weapons was generally unnecessary. Only those unable to awaken their armor crafted weapons for personal protection. Still, Ban Tu could not ignore Han Wu's request. Reluctantly, he ordered the Armor Warriors to lead groups of civilians into the nearby mountains and forests to search for ores.

After a day's labor, they amassed a three-meter-high pile of ores at a designated location, consisting of various sizes and types.

Jing Jing examined the collection with delight and immediately attempted to absorb energy from a piece of Yellownite. She held it in her palms for a long moment, but the energy refused to transfer. Doubt crept in—perhaps ores were not the key to upgrading her armor. Yet she clung to her initial instinct, scanning the pile for another Aquadine to absorb.

Within seconds, the energy flowed into her armor. Whereas the first attempt had only turned her pinky blue, now more than half her arm shimmered with the hue. Her deduction had been correct, though she could absorb only Aquadine at this stage. Han Wu observed quietly from the side, intent on understanding why.

Jing Jing continued sifting through the pile for Aquadines to absorb. Before long, her entire armor had taken on the same luminous hue as the Aquadine. As her Bone Armor started to upgrade, countless blue bones erupted from it and weaved into a dense bone cocoon around her.

Six hours later, the cocoon crumbled, and she stepped out. Her Bone Armor had reached the Black grade. The armor's Skills appeared unchanged at first glance, but testing revealed their true power. Even Han Wu was taken aback by the dramatic enhancement.

Bone Bullet, which had once left only a fist-sized crater in a boulder, now carved a basin-sized cavity. Its destructive force had increased tenfold. Bone Shield, previously unable to withstand a single blow from Han Wu, could now block his strikes and even make his fists sting. Iron Bones had evolved into Steel Bones, further strengthening her armor.

After the upgrade, Jing Jing tried to absorb another Aquadine, only to find she could no longer do so. Observing her, Han Wu had a sudden insight. Perhaps her armor could only absorb energy from one type of ore at a time. He reached for the pile's most abundant ore: Violet Bronze. It was softer than most ores but highly resistant to elemental damage.

Jing Jing took the ore from his hand and focused on absorbing its energy. Almost immediately, a cloud of purple gas seeped from the ore and merged with her armor. She looked at him in surprise and silently questioned how he had known she was meant to absorb the Violet Bronze ore.

Han Wu decided to test his theory further. He handed her a Yellownite, but she could not absorb it. An attempt with an Aquadine produced the same result. Finally, he offered her another piece of Violet Bronze, and this time she absorbed it effortlessly into her armor.

“What’s happening?” she asked.

“I think your armor can only absorb one type of ore each time it upgrades,” he explained.

Jing Jing nodded, recognizing the truth in his words. She swiftly absorbed every piece of Violet Bronze in the pile until her armor glowed completely violet. Bones erupted from the armor and encased her once again in a cocoon as it upgraded.

This time, the process took thirty-six hours. When she emerged, she felt significantly more refreshed. Her armor shimmered in shades of blue and violet. It had reached the Earth grade, yet she still retained her three Skills. Bone Bullet and Bone Shield remained unchanged, while Steel Bones had evolved into Violet Blue Bones.

Bone Bullet’s damage had increased and now carried a chance to inflict random elemental effects. The Skill dealt both physical and magical damage. Bone Shield shimmered with violet and blue light, its surface extraordinarily tough and highly resistant to elemental attacks. Her Violet Blue Bones completed the upgrade, surpassing Steel Bones. Like her Bone Shield, it granted exceptional resistance to both physical and magical damage.

Considering her armor’s new Skills and effects, Han Wu contemplated which ore to absorb for the final upgrade to maximize the Bone Armor’s power.

At that moment, a cheer echoed from their room. Qin Shuang was celebrating her upgrade. To accelerate the process, she had secluded herself inside, absorbing as many lightning-attribute Sacred Objects as possible.

Now her armor had finally reached the Heaven grade. Upon activation, she could transform her body into pure lightning and render herself immune to physical attacks. She deliberately demonstrated the Skill to the two observers, ensuring they understood its full power.

Han Wu struck with his fist imbued with the darkness attribute, only to find it passed through her electrical body without resistance. Simultaneously, a surge of electricity shot up his wrist and coursed through his body, paralyzing him and slowing his movements. He quickly stepped back to avoid further harm.

Han Wu finally understood the true strength of Elementa armor. They were not only immune to physical damage but could also channel their elemental power to harm enemies simultaneously.

The Lightning Armor, however, had clear weaknesses. It was vulnerable to water, excelled against metal, and proved ineffective against objects insulated against electricity. Still, none of that stopped her from growing exponentially stronger while wearing it.

Han Wu also realized she could hold her own against him with her Heaven Lightning Armor, provided he refrained from using his Divine Authority. He felt a spark of pride for her when a faint sound came from the roof. One sound at first, then several more followed.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing heard it too, but they did not want to alarm their *visitors*. They preferred to wait, letting them approach so they could see what would happen next. Even though Han Wu did not look directly at the intruders, he tracked them carefully using his heightened senses.

“I’ll head out first,” Han Wu called out deliberately. He wanted to draw them out and gauge what they planned.

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[1,130 words]

Chapter 370 - Assassins

The intruders froze at Han Wu’s words and scrambled to find a spot to strike him down immediately. They had not expected the three of them to locate their position so quickly.

Han Wu left the area and sensed the assassins trailing him. He realized they were targeting him and recalled Ban Tu’s warning that the Monster Armor Association had sent them. Undoubtedly, they were the ones on his tail now.

Han Wu chuckled. *Good. I was still figuring out how to gather the materials to upgrade my armor.*

To minimize attention, he deliberately veered into the woods. Towering ancient trees loomed overhead, and the area was rarely visited—an ideal place for an ambush.

Once they confirmed the area was empty, the assassins revealed themselves.

“Boss, do you think he’s an idiot, running into the forest alone? He saved us a lot of time and effort,” one assassin mocked Han Wu’s supposed recklessness.

Their leader remained silent. His face was hidden behind a mask, leaving his thoughts unreadable.

Han Wu counted the attackers: eight in total, seven Demigods and their leader, a God. After spending a few days in the Armor Civilization, he had confirmed that most of the native Gods had already upgraded their armor to the Heaven grade. Since these assassins came from the Monster Armor Association, they almost certainly possessed Heaven Monster Armor as well. Defeating them would not be easy.

That didn't mean he had no chance. He could overpower them with one of his stronger Skills, such as the True Demon King Transformation. However, that was his trump card, and using it now would shake the balance within the Armor Civilization. If his enemies discovered it and devised a countermeasure, things would become far more difficult the next time they clashed.

Unaware of his thoughts, the assassins transformed into monsters and lunged to kill him. Only their leader held back, watching.

Each transformation was distinct. One became a wolf with jagged fangs that ran on all fours. Another turned into a goat with a single horn capable of unleashing a devastating charge. A third grew into a hulking bear with golden claws that looked indestructible. Even a mutant appeared, sprouting two heads and eight legs.

Han Wu showed no fear at their twisted forms as he summoned the Black Dark Locust Armor. It molded to his frame with perfect precision. Though unadorned, it radiated raw, concentrated power.

"Attack!" the wolf roared, and the six other monsters lunged in unison.

Han Wu leapt high to slip past their encirclement and summoned ten locusts wrought from Dark Energy to attack the Demigod assassins.

They shrugged off their attacks and countered with a barrage of Skills. Han Wu drew on his mastery of melee combat to block every strike and seized openings to retaliate and leave them wounded.

Meanwhile, the summoned locusts tore into flesh with relentless hunger. Their darkness-infused mandibles corroded flesh and left gaping wounds with every bite. Once they had broken through, the locusts burrowed inside and devoured their prey from within.

At first, the seven assassins were too focused on fighting Han Wu to notice what was happening. Only when the locusts burrowed deeper into their bodies did they begin to realize the danger.

They examined their wounds and saw gaping holes where the locusts had bitten into them. Desperate, they tried to revert to their humanoid forms to expel the creatures and crush them, but Han Wu refused to give them the chance.

The balance of power had changed. The seven assassins, once trying to wear Han Wu down, now struggled to defend themselves. As the battle dragged on, they weakened rapidly. They had to dodge Han Wu's attacks while preventing the locusts from devouring them from within. Their injuries were too severe to heal naturally. At this rate, they would not survive.

"Boss, help us!" one shouted, desperate for their leader's intervention.

Only then did the leader notice the peril his subordinates faced. Pride had long kept him from lowering himself to fight alongside his seven Demigod underlings against Han Wu, but the mission outweighed his ego. He had no choice but to step in and transform.

As a God, he possessed a Heaven Monster Armor known as Blood Panther, whose domain could siphon the blood of enemies to replenish its wearer. With his aid, the seven Demigod assassins managed to retreat and revert to human form, extracting the locusts from their bodies. Meanwhile, Han Wu faced the leader alone.

They were evenly matched in physical strength, but Han Wu's Black armor lagged two tiers behind the leader's. In just a few strikes, the leader sliced open Han Wu's arm, and fresh blood sprayed outward.

The leader absorbed the blood and converted it into energy that fueled his attacks. He struck faster and harder. "Your blood is delicious!"

Han Wu found himself cornered and resolved to use his trump card to kill the leader. Suddenly, a beam of light streaked across the battlefield, heralding the arrival of an unexpected intruder. Han Wu turned to see Ban Tu's son, Lie Guang. He had never expected him to return after Ban Tu had sent him flying.

"You monsters from the Monster Armor Association! I'll show you my true strength!" Lie Guang shouted.

Condensing Light Energy into his fist, he shaped it into a spear and drove it straight into a Demigod assassin.

The assassin had no time to react and was impaled instantly. The remaining Demigod assassins raised their guards. They recognized Lie Guang in his Light Armor and knew the extent of his power.

The leader frowned. Han Wu was already a formidable target, and now Lie Guang stood beside him. Even if he succeeded in the assassination, the cost would be severe. After

a moment's calculation, the leader ordered a retreat. He could not risk the lives of his loyal underlings after so many years of service.

Lie Guang wasn't going to let them escape. "You won't get away today!"

An array of brilliant light erupted beneath his feet and spread to encompass the entire area. This was Smite, a Skill he had once attempted to use before Ban Tu had interrupted him.

The assassins were trapped behind the radiant barrier. The leader, lacking Ban Tu's raw strength, could not make the ground quake to disrupt it.

Their only choice was to endure the onslaught. It was do or die. Han Wu was stunned to realize he too was caught within the array, despite his status as envoy. He had never anticipated that Lie Guang would target him as well.

"Die in the glorious light!" Lie Guang laughed maniacally as torrents of brilliant Light Energy rained down across the battlefield. Every corner was engulfed, and no one managed to escape.

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[1,078 words]

Chapter 371 - Compact Dirt

The array dissolved along with the blinding white light. Everything within it had been consecrated. Only three figures remained standing: Lie Guang, Han Wu, and the assassin leader.

The leader, a God like Lie Guang, had known he could not withstand the force of Smite. In a desperate gambit, he found a way to endure it. He sacrificed his six underlings, draining their blood to empower himself. Their deaths weighed on him, but the infusion allowed him to survive Smite, though his heart throbbed with guilt and pain.

Meanwhile, Han Wu had relied on Black Dragon King Transformation to resist the attack. The Skill had fortified his body against elemental damage, and combined with the Dark Energy from his Dark Locust Armor, he endured Smite without faltering.

Lie Guang was visibly drained. Smite was his most powerful Skill and had sapped every ounce of his energy and stamina. His armor dissipated, leaving him exposed in his human form before Han Wu and the leader.

The leader was badly injured but far from as weak as Lie Guang.

“*Hehe*, I am the victor!” he gloated, changed into his Blood Panther form, and slowly advanced toward Lie Guang. He intended to kill him first to prevent any more mishaps.

Lie Guang tried to run but he couldn't. He was utterly powerless, a man stripped of all defense. Desperation filled his gaze as he looked to Han Wu and silently pleaded for salvation.

Han Wu turned his head, pretending not to see him. *Bullshit. You tried to kill me with Smite too.*

Lie Guang's panic escalated. “Envoy, I am a God of the Armor Civilization! You must save me!”

Han Wu remained indifferent, acting deaf. Lie Guang's voice grew frantic. “My father is Ban Tu! You have to help me for his sake!”

Han Wu yawned, unshaken.

The leader loomed over Lie Guang. With a swipe of his massive paw, he growled, “Stop wasting your breath and die!”

Lie Guang closed his eyes in despair, and memories of his life flashed before him. He remembered being raised solely by his mother, only to lose her to illness before he could awaken his armor. Later, he awakened his Light Armor and joined Ban Tu's team. As he grew stronger, he accidentally discovered that Ban Tu was his father.

Ban Tu had fathered him during a drunken affair and abandoned both him and his mother. That betrayal turned his respect into burning hatred. He swore he would grow strong enough to avenge his mother's death and defeat Ban Tu.

Memories raced through his mind, yet the killing blow had not come. He opened his eyes in disbelief. Two beautiful figures restrained the leader on either side.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing had arrived. Jing Jing pinned the leader to prevent him from moving while Qin Shuang unleashed a continuous surge of electricity to paralyze him. Han Wu strolled casually forward and formed a locust with Dark Devour, which tore into the leader.

Soon, the locust reduced the leader to nothing, bones and all. Han Wu absorbed the released energy and reached the threshold to upgrade his armor once more. Black matter seeped from the armor and enveloped him in a dark cocoon. Qin Shuang and Jing Jing stood vigil beside it.

Lie Guang exhaled in relief. He had survived. Free from immediate danger, his gaze lingered on Jing Jing and Qin Shuang, and desire stirred within him.

Han Wu was occupied with his upgrade, and Ban Tu was absent. Lie Guang assumed this was his opportunity.

“Envoys, I don’t have much strength left. Could you carry me back to base?” he said, feigning weakness to earn their pity.

Unfortunately, he had chosen the wrong tactic. Jing Jing and Qin Shuang were not easily swayed. Seeing that Lie Guang was still being obnoxious, Jing Jing fired a Bone Bullet at the ground just in front of him. With her armor upgraded to the Earth grade, her Bone Bullet now had the power to blast a massive crater.

Lie Guang, still too weak to resist, tumbled into the crater and couldn’t crawl out. He shouted for help, hoping the two would pull him up, but they ignored him and waited by Han Wu’s side for his armor upgrade to finish. Left with no other option, Lie Guang had to rest in the crater and wait for his energy to recover. He swore aloud that he would make the two girls beg for mercy once he regained his strength.

Jing Jing, a bloodthirsty skeleton by nature, quickly lost patience. She began firing Bone Bullets around the crater, sending dirt flying into the air before it rained down into the hole. She didn’t stop until the crater, with Lie Guang trapped inside, was completely filled. She had buried him alive.

Lie Guang was strong enough to survive being buried for some time, but without light deep underground, his energy couldn’t recover quickly.

After he was entombed, silence finally settled over the area.

Han Wu’s black cocoon cracked open twenty-four hours later. He emerged, and his eyes lit up with happiness as he looked at the two girls.

Qin Shuang was the first to congratulate him. “Han Wu, congratulations on upgrading your armor to the Earth grade.”

Jing Jing’s expression tightened with jealousy. She had wanted to be first, but Qin Shuang had beaten her to it.

Han Wu smiled warmly. “Thank you both for protecting me.”

With his armor upgraded, his strength had grown again. He was certain he would no longer feel powerless like the last time Lie Guang had used Smite. Still, to become fully immune to Lie Guang’s Smite and other high-level Skills, he would need to upgrade his armor to the Heaven grade as soon as possible.

As he spoke, his eyes wandered, and he noticed a strange mound. Confusion flickered across his face—he didn't remember it being there before.

Qin Shuang chuckled. "Stop staring. We buried Lie Guang down there."

Jing Jing nodded. "He got a little too impudent with me."

Han Wu frowned, stepped toward the mound, and opened the gate to his divine realm. He summoned his locusts and instructed one in particular to fetch a shovel from his realm.

Qin Shuang blinked, puzzled. "Han Wu, what are you doing? Are you digging that bastard up?"

Han Wu shook his head and offered a calm, confident answer. "No, I'm just making sure the dirt is properly compacted."

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Chapter 372 - We Fear No War

[985 words]

Chapter 372 - We Fear No War

Back at their base, the trio discussed how to best eradicate the remaining bases of the Monster Armor Association. The poor connection meant they would need more time to summon additional units if they hoped to wage a large-scale war. Each day, they drew more units from their divine realms, gathering them just outside Ban Tu's city.

As time passed, every Armor Warrior and civilian came to revere the trio as gods. Only beings with divine power could summon such vast armies for war.

Ban Tu could not help but feel envy and longing whenever he watched the trio draw their forces from the divine realm. The power of the Divine Civilization far surpassed anything the Armor Civilization could hope to match. He harbored a secret wish: if he died, he hoped to reincarnate within the Divine Civilization.

Five days later, Lie Guang returned to the base. He never spoke of being buried alive by Jing Jing, yet his glances at Han Wu burned with hatred. He had heard Han Wu patting down the soil above him during his burial. When he tried to claw his way out, he

found the earth compacted into a near-stone layer. He held no doubt that Han Wu had done it intentionally, and he swore revenge.

Han Wu paid no attention to Lie Guang. He was fully occupied with amassing an army and researching the Profound Armor Pillar. The pillar emitted a strange energy that awakened people's armor. Having personally witnessed the armor's immense power, Han Wu aimed to harness that strength for his own divine realm.

Jing Jing and Qin Shuang shared his ambition. The trio grew excited at the thought of outfitting their units in such armor.

Day and night, they devoted themselves to researching the Profound Armor Pillar. They scraped off shavings to send back to their divine realms for analysis, attempted to communicate with the pillar, and even tried to replicate the energy it emitted. They applied everything they had learned at Imperial College, yet the results remained negligible.

Han Wu went further, scouring the ruins of destroyed bases and cities in search of other Profound Armor Pillars, hoping to bring one back to his realm.

Unfortunately, every attempt failed. The Profound Armor Pillar lost its potency outside the Armor Civilization. Once transported to his divine realm, it became an ordinary pillar, devoid of any trace of its previous power.

Han Wu felt the urge to give up, but each vision of armored units rekindled his determination. He poured hours into research, chasing any clue that could unravel the pillar's mystery.

Even after five days, the trio continued their investigation. Meanwhile, the Monster Armor Association grew restless. Their spies in Ban Tu's base reported back that the trio had raised an army of several hundred million in just ten days.

The sheer scale of this army stunned everyone in the association, especially the weaker bases. Those outposts numbered only 700 to 800 men. Even with their Monster Armor, they stood no chance against an army of 100 million—a force capable of overwhelming an entire base if each soldier so much as spat in its direction.

The association's leadership convened an emergency meeting and resolved to strike immediately. They decided the strongest of the eight Gods would take on the task of eliminating the trio, while all those who had awakened their Monster Armor would join the battle.

The mightiest among them, Ji Long, ranked second only to the association's mysterious leader. His strength was legendary. Ji Long had already been a God before awakening his Monster Armor.

Previously, he had awakened a Potentia armor called Silk Armor, which had been weak in both defense and offense. Despite his efforts to upgrade it to the Heaven grade, its power had remained unimpressive and earned him the derisive title of “Disgrace of Heaven Armor” from other bases. Their scorn only fueled his growing hatred.

Once transformed, he became the fearsome ancient monster Ultrasaurus—a colossal 1,000-meter-tall creature capable of unleashing catastrophic breath attacks and obliterating anything in its path. This newfound might elevated him to the second-strongest God, freeing him from the shadow of his peers.

Many other Demigods and Gods had come into contact with the Monster Armor Association through him and awakened their own Monster Armor. This time, Ji Long would be the one to kill the trio, proof that they had become a true threat.

“Everyone, we have decided to fight against those who once looked down on us!”

Most of Ji Long’s followers had been ordinary civilians who failed to awaken their armor in the past and turned to the Monster Armor Association for power. Now, they rallied beneath his banner with fiery conviction. Many shouted for an assault on Ban Tu’s base, eager to drag the trio out and slaughter them.

Ji Long, pleased with their fervor, began laying out his strategy. “Everyone, here is our plan...”

News of the Monster Armor Association’s attack reached Ban Tu through his own spies. Though he appeared uneasy, he felt no real alarm. With the trio by his side, the association stood no chance, even if they multiplied their numbers tenfold.

Nonetheless, Ban Tu remained pragmatic. If defeat somehow came, he could always hand the trio over. Contrary to what many believed, he was far shrewder than his reputation suggested. Even so, he wasted no time in informing the trio of what awaited them.

Ban Tu entered their quarters and revealed everything plainly. He emphasized again and again that the Monster Armor Association’s forces were coming for them, and that they must intercept them outside the city to spare innocent lives.

The trio understood his motives and affirmed that they could hold off the entire Association by themselves. After all, those of the Divine Civilization had never feared war.

“Let them come. We fear no war,” they declared in unison.

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[995 words]

Chapter 373 - Soul Cage

The Monster Armor Association advanced swiftly and reached the outskirts of Ban Tu's city within two days. The sheer size of their force made concealment impossible, and they were detected almost at once.

Ji Long felt no concern. He had no interest in secrecy—he wanted the enemy to see his army and watch as it crushed the so-called Gods.

Han Wu's swarm of 600 million locusts blanketed the surrounding land, tracking every movement with ease. What puzzled him was the enemy's brazenness. They made no effort to conceal themselves. Was their commander simply arrogant, or was some deeper scheme at play behind their reckless display?

Regardless, Han Wu issued the order to strike. The 600 million locusts surged forward, joined by several million Thunder Sparrows and tens of millions of skeletons. To the Monster Armor Civilization and the Divine Civilization alike, this clash amounted to nothing more than a minor war.

Both sides fought fiercely. The warriors of the Monster Armor Association cut down enemies by the thousands before they fell, but sheer numbers crushed them. Their original force of 100,000 was halved in short order, reduced to 50,000 survivors.

The trio also paid a price. Han Wu lost 400 million locusts, leaving only 200 million. Qin Shuang's Thunder Sparrows suffered the fewest losses—just 4,000, felled mostly by boulders hurled into the sky. Jing Jing, however, emerged stronger. Her skeletal horde swelled as fallen soldiers rose to join her ranks. From her original tens of millions, she gained an additional 50,000 skeletons by the battle's end.

The Monster Armor Association finally recognized the strength of the three envoys.

Ji Long felt a sharp dissatisfaction as he studied the numbers. His men should have outperformed them and taken more lives, yet the chance to prove it had already slipped away. They had been repelled, and now he had no choice but to put his own plan into motion.

That night, Ji Long stepped onto the battlefield alone. He found an empty space, equipped a luxurious brocade, and started to dance. The brocade was none other than his Silk Armor, and the Skill it unlocked at Heaven grade was the Tribute Dance—a ritual that drew the souls of the dead toward him. He could manipulate these souls, weaving them into silk strands capable of wounding the living.

As he danced, more souls converged around him, mostly those of fallen locusts. With careful control, he spun them into delicate strands of silk, then wove them together to form a massive birdcage encircling Ban Tu's city.

His design was cruelly elegant: the souls of the fallen would form the threads of the cage, entrap the entire city, and assault every soul within simultaneously.

Once the cage took shape, it began to contract slowly. They passed through inanimate objects without resistance but shredded anything with a soul. Livestock along the city's edges perished as their souls were torn apart.

Han Wu's locusts detected the immediate threat and reported back at once. Han Wu summoned Qin Shuang and Jing Jing to the city's edge, where they saw threads made of souls slowly slicing into the city. Beyond them lay dead livestock, their souls violently eviscerated.

Anger flared within Han Wu. The Monster Armor Association intended to slaughter everyone in the city, including innocents and Armor Warriors alike.

The trio could easily escape the cage using their God-tier strength, but their units could not. The threads were so dense that even Han Wu's smallest locust could not break free.

"We have no choice but to destroy it ourselves," Han Wu said.

Jing Jing shook her head. "I have a better plan."

Han Wu raised an eyebrow. "You do? How do you propose stopping this?"

"My god, have you forgotten what race I am?" she asked.

"The skeleton race—or rather, the Crystal Skeletons. How does that help you dismantle the threads?"

Jing Jing sighed. "Skeletons can absorb souls."

Han Wu smacked his forehead. He had indeed forgotten this. Skeletons could devour souls, drawing energy from the spiritual flames in their skulls and eye sockets. If they absorbed all the souls from the threads, they could dismantle the cage.

"What are you waiting for? Let's tear it apart immediately," Han Wu urged.

Jing Jing exhaled. "Very well. Let's begin."

Using her authority as a God of the Divine Civilization, she ordered her skeletons to absorb the souls drifting through the threads. They marched in unison to the city's edge and devoured the free souls. With their help, the Soul Cage collapsed in moments.

Sensing its destruction, Ji Long froze mid-dance, and his fury boiled over. He ripped off his brocade, hurled it to the ground, and crushed it underfoot. He had hoped the Soul Cage woven into his Silk Armor would finally achieve something, yet he had never imagined Han Wu commanded a race capable of consuming souls. He spat curses, blaming his misfortune for meeting a perfect counter to his power.

Even so, surrender never crossed his mind. With the Soul Cage undone, he resolved to shift tactics. He would strike hard and sow panic. Though many of his soldiers had fallen during the day, half remained—still outnumbering Ban Tu's forces. He rallied them with a roar and drove them into a frenzied charge.

The battlefield erupted into chaos. The trio rallied their troops to resist. Ji Long's gaze locked on Han Wu, and with a furious roar he transformed. His body stretched and swelled until he stood as a 1,000-meter Ultrasaurus. Dark Energy coiled in his massive jaws before he unleashed it in a searing blast aimed straight at Han Wu.

The latter did not flinch and revealed his true power. "True Demon King Transformation!"

His body expanded in an instant until he loomed as tall as Ji Long. Ban Tu rushed out from his base, and his eyes widened at the sight of Han Wu's majestic Demon King form.

"Oh shit. Ji Long is dead," he muttered.

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[1,125 words]

Chapter 374 - Upgrading Armor Again

Han Wu drew power into his Swordwind Arms and conjured a colossal blade of wind that cleaved toward Ji Long's sphere of death.

"True Demon King Steelcutter!"

The strike carried overwhelming force. It sliced through the death sphere with ease and split Ji Long in half. Black blood erupted from the massive wound, raining down and drenching the ground until the battlefield became a sea of gore.

The surviving members of the Monster Armor Association froze in shock before panic drove them to flee. Any thought of resistance vanished.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing seized the moment. Wreathed in her Lightning Armor, Qin Shuang transformed into living lightning, overtook the retreating enemies, and struck them down. Their weapons and attacks only backfired, unable to pierce the Heaven Lightning Armor, leaving them wounded by their own efforts.

Jing Jing joined the slaughter, using her Bone Armor to fire a relentless barrage of bone bullets that tore the fleeing enemies to pieces. The mangled corpses rose again as skeletons and spread chaos and terror across the battlefield.

Within moments, every member of the Monster Armor Association lay dead, their blood soaking the ground until the field ran red.

Ban Tu and his men stood on the hilltop and stared in shock at the one-sided massacre below. None of them had imagined the envoys would be so powerful. Without needing anyone's help, the trio had annihilated the invading army with staggering speed.

A shadow fell over Ban Tu as he witnessed Han Wu's True Demon King Transformation. He was certain the Monster Armor Association had finally met its match. What surprised him even more was the strength of Jing Jing and Qin Shuang, who effortlessly eliminated the remaining soldiers. He also noted that Qin Shuang's armor had already reached the Heaven grade.

Ban Tu's confidence wavered. He possessed the Tyrannosaur Armor, but it had taken him decades to elevate it to the Heaven grade. Qin Shuang had achieved the same level in less than half a month. It defied all logic.

He also observed that Han Wu's and Jing Jing's armor had reached the Earth grade—an achievement that had required his own Armor Warriors more than ten years to accomplish. The trio had shattered his expectations and experience in an instant.

Is this the strength of those from the Divine Civilization? How can they be this powerful? Ban Tu inwardly grumbled, his eyes flashing red with envy and anger.

No one around him noticed the change.

There was one more person in the city who truly feared the trio's power: Lie Guang. He had witnessed how they had annihilated the Monster Armor Association's massive army.

A shiver ran down his spine as he remembered flirting with Jing Jing and Qin Shuang. It felt like he had been leaping repeatedly through the gates of the afterlife. He could have died countless times if they had grown angry. All it would take was for Han Wu to lose his temper and use True Demon King Transformation—one slap could flatten him.

“They are terrifying. I can’t stay here any longer, or they’ll take revenge. I have to leave now!” Lie Guang bolted into the darkness, slipping through the city’s outskirts and vanishing into the wilderness.

The trio failed to notice Lie Guang’s escape, and even if they had, they would have paid him no mind. To them, he was nothing more than a small, insignificant brat.

After the war ended, Han Wu remained on the battlefield and reverted to his original form. He summoned his armor and activated his Skills to consume the corpses littering the field. This was his long-awaited opportunity to gather energy to upgrade his armor, and he would not waste it. With each corpse he devoured, the energy flowing back into his armor intensified.

It was only after he finished consuming the 1,000-meter-tall corpse of the Ultrasaurus that he had accumulated enough energy for an upgrade. He did not even have the chance to decide whether to proceed. Black ooze erupted from the gaps in his armor and enveloped him in a five-meter-diameter cocoon. His armor was evolving directly on the battlefield.

Everyone could sense the energy within the cocoon, so dense it could almost solidify. This energy was the key to elevating Han Wu’s armor to the Heaven grade. Qin Shuang and Jing Jing exchanged determined glances and positioned themselves to guard the cocoon. They were committed to ensuring the upgrade succeeded.

Ban Tu recognized a prime opportunity. If anyone interrupted the process now and prevented Han Wu from upgrading his armor, it was highly likely the armor would remain stuck at the Earth grade.

A single failure would doom all future attempts, no matter how many times they tried. Experiencing that failure even once would be like falling into a nightmare from which they could never awaken.

However, Qin Shuang and Jing Jing were notoriously difficult opponents. How could he stop them from protecting Han Wu? Ban Tu racked his brain and finally found a solution. He returned to his room, wrote a message, and sent it off via messenger pigeon. Then he put on a facade of cheer to congratulate the envoys on their victory over Ji Long.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing remained cautious, allowing no one near the black cocoon. Ban Tu had no choice but to order his men back to the base. Once they were gone, he approached the two again, offered further congratulations, and praised Han Wu as their hero for defeating Ji Long.

No matter how much he flattered them, Qin Shuang and Jing Jing refused to let him advance any closer to the cocoon. With Qin Shuang clad in her Heaven Lightning Armor, Ban Tu could do nothing but retreat for the time being.

Three days passed, and Han Wu's cocoon remained motionless. The two grew anxious, unsure if such a long delay was normal. After all, Qin Shuang had never taken that long to upgrade her armor to Heaven grade. Yet they knew how compatible Han Wu was with the Dark Locust Armor. Even if the upgrade failed, the cocoon would have reacted instead of remaining so stable.

What if he's experiencing some extremely negative mental changes? they wondered.

In truth, Han Wu was in a trance not unlike that. In this state, the spirit of his armor had entered his mind, darting about with excitement. As long as he fused with the armor's spirit, he would complete his upgrade and awaken his Heaven armor.

Yet his process differed slightly from the norm. When the spirit of his armor entered his mind, it split in two: one remained in its dark locust form, while the other transformed into a black dragon.

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- Chapter 375 - Replicating the Profound Armor Pillar

Chapter 375 - Replicating the Profound Armor Pillar

[1,079 words]

Chapter 375 - Replicating the Profound Armor Pillar

In terms of lineage and strength, the dark locust was clearly inferior to the black dragon. Han Wu's gaze landed on the black dragon, and understanding dawned. The dark locust was a spiritual manifestation of his armor, while the black dragon represented the bloodline coursing through his body.

As a being from the Divine Civilization, the black dragon had endured as a Skill called the Black Dragon King Transformation, analogous to the armors of the Armor Civilization. Still, why did it appear now, when he was supposed to be upgrading his armor?

He searched for the connection between the two before the answer revealed itself: Dark Energy. The black dragon had risen as a tyrant by harnessing Dark Energy and had become a king, while the dark locust was composed entirely of it. The dense Dark Energy radiating from the cocoon had caused the Black Dragon King Transformation to manifest as a spirit and enter his mind.

This was a natural way for Skills to merge. Many had tried to replicate it, but Han Wu had unwittingly triggered one of the necessary conditions.

Han Wu ordered the two to absorb the energy within the cocoon. Even with the black dragon added, the energy gained from devouring the corpses soon ran out, and the two manifestations had still not merged. Determined to accelerate the process, he used Merge on them.

As expected of a Divine Power of the Exclusive rank, the two merged and gave birth to a new life form: the Dragon Locust. It inherited the insatiable hunger of the dark locust and the untamed might of the black dragon.

By merging the two manifestations into one, his armor underwent a radical transformation. He emerged from his cocoon clad in the new armor. Dense black dragon scales covered his body, granting formidable defense. Four wings sprouted from his back that allowed him to fly, and he now possessed an entirely new set of Skills. He quickly inspected his armor.

[Dragon Locust Armor. Organisma (Grade: Heaven); Skills: Shadow Shift, Flight, Dragon Locust Devour, Black Dragon Killing Array, Dragon Locust Meteoric Strike]

Shadow Shift allowed him to meld into the shadows and move with lightning speed. Flight remained, but he could now soar faster than before. Dragon Locust Devour summoned hundreds of smaller Dragon Locusts to consume his enemies and convert the digested matter into energy for his armor. Black Dragon Killing Array unleashed devastating area-of-effect damage, while Dragon Locust Meteoric Strike delivered a single, crushing blow to a target.

Han Wu was thoroughly pleased with his new armor.

While he had been busy upgrading his armor, Ban Tu's messenger pigeon had already reached the Monster Armor Association. When the message was opened, shock rippled through the room: Ji Long had been killed.

Ji Long, the strongest of the association's eight Gods, had clawed his way to the top and earned his title through sheer effort. Yet he had fallen to a single strike from Han Wu. Their sighs mingled with fear as they faced both the magnitude of their loss and the formidable power of the trio.

After some deliberation, they began plotting how to kill Han Wu from the shadows. They reasoned that although Han Wu could kill Ji Long in one blow, the use of that Skill must have exacted a terrible toll.

Their plan, based on this assumption, was to send waves of fighters against him in a war of attrition and gradually drain his strength. By forcing Han Wu to reserve his

powerful Skills for only certain enemies, the others could strike while those Skills were on cooldown.

They believed the plan could work, but no one dared take the lead. The message was passed around, but no one volunteered. Each feared the consequences of facing Han Wu's devastating attack. Ji Long had been unable to survive it; they stood little chance. And even if they survived, what could they do against Han Wu's thousand-meter-tall frame?

To them, Han Wu was an enemy they had to defeat at all costs. Meanwhile, news of Han Wu upgrading his armor to the Heaven grade spread through Ban Tu's bases like wildfire. His fame soared, and many Gods sought to marry their daughters to him in hopes that he would protect them from the Monster Armor Association in the future.

Han Wu avoided them like the plague. He was not here to choose a wife but to quell the rebellion. After upgrading his armor to the Heaven grade, he thought of another way to set the Profound Armor Pillar in his divine realm.

Over the next several days, he summoned his army repeatedly while studying the Profound Armor Pillar. After enduring countless grueling experiments, he finally discovered a tiny clue. One day, he brought a replica of the pillar to Jing Jing and Qin Shuang.

Their eyes lit up with excitement. and they exclaimed, "Did you do it?"

Han Wu nodded at first, then shook his head. "I succeeded, but it's not complete. The success rate for unlocking armor in my units is slightly lower than with the original."

Confused, they decided to test it. Han Wu placed the replica on the ground.

Qin Shuang instructed her units to interact with it. The first Thunder Sparrow lingered over the pillar for more than half a day without awakening its armor. She then had more units try, but only one succeeded.

Despite the low success rate, they were eager to place the replica in their divine realms. Even if only one in ten thousand of their units awakened their armor, it would still count as a success.

Curious about his method, they asked Han Wu how he had replicated the pillar. He explained that upgrading to the Heaven Dragon Locust Armor had sharpened his senses. He realized the energy from the Profound Armor Pillar did not directly bless others with an armor spirit; it acted as a catalyst, accelerating the maturation of each individual's own armor spirit.

Han Wu was stunned by the discovery. If it were true, every living being possessed an armor unique to themselves, yet it remained dormant throughout their entire lives.

Even for the Divine Civilization, this was groundbreaking information. Han Wu had spent countless hours attempting to replicate the pillar's energy. Many experiments ended in failure, but each added to his experience. He finally succeeded and created a replica using stone scrapings from the original Profound Armor Pillar.

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Chapter 376 - Reply from the Association Leader

[1,141 words]

Chapter 376 - Reply from the Association Leader

Han Wu summoned a large number of locusts to test the process and collected the results. The data showed that the chance of his units awakening an armor through the replica was one in ten thousand—far below the original Profound Armor Pillar's 10% success rate.

He was further shocked when the Armor Civilization issued a warning after he reviewed the data. The Will of the Armor Civilization forbade him from continuing his research and threatened to forcibly return him to the Divine Civilization if he disobeyed.

Han Wu noted down how harsh the Will of the Armor Civilization was and grew certain that the direction of his research was correct to the point where he was already touching the edges of the truth of the Profound Armor Pillar. That was why he had received such a harsh warning from the Will of the Armor Civilization.

Although he had to halt his experiments, he felt satisfied with the results. The armor of the Armor Civilization formed the core of its strength, and the technology required to manipulate it rivaled that of the divine realm of the Divine Civilization. If such core technology were stolen or leaked, it could devastate a civilization, potentially leading to its collapse.

Han Wu decided to halt his research and focus on ways to defeat the Monster Armor Association. After days of building their forces, their armies had grown enormous.

Han Wu commanded a billion locusts. Jing Jing's skeletons multiplied through the slaughter of their enemies and had reached an astounding 100 million. Qin Shuang's army was smaller, with only 10 million Thunder Sparrows, yet their destructive power was unmatched. Among the three, her forces dealt the most devastating damage.

With the enemy no longer a daunting threat, Han Wu called the two girls and they started waging war against the Monster Armor Association. A bloodcurdling war swept past the Armor Civilization. Every single base associated with the Monster Armor Association was reduced to nothing as they received divine punishment from the trio.

The Monster Armor Association had been having a good time prior to the trio's arrival, and together they launched a campaign against the Monster Armor Association. A brutal war swept through the Armor Civilization. Every base tied to the association fell to ruin, struck as if by divine judgment at the hands of the trio.

The Monster Armor Association had thrived before the trio's arrival, but now they faced resistance unlike anything they had encountered. For the first time, they met a force capable of challenging their dominance.

The Gods of the Monster Armor Association convened to devise a strategy, yet their deliberations yielded nothing. None could halt the trio's relentless assault. Despite commanding millions of soldiers, thousands of Demigods, and seven powerful Gods, they could not withstand the trio's unstoppable army.

Sensing imminent danger, the higher-ups of the Monster Armor Association had no choice but to call upon their mysterious leader. Since the association's founding, he had never appeared in public. Only the Gods of the Monster Armor Association knew of his existence, and none had ever glimpsed his true form.

What they did know was that he possessed the Divinosaurus Armor. When transformed, he became a 3,000-meter-tall behemoth with unimaginable strength, unmatched vitality, and the ability to condense Light Energy from the air into a devastating laser attack.

The higher-ups sent a message through the association's special encrypted channel and waited. Three minutes later, a response arrived: *I will be there for the final war.*

The higher-ups erupted with excitement. To them, the appearance of their undefeated leader guaranteed their victory.

"To war! Everyone, prepare for the final battle. Recall every operative and ready yourselves to face the Armor Warriors and their three envoys!"

The news spread to every corner of the Armor Civilization. Hidden members of the Monster Armor Association revealed themselves, sabotaged the bases they had infiltrated, and returned swiftly to regroup for the final confrontation.

Ban Tu's forces followed a similar path. Many Armor Warriors returned to the base under the banner of the trio and formed a formidable army of their own. Because the trio was preoccupied with commanding their units, they could not directly manage the Armor Warriors. The responsibility naturally fell to Ban Tu.

The two sides marshaled their forces, bracing for a final, decisive war. The Monster Armor Association fielded 19.73 million warriors and had managed to assemble twelve Gods. Han Wu's side counted nine Gods, including the trio, alongside 6 million lesser Armor Warriors. They also commanded a massive civilian population of 400 million.

Fortunately, Han Wu's army was reinforced by the trio's units, which formed the backbone of their forces. He knew these numbers were only temporary. Once the war erupted, both sides would witness the true terror of the skeleton race. None would anticipate how powerful the skeletons were—except the trio.

Finally, the war erupted as the Monster Armor Association gathered in a single formation. Their Gods took positions at the rear and directed the battle as generals. Armor Warriors and monsters arrayed themselves on opposite ends before clashing in violent combat.

After witnessing the sheer power of her Thunder Sparrows, Han Wu and Jing Jing decided to strike back, eager to prove their worth. They employed the same formidable strategies that had earned them their reputations.

Han Wu detonated his locusts amidst the monster ranks. Many were only wounded by the explosions and retained their fighting abilities, but no one anticipated that the blasts would crack the fabric of space itself. Those jagged rifts mercilessly swallowed nearby monsters and sliced their flesh like sharpened blades. Bodies were shredded, and blood sprayed into the air like fountains.

In the next instant, the Skeleton Knights summoned skeletons from the dead. In moments, the corpses littering the battlefield transformed into swaying skeletal soldiers, some still clinging to remnants of flesh.

These skeletons were weak and easily shattered by the monsters. However, Jing Jing did not flinch. She summoned her Osteomancers and sent them forward. Every step drew bone fragments to their bodies and strengthened them. By the time they reached the frontline, they had grown into ten-meter-tall bone giants—the most powerful Heroic life forms ever seen. Their strength rivaled Black armor users, and their regeneration was unmatched.

They trampled the battlefield with relentless force and annihilated everyone in their path. The Monster Armor Association suffered another devastating blow. Many were flattened beneath the Osteomancers' immense bodies, and their corpses rose again as skeletons under Jing Jing's command.

The frontline gradually gave way, and the Gods of the Monster Armor Association watched with mounting dread. They had expected their army to triumph over the Armor Warriors and the trio, but their assumptions proved disastrously wrong. At this rate, the trio's forces threatened to erase their presence from this civilization forever.

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[1,071 words]

Chapter 377 - Ban Tu's Betrayal

One of the Gods in the Monster Armor Association urged, "Gui Hai, has our leader come?"

"I sent the message, but he hasn't replied." Gui Hai's face fell. He feared their leader had tricked them.

Another God grew agitated. "Damn, what is the leader waiting for? Is he waiting for all of us to die before he acts?"

A God who had recently returned to the Monster Armor Association spoke up. "It is too late for us to hide. Our identities are exposed. Even without the leader's help, we must win this war."

"We must win. Kill those Armor Warriors and we will become true owners of this civilization. The Monster Armor Civilization will bless us."

The Gods spoke in unison and resolved to attack together. A crushing pressure swept across the battlefield as they readied themselves for war. One after another, they donned their Heaven Monster Armor and assumed monstrous forms: the Heavenly Wolf, the Divine Tortoise, the Flying Tiger, Giant Kong, and many others.

Once the Gods of the Monster Armor Association entered the fray, they tore through the Osteomancers with ease, reducing them to bone fragments as they marched inexorably forward.

Han Wu watched the Gods move and knew the decisive moment to secure victory had arrived. He donned his Heaven Dragon Locust Armor and roared, "All Gods of the Armor Civilization, heed my command and attack!"

The overwhelming dragon aura surged across the battlefield, stirring primal fear in the hearts of the Monster Armor Association. The Great Dragons reigned over all life, and the greater the gap between a monster's bloodline and theirs, the deeper the terror they inspired. Some weaker Gods of the Monster Armor Association were so paralyzed by fear they could not advance a single step.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing also donned their armor.

Qin Shuang's armor had already reached the Heaven grade, but she had spent the past days absorbing additional Sacred Objects imbued with lightning to further amplify its power. Every movement summoned bolts from the sky and forced any monster attempting to encircle her to scatter in terror.

Jing Jing had upgraded her Bone Armor to the Heaven grade as well and unlocked its full potential. Five skeletons of different colors floated around her, each infused with the essence of a distinct ore. Each skeleton possessed strength on par with a King life form. Under Jing Jing's command, their flawless coordination allowed them to challenge even a Sage life form collectively.

In addition to the trio, the six Gods of the Armor Civilization charged forward. Ban Tu led them, and his strength was so overwhelming that he alone eclipsed the other five.

"Everyone, kill them! Once they fall, the Monster Armor Association will dominate this world, and we will claim it as ours!"

"Praise the Monster Armor Association! Everything is for us! AWOOOO!"

"Kill them all! I will shred anyone who stands between me and my prey!"

The two sides were going to clash in battle when Ban Tu suddenly turned around and landed a powerful blow on one of his allies. The force was enough to shatter mountains. The Tyrannosaur Armor truly represented the pinnacle of strength-focused armor, and that single strike killed the unlucky ally instantly.

Seizing the moment of confusion, Ban Tu struck again and killed another God. The remaining three panicked, unable to comprehend his intentions. Ban Tu gave them no time to react. After three punches, all of his former allies had been driven deep into the earth, never to rise again.

Everything happened so suddenly that even Han Wu couldn't comprehend it. Before he could react, Ban Tu lunged at him. Han Wu leapt backward to evade the crushing blow. Ban Tu continued his assault, but none of his strikes connected.

While retreating, Han Wu unleashed several Dragon Locust Devour attacks to distract Ban Tu and widen the distance between them. "Ban Tu, are you insane? Why are you killing your own men?"

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing returned to Han Wu's side, and together the three moved to stop him.

Ban Tu chuckled. "My own men? No, no. They are merely Xu Hai's lapdogs."

Han Wu frowned. Why was Ban Tu calling them lapdogs after killing them? He was already pushing Han Wu's bottom line.

“You’re a traitor. You have no right to insult them. Have you forgotten that you were the one who wanted to be Professor Xu’s lapdog in the first place?” Han Wu said, his voice dripping with mockery.

He had read the report Xu Hai had given him. At the time, it had been hard to believe that Ban Tu, normally solemn and authoritative, would grovel before Xu Hai and beg to become his lapdog. Now Han Wu understood how it could happen.

Ban Tu winced, humiliation twisting his features, and roared, “What do you know? You were born in the Divine Civilization, able to command countless units at will. We were born in the weaker Armor Civilization, forced to labor relentlessly just to awaken an armor slightly stronger than the rest.

“Many never even awakened their armors. They became civilians, working day and night for meager wages to put the slightest scraps of food on their tables. I want to betray not just you, but Xu Hai and the entire Divine Civilization! I led the Monster Armor Civilization here, and it’s inside me right now. Do you want to see it? I’m sure you’d love it—you are, after all, a God.”

Ban Tu laughed maniacally and ripped off his shirt to reveal a sinister tattoo. Energy surged into the design, which writhed and slithered across his body, eventually enveloping him completely. His form swelled, and he transformed into something inhuman—a frenzied, monstrous figure.

“Kill all of the Armor Warriors!” His voice, thick with bloodlust and authority, thundered from deep within his chest.

The Gods of the Monster Armor Association, who had been sneaking toward him for an ambush, froze in shock. They had assumed Ban Tu was the most loyal servant of the Armor Civilization, but it became clear that his allegiance lay even more firmly with the Monster Armor Association!

Gui Hai’s eyes widened in recognition. Ban Tu’s monstrous form was the legendary Divinosaur, the very armor their leader possessed. At that moment, it became undeniable: the leader of the Armor Warriors was, in truth, the leader of the Monster Armor Association.

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Chapter 378 - Killing a Family Member

[1,214 words]

Chapter 378 - Killing a Family Member

The 3,000-meter-tall Divinosaur loomed over the two forces like a mountain, splitting them apart. The Monster Armor Association erupted in cheers, their morale soaring, while the Armor Civilization fell into stunned silence.

Armor Warriors stared in despair at their fate, and civilians looked up with hopeless eyes. Victory was no longer within reach. Ban Tu—the figure they had revered as the paragon against evil—had betrayed them. Their hopes had been extinguished. Many Armor Warriors seized this moment to defect, following Ban Tu's lead.

The Monster Armor Association welcomed the large group of defecting Armor Warriors with open arms. As they surrendered and joined the ranks, only a handful of Armor Warriors remained loyal. The Armor Civilization weakened further under the weight of its people's betrayal.

Ban Tu had been waiting for this moment for a millennium. He intended to exploit despair, annihilate the Armor Warriors, and cement the Monster Armor Civilization as the new ruler of the land. From there, he planned to harness the Monster Armor's power to strike the Divine Civilization and bend its forces to his will. This had been his ambition for 1,000 years.

"Envoys, stop resisting. None of you will escape death today," Ban Tu said with smug confidence.

The trio met his gaze with icy resolve. They glanced at the remaining Armor Warriors beside them and understood there was no hope of victory through others. They would have to seize it themselves.

Ban Tu continued, "Why aren't you answering? Have you succumbed to despair? When Xu Hai invaded our civilization that year, I felt the same despair you feel now. A millennium has passed, and now it is your turn.

"Xu Hai spared my life once, though I was his lapdog. Now I offer you the same chance. Let go of your identity and join the Monster Armor Civilization. I will spare you."

He demanded their surrender. Those with weaker wills would have likely chosen life as a slave to avoid death, but the trio would rather die. They also knew the situation was not as dire as Ban Tu imagined.

"Ban Tu, your plan is clever," Han Wu said as he observed the Armor Warriors around them defecting. "You are using absolute despair to persuade the Armor Warriors to abandon their faith. That way, the Armor Civilization weakens, and the Monster Armor Civilization can seize its place. But you've overlooked one thing."

Han Wu's tone was grave, but Ban Tu dismissed it as mere bravado. "And what is that? Tell me, O Great Envoy, how could a plan I have honed over many years harbor a weakness?"

Han Wu chuckled. In the brief time he had spoken with Ban Tu, he had secretly communicated with the Will of the Armor Civilization and obtained the answer he needed.

"The Will of the Armor Civilization has been weakened so severely that even the Will of the Monster Armor Civilization can infiltrate this place. That also means the Divine Civilization can do the same." Han Wu's voice was calm, but Ban Tu's ears rang as he heard it.

It was too late to stop them. Han Wu, Jing Jing, and Qin Shuang each opened a massive gate behind them, and their units poured forth.

Before this, the trio from the Divine Civilization could summon only one ten-thousandth of their power each day, constrained by the interference of the Will of the Armor Civilization. Any attempt to exceed that limit risked breaching that interference. Now, however, the Will of the Armor Civilization struggled merely to survive. The Divine Civilization could strike it at will.

The sky itself darkened as locusts blotted out the sun. Many were as powerful as the Gods of the Monster Armor Association since they were already King life forms.

From Jing Jing's divine realm, a tsunami of skeletons poured forth. Their death aura spread like a toxic miasma and poisoned everything it touched. At a single command, ten 10,000-meter-tall Osteomancers awakened. Though they could not match Ban Tu's Dinosaur form in raw strength, their sheer size made them far more intimidating.

Next, Thunder Sparrows soared from Qin Shuang's divine realm, their cries harmonizing in unison. Qin Shuang wasn't a God yet, so her strongest units remained King life forms, but that alone was formidable. Once all of their units were summoned, the army of Armor Warriors surged with terrifying power.

"Damn it! Blast the Divine Civilization!" Ban Tu's words had become a reflex, repeated so often he could hardly count.

The trio's summoned army reignited the despair he had felt facing Xu Hai. Anger consumed him, and he shouted in hopeless fury.

In an instant, waves of green gas radiated from his body. Monsters that inhaled the gas began mutating uncontrollably. Some sprouted massive muscles, others grew to enormous size, and a few developed extra limbs. Each mutation stripped them of all rational thought, leaving only a singular drive: destruction. In trading intelligence for raw ferocity, they had become instruments of pure devastation.

“Kill them all!” Ban Tu roared. The mutated monsters charged forward without hesitation.

The trio’s units charged forward to intercept them. Locusts rained from the sky, detonating on impact. Each explosion tore cracks in the surrounding space and annihilated the mutated monsters.

Yet the mutated monsters had evolved beyond expectations. Alongside immense strength, they now possessed extraordinary regenerative abilities. Even when the cracks consumed their organs, the monsters somehow regrew them and reformed their bodies almost instantly.

Behind the locusts, Jing Jing’s skeletons advanced. The 10,000-meter-tall Osteomancers stomped forward and flattened at least six mutated monsters with each step. Still, the monsters healed rapidly, reshaping themselves as if nothing had happened. At the rear, the Thunder Sparrows unleashed vast webs of lightning and incinerated any mutated monsters that survived the front lines.

Han Wu was worried that the mutated monsters would revive and ordered his locusts to consume every fragment of flesh. Only through digestion could he ensure the monsters would not return.

Through the combined efforts of the three armies, the horde of mutated monsters was obliterated.

Ban Tu could no longer remain idle. He concentrated Light Energy into a searing laser and aimed it at the trio. He was confident that killing them would shatter their units’ faith and reduce them to powerless puppets.

The laser moved with blinding speed, and Han Wu was about to activate the True Demon King Transformation when someone even faster intercepted it. The beam tore through his body, yet instead of causing harm, it transformed into a vast reserve of energy for him to wield.

The one responsible was none other than Lie Guang, the God who had once feared the trio’s power and fled. He had returned just as the Armor Civilization teetered on the edge of destruction.

After absorbing the Light Energy from the laser, Lie Guang felt a strength beyond anything he had known. “Envoy, I am here to uphold justice, even if it means killing my father. You wouldn’t stop me, would you?”

Han Wu frowned, skeptical of Lie Guang’s claim. Yet if he truly intended harm, he would not have intercepted the deadly laser.

“Do as you wish,” Han Wu replied calmly. He was equally curious to see how Lie Guang would confront his father.

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[1,054 words]

Chapter 379 - Defeating Ban Tu

Ten minutes later, Ban Tu threw Lie Guang aside like a ragdoll. Although Lie Guang was immune to physical damage and could absorb the laser’s Light Energy, Ban Tu still had ways to kill him.

Because Lie Guang was his only son, Ban Tu spared his life. He dealt severe wounds and cast him aside to keep him from interfering.

Over those ten minutes, the trio rallied their units and crushed the Monster Armor Association’s army. Jing Jing expanded her skeleton army to its intended size and ordered the Osteomancers to trample everything in their path.

The Monster Armor Association’s Gods now cowered and begged for mercy.

“Please let me live. I will forfeit my strength if I can live.”

“They tricked me into joining the Monster Armor Association. I know my mistake and I will repent.”

“I am so sorry. Please let me go.”

The trio felt no sympathy. They found the pleas merely irritating and intended to eliminate the enemies for good. Damaging the Armor Civilization further would be regrettable, but it seemed better than letting it recover and fester again.

“We will not sympathize with traitors. Kill them!” Han Wu instructed.

Jing Jing nodded and sent her Osteomancers forward, while Qin Shuang commanded her King Thunder Sparrows to rain lightning from above. At the same time, Han Wu’s locusts plummeted from the sky, detonating like bombs.

After dealing with his son, Ban Tu looked up and saw the battlefield. Rage flared in his chest. In less than ten seconds, the Monster Armor Association was on the brink of collapse. Snarling, he gathered more Light Energy and prepared another laser.

This time, Han Wu was ready. The beam carried enough force to pierce even the combined defenses of his True Demon King Transformation and Dragon Locust Armor, but he had prepared a countermeasure. He would use his Thirty-Six Martial Castes to transform into the unit of a specific race.

Among the thirty-six races was one belonging to the Archer caste: the Light Spirits. They were elemental beings immune to light-attribute damage. Han Wu transformed, and the laser passed harmlessly through his body.

As expected, the laser passed through him without causing harm. At the same time, he absorbed much of its energy and unleashed a single arrow packed with that power. It shot straight toward Ban Tu's abdomen, piercing through and leaving a gaping hole that sealed itself almost instantly.

Han Wu scoffed. "Let's see how long you can keep that up."

Realizing his laser was useless, Ban Tu lunged into close combat. Each strike cracked the earth and sent tremors rolling like apocalyptic quakes.

Han Wu used True Demon King again and changed forms. He relied on his various organs and fought back against Ban Tu, who loomed three times his height.

Meanwhile, Qin Shuang and Jing Jing had finished dealing with the Monster Armor Association and hurried to Han Wu's side. Qin Shuang summoned her Thunder Sparrows to weave a vast array in the sky, then activated her Lightning Armor and merged with the formation. Bolts rained down with unerring precision, and each strike carved fresh wounds into Ban Tu. Although he regenerated after every blow, his recovery slowed with each strike.

Jing Jing refused to remain idle. She ordered her Osteomancers to restrain the Divinosaur while she joined the assault with her five multicolored skeletons. Each skeleton rivaled a King life form and carried the unique properties of a rare ore, allowing them to tear into Ban Tu's flesh with ease.

The trio fought relentlessly until Ban Tu suffered a wound his body could no longer recover from. Blood poured from the injury, so they seized the opportunity and concentrated their attacks on it.

The battle raged for three days straight before Ban Tu finally collapsed, utterly drained. He reverted to his original form, too exhausted to even lift a finger. His face was pale and blank, as if his soul had fled. Xu Hai and Su Lan had defeated him 1,000 years ago, and now Han Wu and the others had triumphed over him. He recognized it as fate—a bitter truth he could not deny.

The trio approached Ban Tu's motionless body. Defeated once more, he had lost all will to live and whispered, "Kill me."

Han Wu needed no prompt. Killing Ban Tu had always been his plan. The Will of the Monster Armor Civilization now resided within him, and if Ban Tu lived, that Will would rise again. The Armor Civilization was far too weak to endure another war.

Han Wu was ready to kill Ban Tu when Lie Guang dragged his injured body forward. “Wait, spare him for a bit.”

Lie Guang had bought them the critical ten minutes in the war and accomplished a great feat. Han Wu decided to grant him the respect he had earned. Lie Guang approached Ban Tu, his gaze a turbulent mix of longing, hatred, and disgust. “Ban Tu, this is what you deserve. You’ve lost. You will die, and the locusts will feast on you. I pity you...”

Ban Tu said nothing.’

Lie Guang’s voice rose, almost a shout. “You are dead this time. Before you die, apologize to my mother. You ruined her life.”

Ban Tu’s eyes moved slightly. “In my entire life, I’ve only felt sorry for you, never anyone else. I do not remember your mother, but I am certain she would be proud to have carried my child.”

“Bullshit!” Lie Guang slapped him. “My mother would never be proud of you. And if she ever were, it would only be because of me—her outstanding child.”

“Indeed. You are talented, my son,” Ban Tu said calmly.

Lie Guang’s anger flared further. “I will not call myself your son. You do not deserve that title.”

“But you are my son,” Ban Tu replied without a hint of emotion.

Lie Guang lunged to strike him again, but Han Wu intervened. “Alright, time’s up. It seems there’s nothing more you wish to say. Step aside. It’s time to finish this.”

Han Wu chose his moment well. He cared nothing for family disputes; his sole purpose was to kill Ban Tu and complete the mission Xu Hai had assigned.

“Envoy, let me do it. I want to execute this bastard myself,” Lie Guang insisted.

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Chapter 380 - Esteemed Guests of the Armor Civilization

[1,124 words]

Chapter 380 - Esteemed Guests of the Armor Civilization

Han Wu studied Lie Guang with a flicker of interest, then shook his head. "I know you hate him deeply, but he is still your father. The sin of killing him isn't one you are meant to bear."

He turned to Ban Tu. "Any last words?"

Ban Tu faced death with an unusual calm. In truth, he should have died a thousand years ago. For a millennium, he had hunted for a way to defeat the Divine Civilization, only to meet failure at every turn.

A bitter chuckle escaped him as he recalled the futility of his efforts. Then he looked at his son one final time. At least, he had produced an exceptional child.

"Thank you," he said.

Han Wu blinked in confusion before realization dawned. Ban Tu was grateful that Han Wu had denied Lie Guang's request. In that sense, this act preserved a fragment of his dignity as a father.

Han Wu sighed and used his Divine Authority on Ban Tu. The combined forces of Death, Destruction, Darkness, and War struck Ban Tu and ended his life. Simultaneously, Han Wu used his Divine Authority to strip the Will of the Monster Armor Civilization from Ban Tu's body.

Han Wu's gaze fell on the tiny monster clawing at him, and an idea struck. Though the Armor Civilization and the Monster Armor Civilization were distinct, their core mechanisms of power likely shared the same principles. He was already close to deciphering the secrets of the Profound Armor Pillar when the Will of the Armor Civilization warned him to stop.

What if he focused on the Monster Armor Civilization instead and attempted to replicate its methods? Its principles mirrored those of the Armor Civilization, giving him a promising chance of success. He could not predict the outcome, yet his curiosity was piqued. As such, he carefully stored the Will of the Monster Armor Civilization and resolved to experiment with it once he returned.

With Ban Tu dead, the remaining members of the Monster Armor Association lost all resolve and surrendered. Seeing how powerful some of them were, Han Wu chose not to kill them—at least for now. Instead, he imprisoned them and planned to hand them over to Xu Hai for further handling.

They had finally defeated the Monster Armor Association, but the Armor Civilization had paid a terrible price. Only a handful of strong individuals remained, with Lie Guang as their sole God. Eight Demigods and 32,000 regular Armor Warriors survived, along with just 110 million civilians.

These numbers reflected the unofficial tally after the war between the two civilizations. The surviving population could not generate enough Faith Points to sustain the Will of the Armor Civilization. If this continued, the Will would starve.

Han Wu was unwilling to see the civilization perish, especially given its potential, and decided to intervene. He planned to support the Will of the Armor Civilization by leaving some of his units behind as permanent residents. Their presence would provide a steady flow of Faith Points, allowing the Will to survive.

He shared his plan with the Will of the Armor Civilization, which agreed and expressed deep gratitude. In recognition of their contribution, the Will declared that from that day forward, the three were esteemed guests, free to establish Eternal Gates and summon unlimited units.

In a sense, this place had become their personal garden. They could nurture their units freely within the Armor Civilization, unbound by previous restrictions. Though small, this place could produce Gods, making it immensely valuable.

Han Wu had never expected that the Will of the Armor Civilization would grant him something so precious simply because of a decision he had made on a whim. It was an extraordinary bargain.

Over the next two months, the trio busied themselves with rebuilding the place. They captured the remaining monsters and sent them to prison, where Xu Hai would determine their fate. In an era when so few remained, each Armor Warrior represented a significant asset. After all, they could be used to defend a city or produce offspring to repopulate the Armor Civilization.

Han Wu also purchased several hundred Fertility Cards and activated them within the Armor Civilization. He could already foresee that, under the cards' influence, every family would have at least five children within ten years.

After addressing the aftermath of the war, Han Wu returned to the Divine Civilization with Qin Shuang and Jing Jing. Xu Hai had already used his authority to learn what the three had accomplished in the Armor Civilization, so no formal report was necessary.

Xu Hai was visibly pleased. “You have not only defeated the Monster Armor Civilization but also eradicated all traces of its existence within the Armor Civilization. Well done.”

Han Wu’s eyes gleamed. “Professor Xu, if you think we did well, shouldn’t the reward come soon?”

Xu Hai laughed and mock-scolded him, “I’m a Major God. Do you really think I would value the Sacred Object meant for you that much?”

He handed Han Wu a list of Rank 5 and 6 Sacred Objects from his personal vault and allowed him to choose freely.

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing also received rewards from Su Lan. The latter was particularly fond of Jing Jing and even wrote a recommendation for her to join the Darkness faction.

Qin Shuang claimed her reward and sought out Saliya to ascend into a God. She lacked an Exquisite Skill Gem and could not bear to wait another month. Fortunately, she possessed a High-Grade Skill Gem, which she used to ascend. By sheer luck, she awakened a Divine Power strong enough to rank among the top-tier Divine Powers, perfectly suited to her abilities. In hindsight, she had not needed to expend the High-Grade Skill Gem at all.

Adjusting to her new rank required time, so Qin Shuang could not accompany Han Wu to the various civilizations just yet.

Han Wu understood her situation and had already planned to remain in place for the time being. He had gained substantial resources from the Armor Civilization and intended to use them to strengthen his army. With that in mind, he returned to his divine realm and focused on researching how to merge the Will of the Monster Armor Civilization with the Profound Armor Pillar.

The process took thirty realm years to complete. During that time, he had expended vast amounts of Divine Points and Divine Essence to accelerate the merging. The Will of the Monster Armor Civilization had resisted every step, like a wild beast refusing to be tamed. Han Wu had spent years subduing it before finally guiding it to merge with the Profound Armor Pillar, ultimately integrating it into his divine realm.

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[1,026 words]

Chapter 381 - Sixfold Artifact

After subduing the Will of the Monster Armor Civilization, he fused it with the replica of the Profound Armor Pillar he had created, forging the third law governed by the Will of his divine realm.

[Law 1: All life forms within the divine realm will receive the Assist System.]

[Law 2: All Skills will be quantified and upgraded through Assists.]

[Law 3: All life forms have a chance of awakening their Monster Armor, and it can be upgraded through Assists.]

Once these laws took root in his divine realm, every unit under his command fell under their influence. To awaken their Monster Armor, they needed only to touch the Profound Armor Pillar.

The first awakening came sooner than expected. It was not his core race, the locusts, nor the Tigermen, his second-largest race. Instead, it was a newly hatched ice Great Dragon named Leng Ning.

Through the power of Reincarnation, Leng Ning was reborn as the offspring of Erebard and a lightning Great Dragon. She retained all her past memories, and with the formidable bloodline of the Great Dragons, her strength and mastery advanced at remarkable speed. Han Wu, who commanded vast forces within his divine realm, provided her with abundant Assists that allowed her to grow exceptionally powerful in a single day.

After Leng Ning awakened her Monster Armor, Han Wu ordered every locust under his command to channel their Assists into her. With her Heaven Monster Armor, Leng Ning became a King life form. Coupled with her numerous powerful Skills, she had a strong potential to become a Sage life form in the future.

Soon afterward, the leaders of Han Wu's units awakened their own Monster Armor. When Han Wu examined the data, he discovered that the forms of their Monster Armor were strongly shaped by the life forms they most admired.

Leng Ning had reincarnated as a Great Dragon, a being she revered deeply despite her origins as a human. That reverence shaped her own Monster Armor, which manifested as an ice Great Dragon. Once activated, her body expanded to ten times its normal size.

The other units also transformed into a variety of life forms. Dark Locust admired a giant insect called Heracle, so his Monster Armor naturally became the Heracle Monster Armor—a massive beetle renowned for its extraordinary defenses. Han Wu considered customizing Dark Locust's evolution path and nurturing him as a vanguard or a tank.

He was most intrigued by Steely's transformation. As the strongest unit in his divine realm, the humanoid Steely had developed a fascination with the Myriad Centipede, a creature renowned for its 10,000 legs.

To Steely, 10,000 legs meant 10,000 swords. As a member of the Swordwind race, the ability to wield and swing 10,000 swords was unprecedented—an entity like that could fell even Gods. Driven by this desire, Steely awakened the Myriad Locust Monster Armor. After transforming, he could wield all 10,000 swords simultaneously, unleashing a torrent of wind swords the likes of which had never been seen.

Han Wu was confident that no life form below the Sage rank could challenge Steely in his current state. He continued observing his other units as they awakened their Monster Armor, feeling a rare sense of relief.

Then he remembered he had yet to claim the reward Xu Hai had promised. He quickly reviewed the list of Sacred Objects and filtered out those he didn't need. He soon selected a useful Rank 6 Sacred Object called the Sixfold Artifact. Its effect allowed his units to choose one of six weapons as their main armament, with the weapon's strength tied to their potential and stats. The six options were sword, lance, shield, bow, hammer, and staff.

Han Wu equipped it to his Core and quickly noticed that every one of his locusts could now wield one of six weapons in combat. Naturally, a unit armed with a weapon outmatched those without. Still, he was eager to gauge exactly how formidable his locusts had become.

He decided to put them to the test at the Blood Coliseum. This time, he had no intention of facing another candidate. Instead, he sought a random God as an opponent. Moments later, he was transported to the arena, where half the seats were already filled with spectators.

Han Wu hadn't been here in a long time, and his reputation as the Locust Plague had faded somewhat. The crowd assumed he had come to be an easy target.

His opponent was a well-known figure named Wild Slash, who had won sixteen consecutive matches against other Gods. Wild Slash had earned his moniker because his units cut down everything in their path, leaving enemies reduced to a bloody paste. His brutal, bloodthirsty tactics attracted fans who thrived on gore and violence, and they cheered wildly as he appeared.

Wild Slash glared at Han Wu and asked hurriedly, "Which unlucky units are going to be cut up today?"

Han Wu chuckled. "My locusts."

The crowd erupted into chatter.

“Locusts? Are you kidding? How can locusts fight against Gods? Did you pull some strings to get in here?”

“Wait, locusts? Hey, isn’t that the Locust Plague? I think I’ve heard that name, but... why can’t I remember?”

“Are you stupid? I’ve never heard of a Locust Plague before.”

Han Wu heard their mockery loud and clear but paid it no mind. He would demonstrate his strength soon enough; there was no point in wasting energy arguing with them.

The two opened their gates. From Han Wu’s divine realm, a massive swarm of locusts surged into the arena. The sheer number was staggering.

Meanwhile, Wild Slash summoned a horde of Thri-kreens, a rare race on par with the Iron Skins. Small but lethal, they punished anyone who underestimated their size. Each Thri-kreen wielded two deadly forelimbs tipped with sharp sickles, capable of inflicting severe damage. By nature, they were relentlessly destructive.

The referee signaled the start of the match. Wild Slash immediately commanded his units to strike the locusts without mercy. In response, Han Wu ordered his swarm to summon protective shields.

In the next instant, countless shields materialized and stopped the Thri-kreens’ attacks.

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Chapter 382 - From a Loli to a Beauty

[1,085 words]

Chapter 382 - From a Loli to a Beauty

The shields absorbed the Thri-kreens’ attacks. Wild Slash stared in disbelief. After all, he knew how powerful the Thri-kreens were. Stopping them would require at least a Divine shield. Yet every locust before him carried one. How many Divine Points had his opponents spent? Even the descendants of the God Kings weren’t that wealthy.

Han Wu observed the battlefield with satisfaction. While Wild Slash was still reeling, he ordered his locusts to switch from shields to bows. All 100 billion locusts summoned their weapons and trained their arrows downward.

“Fire!”

A torrent of 100 billion arrows rained down, leaving no room to dodge. Blocking was the only option. Unfortunately for the Thri-kreens, they specialized in offense and lacked shields like Han Wu’s army. All Wild Slash could do was watch his forces fall beneath the relentless hail. That single strike wiped out nearly 80% of his units.

The spectators were stunned. None had realized Han Wu possessed the Rank 6 Sacred Object: the Sixfold Artifact. All they could see were locusts armed with both Divine shields and Divine bows. To them, the scale of investment was absurd. Equipping that many locusts with such weapons would have drained an unimaginable amount of Divine Points and Divine Essence. With that kind of wealth, even ants could bring down mammoths, let alone locusts.

Wild Slash reached the same conclusion and surrendered. He assumed his defeat against Han Wu wasn’t due to the locusts’ innate strength but rather because he wasn’t as wealthy.

Han Wu had no intention of correcting him. If Wild Slash believed Han Wu relied on money instead of skill, his future opponents would likely underestimate him and expose their weaknesses out of carelessness. This would make future victories easier.

He obtained a Core Fragment as his reward and prepared for more battles. During his match with Wild Slash, he had used only two of his six weapons—four remained untested. He also wanted to gauge the strength of his locusts with their Monster Armor. He waited for another match against a God to continue his experiment.

Han Wu’s previous match had captured the audience’s attention. Fans had set notifications to alert them whenever he entered a match, eager to watch him in action.

Now, the arena was three-quarters full. Designed for battles between Gods, it spanned one million square kilometers. Even at three-quarters capacity, the sheer number of spectators was astonishing.

Han Wu scanned his surroundings before locking eyes with his opponent and grinning. He was about to face someone he had encountered once before while still a Demigod: the little loli, Dark Night.

Dark Night was once a candidate, just like her partners White Ice and Firewind. Together, they had challenged Han Wu in a previous battle. At the time, Han Wu’s divine realm had been sealed, and he had been unable to summon his units that time. He had relied on the Origin of Mutation’s ability to fight against Dark Night’s units and had barely scraped out a victory. Dark Night’s candidacy had been forfeited after her defeat.

Fate had brought them together again.

Dark Night studied Han Wu carefully, and recognition flickered in her eyes. She remembered the one who had defeated her before.

“Hmph! If you think I’m still as weak as when I was a Demigod, you are sorely mistaken. Today, I will take your candidacy for myself!” Dark Night declared.

Han Wu chuckled and released his units. After becoming a God, his divine realm had grown again. He could now nurture even more locusts along with his other units. He now had 800 billion locusts in his divine realm. This time he only summoned half of them and chose not to summon the other races.

A locust army of 400 billion was monstrous. The audience cheered as the swarm blotted out the sun. Everyone who bought the right viewing ticket felt they had gotten their money's worth.

Dark Night refused to back down. She summoned a vast host of bats, with species ranging from Cow Eaters that had ten-meter wingspans to Hognose Bats no larger than a thumb at full size.

Han Wu used his senses to estimate she had summoned 80 billion bats. Her force was large, but it paled next to his locusts.

The referee signaled the start of the match. Dark Night then displayed overwhelming might. She did not order all 80 billion bats to attack. Instead, she used a special Divine Skill to draw them to her side. They offered their Life Energy and transferred it to Dark Night. Her body expanded, and she transformed from a loli into a beauty.

The transformation did not stop. Each infusion of Life Energy increased her size until she rose to 1,000 meters. She became queen of the night, her power matching a Sage life form. Even though the power boost was temporary, it was more than enough.

“Locust Plague, surrender now while you still can—or I will annihilate every one of your units,” she warned.

Her colossal figure, draped in a striking black gown, exuded an almost hypnotic elegance. Spectators who had gathered to witness her battles erupted in frenzied cries:

“My darling Dark Night, I want to lick your toes!”

“My darling Dark Night, make me your slave! Please, whip me!”

“O Queen Dark Night, please accept my kowtow!”

...

Dark Night seethed at the lecherous men and thundered, “You disgusting pigs! Perverts! Get out of here and don’t bother me.”

Instead of anger, her fans responded with delight.

“*Aiyo*, our Dark Night is shy. So cute!”

“Dark Night called me a fat pig and a pervert. Just me. Does that mean she likes me?”

“Dark Night, baby, I want to have your babies!”

...

Dark Night’s cheeks burned with humiliation. She felt both insulted and embarrassed to have fans like these—she would rather see them die.

She unleashed all her anger on Han Wu. “Locust Plague, prepare to die.”

Drawing on the energy coursing through her body, she unleashed a flurry of powerful Divine Skills in rapid succession:

[Summon Divine Skill: Summon Noble Vampire Juliet]

[Summon Divine Skill: Summon Noble Vampire Alina]

[Summon Divine Skill: Summon Noble Vampire Jucy]

[Summon Divine Skill: Summon Noble Vampire Miska]

[Summon Divine Skill: Summon Noble Vampire Bulfy]

Five formidable Noble Vampires emerged from the summoning array. Each combined breathtaking beauty with a ruthless, merciless heart. Yet the audience ignored their danger and cheered for Dark Night to summon even more alluring vampires.

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Chapter 383 - Han Wu vs Dark Night

[969 words]

Chapter 383 - Han Wu vs Dark Night

The five Noble Vampires gathered, each possessing the strength of a King life form and the Blood Domain. They expanded their Blood Domain to cover 10,000 square kilometers of the arena, where it continuously summoned thralls to fight alongside them.

This wasn't over, though. Dark Night was a God with five Divine Aspects, of which Summon was only one. She still commanded the Blood, Darkness, Vampire, and Martial Aspects. The Divine Skill: Blood and Divine Skill: Vampire perfectly complemented the Noble Vampires.

Drawing energy from her bats, Dark Night activated two more Divine Skills from her remaining Aspects. The first expanded the Blood Domain to a staggering 50,000 square kilometers. The second enhanced her thralls and granted them flight, blood-sucking abilities, and the capacity to inject venom into their victims, converting them into additional thralls.

With her Divine Skills, Dark Night had transformed her previously weak core race—the bats—into formidable vampires. Her ingenuity drew admiration from the crowd. Those who had initially come to see her appearance now recognized her talent and tireless effort. It seemed entirely plausible that she could ascend to a Major God if she continued to grow at this pace.

Exhausted from channeling the energy of her 80 billion bats, she could no longer sustain the Darkness and Martial Divine Aspects. She paused and cast a disdainful gaze downward at the tiny Han Wu.

"Locust Plague, your end is here," she proclaimed.

Han Wu smiled bitterly. Dark Night was clearly forcing his hand, but since she had already revealed her true power, he saw no reason to hold back. He activated True Demon King Transformation and stood on equal footing with her. All of his enhanceable organs pushed his strength to match hers.

Simultaneously, he activated his Divine Skills. Thanks to the effects of Defiance, he had gained eight Divine Aspects instead of the usual four. Each was powerful enough to serve as the core Divine Aspect of a standard God. Today, however, he chose to employ only one for his locusts: War. It was perfectly suited for commanding an army.

He used all five Divine Skills—Fanatic, Last Stand, Haste, Knowing, and Unparalleled—on his locusts, and their power intensified visibly. Stamina flowed from deep within their bodies, seemingly without end. He held back his other Divine Skills and commanded his locusts to activate their Monster Armor.

In an instant, his 400 billion locusts morphed into a variety of monstrous forms.

The audience froze in shock. The locusts were supposed to be his core race, so why had they all transformed?

Han Wu resembled a zookeeper overseeing an impossible menagerie. Ordinary animals appeared, like rhinos, giraffes, and zebras, alongside bizarre, unidentifiable life forms that even he could not name. He longed to dissect the tiny brains of the locusts to understand why they revered such forms, though the battle left no time for curiosity. Without hesitation, he ordered them to strike.

The battle between the vampires and the locusts promised to be spectacular. The spectators stood on their seats and shouted in excitement. Two Gods, each towering over 1,000 meters and with fully transformed core races, commanded forces capable of destroying ordinary Gods.

Han Wu and Dark Night watched the clash between their units with keen interest.

Dark Night's surprise grew as she observed the locusts in their monstrous forms holding their own against the thralls, one-on-one. She knew the thralls' strength—they were at least Heroic life forms, enhanced by her Vampire Aspect. For Han Wu's locusts to match them in combat meant each transformed locust equaled a Heroic life form. Multiply that by 400 billion, and the scale was staggering.

It was absurd. Even a weaker civilization didn't have 400 billion life forms, let alone Heroic ones. Not even Major Gods could summon so many Heroic life forms from their divine realms. The more she thought about it, the more bewildered she became.

Yet this was not the full extent of Han Wu's power. He didn't seem satisfied watching his transformed locusts spar with the thralls. True, they had reached the strength of Heroic life forms, but their combat effectiveness remained low. The locusts had awakened too many types of Monster Armor, and they hadn't yet learned to utilize their transformed bodies.

Their limited intelligence prevented them from using claws and fangs skillfully. Instead, they attacked like typical locusts, headbutting the thralls repeatedly. Each thrall required multiple strikes to fall. They were remarkably foolish, yet fortunately, their transformation made them far tougher. Otherwise, their relentless headbutting, combined with their low intellect, would have gotten them killed.

Han Wu sighed. "It seems they need more training."

Dark Night bristled, believing he was criticizing her and her units.

You fucker. Bats are my core race, not the thralls. Isn't it normal that I haven't trained with them before? She had every reason to curse, but she held her tongue and focused on the battle raging before her.

Dark Night's blood pressure spiked as her forces faltered. Four hundred billion locusts against two billion thralls was overwhelming. The thralls failed to convert the locusts into more of their kind; instead, some of the locusts had transformed into monstrous, blood-sucking predators and drained the thralls dry.

Ultimately, the five Noble Vampires were left to fight alone. Even united, they could not pierce the defenses of Dark Locust, who had transformed into Heracle.

It was not a matter of weakness. Dark Locust was a Sage life form and now assumed an even more heavily fortified form. Despite using every Skill at their disposal, they failed to breach his carapace.

Dark Locust shrugged off their attacks and manipulated Dark Domain at will. The Blood Domain crumbled under his power.

Dark Night bit her lower lip as she could already tell that she had lost.

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[1,096 words]

Chapter 384 - Exchanging Experiences

It was a landslide victory for Han Wu. Dark Night had used all her trump cards, yet she still lost. The 400 billion locusts swarmed the five Vampire Nobles and defeated them. In the end, Dark Night lost everything.

The moment her willpower wavered, the bats around her scattered like toppled dominoes. She reverted to her original loli form, while Han Wu remained towering in his 1,000-meter-tall Demon King body.

The crowd cheered for Han Wu's immense strength while offering sympathetic murmurs to the defeated Dark Night. It was obvious she could not overcome the genius that was Han Wu. A few older perverts continued to express their so-called admiration, which only added to her disgust and sour mood.

Han Wu stepped closer and tried to console her. "You actually did really well."

Those words struck her harshly. Tears welled in her eyes, but she fought to hold them back. To the onlookers, it seemed as though Han Wu was mocking her.

Han Wu panicked. "Wait, don't cry. We can talk this out."

That only broke her restraint, and she began to sob. Her wails echoed across the arena and drew the attention of everyone present. Her fans quickly turned on Han Wu and condemned him for being so cruel to her. The battle was over, but he had made her cry—a gesture they deemed utterly unchivalrous. Even the referee’s gaze carried disapproval at the sight of a little girl in tears.

Han Wu stood frozen. He had just won the match, yet now he was cast as the villain who had made her cry. He hastily apologized, “I didn’t mean it. Stop crying, alright? You can tell me what you want. As long as it’s reasonable, I’ll do it for you.”

Dark Night had stopped crying, though a few sobs still escaped as she spoke. “I want you to share your experience in nurturing your units.”

Han Wu blinked in surprise. She looked cute and innocent, but her words revealed a calculating mind. Anyone paying attention could see the parallels between their core races. Though one commanded locusts and the other bats, both had trained their units to achieve victory through sheer numbers.

Naturally, there were still differences. His locusts’ strategy relied on self-detonation to deal massive damage, while her bats focused on channeling energy to strengthen her before she used her Divine Skills. Sharing their methods could help each cover the weaknesses in their respective approaches.

Han Wu considered this briefly, then nodded. “I can share my methods, but you must share yours as well, including sensitive details like the combination of Sacred Objects you use.”

Her first instinct was to refuse. Exposing such information was risky, but rejecting him now would likely mean he would refuse to exchange ideas later. Given the strength of his locusts, she knew his experience far surpassed hers. Finally, she nodded in agreement.

They arranged to meet at a cafe by the plaza just outside the Blood Coliseum to exchange knowledge. Before that meeting, Han Wu collected his prize and upgraded his Core Level by one. He was one step closer to equipping another Rank 6 Sacred Object.

He left the Blood Coliseum and waited at the agreed spot. Soon, she appeared, dressed in her gothic skirt, but not alone. Firewind and White Ice trailed closely behind.

“I’m over here,” Han Wu called, gesturing toward the trio.

The four ordered their drinks, and Han Wu dove straight into the main topic. “We will each take turns sharing our experiences in nurturing our core races. Speak one at a time. If anyone feels dissatisfied or thinks the speaker isn’t being sincere, they may leave at any point.”

Firewind and White Ice nodded. The rule would save time and prevent anyone from sharing useless information. Dark Night nodded as well. "Sure."

"I'll start," Han Wu announced. "I have three Rank 6 Sacred Objects in my Core. They are..."

He first revealed the effects of the Rank 6 Sacred Object: Law of Gluttony. Dark Night's eyes widened in astonishment. The effects of Law of Gluttony were overwhelmingly powerful. With just this single Sacred Object, Han Wu had effectively elevated his core race to a new level.

Dark Night quickly searched online for information on any Sacred Object with comparable effects to no avail. Most gluttony-related Sacred Objects she found were far weaker than Han Wu's Law of Gluttony.

She memorized the details and resolved to track it down later. Then she shared the information about her own Sacred Objects.

The two exchanged more information and grew increasingly animated as they delved into topics where both were experts. They connected effortlessly and felt eager to share knowledge to benefit the other. Han Wu even provided her with a copy of his self-detonation warfare tactics, allowing her to study and learn from his strategies.

Dark Night gained much from their interaction and gave Han Wu a copy of her warfare tactics, which focused on concentrating energy by drawing it from her core race. Han Wu absorbed her insights and devised new experiments. He sensed that applying Dark Night's experience would further enhance his strength.

Dark Night felt the same. After Han Wu shared all his knowledge, many of the issues that had troubled her while nurturing her units seemed to vanish. She was confident that her own power would at least double if she applied Han Wu's methods to training her bats.

They spoke continuously for three days and nights, deepening their connection. When it was finally time to part, Dark Night patted Han Wu's head and wanted to acknowledge him as a sworn brother.

Although Han Wu was taller and looked more mature, Dark Night was actually a second-year student at one of the top colleges, Demonic Imperial College.

"Little Brother Wu, next time you visit Demonic Imperial College, just mention my name—Xu Mengmeng—and no one will dare bully you," she said and patted her small chest. In real life, she was straightforward and practical, far from a delicate lady.

"I will. I will find some time to visit you there, Sister Mengmeng."

Through their conversation, Han Wu learned from Xu Mengmeng that some second-year students at Demonic Imperial College also wielded the power of the Nine Martial Castes. He planned to visit them and use Replicate to enhance his current Thirty-Six Martial Castes.

After bidding farewell, Han Wu returned to his divine realm instead of continuing to fight in the Blood Coliseum. He intended to apply what he had learned from Dark Night to improve his units.

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Chapter 385 - Rewards of a Valedictorian

[1,064 words]

Chapter 385 - Rewards of a Valedictorian

Han Wu spent the next month in his divine realm, applying the methods Xu Mengmeng had taught him and strengthening his core race's power. When he finally emerged, he received a notification from his college inviting him to attend the graduation ceremony as the first-year valedictorian.

The graduation ceremony marked the farewell to the fourth-year seniors. It was a special event, reserved for the valedictorians of the first, second, and third years. Each graduating senior prepared a gift for the junior valedictorians. With hundreds of seniors, the three valedictorians were set to receive hundreds of gifts.

Han Wu also learned that these gifts were rarely modest—many cost no less than a single Divine Essence. A hundred gifts amounted to at least 100 Divine Essence, an enormous sum for someone who had just ascended into a God.

He accepted the invitation and prepared a lengthy speech extolling his seniors. His address highlighted their bright futures, remarkable achievements, and every other compliment he could offer. Han Wu suspected that the happier his seniors felt, the more generous their gifts would be.

As Han Wu had expected, his seniors were delighted and showered him with high-quality gifts. He grinned widely at the sight of hundreds of presents and planned to store them in his divine realm. That was when he noticed the chancellor.

The figure before him was not the chancellor's true body but a clone formed from one of the original's Divine Aspects. Despite being a mere clone, its strength alone could overwhelm even a Major God.

The professors listened with utmost seriousness as the chancellor spoke. During the address, he detailed the current state of the Divine Civilization and the looming threats facing it. Each danger was grave enough that a single misstep could spell the civilization's destruction. The Divine Civilization was walking on a knife's edge; one wrong move, and everyone would perish.

Han Wu would never have believed such claims if anyone else had made them, but hearing them from the chancellor made the truth undeniable. The war against the foreign civilizations raged fiercely. The only reason many could live peacefully within the Divine Civilization was the formidable seniors guarding them while waging war on other fronts.

At the conclusion of the speech, the chancellor personally handed transcripts to the graduating students and appointed the most exceptional among them to join the college's faculty.

During his address, the chancellor had also mentioned the Chaotic Starfield. Han Wu could never forget that his dying grandfather had once asked the original Han Wu to venture into the Starfield to find his parents.

The original Han Wu had sworn to fulfill that mission, but fate had intervened, and he died before he could act, leaving the current Han Wu to inhabit his body.

Han Wu felt a surge of anxiety and longing pulse through him. He whispered, "Calm down. I will find your parents."

His heart steadied immediately after he spoke.

Once the ceremony ended, he sought out Xu Hai to learn more about the Chaotic Starfield, but Xu Hai's answer was frustratingly vague. All he could say was that Han Wu had to maintain his valedictorian status until graduation. Only then would the chancellor allow him to journey to the Chaotic Starfield. At last, Han Wu had a clear goal to pursue.

Back in his divine realm, Han Wu summoned Qin Shuang, Jing Jing, and Sun Qingnian to inspect the gifts he had received from the seniors. He had no hesitation in offering them anything that suited their tastes. When they entered his realm, they froze in astonishment at the sight of hundreds of gift boxes stacked like a small mountain.

Sun Qingnian exclaimed, "Isn't this too much? How could a valedictorian get so many gifts? If I had known it would be this good, I would have worked harder to become one myself."

Qin Shuang rolled her eyes. “You? Compete for it? With your weakened body? Or with those pathetic Foxmen?”

Sun Qingnian forced a bitter smile and cast a pleading glance at Han Wu, silently asking him to rein in Qin Shuang.

Han Wu chuckled. “Serves you right.”

Sun Qingnian frowned bitterly. He couldn’t win against the two lovers. He couldn’t outmatch the couple, so he turned his attention to the gifts instead. He grabbed a random box and tore open the elaborate wrapping.

Inside lay a Rank 6 Sacred Object, the Blazing Sun Crystal, which enhanced fire- and light-attribute units. Among its rank, it was considered common, yet even a common Sacred Object cost fifteen Divine Essence.

That was only the beginning. They kept unwrapping gifts, uncovering treasures such as 6-Star God equipment, a massive Core fragment, and even an item that completed an Evolution Path for a unit called the Lament Stone. Altogether, the gifts were worth an astounding 500 Divine Essence.

Sun Qingnian’s eyes gleamed with greed. He had never imagined that a valedictorian could amass such fortune from gifts alone. For Han Wu, a first-year, this was only the start. He still had the second and third years to collect rewards of the same caliber.

Han Wu had two more chances to become filthy rich overnight. Sun Qingnian nearly drooled at the thought and swore he would work hard to earn the title of valedictorian himself. Yet he knew the truth: the gap between them was too wide. Compared to Han Wu, he was far too weak, struggling even to dream of breaking into the top ten.

In the end, Han Wu selected three gifts that best suited his companions as thanks for their help unwrapping the trove. The four of them left satisfied with their haul. Just before they departed, a message arrived from Saliya.

It was a group announcement. The graduating seniors were preparing a game for all the college students, one filled with resources and prizes for their juniors. They encouraged everyone to participate, describing it as their way of giving back to the academy before leaving.

Sun Qingnian lit up as he read the message. He already knew how wealthy the seniors were from the gifts they had showered on Han Wu. Now he had a chance to seize more of that wealth for himself.

Everyone else in the group thought the same. They would join the game without hesitation. Only a fool would turn down such easy spoils.

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Chapter 386 - Middle Realm, Legend of the Ring

[1,268 words]

Chapter 386 - Middle Realm, Legend of the Ring

The four arrived at the time listed in the announcement and saw that a large crowd of students had already gathered. Nearly 1,500 filled the area, many of them familiar faces.

Han Wu spotted classmates from his own year, including Duan Meng and Qian Lili, as well as the transfer students Elina and Bao Xiren. He also recognized upperclassmen such as Xiang Meng, Xia Tian, and Ye Ling. Almost every student was present, except for those about to graduate.

Han Wu frowned, sensing something amiss. The event was supposed to be a game organized by the seniors, yet the sheer number of participants suggested otherwise. Was there another purpose behind it?

Just then, Xiang Meng noticed him and waved him over. Han Wu took the chance to ask about the game.

Xiang Meng spoke openly. "The seniors' game is meant as a bonus round to push us juniors to work harder. What really draws the crowd, though, is the chance to uncover the secret treasure hidden in the game."

"Treasure? What kind of treasure?" Han Wu asked.

Instead of answering directly, Xiang Meng posed a question of his own. "Han Wu, do you know where the game will take place this time?"

Han Wu shook his head. The announcement had only mentioned the event itself, giving no further details.

Xiang Meng looked slightly surprised. "Then let me explain. The site of the game this time is a fallen civilization. Although it now lies in ruins, remnants of its former glory remain, and many treasures are still hidden within. These treasures hold immense value—valuable enough to tempt even a God."

Han Wu remembered another fallen civilization he had once heard about, the same place where his God equipment, Ravenous Wolf, had originated. The original weapon had been lost long ago, and what he possessed now was only an incomplete replica. Since he had not used it for some time, he had left it locked away in his vault.

Qin Shuang and the others drew closer, intrigued by the conversation. Han Wu pressed, "Senior Xiang Meng, tell me more about this particular fallen civilization."

Xiang Meng cleared his throat. "This place was once called the Middle Realm, a land where a mighty civilization built on western fantasy once thrived. Do you know what western fantasy means? Think of swords, magic, wars between races, and wizards everywhere."

Qin Shuang nodded. "We know. We studied that in our classes."

Xiang Meng nodded as well. "The Middle Realm once housed a powerful civilization that produced several God Kings. But after a brutal war among the races, the civilization fell into chaos and was eventually annexed by another civilization.

"Even so, many relics and treasures remain hidden there. The lost civilization forged them through unique methods that we cannot reproduce, making each one truly one of a kind.

"The most precious of these, known as the Jewel of the Middle Realm, was the Magic Ring[1]. At the height of that civilization's power, they created twenty rings, each with different abilities. What made them remarkable was that they could grow stronger alongside their host.

"It's said the God King of Light once possessed one, and it greatly aided him during his rise."

The four listened intently, then turned toward Elina, daughter of the God King of Light. As if sensing their gazes, Elina looked back in puzzlement, clearly unsure why they were watching her.

Sun Qingnian asked impatiently, "Wait, does that mean there are clues to the Magic Ring in this game?"

Xiang Meng glanced around before nodding. "According to credible sources, a Magic Ring is sealed in the southern area of the Middle Realm, within the Fragmented Earth region. However, no one knows what its effects are."

"There's really a Magic Ring there?" Sun Qingnian exclaimed, a little louder than he meant to be.

The nearby students turned to stare, and he immediately realized his mistake. Xiang Meng smacked his head. "Quiet. Are you trying to get us in trouble?"

Sun Qingnian quickly bowed his head. "Sorry, senior. I got too excited. Please continue."

Xiang Meng coughed. "Honestly, you can forget about claiming a powerful treasure like the Magic Ring. Even third- and fourth-year students, or the lecturers, can't extract it safely. It's far beyond your reach.

"Most students focus on recovering the lost knowledge of the civilization, like methods for forging their unique weapons or mastering their spells. After that, they search for treasures left behind by graduating students."

Han Wu patted his chest confidently. "Don't worry, Senior Xiang Meng. We know our limits. We won't get ahead of ourselves."

Xiang Meng nodded. "Good. That's the spirit. The purpose of this game is for graduating students to give back to the college and its students as a token of thanks. Have you read the rules?"

Han Wu nodded. The rules had been outlined by Saliya in the notification.

First, students had to create a clone from a single Divine Essence to enter the game, then transfer their consciousness into it. This ensured that everyone started on equal footing and that the rewards distributed by the graduating seniors would be shared fairly. That way, every student received some benefit, no matter their skill.

"It's good that you've all read the rules. To be honest, while I don't want the rest of you trying to find the Magic Ring, I think Han Wu might actually stand a chance. You can go ahead and try," Xiang Meng said, reconsidering his earlier words. He patted Han Wu encouragingly before returning to Xia Tian and Ye Ling.

Once he left, Sun Qingnian leaned closer and whispered, "Senior Xiang Meng doesn't want us searching for the Magic Ring, but I'm going to do it anyway. I've heard from my third girlfriend that one of the Magic Rings grants the host infinite stamina. Imagine how easy life would be if I got it."

Han Wu didn't bother replying. Sun Qingnian's desires were shallow—he didn't care about the ring itself, only about endless stamina.

"We should probably follow our own judgment and ignore his warning," Sun Qingnian continued. "We can send our clones to search for the Magic Ring. Even if we fail, we'd only lose a single Divine Essence."

Qin Shuang and Jing Jing nodded in agreement. The Magic Ring represented the culmination of an entire civilization's intelligence and effort. Every single one of them was undoubtedly powerful.

One of the department heads stepped onto the stage and announced the start of the game once everyone had gathered. All participating students were required to enter a landing pod and insert a Divine Essence to generate a clone.

The students climbed into their assigned pods and placed a Divine Essence inside. In an instant, they were transported to the Middle Realm.

With a soft *ding*, Han Wu opened his eyes and realized he was already there. He lay in a cave, dressed in ragged linen clothes, surrounded by the stench of rot that made him frown.

[Welcome, Student Han Wu. You have arrived in the southern area of Middle Realm. Please allocate your stats.]

At the notification's sound, five stats appeared before him: Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Spirit, and Willpower. He had ten points to distribute.

Beyond these five stats, a separate column listed his Skills. Awakening the first Skill required ten points, after which he could choose one of his existing Divine Powers and integrate it into his Middle Realm clone.

Han Wu decided to spend all ten points to unlock a Skill, and a list of options appeared.

1. My preciousssssssssssssss 📄

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Chapter 387 - Choosing a Divine Skill

[1,044 words]

Chapter 387 - Choosing a Divine Skill

[Skill 1: Sacrifice (Exclusive) – Sacrifice any unit under your command to receive a random reward. Usable once per day.]

[Skill 2: Life Infusion – Consume Life Energy to bless any units. The blessing's strength scales with the amount of Life Energy spent.]

[Skill 3: Merge (Exclusive) – Can merge objects or living beings. Targets with similar properties will be upgraded after merging. Targets with different properties may produce an unpredictable result. Three times a day.]

[Skill 4: Famine – Expend Spiritual Energy to inflict hunger on any living being. The intensity of hunger matches the energy used.]

[Skill 5: Thirty-Six Martial Castes – Transform into any of 36 races and gain their basic Skills. Usable three times per day, with a cumulative transformation limit of 100 minutes.]

[Skill 6: True Demon King Transformation – Transform into a Demon King. Usable once per day. Transformation time limited to 5 minutes.]

[Skill 7: Reincarnation – Absorb useful souls to reincarnate within the divine realm. Limited to three souls per day.]

[Skill 8: Replicate (Exclusive) – Duplicate any object or Skill. Usable once per day.]

Han Wu was presented with eight Divine Powers. Nearly all were excellent options, yet he only had enough points to select one. He started eliminating them one by one.

The first to go was Sacrifice. Though powerful, it only worked if he commanded units. In the Middle Realm he had no access to his core race, so the Skill was useless.

Next he dismissed Reincarnation. His current goal was to search for treasure, not to recruit souls for his divine realm. True Demon King Transformation also failed to impress him. Its five-minute duration was far too short to matter.

He set aside Famine as well. It lacked the strength to kill an enemy and would likely only provoke them. Life Infusion soon followed. Without guaranteed loyalty, blessing his followers posed a risk. Worse, it consumed his Life Energy, and the weaker he became, the weaker the blessing grew. For the early stages, it was a wasted choice.

In the end, only three remained: Merge, Thirty-Six Martial Castes, and Replicate. Each offered strong advantages in the early game. Han Wu weighed them carefully before selecting Thirty-Six Martial Castes. It was the most versatile and offered the longest duration, allowing him three transformations per day with a combined time of 100 minutes. It was the ideal choice for early development.

His points drained away the moment he confirmed his choice. Only then did he turn his attention to the world around him.

The cave was pitch black, and his clone's eyes were useless against the darkness. He had no choice but to trace the walls with his hands to find a way out. Step by step, he followed the rough surface until his foot sank into something soft. The texture felt pliant on the outside yet firm within. A chill ran through him as he realized he had stepped on what seemed like a limb. The lack of movement suggested the creature it once belonged to was already dead.

He drew in a steadying breath and pressed on. More limbs littered the ground, and each step confirmed his suspicion: this cave was little more than a dumping ground for corpses.

His hunch proved right. At last, faint light outlined the exit, where two grotesque gnomes appeared, hauling another body. He slipped behind a jagged rock and watched as they heaved the corpse near the mouth of the cave before shuffling away.

The body belonged to a humanoid dressed in the same tattered linen outfit he wore. Filthy and ragged, it looked no better than a vagrant. Han Wu tried to piece together where he had ended up, but he needed more information. He spent one of his daily transformation slots and turned into a Dark Curse Bug, then took to the air.

The moment he transformed, the bug's natural affinity for darkness enhanced and sharpened his sight. For the next thirty minutes, he scouted the area and committed every detail to memory. By the end, he had a clearer sense of where he was.

This place was a mine under gnome control, where humans were forced into slavery. The gnomes whipped and shouted at them to dig faster, driving them without pause. Day after day, the slaves mined under relentless strain, their bodies breaking down from exhaustion.

Food and water were scarce, never enough to sustain them. Many perished from hunger or fatigue, and when they did, the gnomes dragged the corpses away and dumped them into a nearby abandoned shaft.

This had nothing to do with Han Wu. What mattered now was earning more points. While he considered how to do that, he spotted a glowing wooden chest. Strangely, none of the gnomes or humans noticed it, which told him it was no ordinary chest. He landed on it, and the moment he touched it, the chest vanished.

[Congratulations, Han Wu. You've found a wooden chest left behind by the seniors. You've obtained a 1-Star God weapon, the Overlord Sabre. You've also obtained 2 points.]

[Overlord Sabre: 1-Star God Weapon – Incredibly tough. Can destroy most weapons beneath 1-Star; Requirements: 5 Strength.]

The weapon automatically appeared in Han Wu's dedicated pocket dimension for the game. He stared at it, speechless. Without allocated points, he couldn't even wield it. Thankfully, the chest granted him two points, which allowed him to enhance his stats slightly. To boost his exploration efficiency, he invested both points into Dexterity.

As soon as he did, his flight speed increased by roughly 20%. Motivated by this gain, he resumed searching for more treasures left by his seniors. He explored the mine thoroughly and retreated to a hidden area to transform back once his transformation timer reached ninety minutes.

Han Wu's efforts had not been in vain. He discovered four wooden chests in the mine. Alongside the Overlord Sabre, he obtained the Rank 2 Sacred Object: Iron Star, the Skill Book: Silver Bladefall, and a Repeater Bow Tower, earning eight additional points in total.

He allocated six points to Strength and finally met the requirement to wield the Overlord Sabre. He also learned Silver Bladefall, giving him a way to fight back at last.

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

[1,120 words]

Chapter 388 - Hero? Faith!

Within the dark, fetid cave, Han Wu reviewed the areas he had explored while transformed into a Dark Curse Bug and pieced them together into a three-dimensional mental map. He traced the paths in his mind, searching for the mine's exit. Soon, he spotted a small group of gnomes mercilessly whipping a cluster of emaciated humans, apparently forcing them into a specific shaft.

While Han Wu was startled by the grisly scene, one of the gnomes peered into the shaft where he hid and somehow spotted him. It bellowed, cracked its whip, and lunged forward, presumably to punish him for straying from the group.

Han Wu would not allow it. Though weakened as a clone, his strength had grown thanks to careful stat allocation. He wielded the Overlord Sabre and carried the experience of countless battles, not to mention the Silver Bladefall Skill. Defeating a mere gnome would be effortless.

As the gnome entered his strike range, Han Wu swung the sabre and cleaved it in half. Dirty blood splattered across the cave floor, and the gnome let out a brief, piercing shriek before collapsing.

The surrounding gnomes were stunned. The humans they usually terrorized cowered like dogs; when had any of them shown such courage?

They had no idea what had emboldened this supposed human slave. Without hesitation, they drew their weapons and charged, determined to overwhelm him with sheer numbers.

Han Wu felt no fear facing a horde of enemies at once. He moved with fluid precision and wove through the gnomes. With a few swift slashes, he cut them down effortlessly. The human slaves cowered on the ground, trembling and pleading for mercy.

Han Wu felt pity for them. He cut the ropes binding their hands and urged them to flee.

Yet most remained frozen, conditioned by years of terror. One older slave even tried to reason with Han Wu and urged him to confess his actions to the mine's owner in hopes of reducing his punishment.

Han Wu kicked the man aside. He had never imagined such deep-rooted submission. He ignored the others and advanced toward the unexplored section of the mine, intent on locating treasure chests that his seniors had left behind during the game's early phase. He knew this would allow him to grow stronger faster than anyone else.

As he explored, numerous gnomes attempted to block his path, but a single sweep of his sabre cut them down. Blood stained the ground wherever he walked.

Some slaves, still harboring a rebellious spirit and seeing Han Wu as their hero, picked up fallen weapons and followed him. Driven by rage, they sought gnomes to kill, and Han Wu did not stop them—he even spared one or two gnomes so the slaves could vent their fury.

After bludgeoning the first gnome to death, the slaves felt as though they had been granted a second chance at life. Their fear of the gnomes vanished and was replaced by unrestrained aggression at every sight of one.

The slaves' efforts eased some of Han Wu's burden, giving him more time and energy to search for the chests left by his seniors. He soon discovered two more wooden chests, claiming 1-Star God war greaves and a scroll containing the Fire Dragon Breath spell. He also gained four points, which he immediately allocated to Dexterity to enhance his speed.

Han Wu thought that everything seemed to be going smoothly until a slave screamed in pain. He turned and saw a towering gnome, easily three meters tall, swinging a massive wooden club and crushing the slaves in its path. Several were obliterated instantly, reduced to a gruesome paste. The remaining slaves lost their courage and fled in terror.

The gnome chuckled, emboldened, and swung its club again to kill ten more slaves.

Han Wu had just arrived to investigate when he suddenly found himself directly in the gnome's path. He strode past the fleeing slaves and soon stood before the giant gnome.

Offended that a human dared approach on his own, the gnome swung its club down at him. Han Wu did not dodge. Instead, he met the strike head-on with his Overlord Sabre. The blade bit into the wooden club with ease, but he had to strain to pull it free.

He now understood the gnome's strength and knew a prolonged fight would be dangerous. He needed to end it swiftly. With that resolve, he leapt high and brought the Overlord Sabre down in a vertical slash. As the blade descended, silver light flashed with razor-sharp brilliance.

The giant gnome sensed the attack and swung its wooden club to block it, but the weapon was no match for the Overlord Sabre's edge. The club split in two, and the blade sank deep into the gnome's throat.

Han Wu twisted the sabre and severed the gnome's head cleanly. Its massive body collapsed to the ground, lifeless.

The surrounding slaves stared at Han Wu in awe. Finally, one of them whispered, "Hero."

The other slaves caught on, and their murmurs swelled into chants that filled the mine. Han Wu's presence seemed to banish the despair that had long gripped their lives, replacing it with courage and hope.

Initially, Han Wu had intended to continue his exploration, but he suddenly felt the familiar tug of several threads of faith reaching toward him. The slaves regarded him as a deity. After all, in their darkest hour, they had grasped a single strand of light that embodied hope and poured all their belief and trust into him. It was only natural that Han Wu had become their guiding beacon.

He surveyed the slaves, who were waiting expectantly for his guidance. With his experience in spreading faith, he recognized this as the perfect moment to gather even more followers. Thus, he raised the Overlord Sabre and proclaimed, "I shall lead you forward!"

In the slaves' eyes, his gallant figure was like a sun that radiated light. Many raised their weapons and cheered in unison, a clear sign of their loyalty.

The moment was right, and Han Wu resolved to deepen their faith further. He recalled the places he had explored and remembered where the gnomes had stored their food—enough to sustain the slaves for months.

Leading the way, he guided the crowd of slaves to the cache. He swiftly dealt with the two gnomes guarding it and then distributed the provisions.

The slaves, long starved and forced to labor without rest, had rarely received enough to survive. Now faced with a mountain of food, none could resist. They surged forward and devoured their fill with ravenous gratitude.

In that instant, their devotion to Han Wu transformed. They evolved from Believers to Worshippers.

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Chapter 389 - Taking Over the Armory

[931 words]

Chapter 389 - Taking Over the Armory

As the slaves' faith in Han Wu deepened, their obedience grew. Determined to convert more of them into worshippers, he knew he had to both strengthen the devotion of those who already followed him and save more of the oppressed.

After resting for half an hour, he led the physically stronger slaves on a mission to rescue the others. With their newfound strength, they struck down gnomes with relentless blows. Yet, against the more powerful gnomes, they still relied on Han Wu. Since his clone remained somewhat weak, he faced numerous powerful gnomes he could not defeat without transforming.

The slaves were awestruck by Han Wu's transformations, which only reinforced their belief that he was a god. They memorized his every action and gradually deified him. Their devotion grew so extreme that even his fart was considered divine, capable of prolonging life and granting immunity to poison.

To defeat the gnomes, they needed more than food—they needed weapons. Han Wu relied on his memory to lead the slaves to an armory controlled by the gnomes. There, two giant gnomes stood guard. Even transformed, Han Wu could not defeat one alone in a short time; he was still too weak. He required the support of the slaves.

Under his command, four slaves stepped forward, driven by courage and a desire to aid their god in buying time. Han Wu nodded, impressed that four were willing to risk themselves as bait.

He retrieved the magic scroll he had previously collected from a wooden chest. It contained the Fire Dragon Breath spell. He handed it to the strongest of the four and instructed him to use it against the giant gnome if the situation became dire. The slave accepted the scroll with reverence and bowed deeply to Han Wu.

Han Wu nodded and charged at one of the heavily armored giant gnomes. Its tough skin, now reinforced with iron, made landing a powerful strike nearly impossible. The two clashed in a vicious battle.

The other giant gnome moved to assist its comrade, but the four human slaves intervened. Knowing it was their moment to shine, they slammed their wooden clubs against the ground to draw the gnome's attention.

Just as they hoped, the gnome ignored Han Wu and pursued the slaves. They darted around a pillar, narrowly evading its attacks. Their maneuvers bought some time, but it wouldn't last long. They prayed Han Wu could defeat the first gnome quickly enough to aid them against the second.

Han Wu focused on his fight, carving a massive chunk of metal from the gnome's armor with his Overlord Sabre. He remained patient and watchful, carefully studying the gnome for the precise moment it would reveal a weakness.

Three minutes later, the giant gnome faltered. Han Wu seized the opportunity, leapt high, and used Silver Bladefall. His Overlord Sabre slipped through a chink in the armor and struck the gnome's neck, killing it instantly.

Just as he prepared to assist the slaves against the second gnome, a sudden torrent of flames erupted from the magic scroll one of them held. The Fire Dragon Breath spell engulfed the remaining gnome, turning its armor a searing red. The molten metal fused to its body, and it burned to death within its own armor.

With both giant gnomes defeated, the human slaves rushed into the armory and eagerly selected their preferred weapons.

Han Wu stepped into the room and scanned the neatly arranged weapons. He examined them slowly, and his gaze finally settled on a chest glowing with a red light. The slaves neither noticed the chest nor could they touch it. Han Wu knew immediately that it was one of the treasures that his seniors had left behind.

He reached for the chest, and a notification rang out.

[Han Wu, you've found a bronze chest left by your seniors. Congratulations on obtaining a 2-Star God equipment, the Gold Necklace, and 5 points.]

Han Wu reviewed the Gold Necklace's data.

[Gold Necklace: 2-Star God equipment – Effects: When equipped, the holder is protected by a barrier with 1,000 durability. The holder can use Divine Points to restore its durability.]

“Not bad. I’ll equip it.” Without hesitation, he put on the necklace and allocated the five points to Strength and Dexterity. Since he currently had no spells, these were the only attributes he needed to enhance.

After allocating the points, he now had nine points in Strength, and he could feel it had at least doubled. His Dexterity had also reached eight points, and he could move with greater speed now.

Yet these gains weren’t the most significant reward. He had just seized control of the gnomes’ armory, leaving them at a severe disadvantage without weapons. The well-fed slaves, armed with their new equipment, grew bolder with each passing second.

Their rising confidence and trust translated into double the Faith Points for Han Wu. While it was still too early to generate Divine Points, every gain mattered.

Having spent only two days in the game, Han Wu knew his progress was limited. To prevent the gnomes from reclaiming the armory, he positioned the Repeater Bow Tower at its entrance. Anyone venturing into its range faced a relentless hail of arrows.

With both food and weapons secured, his next goal was to drive all the gnomes from the mine. Nevertheless, the gnomes of the Middle Realm were not weaklings. When news of the slave rebellion reached the mine’s owner, he dispatched his strongest subordinate, a Gnome Warrior, to deliver a lesson the rebels would never forget.

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[1,055 words]

Chapter 390 - Saintess Club

After seizing the armory, the slaves finally gained the means to rebel against the gnomes. They started rescuing fellow slaves from the surrounding regions. As their numbers swelled, however, the demand for food grew urgent.

Han Wu surveyed their supplies and realized they had barely enough to last two days. If more slaves joined, the rations would stretch only a single day. As their god, he needed to act quickly to prevent starvation among his followers.

He searched other areas but found no additional provisions. The gnomes proved far crueler than he had anticipated. To tighten their control, they had deliberately stockpiled only minimal food and daily necessities in the mine. This ensured that any rebellious slaves would struggle to sustain themselves.

The gnomes' strategy was simple: block the exits, trap the slaves inside, and let hunger sap their strength. Within days, the rebels would be too weak to fight, and some might even starve to death. Only then would the gnomes need to send in a small contingent of stronger warriors to crush the rebellion.

Recognizing this plan, Han Wu grew even more determined to save the slaves. He selected ten of the most loyal and strongest among them to form a vanguard. This team would lead the charge and break through the gnomes' defenses outside the mine.

The ten slaves, armed to the teeth, followed Han Wu toward the cave's exit. They hadn't even reached it when angry gnome bellows erupted, followed by several bombs hurled into the corridor.

The gnomes had anticipated their approach. The moment they saw the group, they threw bombs to block their escape. Han Wu's clone was too weak to withstand the blasts directly, but he still had his Divine Skill.

His Thirty-Six Martial Castes allowed him to transform into any of thirty-six specialized units. One of them would be perfect for this moment. He shifted into the Thunder Sparrow, a unit faster than a Dark Curse Bug and far stronger as well. He needed both speed and power now.

The bombs exploded, sending clouds of dust billowing through the corridor. The gnomes peered inside to see if the slaves had survived, but the dust obscured everything.

Suddenly, a streak of lightning cut through the haze. The gnomes quickly ignited another bomb and tossed it into the corridor, but Han Wu was already airborne, evading the blast. Channeling his lightning, he struck the four gnomes guarding the exit. All of them went down, stunned by his attack.

Han Wu was about to call the ten slaves forward when a muscular figure caught his eye. As he studied the opponent, he immediately reconsidered. It was a gnome with a class—a Gnome Warrior. It was slightly taller than typical gnomes, but its aura far surpassed even the armed giant gnomes Han Wu had faced before.

The Gnome Warrior met his gaze, and in an instant, it vanished. A sharp blade suddenly lunged at Han Wu. At the last possible moment, he transformed instinctively into a light spirit composed of pure elemental energy.

The blade sliced through him, splitting his body in two, yet the Gnome Warrior recoiled in confusion. Its strike felt strange, as if it hadn't passed through flesh. Before its eyes, Han Wu's halves merged seamlessly back into one.

The light spirit was not inherently strong, but its unique composition rendered it immune to physical attacks. No matter the speed or power of the Gnome Warrior's strikes, Han Wu remained untouchable.

Refusing to accept this, the Gnome Warrior attacked again and sliced Han Wu into multiple pieces. Still, Han Wu reassembled himself in moments.

Han Wu did not remain passive. Occasionally, he unleashed arrows of light that pierced the Gnome Warrior with each shot. After thirty relentless minutes, the Gnome Warrior's body was riddled with wounds from Han Wu's light arrows.

Due to severe blood loss and the relentless fighting, the Gnome Warrior finally fell. After slaying the strongest opponent, Han Wu maintained his transformation and, alongside the ten slaves, eliminated the remaining gnomes.

Soon, they secured the mine's exit. Word of their victory spread quickly among the other slaves, who had long toiled in darkness, and they seized the chance to escape. For the first time in years, they saw sunlight. Some of them even advanced to Zealot status. Though the Faith Points from several hundred slaves were modest, they marked a promising beginning for Han Wu.

He then ordered the slaves to hunt for food nearby while he transformed back into a Thunder Sparrow to search for the treasures left by his seniors. With its incredible speed and sharp vision, he quickly discovered four wooden chests and claimed their hidden rewards.

The most valuable treasure was a 1-Star God spatial ring, offering 100 square meters of storage. It allowed him to hold many items he could not store in his divine realm for now. He also gained eight stat points, which he distributed between Intelligence and Spirit. As he did so, he noticed that his control over lightning in his Thunder Sparrow form became markedly more precise, a benefit tied directly to these stats.

While scavenging for treasures, he unexpectedly encountered two students, one male and one female, who were struggling over a bronze chest and had accidentally injured each other.

Naturally, Han Wu's sudden appearance startled the two.

"Hey, help me deal with that bitch and the wooden chest is yours. I'll also throw in a 2-Star God equipment," the boy shouted.

The girl, fearing Han Wu would accept, quickly countered, “I’m a third-year student, Meng Lian. I’m also part of the Saintess Club. Our leader is Wei En, the third-year valedictorian. If you take down that idiot, I’ll ask our leader to let you join the fan club!”

Han Wu frowned in confusion. He rarely paid attention to rumors at Imperial College, but he had heard of the Saintess Club before. The club promoted women’s rights and feminism, and the male members had to follow strict rules. They had to pay five Divine Essence each month as a membership fee, bow to female members, and cover their expenses when accompanying them on shopping trips.

Countless other one-sided rules existed, yet every year, many boys still tried to join the fan club. Han Wu couldn’t understand why anyone would want in.

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Chapter 391 - Do You Not See Your Reflection?

[1,047 words]

Chapter 391 - Do You Not See Your Reflection?

Meng Lian misread Han Wu’s silence for shock at the excitement. She grew even more arrogant as she spoke. “This is an offer every other male student would fight for, and you’ve earned it so easily. Kill that fool.”

Han Wu scoffed at her commanding tone and claimed the bronze chest as his own.

Meng Lian felt insulted. He just ignored my orders and took the chest for himself. *Doesn’t he know that it’s mine?*

“How dare you defy me and take the chest for yourself! I will spread word of your wicked deeds and ensure every female student at the college knows your wicked face,” she shrieked, sounding unhinged.

Han Wu felt his patience fray under her barrage of insults and advanced toward her.

Meng Lian assumed he was approaching her to apologize. Her voice rose even higher. “Are you scared now? Too late! I’ll only forgive you if you kill that fool and then give me all your loot as an apology!”

Han Wu could no longer contain himself. “Have you ever looked at your own reflection?”

Meng Lian froze.

He pressed, “Even if you don’t have a mirror at home, you could’ve just pissed on the ground and seen your reflection there. Where did you get the confidence to think you could command me?”

Meng Lian’s face flushed with rage. She unleashed a tirade at Han Wu without a care for propriety. “I’m a lady! What kind of man nitpicks a lady—”

Han Wu could no longer tolerate her and slapped her. She was stunned by the sudden strike. Unsatisfied with just one blow, Han Wu struck her repeatedly, determined to shatter the illusions clouding her mind.

“You think I won’t hit you just because you’re a girl? I’d strike even an animal! Have you lost your mind from living in poverty so long? Do you really expect me to give all my loot just for your forgiveness?”

“I’ve heard of the poor who only have empty walls, but you don’t even have walls! You think I’d fear you just because you belong to the Saintess Club? Do you even know who I am?” he demanded.

Meng Lian trembled, a mix of fury and humiliation coursing through her. Han Wu’s relentless blows intensified her anger, and she shouted, “Who are you? Tell me! The Saintess Club will never forgive you!”

Han Wu slapped her again. “You don’t even know me, and you dare to threaten me? Go eat shit.”

Meng Lian felt herself on the brink of madness. She had never endured such disgrace, even in her clone body.

Han Wu vented his anger before striking down her clone with his Overlord Sabre. The clone’s body dissolved into fragments of light, and a wave of relief washed over him. “Finally, the world feels quieter.”

He turned to the injured boy. The latter raised his arms and stammered, “H-hey, no need to kill me. I know the rules, and I’ll handle it myself. Still, it felt amazing when you berated her just now. I respect you deeply, so I’ll leave the God equipment I found to help you. I’ll go first.”

The boy destroyed his clone with a slap to the back of his head. Han Wu sighed because he hadn’t had time to stop him. “Why were you in such a hurry? I never wanted to kill you.”

Unfortunately, the boy could no longer hear him. Han Wu examined the items left behind: two weapons and two pieces of defensive equipment—a set of boots and a bracelet.

He didn't need the weapons immediately, so he planned to give them to the exemplary human slaves or his units upon returning to his divine realm. The defensive gear, however, would serve him well right away. He equipped the boots and bracelet, and his strength increased once more.

Elsewhere, Wei En scoured a castle perched on the side of a mountain. According to her informant, the Magic Ring was real and hidden in one of three locations in the southern region of the Middle Realm: the dwarves' castle, the elves' stronghold Ravendell, or the deep mountains within the gnomes' territory.

At present, she was exploring the dwarves' castle. The souls of fallen dwarven soldiers patrolled its halls, attacking the moment they sensed any living presence. Yet Wei En was no ordinary intruder—she was the third-year valedictorian. She raised her right arm, and scales spread across her hands. Then a God blade, forged from pure light, materialized, gleaming brilliantly and radiating sacred energy.

A single slash exorcised the fallen souls on the spot. She cut through them effortlessly and advanced deeper until she reached the vault. Inside, the treasure was staggering—so much gold that even a single ray of light reflected across the piles, illuminating the space.

Wei En surveyed the gold and jewelry heaped within the vault. The fortune was staggering, yet she felt nothing. To her, it was no more valuable than the stones scattered at her feet. As she scanned the chamber, her gaze fixed on a golden figure sprawled across the glittering hoard.

She stepped lightly, creeping closer, and realized the creature before her was a Great Dragon, its massive body shimmering gold as it slept atop the hoard. The dragon's deep, rumbling snores echoed for hundreds of meters.

She studied it carefully and spotted a golden chest floating just above its head. Unfortunately, she didn't have the ability to transform like Han Wu here right now, so she dared not make a reckless move. With absolute silence, she shifted her weight and edged nearer the dragon.

At last, she reached the dragon's side and extended her hand toward the chest. In that instant, her excitement betrayed her. A single misstep sent a coin skittering underfoot, and the slight shift unleashed a cascade. Coins tumbled around her in a glittering avalanche.

Wei En darted aside to avoid the collapse and lunged for the golden chest. She was just centimeters away when the dragon's eyes snapped open, locking onto her with a piercing glare.

Her face drained of color. Being stared down by a Great Dragon was terrifying enough, but this was a gold one—the pinnacle of physical power, its body unmatched among all others of its kind.

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[1,128 words]

Chapter 392 - Omnipotent Faith

“You lowly scum! Wretched thief! How dare you come and steal Smog's treasure!” The golden Great Dragon somehow spoke in a language Wei En could understand.

Wei En activated all her God equipment and quickly distanced herself from Smog. Seeing her attempt to escape, the dragon opened its massive maw and spewed a torrent of golden fire. She dove behind a massive stone pillar and narrowly avoided the flames.

As Smog continued to spew golden fire, countless gold coins melted and streamed across the vault. Wei En planted her daggers and anchored herself atop the pillar, keeping clear of the molten treasure while formulating a counterplan. She would not fear Smog if she were in her real body, but her clone was over 10,000 times weaker. Facing the dragon now would be suicidal, so she chose to flee.

Thanks to her boots' exceptional jumping power, she propelled herself out of the vault. Before leaving, she cast a longing glance at the golden chest hovering above Smog's head. Victory was out of reach for now; retreat was the only choice.

Even though Smog sensed that Wei En had escaped, it continued to rampage, spewing flames in every direction to vent its fury. The mountain of gold melted under its scorching heat and flowed everywhere before cooling into a single, massive mound. The various treasures became trapped within the solidified gold.

Yet one diamond glowed with a pure white light from within the pile. Its radiance formed a barrier that shielded it from the molten gold, unnoticed by Smog.

Having vented its anger, Smog gazed at the colossal mountain of gold—too heavy for anyone to move—then sprawled across it with satisfaction and fell asleep. Only once it

slept did several chests of different colors rise from beneath the solidified gold. These were the treasures that the seniors had left behind, but no one could get them.

Meanwhile, Han Wu had already led the slaves to occupy the entire mine, but securing food remained a pressing problem. With no other options, he had to cultivate his own crops. Fortunately, the Grovekin from his Thirty-Six Martial Castes could handle the task.

He first commanded the human slaves to gather the gnome corpses into a single pile before reluctantly transforming into the Grovekin. Once in his new form, he embedded his roots into the corpses beneath him and absorbed their nutrients until the flesh decayed, leaving only bones. He then used those nutrients to cultivate the breadfruits.

The fruits emitted a tantalizing aroma, and the slaves' mouths watered at the sight. Their loyalty deepened, and their prayers grew more fervent; they now regarded Han Wu as omnipotent. As the fruits ripened, the slaves' faith surged. Nearly all became Zealots, and the Faith Points they provided dramatically increased.

At this pace, Han Wu could condense a single Divine Essence in roughly ten days using only the Faith Points they provided. With enough resources, even his clone could ascend into a Demigod in the Middle Realm. Yet such a feat required ideal conditions. Ascension could not be rushed.

Han Wu considered his next moves carefully while continuing to absorb nutrients and cultivate tens of thousands of breadfruits. A single breadfruit could satiate the hunger of two human slaves for a full day. With so many, he could guarantee that they had enough to eat for at least five days.

After ordering them to store the fruits, he transformed a second time—this time into a skeleton. The slaves froze in terror at the sight. An undead was far more frightening than a gnome. Yet their loyalty to Han Wu ran so deep that fear quickly shifted to fascination and then to worship.

Their god could transform into a fruit-bearing treant, a locust, a sparrow, a light spirit, and now a skeleton. Was there anything their god could not become? More Faith Points sprouted out from their bodies, and Han Wu's progress to condensing a single Divine Essence shortened just a little.

There was a purpose behind his skeletal transformation. It was not to deepen their worship, but to convert the gnome skeletons into undead servants. He used Summon Skeleton to reanimate the dried corpses.

Their flesh fell away as dull spiritual flames ignited in their eye sockets. The corpses became the lowest-grade skeletons, fragile enough that not even ten could defeat a single slave. Still, as undead, they served as effective deterrents against the living.

If the gnomes discovered that their mine teemed with undead, they would be forced to reorganize and devise a strategy. This would buy Han Wu valuable time to continue his development.

By the time Han Wu had reduced all the corpses to skeletons, he encountered a surprise. The Gnome Warrior he had previously fought remained formidable even in skeletal form. It had transformed into a Skeleton Knight and could summon skeletons like him. This meant Han Wu no longer had to personally raise skeletons from the corpses; he could delegate that task to the Skeleton Knight, saving a transformation for a more critical purpose.

Han Wu assigned the skeletons to patrol the mine before gathering the slaves. They now had food and weapons, but the human slaves remained inexperienced in combat. As such, he decided to train them personally and, for the final transformation, assumed the form of a race called Knife Hands.

Han Wu inherited all the close-combat expertise from the unit and repeatedly demonstrated techniques for the slaves. Despite the brief training period, the humans improved noticeably under his guidance.

One slave, Akanzor, even acquired a Skill. It was a low-ranking one, but acquiring it in such a short span marked exceptional talent and potential. Recognizing this, Han Wu resolved to dedicate more time and effort to nurturing Akanzor's abilities.

The rebellion at the mine had disrupted its supply lines. Even the Gnome Warrior sent to suppress it had not returned. The mine's owner realized this uprising was no ordinary disturbance and quickly reported the situation to the gnome nobles deep within the mountains.

The gnome nobles erupted in fury upon reading the report that the human slaves had rebelled and possibly killed a Gnome Warrior.

One gnome noble commanded 1,000 giant gnomes to assemble an army to crush the uprising in the mine. He vowed to execute every slave involved, both to punish the offenders and to warn others against defying their authority.

The campaign would also serve as a display of the nobles' power. The gnome noble planned to march three days later, on the sixth day after the rebellion started.

The nobles knew food was scarce in the mine and expected many slaves to starve before the army even arrived. Those who survived would be too weak to mount any meaningful resistance.

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Chapter 393 - Capturing the Gnome Noble

[1,222 words]

Chapter 393 - Capturing the Gnome Noble

Three days later, the gnome noble led the 1,000 giant gnomes toward the mine. As they drew near, the army's scout noticed that something was wrong. "My lord! Undead creatures lurk within the mine."

The gnome noble froze in confusion. He had heard of the undead before. They were monsters raised from corpses. Any area that housed them was considered as ominous and would draw even more of their kind over time.

The gnome noble was in a dilemma. The mine belonged to the gnomes, and abandoning it so easily felt unthinkable. Yet, the presence of undead was an ill omen, and he dared not march into their lair without more knowledge. After weighing his options, he ordered the scout to monitor the mine and gather more information.

Another three days passed before the scout returned with a full report.

From the report, the gnome noble learned that the mine contained only the lowest-ranked skeletons, numbering no more than a few hundred. Even if their summoner was hiding within, the small number suggested that the other party was weak.

Encouraged, the gnome noble ordered an all-out attack, sending the entire army of giant gnomes charging toward the mine. As they closed in on its outskirts, the skeletons emerged to meet them, just as the gnomes had expected.

The skeletons were pitifully weak. One strike was enough to reduce them to splinters, and none posed any real threat. The army of giant gnomes reached the mine's entrance without much difficulty.

"Attack! Kill the rebelling slaves!" the gnome noble thundered.

The 1,000 giant gnomes marched forward in single file and pushed into the mine. Han Wu, in the form of a Thunder Sparrow, observed the invasion unfold. He had already learned of the gnome noble's advance when the scout was snooping around the mine. He then tailed it back and discovered the gnome army's location.

A thousand giant gnomes were a daunting force for him and the slaves, but the mine itself gave him the advantage. With traps in place, he could whittle them down with

ease. For three days he had driven the slaves to rig the mine and to wait for the gnome army to step inside.

The moment the giant gnomes entered, Han Wu let out a piercing cry. It was the signal that he had agreed upon with the human slaves, who lay near the mine's vents waiting for his call.

Once they got the signal, they launched their retaliation. Akanzor leapt from hiding and drew the giant gnomes' attention. This was all part of their plan.

"We found a slave! Follow him, and we'll find the others," the gnome noble shouted.

The giant gnomes spotted him at once and chased after Akanzor, driving him deeper into the mine through the cramped corridor. None of them realized that they had walked into the slaves' trap.

Akanzor reached a dead end, signaling the success of his mission. The giant gnomes chuckled when they realized he had nowhere left to flee. "Human, you have nowhere to run. Tell us where the other slaves are."

Akanzor's body was shivering as they slowly closed in but not from fear—excitement coursed through him. He crouched low and reached for the weapon that his god had bestowed him: the Overlord Sabre. He had hidden it there ahead of time.

The giant gnomes were shocked and edged back to put some distance between themselves and Akanzor. The sharper among them quickly noticed that his Overlord Sabre was no ordinary weapon.

"Human, hand over your weapon, and we will spare you," the leader said and carefully approached Akanzor.

The others grumbled because they were one step too late. To them, a human was nothing to fear; even ten together posed no threat. The leader stood ten meters away from Akanzor when the latter shouted and drove the Overlord Sabre into the ground.

The stone floor split under the weapon's force, and cracks raced outward until they widened into deep fissures before Akanzor. This was the slaves'

trap.

The ground shattered beneath the giant gnomes, plunging them into a pit lined with razor-sharp spikes made out of hard stone. More than fifty of the giant gnomes were impaled and died, while the rest were heavily injured.

Akanzor smiled, swung the Overlord Sabre into the wall beside him, and revealed a narrow corridor barely wide enough for one person. He quickly escaped through the corridor.

The giant gnomes had fallen for Akanzor's trap. Rather than pursue him, they turned back to retreat. They had barely taken a few steps when the ground shook violently. A cascade of stones and rocks fell from the ceiling and blocked the path to the entrance.

The giant gnomes all realized that they had been deceived. With no other path open, they were forced to funnel into the same corridor that Akanzor had taken, squeezing through one by one in a slow, constricted line.

At the far end of the corridor, hundreds of armed slaves lay in wait, ready to spring their ambush! The terrain gave them every advantage, and they held unwavering confidence that they could kill the giant gnomes if they emerged one by one.

A Skeleton Knight was standing among the human slaves. Its task was to turn the corpses into skeletons to aid the human slaves in their battle.

The gnome noble outside didn't know that his army was in trouble. He had been waiting for several hours for news. Even the scout that he had sent in hadn't returned.

He realized that something must've gone wrong. The giant gnomes could have died in the mine. Faced with the prospect of danger, he decided to flee.

When the gnome noble turned around, he found Han Wu was blocking the path. He raised his sabre and tried to intimidate Han Wu. "Human, do you know who I am? I am the nephew of the Gnome Lord who governs the deep mountains. If you dare lay one hand on me, you will suffer his wrath!"

In reality, the gnome noble was very afraid. His status as a noble made his life far more valuable than the worth of the giant gnomes and the Gnome Warriors. A thousand giant gnomes did not equal even a single joint of his fingers. At that moment, his only concern was his own safety, not the lives of the 1,000 giant gnomes. Once he returned, he would have to report the news to the Gnome Lord and request for thousands of Gnome Warriors to level this entire mine.

Han Wu ignored the gnome noble's threats. He brandished a 2-Star God longsword and pointed it at the gnome noble.

"You dare point a sword at me? You shall die!" the gnome noble shouted. He understood that escape depended on defeating the man before him, so he struck first.

Unfortunately for him, the gnome noble was woefully inexperienced compared to Han Wu, who was a God. Even as a mere clone right now that couldn't use his powerful

Skills, he still retained his muscle memories and battle instincts. Within a few exchanges, he easily injured the gnome noble.

Rather than finish him off, Han Wu commanded two skeletons to drag him into the mine. The gnome noble's life could be valuable to him right now.

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

[1,230 words]

Chapter 394 - Second Divine Power

The capture of a gnome noble sent shockwaves through the deep mountain ranges. The Gnome Lord was enraged, and the other nobles urged him to use the gnomes' ultimate weapon and level the mine.

The Gnome Lord considered their proposal but rejected it. The human slaves' lives and the mine itself held no value to him, yet the life of a gnome noble carried immense importance, especially one with royal blood in his veins. He must do his best to protect such a figure.

The Gnome Lord also learned that the humans had spared the captured gnome noble, which made it clear that the humans were waiting for someone to go and rescue him. In response, he dispatched a gnome noblewoman with 100 Gnome Warriors to the mine, both to ensure the noblewoman's safety and to display the gnomes' strength.

The gnome noblewoman led the Gnome Warriors toward the mine to open negotiations. She loathed the foul air and disgusting surroundings, but for the sake of her race she forced herself to endure it and sit across from Han Wu at the table.

Han Wu already anticipated that they would send a rescue party and had prepared his terms in advance. At present, the gnomes were stronger than him, so he couldn't afford to name an outrageous price. If he pushed too far, they could get angry and raze the entire mine. Thus, he had to keep his terms simple while still securing benefits for himself.

Han Wu pretended to weigh the terms before naming his price. He wanted the gnome noblewoman to guide him through the gnomes' territory. Once the tour ended, he would release the gnome noble.

Naturally, the request baffled her. What kind of benefits could a human gain from a simple tour of their territory?

Could he be after information about our military, defenses, security, and other domestic affairs?

she wondered.

Unable to decide on her own, the gnome noblewoman sent a letter back to the Gnome Lord. The latter shared the same concerns. In the end, he allowed Han Wu to tour the territory, though only within the royal city, and the tour would be limited to three days.

Han Wu was dissatisfied with the short duration but ultimately accepted. He had already collected more than ten chests from just a single mine, and the gnomes' royal city held far greater value. The chances of finding even more chests there were almost certain.

He followed the gnome noblewoman into the royal city under the watchful guard of a great escort of Gnome Warriors. Over the course of the tour, he explored the entire city, with only the land around the Gnome Lord's residence remaining off-limits.

Han Wu obtained sixty wooden chests, thirty bronze chests, ten iron chests, and two silver chests. By any measure, his gains from this tour were considerable. Alongside an abundance of lower-ranking God equipment, Sacred Objects, and Skills, he gained 350 points.

He started allocating the points among his stats. To his surprise, when his total points reached 100, he could unlock another Divine Power beyond his five stats. He only needed to spend 100 points to unlock it.

As a God with many powerful Divine Powers, he quickly spent the points and activated the second Divine Power. From the list of his remaining locked Divine Powers, he carefully considered his options and selected the True Demon King Transformation.

Although the Middle Realm's powers imposed heavy restrictions on it, limiting the transformation to once per day and only for five minutes, it remained powerful. His clone was weak right now, so the True Demon King Transformation would serve as his trump card for survival.

After investing the 100 points, 250 points remained. He divided them evenly across his five stats, and felt more powerful as the numbers increased. Now his might rivaled that of a Gnome Warrior. With his combat experience, he could easily break free from the encirclement of 100 Gnome Warriors.

Confident by his newfound strength, he demanded a visit to the Gnome Lord's palace. The noblewoman flatly refused. The palace was not only the Gnome Lord's residence but also the most revered place within the deep mountain. They would never allow a human to take a step inside.

Han Wu threatened them that he wouldn't release the gnome noble if he wasn't granted entry. With little choice, the noblewoman relayed his threat to the Gnome Lord. To save the gnome noble, the Gnome Lord agreed, but only on the condition that Han Wu couldn't take anything from within the palace.

Han Wu chuckled and agreed. *You guys can't even see the things that I take away.*

Escorted by the gnome noblewoman and hundreds of Gnome Warriors, Han Wu stepped into the palace. They were afraid that Han Wu would cause trouble here, yet they saw him dart about like a monkey and grin foolishly from time to time.

None of them realized how much Han Wu had already gained simply by setting foot inside. Even he hadn't anticipated the palace to hold so many treasure chests. Halfway through his tour, he had already found three silver chests. One held a 4-Star God equipment, another a Rank 4 Sacred Object, and the third a powerful Skill and a rare ingredient. The chests also granted sixteen points in total.

Han Wu was reaping enormous rewards and quickly noticed a pattern: the more perilous the location, the greater the prize. To test his theory, he headed toward the palace's main hall. This was the heart of the palace, where the Gnome Lord and the other gnome nobles discussed important matters.

Once inside, he spotted a golden chest floating above the throne. It gleamed with an alluring gold light that tempted anyone who saw it to reach out and touch it.

Han Wu swallowed hard and slowly approached the throne. When he was just five meters away from it, two shadowy figures emerged and barred his path.

"Do not approach the throne of our Lord. Trespassers shall die!" they declared in unison, their voices echoing as if from a single mouth.

Han Wu, now far stronger than before, gauged their power at once. They were at least as powerful as a King life form. Even if he descended into this world with his true body, defeating them would not be easy. Still, he had to get the golden chest no matter what.

"I'm not here for the throne. I just want to take a look," he said.

His excuse was ineffective. The two shadowy figures stood immovable at the throne's sides, looming like iron towers. Behind him, even the gnome noblewoman got annoyed and shouted for him to return to the mine and release the captured gnome noble. Meanwhile, the 100 Gnome Warriors brandished their swords and prepared to attack.

Sensing the rising tension, Han Wu decided to act. He immediately used the True Demon King Transformation and turned into a ten-meter tall Demon King. His transformation sent a powerful shockwave that tore the roof away. At the same time,

sand and debris whipped through the air, which forced the two shadowy figures to shield their eyes.

Han Wu seized that opening and stepped forward. At last, he brushed the golden chest with the tip of his foot, and in that instant, he absorbed its contents into his storage.

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

[1,071 words]

Chapter 395 - Transmutation Golem

[6-Star God Equipment: Ju Que[1]]

[5-Star God Equipment Set: Abyss]

[Rank 5 Skill: Nine Falling Heaven]

[100 points]

These were the treasures hidden inside the golden chest. Han Wu was stunned because the rewards were too valuable! A single golden chest offered more than the five silver chests that he had just collected combined.

Unfortunately, the two shadowy figures attacked before he could celebrate. Their powerful blows crashed against Han Wu's Demon King form and inflicted shallow wounds that disappeared under his regeneration within seconds.

Han Wu chose to retaliate. He brandished Ju Que, then equipped the Abyss armor set before attacking. The 6-Star God sword grew larger with his energy, stretching into a 100-meter-long sword that pushed the two shadowy figures back with ease.

At the same time, his new Abyss armor set exuded a form of pressure and bloodlust. The bloodlust condensed into the air and formed a thin yet resilient barrier that helped him deflect numerous strikes.

Han Wu also seized the opportunity to comprehend the Rank 5 Skill: Nine Falling Heaven. With his accumulated battle experience and mastery of various sword techniques, he met the powerful Skill's strict requirements and unleashed its power.

As he used Nine Falling Heaven, nine ten-meter-long swords took shape in the sky hundreds of meters above. They radiated unwavering strength and indestructible force before plunging downward. The swords tore through what remained of the great hall,

their impact cracking the ground apart. When they punched through the great hall's floor, Han Wu noticed a big black hole beneath it.

He didn't know what lay within, but he was certain that it was important. A hidden hole beneath the great hall of the Gnome Lord's palace was far too suspicious to ignore. Hence, he resolved to explore it.

First, though, he needed to eliminate the two shadowy figures before his transformation time expired. He channeled his energy into Ju Que and formed a 100-meter-long sword of Wind Energy. He then used all four of his Swordwind Arms and slashed downward.

"Steelcutter!" he roared.

The attack's overwhelming force obliterated the entire great hall and the surrounding structures. Countless wind blades exploded outward and cut down everything around him.

The 100 Gnome Warriors encircling Han Wu died in an instant. Only the gnome noblewoman survived due to an artifact of extraordinary defensive power. The two shadowy figures guarding the throne were heavily injured from Steelcutter.

Han Wu had intended to finish them off and eliminate any future threat, but before he could act, an old gnome clad in full armor and wielding a giant hammer stormed into the ruins.

With blazing speed, the old gnome attacked Han Wu's Demon King form. Although his clone had been enhanced, it was still only a copy and couldn't compare to his true body. The old gnome was powerful enough to shatter Han Wu's defenses even in his Demon King form, and in that instant his transformation collapsed.

Seizing the moment while the Gnome Lord faltered, Han Wu jumped into the hole.

"Quick! Stop him from entering our ancestral grounds!" the Gnome Lord thundered.

However, no one came to his aid. The Gnome Warriors were all dead, and the two shadowy figures were wounded.

The Gnome Lord glared at the hole and coughed. He wanted to pursue Han Wu, but his armor was too heavy. Even if he entered, he would still lag behind. As such, he abandoned the chase and turned to aid the two shadowy figures in tending their wounds. At the same time, he dispatched an order to all the gnome nobles under his command: each was to lead at least 100 Gnome Warriors to guard the palace.

The gnome nobles nursed ambitions of their own, but none dared to defy him. Within half a day, twelve gnome nobles arrived with a combined force of 1,400 Gnome Warriors—an army large enough to face a powerful foe. Unexpectedly, the Gnome Lord

commanded them to enter the hole and search for Han Wu within their ancestral grounds.

Unbeknownst to them, Han Wu was already inside. He used his 6-Star God Ju Que to slice open the giant stone gates and pressed deeper inside. He had already transformed into a light spirit and rendered every physical trap in the ancestral grounds useless against him.

He passed through numerous corridors until he reached a giant underground palace, which served as a royal mausoleum where generations of Gnome Lords had been laid to rest. Strangely, they had all been interred with their heads facing the same direction.

Intrigued, Han Wu followed the line of their gazes and found only empty space. After a moment of contemplation, he drove Ju Que into the ground.

The earth split open, revealing a hidden chamber. Inside stood a figure nearly five meters tall, encased in impenetrable armor engraved with numerous strange runes.

“Is that... a mech?” Han Wu stammered.

This was Middle Realm, a world of western fantasy. Advanced technology had no place here, so how could a mech possibly exist?

Han Wu studied it more closely and realized what it was. The five-meter-tall figure wasn't a mech. Its limbs were attached to the main body with special threads rather than wires, and those threads conducted for magic with startling efficiency.

After a careful inspection, he confirmed that it wasn't a mech but a Transmutation Golem crafted by gnome alchemists. He was curious and touched it tentatively. The golem stirred with a low whir before its torso split open, revealing what looked like a cockpit.

Han Wu climbed inside and settled into the seat. Two crystal balls rested before him. All he had to do was place his hands on them, and they would absorb his magic energy. The energy would then circulate through the threads, allowing the pilot to control the Transmutation Golem with their mind alone. However, in order to operate it, the pilot needed exceptionally high Intelligence and Willpower—at least 100 points in each.

Han Wu fell short, with only fifty in both attributes. Thankfully, he had managed to gain an extra 100 points from the golden chest. Hence, he allocated them evenly between the two attributes and could finally pilot the golem.

In that instant, a strange sensation coursed through him. His very cells seemed to fuse with the golem, as though they had become one.

1. This is the name of a fairly famous sword 🗡️

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[1,026 words]

Chapter 396 - The Gnomes' Hatred

All 1,400 Gnome Warriors entered the ancestral grounds and froze at the sight before them. Han Wu had easily managed to slice open the stone gates, each several meters thick, with Ju Que. The cut surface was unnaturally smooth, proof that Han Wu's weapon had a terrifying edge.

The Gnome Lord had removed most of his heavy armor and was leading the army. He looked at the sliced stone gates and understood how dire the situation had become.

They ran down the corridor of ruined stone gates until they reached the ancestral grounds. There, the Gnome Lord saw Han Wu controlling the Transmutation Golem.

"You damned human! How dare you touch our race's sacred treasure!" the Gnome Lord demanded.

The Gnome Lord's fury was justified. The Transmutation Golem was a treasure crafted through the lost arts of alchemy. Legends claimed that it rivaled a Great Dragon in strength. Aside from the Gnome Lord, only a handful of gnome nobles knew of its existence. The rest of the Gnome Warriors had no knowledge of what it was or why such a precious treasure lay hidden beneath the great hall.

Han Wu ignored the Gnome Lord and focused on learning how to pilot the golem. He controlled the golem and guided it toward the exit.

A gnome shouted, "That human is trying to escape. All warriors, throw your bombs and kill him!"

The Gnome Warriors yanked the bombs from their waists and tossed them at Han Wu. Each bomb was coated in a sticky substance that clung to almost any surface before exploding.

As expected, the bombs latched onto the golem's surface without slipping off. Han Wu tried prying them loose, but the adhesive held fast, and several bombs stubbornly stuck to the golem's fingers.

Before he could rid himself of them, the bombs went off. The first explosion triggered the rest, unleashing a chain of violent explosions that engulfed the golem completely.

Unexpectedly, they proved useless. The golem strode out of the dense smoke without so much as a scratch.

Even the Gnome Lord, who had read about its powers, was stunned. He regretted not using the Transmutation Golem to crush the rebellion in the mine from the start. Now the situation was spinning out of control.

“You despicable human. Release the golem, and we will let you leave in peace.” The Gnome Lord fought to keep the Transmutation Golem within the kingdom at any cost, even if it meant placating Han Wu.

Han Wu flipped the bird at him. The Gnome Lord didn’t know the gesture’s meaning, but he had a feeling that it was an insult.

With a roar, the Gnome Lord swung his giant hammer at Han Wu. The weapon struck the golem with full force, but instead of damaging it, the hammer itself dented. He kept swinging at the golem, and more dents appeared on the hammer. Meanwhile, the golem remained unscathed and had instead grown one centimeter taller.

Inside the cockpit, Han Wu noticed that the golem was actually absorbing the hammer’s metal to expand its body. At the moment, it was only five meters tall.

He wondered how strong it would become if it absorbed even more metal. To test it, he charged straight at the Gnome Lord.

The Gnome Lord fell back while several Gnome Warriors rushed forward to protect him, only to be struck away.

Han Wu seized the Gnome Warriors’ weapons, and the runes etched into the golem’s body flared to life. A stream of energy poured from the weapons into the golem. Within seconds, the weapons crumbled to dust, and the golem grew taller again.

Han Wu finally understood the golem’s true power. It could keep growing as long as there was metal to absorb.

The Gnome Lord panicked. As the gnomes’ leader, he knew of the Transmutation Golem’s unique properties. Its creation had once sparked a huge war among the gnome nobility, and the last surviving noble family sealed it to prevent another civil war. Ironically, the Transmutation Golem had become a weapon turned against the gnomes themselves.

“Destroy it! Do everything you can to break it!” the Gnome Lord hollered.

Sadly, not even the combined strength of 1,400 Gnome Warriors and twelve powerful gnome nobles could do anything to the golem’s impenetrable defenses, let alone wound

Han Wu. On the other hand, the latter seized many of their weapons and absorbed them.

The gnomes were stunned. They couldn't defeat or blast it apart. Despair gripped them as they watched the Transmutation Golem their ancestors had created now wielded against them. They hated their ancestors for creating a golem too durable to destroy.

With the battle turning hopeless, the Gnome Lord ordered a full retreat. Until they found a good solution, their only choice was to cut their losses.

Han Wu kept tinkering with the golem rather than chasing after them. He remained in the ancestral grounds and practiced various moves to grow accustomed to controlling it.

By the next day, the Gnome Lord was still in distress, unable to devise a strategy to stop the golem.

After practicing through the night, Han Wu finally grew familiar with the golem. He piloted it out of the ancestral grounds and appeared in the great hall's ruins.

The gnome nobles were all glaring at him with hatred. After all, he was piloting their most prized creation, the Transmutation Golem. How could they allow a mere human to tarnish it?

Han Wu ignored them and headed toward the exit. Along the way, more gnome nobles and Gnome Warriors glared at him, but none dared to stop him.

"I'm leaving," Han Wu said. "I also promised to release the gnome noble after my tour. I will fulfill my promise once I return."

None of the gnomes rejoiced, even though one of their own would soon be freed. Their hatred for Han Wu burned hotter than any joy could. Still, they could do nothing to stop him. They could only watch as he carried off their treasure.

After leaving the palace, Han Wu ran toward his mine. He needed to get back as quickly as possible.

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Chapter 397 - Uprising of the Mine

[1,090 words]

Chapter 397 - Uprising of the Mine

Han Wu ran and reached the mine within half a day. The human slaves guarding the entrance spotted the golem and immediately sounded the alarm. Others rushed to their posts, ready for battle, and only stood down after confirming that Han Wu was the one piloting the golem.

After returning to the mine, Han Wu's first order was to release the captured gnome noble. Since the gnomes had been generous enough to *give* him the golem, he decided to return the favor by releasing their kin.

The gnome noble knew nothing of what Han Wu had done in his kingdom. He strutted out of the prison with arrogance, thinking that Han Wu's fate was sealed. Naturally, the sight of the Transmutation Golem beside Han Wu stunned him.

As one of the gnome nobles, he possessed all of the qualifications to know of the golem's existence. *Did the Gnome Lord surrender to him because he has the golem?*

Han Wu wasn't going to answer any questions and ordered his men to chase him out of the cave. He then piloted the golem in a mine rich in ore to start his experiment. Stepping into a huge pile of ore, he felt a surge of energy flow from the ore into the golem. As the energy poured in, the golem started to grow.

It expanded from five meters to six, then seven, eight, and finally ten before a loud rumble echoed from within. Han Wu then noticed that the golem gained a new ability called Manufacture, which allowed it to absorb energy from metals and create a lesser version of itself. The weaker golem stood five meters tall and matched the original's defense and strength, but it lacked the ability to absorb energy from metals.

Han Wu was eager to test it and fed the golem a vast amount of ore to create the first lesser golem. He jumped into the lesser golem and confirmed his expectations—it possessed the same strength and defenses but couldn't grow through metal absorption. It was a fixed product that wouldn't change over time.

Even so, it was immensely powerful. It could destroy 1,000 units before falling. With the mine's abundant ore, he continued to pilot the main golem and create more lesser golems. He intended to form the first golem army and use it to expand his influence.

Back in the outside world, the gnomes had spread word of Han Wu's possession of the Transmutation Golem to every major faction in the Middle Realm. Before long, the various factions and species learned of what had transpired.

Most of the major factions had records of the Transmutation Golem. They feared it but coveted its power no less. The gnomes' reports also described Han Wu's current forces, revealing that he commanded only a few thousand human slaves and lacked any powerful combatants.

The various factions started to move and scheme. For someone weak, possessing such a treasure was a death sentence. The elves, humans, dwarves, and demihumans all readied their elite troops to march into the deep mountains. They would eradicate the mine and seize the golem for themselves.

Word of the situation soon reached the students of Imperial College as well. Qin Shuang, Jing Jing, and Sun Qingnian dropped what they were doing and rushed to Han Wu's side to help him.

Several merchants also set their sights on the golem but didn't want to offend Han Wu. Instead, they attempted to purchase it from him with extravagant sums.

Han Wu wouldn't sell the golem, though he had no qualms about selling the lesser golems. He contacted some of the richer merchants and demonstrated their strength.

The merchants tested the lesser golems and were all shocked by their durability. Ordinary weapons couldn't even scratch them. Only the dwarven master forgers, who had spent years crafting a single blade, could hope to leave the faintest mark on them. Yet even that was the limit of their sharpness. To truly destroy one required both a powerful weapon and a formidable warrior of exceptional skill.

The merchants immediately recognized their value and started calling out prices to purchase them. Han Wu had no interest in coin. He would be there temporarily, and their currency held no real worth for him. Its only purpose was to purchase more ores and slaves. The ores would let him manufacture additional golems, while the slaves would further increase his Faith Points.

When Qin Shuang, Jing Jing, and Sun Qingnian reached his base, they joined his work. Under his guidance, Qin Shuang and Sun Qingnian selected the Nine Martial Castes as their second Divine Power. Through it, they could obtain a portion of the Faith Points from Han Wu's followers, which helped them turn their clones into Demigods.

Meanwhile, Jing Jing took over the skeleton production from Han Wu. Under her nurturing, the once-fragile skeletons grew ten times stronger and the spiritual flames within their skulls burned brighter.

As the four of them worked together, the mine's influence steadily grew. However, before they could even expand further, the various factions' elite forces arrived. They surrounded the mine and sent an envoy to issue their ultimatum: Han Wu was to surrender the Transmutation Golem or die.

Han Wu wasn't going to be intimidated by them. He had wrested the Transmutation Golem from the gnomes with his own hands and would never yield it.

Seeing that Han Wu was adamant in his decision, the factions decided to destroy the mine. They would eliminate Han Wu and his human slaves first, then decide who would claim the Transmutation Golem.

A huge war erupted, and the area around the mine turned into a battlefield. Han Wu wouldn't retreat before the elite troops and sent out his lesser golem army. A hundred of them surged from the mine to attack the first advancing wave.

Although they were facing the various factions' elites, the lesser golems' absurd defenses made them impervious to damage. None of the invaders could harm them.

Within two days, the allied forces had lost 3,000 soldiers, while Han Wu had only lost one lesser golem. He retrieved it from the battlefield, brought it back to the mine, and used the Transmutation Golem to absorb its energy, which he then used to create a new one.

At the same time, Jing Jing raised the various corpses into skeletons to fight against the allied army. After that battle, the various factions finally understood that Han Wu's faction wasn't as weak as they had imagined.

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

[1,256 words]

Chapter 398 - Everyone's Motive

Defeating the army was the first step in Han Wu's plan. The second was to spread word that he intended to sell the lesser golems.

The news shocked every faction in the southern region, especially the gnomes. The Transmutation Golem and the lesser golems were valuable treasures that they had gone to great lengths to conceal from the other factions, yet Han Wu had deliberately made their existence known.

He wanted the world to see the lesser golems' strength and announced that he would auction them off. The factions that had suffered defeat at the hands of his lesser golem army would do anything to purchase one.

Han Wu was certain that they would buy them no matter the price. Owning even one would increase the factions' strength. Once they grew stronger, the smaller factions would have no choice but to purchase golems of their own to withstand the larger factions' inevitable attacks. That was the only way for them to survive in a war between larger factions.

Han Wu had already anticipated criticism for selling the lesser golems but didn't care. He was confident that the larger factions would shield him if trouble arose. As long as he declared himself a neutral party, they would all leave him alone.

Once the news spread that he intended to sell the lesser golems, the once-intimidating factions all sent envoys bearing goodwill. They apologized for their earlier rude behavior and offered various treasures in hopes of securing more lesser golems, or at least ensuring future purchases.

Han Wu had no interest in wasting time with them and decided to let Sun Qingnian handle the external affairs. He had a feeling that by the time negotiations ended, the large factions would be bleeding their coffers dry under Sun Qingnian's hand. They would likely even have to offer up a princess or two to him in the process.

The news of the sales expanded the mine's influence. Even the students from Imperial College were looking for ways to profit from the trade.

Regardless of what Han Wu said, he was still a first-year student. The second- or third-year students still had more experience than he did.

In a newly founded kingdom that admitted only women, Wei En, the president of the Saintess Club, sat on the throne and studied the report in her hand.

"Are you sure this is real?" Her voice carried gravity as she addressed the girl kneeling in front of her.

The girl nodded. "Yes, President. I've confirmed it through one of my spies. He's a back-up^[1] of mine that got this information from a gnome noble."

Wei En stood up, mumbling, "The deep mountain ranges... The Transmutation Golem... Is this related to the Magic Ring? Prepare the vehicle. I need to visit Junior Han Wu myself."

"Yes," the girl replied with devotion.

Elsewhere, in a forest bathed in the glow of the setting sun, Huang Shengjun stood on a moving war wagon with a crown upon his head. He was monitoring the goblin army training to the side.

Since descending into the Middle Realm, he had chosen to nurture the goblins that he knew best. With his deep understanding of the goblins, he easily spread his faith and became their king.

The former king of the goblin kingdom, Caesar, stood in loyal attendance behind him and handed him a message. Huang Shengjun opened the report, and his eyes lit up. "The new faction from the mine defeated the allied forces of the various factions using

the lesser golems they manufactured. Interesting. We should go see them for ourselves. Caesar, bring a few treasures. Let's see if we can buy a couple of those golems."

Caesar nodded.

Inside the Garden of Behemoths, Xiang Meng sprinted toward his friends, waving a flyer. "Xia Tian, Ye Ling! There's a new faction from a mine. Apparently, they are selling lesser golems powerful enough that even the allied forces of the larger factions couldn't stand against them."

Xia Tian took the flyer and read it carefully. "Something's off about this. I think one of us is behind this."

"What should we do?" Xiang Meng asked.

Ye Ling answered, "We should go and check it out. There might be clues about the Magic Rings there."

Xia Tian nodded. "Then let's get ready to move."

Within Ravendell, Elina had also received news of the rising faction. "Han Wu has found the Transmutation Golem! Even though it's not as precious as the Magic Ring, it's still a fairly valuable lost treasure. If Han Wu offers it to the Light, then he will earn the Light's blessings. I must work hard and persuade him to return to the Light's embrace."

Back in the mine, Jing Jing commanded the tireless skeletons to build a grand stone palace that would serve as the trading location for the lesser golems' sale.

The slaves were assigned to the intricate engraving work. Even though it was a daunting job, they embraced it with willing hearts as they were laboring for their god. No matter how exhausting the work became, they devoted themselves to it with unwavering zeal.

Jing Jing watched them closely. Her spiritual flames hidden beneath her twinkling eyes were dancing. By the slaves' energy fluctuations, she could sense the purity of their faith in Han Wu.

"*Hmph*. My faith surpasses theirs. I must become my god's only believer," Jing Jing mumbled, then ordered her skeletons to work even harder.

Deeper within the mines, Han Wu was elated to see that his Transmutation Golem had grown to twenty meters. Its strength reached a new threshold, and its attacks were more destructive now. It had also acquired a new ability: the capacity to equip a new weapon called the Magic Cannon, which could also be fitted onto all manufactured lesser golems.

The Magic Cannon could absorb the magic particles in the air, condense them into a bullet, and release a devastating blast that could carve a ten-meter crater into the earth. The only drawback was that it required a three-minute charge time.

However, Han Wu didn't consider it an issue. After all, it finally granted his lesser golems a ranged attack option. Naturally, he had no intention of fitting the Magic Cannons on the ones he planned to sell. The good weapons would remain his alone. Once he unlocked another ability, he could always sell the lesser golems with Magic Cannons later.

He was still considering his next steps when Qin Shuang, who had transformed into a Thunder Sparrow, flew to his side. "Han Wu, the third-year valedictorian Wei En is here to see you. Apparently, she's here to talk to you about something important."

Han Wu raised an eyebrow. "Wei En, the third-year valedictorian? She must be the one who founded the Saintess Club. Let's see what she has to discuss with me."

He followed Qin Shuang into the newly built courtyard, where Wei En and her two subordinates were waiting.

One of them spotted Han Wu and shouted, "Junior Han, what's with this arrogance? You kept us waiting here ten whole minutes. How are you going to make it up to us?"

"Come on. I doubt Junior Han is stingy," the other chimed in. "Junior Han, how about you give each of us a lesser golem? One would be more than enough to earn our favor. Surely that's a bargain you can't refuse!"

While the two girls chattered and amused themselves, Han Wu smiled and ordered, "Send them off!"

1. a simp basically 📧

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[1,169 words]

Chapter 399 - Retorting the Seniors

"Junior Han, what is the meaning of this?" one of the girls demanded.

"It's exactly as I said. Goodbye." Han Wu waved his hands, and two slaves stepped forward to escort the trio away.

The other girl shoved the slaves to the ground. “Han Wu, I’m trying to preserve your reputation by calling you junior. Don’t get cocky!”

Han Wu gestured for the slaves to back away. “I don’t need you to preserve my reputation. One must uphold it themselves. Also, it can be lost through one’s own shameless actions, just like what you are doing now.”

“Who are you calling shameless?” the two girls shrieked in unison.

They had always seen themselves as fairies above everyone else and had never before faced an insult.

Meanwhile, Wei En’s face tightened with displeasure. The two girls were her club mates, and Han Wu was blatantly insulting them. She interpreted his behavior as provocation.

“Junior Han, I will not ignore your words. You must give me a proper explanation, or I will not let you go!” Wei En’s words emboldened the two girls, who flaunted their arrogance and waited for Han Wu to apologize.

Han Wu sniggered. “What’s wrong? Can’t get it by begging, and now you’re trying to rob me?”

“Bullshit. Who’s begging for anything? How could we do something so shameless?” one of the girls barked.

Han Wu snickered. “Are you sure? Who told me to give each of you a lesser golem? We’ve only just met, and you already expect me to hand over such a precious gift? How shameless can you get?”

“You are a man. What’s wrong with giving us things? Besides, those were supposed to be apology gifts. Ten minutes of our time are very precious,” she argued.

Han Wu’s grin widened. “I should give you gifts just because I’m a man? What kind of logic is that? Do you think I have never seen a girl before? And why should I apologize to you? You didn’t even inform me in advance before coming here. Shouldn’t you be the ones apologizing?”

The trio attempted to gaslight and guilt-trip him.

“*Haiya*, you are already an adult man,” one of them said. “Stop nitpicking us girls and try to be more courteous. It’s not as if you’ll die just from making a small sacrifice for us.”

Han Wu rolled his eyes. “Sure, I won’t die, but I will feel disgusted. What’s so good about any of you? Honestly, there’s barely any difference between men and women, no?”

He stared at the trio pointedly.

“You lecherous bastard! Shameful brat! Once I get back to the college, I will spread the news of how you insulted and belittled us. Every single girl there will know your true face!” one of the girls shouted hysterically.

The other pointed at Qin Shuang. “Junior Qin Shuang, now do you see him for what he really is? He’s a despicable, bastard wolf in sheep’s clothing. He doesn’t deserve your love. Leave him now, and we of the Saintess Club will help you find a better man.”

Qin Shuang shook her head. “Seniors, please do not accuse someone without proof. Han Wu may speak a little aggressively, but he hasn’t insulted you to the point of verbal abuse.”

“Junior Qin, he must have fooled you. We are all girls here and wouldn’t lie to you. He’s definitely unreliable. You have to trust us.” One of them reached out, trying to pull Qin Shuang toward them.

Han Wu reacted instantly and slapped her hand away. “Keep your filthy hands to yourself.”

The girl was infuriated. She looked every bit the unbearable girl scolding someone in public as she shouted, “You dirty bastard. How dare you touch me in public and even slap my hand away? What kind of man are you?”

The other girl snapped, “Don’t think you can touch us just because you’re a man. You’ve picked the wrong people to mess with today. Junior Qin, if you are truly a woman, you should be standing with us. Don’t let him fool you.”

Qin Shuang shook her head adamantly, her anger rising. “Seniors, if you keep accusing Han Wu of things he didn’t do, then I’ll be angry too.”

“Qin Shuang, how could you forgo the bonds of our womanhood for one man’s sake? You are one of those foolish women that would let the man sell you and still help him count the money.”

Han Wu’s expression darkened at her words. He had no desire to continue arguing with them and brandished his weapon. “If your goal today is to disgust me, then congratulations. Now leave. Get out of my place.”

Wei En frowned. “I hate it when someone points their weapon at me. Junior Han, hand us the lesser golems, and I might forgive you.”

Han Wu scoffed. “I hate letting people like you walk away. Kill your clone here, and I will consider carving a nice gravestone for you.”

Furious at his provocation, Wei En lunged with her own weapon. Han Wu countered immediately without hesitation. Both were inhabiting their clones and had roughly equal total stats, so it was hard to predict the winner.

Wei En decided to reveal her full strength and activated her powerful Divine Power: Martial Goddess. In that instant, a halo of golden light enveloped her, and she exuded a crushing pressure.

Han Wu felt the incoming force and immediately summoned his 5-Star God armor set, Abyss, to protect himself. He also activated his True Demon King Transformation, and his body swelled to ten times its normal size.

Gripping his 6-Star God weapon, Ju Que, he channeled Wind Energy through his Swordwind Arms and summoned a razor-sharp wind blade that was 100 meters long.

Wei En stared in disbelief. She didn't even possess 5- or 6-Star God equipment, yet Han Wu was blatantly wielding them. That was when she realized that he must have obtained a golden chest.

A surge of envy erupted deep within her mind. How can he get a golden chest, and I can't? Is it because he's a man and I'm a woman? This is unfair!

Her envy intensified and heavily influenced her Martial Goddess. It started transforming into another Divine Power that the Saintess Club's members called Asuri. The golden light enveloping her body now shimmered with purple flower engravings, each new blossom amplifying her strength.

Han Wu wouldn't wait for her transformation to finish and swung Ju Que down with a sharp cry. "Steelcutter!"

The huge wind blade cleaved Wei En's transforming body clean in half, and yet she didn't die. Her two halves began to slowly knit themselves back together.

The other two girls froze in horror at Han Wu's display of strength. Each grabbed one half of Wei En's body and fled, moving with such speed, it seemed they had rehearsed it numerous times.

Han Wu abandoned the pursuit as they were far too fast. Evidently, they had pulled this move many times before.

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[1,222 words]

Chapter 400 - Auction

After defeating Wei En, Han Wu released his transformation and felt the weight of exhaustion. Here, he could use his Divine Power only once per day, and each transformation drained a tremendous amount of his stamina.

Han Wu was about to return to rest when someone else came looking for him. It was Elina, the God King of Light's daughter, flanked by two handsome elves.

Han Wu grumbled inwardly, *She really picked the perfect time to come looking for me, right when I'm exhausted.*

"Han Wu, I am here to—" Elina began, but Han Wu cut her off before she could finish.

"I'm tired today and want to rest. Talk to me tomorrow," he said.

Elina refused to let him walk away just like that. "I have something important to discuss, and you must listen to me."

Han Wu ignored her and turned to return to his room, but Elina chased after him.

Qin Shuang stopped her vehemently. "Han Wu said he's going back to rest."

Elina's distress showed. "But this is crucial for Han Wu. It's about him joining the Light faction."

Qin Shuang rolled her eyes at Elina's persistence. Han Wu had rejected her numerous times, yet she still kept pestering him to join the Light faction.

"This is the last time I'll say this. Han Wu is tired and needs rest. He will never join the Light faction because he's already the Holy Son of Death!" Qin Shuang stated.

Elina stood her ground. "If he joins the Light faction, he can become a Holy Son as well."

Qin Shuang didn't want to waste time bickering with her and drew her sword. "Han Wu wants to rest. Stop bothering him and leave."

Elina had never experienced anything like this before, yet she prepared to strike. She gathered light particles in her hands and formed an orb of light. In response, Qin Shuang's body turned into pure lightning, and the crackle of electricity echoed from a distance.

The two elves at Elina's side aimed their arrows at Qin Shuang, ready to fire the moment Elina attacked. Just as they were about to clash, Jing Jing appeared beside Qin Shuang, accompanied by hundreds of Skeleton Knights.

Elina felt no fear at the sight of skeletons, but the two handsome elves did. They repeatedly urged her not to act rashly.

After a moment of thought, Elina recognized the impulsiveness of her actions. At present, she was in her clone and couldn't hope to defeat hundreds of Skeleton Knights. Retreat was her only option, but she stubbornly declared, "I will come back tomorrow to find Han Wu."

With that, she left with the two elves. Jing Jing despised the Light faction but didn't try to stop Elina. She understood the importance of seeing the bigger picture.

Qin Shuang sighed and put her weapon away. "The situation is getting out of hand. I hope Han Wu can handle it."

Jing Jing's confidence in Han Wu never wavered. "My god will guide me in the right direction."

Han Wu had slept well and felt rejuvenated when he awoke the next day. Today he would sell the lesser golems.

The other factions' representatives were already gathered outside his mine, so Han Wu ordered Akanzor to lead the slaves in ushering them into the stone palace built by Jing Jing's skeletons.

Han Wu took some time to scan the crowd and spotted many familiar faces: Wei En, whom he had defeated the previous day; Elina, who kept pestering him to join the Light faction; Huang Shengjun, the current goblin king; and Xiang Meng and his companions.

Soon, the auction commenced. Han Wu didn't show himself, leaving Akanzor in charge of the auction. Excitement rippled through the representatives when Akanzor displayed the lesser golems. Owning even one meant they would gain a powerful fighter in their ranks, and no one intended to let that chance slip away.

This time, Han Wu had no intention of selling them for money. Instead, he chose a barter system, trading the lesser golems for whatever treasures the bidders offered. One by one, the factions presented their offers.

"Dwarf Kingdom, we offer ten pieces of 2-Star God equipment."

"Demihumans, we will trade 300 War Kobolds for a single lesser golem."

"We are from Ravendell, the land of the elves. We are willing to exchange 50 Elemental Stones."

"Human Kingdom here. We present a full set of 3-Star God equipment..."

The students from Imperial College joined in as well.

“Six Rank 4 Sacred Objects and one 4-Star God equipment.”

“Rank 4 Skill: Black Flash.”

“300 Warfront Essence.”

Han Wu waited in the dark, listening as each faction named its price before making his decision. He decided to trade one lesser golem for the Human Kingdom’s 3-Star God equipment set. Although it wasn’t as powerful as the set Han Wu wore, it was still a full set capable of protecting one’s life. It was a fair exchange for a lesser golem.

The Human Kingdom’s representative was elated once the trade went through. His king had ordered him to return with at least one lesser golem, even if it meant trading every treasure he carried. Thankfully, he had fulfilled that command, and Han Wu had completed his first sale.

With that, the various factions grasped just how expensive a lesser golem was and began bidding increasingly higher amounts. Han Wu watched eagerly, curious how high the prices would climb as more and more lesser golems were sold.

Those who secured a lesser golem were exhilarated to the point they were planning celebrations for when they returned. Those who failed to obtain one grew restless. What if they became the only faction without a lesser golem while the others possessed at least one? The other factions would suppress them once they returned! Driven by that fear, they kept increasing their bids, even far beyond a lesser golem’s standard value.

To meet their demand, Han Wu chose to manufacture five additional lesser golems instead of ending the auction as he had planned. In the end, he sold fifteen lesser golems and obtained many treasures.

Han Wu was signaling Akanzor to stop the auction when Wei En suddenly stood up and exposed him. “Junior Han Wu, stop hiding in the shadows while counting the treasures that everyone worked so hard to obtain. Show us the real Transmutation Golem instead. Let us, your seniors, take a proper look.”

All the students from Imperial College turned toward Akanzor on stage. They didn’t have an information network as extensive as Elina’s, so they had assumed that Akanzor was the mastermind. None would have suspected that the real mastermind was Han Wu, the first-year valedictorian.

Exposed, Han Wu had no choice but to step forward with a smile. He glared at Wei En and spoke for all to hear. “Senior Wei, I must admit that you have an incredible regenerative ability. To think you could reconstruct your body in just a single day, even after I destroyed it, including the clothes.”

The remark bordered on harassment. As expected, Wei En's face burned red. She had never imagined that he would voice it publicly. It was a reckless act that hurt them both!

"Han Wu, do you have a death wish?" Wei En hissed through gritted teeth, her eyes blazing with terrifying bloodlust.

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