The People's God: Sacrificing Trillions to Ascend

Chapter 801 - Because I Want To Pick It Up

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 801 - Because I Want To Pick It Up

Ten, nine, eight... Wei En counted silently. If Han Wu stayed within ten meters for the full ten seconds, she would win.

Han Wu turned to her, his gaze sharp and authoritative. “Senior Wei En. I don’t know why you’re in my tent. I’m giving you three seconds to get out, and I’ll pretend I never saw you.”

Wei En nearly lost her composure. She lay completely bare before him, face up. Even the most clearheaded man would be distracted by her figure for at least a few seconds. She was starting to question whether Han Wu was actually a man.

“Three, two, one.“ Han Wu finished the countdown without hesitation.

Wei En still made no move to leave, so he simply unleashed his aura and blew the entire tent off the ground. The force sent Wei En and the Magic Sealing Wave hidden beneath her flying a considerable distance away.

Han Wu sighed. *Peace at last.*

Wei En tumbled through the air and barely managed to steady herself before landing safely. She was uninjured, but the shock settled in quickly. They were both Major Gods, yet Han Wu’s aura alone had sent her flying without effort.

Then anger followed. Han Wu had completely ignored her figure and look. Someone like that didn’t deserve such power!

She quickly pulled a set of clothes from her divine realm and put them on, then searched the area for the Magic Sealing Wave. It had separated from her during the blast, but she remembered the direction it had fallen.

Following that direction, she found Jia Gui. He was standing completely still, eyes glazed and mouth hanging open, like an old dog at the end of its days. At his feet lay what she was looking for.

Wei En moved to pick it up. The moment her fingers touched it, she felt nothing inside. No energy at all. It had already activated. She looked at the stupefied Jia Gui and nearly lost her mind. That priceless weapon had triggered on him!

Jia Gui slowly came back to his senses, his gaze settling on Wei En and the Magic Sealing Wave. Her body tensed as she considered silencing him.

“I’d advise you not to pick that up,” Jia Gui said.

Wei En straightened slowly, keeping her eyes on his watchful expression, and did not reach for the device.

“Back up even more,” Jia Gui continued.

Wei En obeyed, confused. From his perfectly calm face, she couldn’t tell whether he had been affected. Once she put some distance between herself and the Magic Sealing Wave, Jia Gui nodded, stepped forward, picked it up, and tucked it into his jacket with a satisfied look.

Wei En stared. “Hero Jia, why didn’t you let me pick it up?”

“Because I wanted to pick it up. I spotted it first. First come, first served,” Jia Gui replied slyly.

Wei En hesitated, then tested him. “Hero Jia, don’t you feel anything off about your body?”

Jia Gui paused. He rolled his ankles, flashed a wide grin, and said cheerfully, “I found a treasure. Why would anything be off? I feel great.”

“You don’t notice anything unusual about your abilities?” Wei En pressed.

The reminder turned Jia Gui’s expression serious. He tried to activate his abilities and found that every one of them was sealed. Even his Divine Aspects and Divine Authority were gone.

“What’s going on? I can’t use any of my abilities, Aspects, or Authority!” Jia Gui exclaimed.

A wave of helplessness washed over Wei En. The Magic Sealing Wave had been wasted on Jia Gui. There was nothing left to do but to cut her losses.

With Jia Gui's abilities, Aspects, and Authority sealed, she considered finishing him off on the spot. Even without them, he was still a World life form. Killing him would at least weaken the Wisdom Faction's forces.

Just as Wei En was about to act, Jia Gui let out a long sigh and waved her off. "Never mind. I barely use my abilities, Aspects, or Authority anyway. They won't affect my patrols at all."

Then he looked at her with a puzzled expression. "Weren't you in Han Wu's tent? What are you doing out here? Did you get lost? Let me take you back."

Wei En processed his words. *He never uses his abilities, Aspects, or Authority in combat. His strength is completely unaffected?!*

She wasn't a World life form and had no quick way to gauge whether she could defeat him. She was also worried that being escorted back would expose her identity to Han Wu.

Caught between two bad options, Wei En made her decision. She opened a divine realm gate and left the battlefield.

Jia Gui watched her sudden departure and seemed to understand.

"That young lady got shy. But she really is something. Han Wu's a lucky one," he muttered, then resumed his patrol.

That same evening, news broke that Wei En had defected from the Wisdom Faction.

Jia Gui was brought before the Wisdom God King, who examined him with his Mind Eye. It revealed that what had happened to him was a result of the Magic Sealing Wave.

Jia Gui was baffled at first. After Commerce explained everything, it all clicked into place, and shame weighed on him. After all, he had led an enemy agent right into the heart of their base.

Even so, Xu Hai and Han Wu didn't hold it against him. Jia Gui had made a mistake, but the outcome was favorable.

The Slaughter Faction had wasted the Magic Sealing Wave on Jia Gui. In the process, the Wisdom Faction had exposed a spy and gained a clear warning of the lengths their enemy would go to. The Slaughter Faction had come away with nothing but losses.

Even so, a treasure as significant as the Magic Sealing Wave was not necessarily unique. Xu Hai couldn't rule out the possibility that the Slaughter Faction possessed another. This time, it struck Jia Gui. Next time, they could target Han Wu or Xu Hai. If that happened, the Wisdom Faction could lose half of what was holding it together.

Since the Slaughter Faction had done it once, they would try again. Xu Hai had to prepare for that. That very day, he searched through the tens of billions of texts from various civilizations archived in his mind and found a method to counter the Magic Sealing Wave. It required sourcing something from the Sealed Civilization, which was some distance away from the Divine Civilization.

Xu Hai decided to send Han Wu, but the latter was concerned. “Sir, if I leave, the Slaughter Faction may launch a heavy push. I’m worried the Wisdom Faction won’t hold.”

Xu Hai patted his shoulder and smiled. “Your concern for the Wisdom Faction is commendable. But aren’t you underestimating your mentor and everyone else in this faction?

“You’re exceptional, but we’re not pushovers either. Go and come back. By the time you return from the Sealed Civilization, this divine war may have already been won.

“One more thing. To be safe, leave an avatar behind. Have it appear along the front line every few days. It should confuse the Slaughter Faction.”

After hearing this, Han Wu felt considerably calmer. “I’ll do as you say, Sir. I’ll find a way to counter the Magic Sealing Wave as quickly as possible.”

Chapter 802 - Entering the Sealed Civilization

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 802 - Entering the Sealed Civilization

Han Wu left an avatar behind and departed the battlefield. Before heading to the Sealed Civilization, he stopped at Imperial College.

It was summer break, but Qin Shuang had stayed on to work on grasping the incomplete form of the Lightning Jurisdiction. She also made occasional trips to the battlefield to lend support.

Han Wu went to her dormitory and handed her the Divine Jurisdiction he had taken from Major God Jing Lei, along with several lightning-related secret techniques he had extracted from Jing Lei’s soul during interrogation.

For someone who specialized in lightning, these were of immense value. Qin Shuang accepted them with clear delight and kissed him. They held each other for a long while before parting.

With Han Wu's support, her comprehension advanced at a much faster pace. As such, when she learned he was heading to the Sealed Civilization, Qin Shuang decided to accompany. Once she completed her Divine Jurisdiction and ascended into a Major God, she could take advantage of the Sealed Civilization and gain an additional ability.

Han Wu agreed, and the two set off immediately. They teleported through a series of arrays, then boarded a ship for the remaining distance.

After three days of travel, they finally arrived near the Sealed Civilization. A translucent membrane surrounded it on all sides. Entry required passing through it, but the membrane was not as simple as it looked.

A thousand interlocking rules were woven into it, forming a closed system. Any outsider civilization who wished to enter had to be recognized by the membrane first. Recognition required accepting a seal. Any abilities, Divine Aspects, Divine Authority, Divine Jurisdiction, and even physical strength unrelated to sealing would be sealed away. The effect was far more thorough than the Magic Sealing Wave.

However, the membrane's seal didn't reduce visitors to ordinary people. Instead, it converted sealed powers in a different form called Ring Count. The more Rings a person possessed, the greater their resistance to sealing and the higher the rank of Seal Arts they could wield.

Han Wu accepted the membrane's seal. A wave of unusual energy wrapped around his powers unrelated to sealing and converted them into Rings. His Ring Count was set at twelve.

Even with his powers sealed, two skills remained available to him. The first was the Reaper Seal, a soul-attribute Seal Art, rated at eight Rings. The second was the Four Guardians Seal, a space-attribute Seal Art, rated at nine Rings.

Qin Shuang followed and accepted the membrane's seal, receiving a Ring Count of nine. One skill remained available to her: the Thunder Sparrow Seal, a lightning-attribute Seal Art, rated at five Rings.

Recognized by the membrane, they entered the Sealed Civilization and landed in a stretch of mountain forest. The area teemed with magical beasts that were naturally hostile toward humans and would attack on sight.

The moment Han Wu and Qin Shuang arrived, a magical beast struck. A hundred-eyed spider the size of a small house sensed them and charged on eight long legs.

They dodged the spider's first strike, but it pressed the attack without pause. They quickly realized that evasion wouldn't solve the problem. They needed a powerful attack to overwhelm it and put it down.

Qin Shuang instinctively moved to summon her divine realm, but she couldn't access it. The seal on her body blocked it, leaving only the Thunder Sparrow Seal available.

Following the knowledge in her mind, she released it. A bolt of lightning answered her call and formed a sparrow made entirely of electricity. The sparrow cried out and launched itself at the hundred-eyed spider.

Upon contact, it dissolved into countless lightning threads, wrapping around the entire spider. As it struggled, the lightning threads of the Thunder Sparrow Seal sent high-intensity currents through it to subdue and seal the creature.

The hundred-eyed spider wasn't so easily subdued. All of its eyes flared, each emitting a different colored beam at Qin Shuang. She dodged, but her concentration slipped. As a result, the spider broke free of the Thunder Sparrow Seal and turned its beams on her in a frenzy.

Han Wu decided to test his two skills and started with the stronger one, the eight-Ring Reaper Seal. As the seal activated, a pale phantom figure manifested behind him. The phantom looked ferocious, but its movements were stiff, like a puppet on strings.

Han Wu was not impressed, but there was no helping it. The Reaper Seal had originally been a skill used by the evil god that had presided over the Giant Shadow Civilization to harvest souls. Han Wu had killed that god, then absorbed and converted its Microcosm into his Soul Microcosm.

The skill had lost most of its original power. Even so, under Han Wu's control, the Reaper Seal still ranked at eight Rings.

The hundred-eyed spider saw the phantom looming behind Han Wu and felt the soul pressure rolling off it. It immediately tried to run. What it didn't realize was that the moment the phantom appeared, every escape route had already been cut off.

The phantom reached out, seized the spider's soul, and tore it clean from its body. It then drew a blade and split the soul in two. The hundred-eyed spider's soul shattered on the spot.

Han Wu watched as the lifeless spider collapsed and compressed into a small amber bead, its surface inscribed with the character for six. He picked it up and sensed a substantial reserve of Light Energy within.

As he examined the bead, a group of people approached. There were quite a few of them, all wearing matching armour, clearly a unit from a major power.

Their leader spotted Han Wu and Qin Shuang and paused, visibly struck by their appearance.

Han Wu appeared lean and sharp, and one with a discerning eye could detect the strength contained into his frame. Qin Shuang needed no description; her beauty and composed bearing spoke for themselves. The leader felt unworthy of standing before her.

He took a deep breath and spoke. “Did either of you happen to see a six-Ring magical beast, a hundred-eyed spider? If so, please tell us honestly. The Panyang City Guard will reward you generously.”

Chapter 803 - Eight-Ring Seal Master

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 803 - Eight-Ring Seal Master

“Are you referring to this?” Han Wu tossed the bead over.

The leader caught it, sensed the energy inside, and nodded with visible excitement. “That’s the one. Thank you for sealing it.”

He and his unit had been tracking this six-Ring hundred-eyed spider for five days without managing to seal it. Yet two young strangers they met entirely by chance had done what they couldn’t.

“You’ve done Panyang City’s Guard a great service. If you have time, would you come back with us to collect a reward?” the leader offered.

Qin Shuang glanced at Han Wu. They had come to the Sealed Civilization and needed to travel anyway to search for information on countering the Magic Sealing Wave.

Han Wu nodded. “Sure.”

The leader was delighted. Anyone who could casually seal a hundred-eyed spider was no weakling. Bringing back the sealed spider alone was a significant achievement. Bringing back two capable fighters on top of that would surely earn him a generous reward from the city lord.

“After you, please,” he said respectfully.

As they traveled, Han Wu asked many questions about the Sealed Civilization, including what the Ring Count meant.

According to the leader, the Ring Count represented both a person's strength and highest rank of Seal Arts they could use. He himself was a five-Ring Seal Master. His strongest usable Seal Art was five-Ring, and attempting a six-Ring Seal Art would risk backlash.

The success of a seal depended heavily on the relationship between the Seal Art's Ring level and the target's Ring level. A six-Ring Seal Art used against a six-Ring beast had at least a fifty percent chance of success. A seven-Ring or higher Seal Art used against a six-Ring beast pushed the success rate toward one hundred percent. A five-Ring Seal Art used against a six-Ring beast, however, dropped the success rate to a meager ten percent, though an attribute advantage could improve those odds.

After explaining all this, the leader asked Han Wu and Qin Shuang their Ring Counts.

Han Wu decided not to reveal his true power and answered plainly, "Eight Rings."

Qin Shuang followed suit and lowered her count by three Rings. "Six Rings."

Both concealed their real strength to avoid drawing unwanted attention. Even so, eight and six Rings were enough to surprise the leader. A six-Ring Seal Master was already the backbone of a city. An eight-Ring ranked at the national level. Nine Rings were enough to lead a kingdom. Beyond that were the legendary ten-Ring Seal Masters, so rare that only the most powerful empires could have either one or two.

Han Wu asked what eleven Rings and above would represent.

The leader laughed and said that an eleven-Ring Seal Master had never been born in this world.

Han Wu touched his nose awkwardly. That gave him a clearer sense of where his twelve-Ring rating stood.

They followed the unit into Panyang City. The city felt lively, with trading stalls lining the streets. Many were selling sealed-beast beads, priced according to Ring level and attribute.

Han Wu wanted to buy some for experimentation, but he and Qin Shuang had nothing to their names at all. They couldn't even afford food. For now, they had to follow the unit and meet the city lord.

When the city lord heard that an eight-Ring Seal Master had arrived, he hurried over with evident excitement. However, seeing how young Han Wu was, doubt flickered across his face.

To ease the tension, Han Wu offered a demonstration. He asked the city lord to bring him a magical beast to seal.

The city lord produced a two-Ring ram. Using an eight-Ring Seal Art on such a creature was rather excessive, but Han Wu didn't mind. He activated the Reaper Seal, and a fearsome pale phantom manifested behind him. In a single, fluid motion, it extracted the ram's soul and swallowed it. An instant later, the ram compressed into a bead.

The display won over the city lord and every city official present. A soul-attribute eight-Ring Seal Art was undeniably powerful. After that, no one questioned Han Wu's Ring Count.

The city lord became even more attentive, visibly wishing he could offer Han Wu his daughter's hand in marriage, or at least keep an eight-Ring Seal Master in the city by any means available.

Han Wu had no intention of staying, but he didn't mention when he would leave. He wanted to review the records in Panyang City first and gain a clear picture of the Sealed Civilization's situation. He also intended to find an opportunity to ask the city lord about any information related to the Magic Sealing Wave.

The banquet was a pleasant occasion for all.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang were shown to their guest rooms to rest.

Meanwhile, the city lord took the hundred-eyed spider bead and made his way down into a hidden chamber beneath his bedroom.

Inside the chamber was a large cube. Within it, a powerful magical beast was sealed. It was known as the Feral Beast, a real nine-Ring magical beast.

Sealing it had cost more than 100 five-Ring Seal Masters their lives years ago. They had only succeeded through a combination of terrible odds and sheer collective sacrifice. Even so, the seal was not stable. Every seven days or so. It required one bead of six-Ring or higher light-attribute energy to sustain it.

The city lord had spent years losing sleep over that requirement. At times, he had to hunt six-Ring beasts himself and seal them into beads just to keep the enclosure intact. No matter how many beasts he secured, seven days always came back around.

Light-attribute beasts were also rare in the forests outside the city, and those that had reached the six-Ring level were formidable enough to trouble even the city lord. Today's find was a pleasant surprise.

However, what excited the city lord even more was Han Wu, an eight-Ring Seal Master with a soul-attribute. Eight-Ring against nine-Ring gave a ten percent success rate, but Han Wu's attribute had a decent advantage over the Feral Beast's type, which would push those odds higher.

The city lord had already made up his mind. Whatever it took, he would persuade Han Wu to try sealing this Feral Beast. He was genuinely terrified that the creature would burst free one day. The chamber was directly beneath his bedroom. If the Feral Beast broke out, he would be its first target.

Chapter 804 - Sealing the Feral Beast

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The city lord hosted Han Wu for a meal the following day. Always eager for opportunities to gather information, Han Wu brought Qin Shuang along.

At the table, the city lord and his guests heaped praise on Han Wu's strength in every way imaginable, practically casting him as a once-in-a-generation hero on the verge of reaching an unprecedented eleven Rings.

When Han Wu heard their fawning, he immediately knew they wanted something. He only needed to wait.

After the third round of drinks, the city lord sent the guests away and raised the matter of the nine-Ring Feral Beast himself. Han Wu played along smoothly, said that he was willing to try, and named his own condition: access to the city's archive of Seal Art records.

The city lord felt like a prize had been dropped on his head. Allowing Han Wu to look through the archive cost him nothing. If Han Wu actually succeeded in sealing the Feral Beast, that would be an enormous benefit to the entire city. Thus, he immediately agreed to grant Han Wu access to the full archive regardless of his success.

Han Wu did not drag things out. After finishing his drink, he asked the city lord to take him and Qin Shuang to see the Feral Beast.

Down in the chamber, the Feral Beast let out a violent roar when it sensed unfamiliar visitors. Its thrashing shook the enclosure, and a faint hairline crack appeared along one surface. The light-attribute bead the city lord had placed there just the day before was absorbed into the cube and closed the gap.

The city lord drew a sharp breath. "You can clearly see it. This beast is as savage and powerful as it looks. If it ever escapes, it'll bring catastrophe down on the entire city."

Han Wu nodded and moved closer to examine the Feral Beast. Even in captivity, it was impossible to ignore. It looked vaguely like a horse, except covered in savage spines, with grotesque features and a jaw wide enough to swallow something its own size.

However, it was the energy rolling off it that caught Han Wu's attention. It looked like darkness but was not purely dark. After assessing it, he determined that it was a special combined attribute, with darkness as the dominant base blended with traces of other elements. That made it even more interesting.

Using the eight-Ring Reaper Seal on this beast felt wasteful. Moreover, by the Sealed Civilization's rules, the success rate wasn't especially high either.

A new idea formed in Han Wu's mind. He would use the nine-Ring Four Guardians Seal instead, hoping to pull the Feral Beast into his own consciousness to serve as an energy source.

With that plan of action in mind, Han Wu waved the city lord and Qin Shuang back before forming the hand seal. The Four Guardians Seal activated.

Chains of spatial energy shot out from Han Wu's torso and drove into the cube. The city lord instantly recognized that this was different from the Reaper Seal and noticeably stronger at that. It was at this moment that he realized that Han Wu had likely been hiding his true Ring Count.

Eight Rings at this young age was already extraordinary. A nine-Ring Seal Master at only twenty years old or so seemed beyond the realm of possibility.

The city lord watched with wide eyes as chain after chain pierced into the cube and locked around the Feral Beast. Sensing something amiss, the beast thrashed wildly, refusing to be dragged out of the cube.

Unfortunately for it, Han Wu wasn't giving it a choice. He focused his consciousness on the chains and pulled hard, wrenching the Feral Beast out of the cube.

A violent pressure filled the room. Just standing inside it was enough to make the city lord's legs tremble. If not for Han Wu's clear confidence, he would have turned and run.

The Feral Beast continued its futile resistance, all four limbs stamping the floor in defiance of Han Wu's seal, but its wants meant little in this situation.

Han Wu applied more force, pulling the Feral Beast off the ground and straight into his own body. His shirt tore across the chest from the strain, exposing a seal pattern across his skin.

"The Feral Beast was sealed inside your body?" the city lord asked in surprise.

He had seen many types of seal techniques, even ones involving books or weapons, but he had never once seen anyone seal a beast inside a body. Was there no fear of the beast causing damage from within?

Han Wu exhaled slowly. The deeply unhappy Feral Beast was firmly trapped inside his consciousness space. It just needed further training to become more amiable.

“As long as I live, it cannot escape,” Han Wu vowed with certainty.

A weight lifted from the city lord’s shoulders, and he stepped forward to clasp Han Wu’s hands with both of his own and said with conviction, “My benefactor. From this day on, you’re Panyang City’s greatest benefactor. If you need anything in the future, just name it. If I can do it, I will.”

“Then please keep your promise and take us to the archive.” Han Wu smiled.

“Of course. Right away.” The city lord led them to the archive room in the manor and issued instructions granting Han Wu and Qin Shuang unrestricted access to everything inside. Then he left them to it, visibly happier than he had been in years.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang started sifting through the records. The script used in the Sealed Civilization was one they had studied at the college, so reading it was not difficult. While searching for information on the Magic Sealing Wave, the two of them also took the time to learn more about the Sealed Civilization.

Later, after they had turned in for the day, Han Wu settled into meditation and entered his consciousness. The Feral Beast launched a furious assault on the bars of its cage at the sight of Han Wu.

Han Wu stopped holding back, releasing his twelve-Ring presence within the privacy of his own consciousness. The terrible pressure completely overwhelmed the Feral Beast. It dropped to its knees with a thud, so frightened it lost control of its bladder on the spot.

The beast wore an expression that promised good behavior, even stretching out its tongue in an attempt to lick him and show loyalty. Han Wu had not expected the Feral Beast to be so easy to tame.

“Lend me your power,” Han Wu said bluntly.

The Feral Beast immediately agreed. Rather, it had no right to refuse. The Feral Beast’s energy flowed into Han Wu’s body, allowing him to grasp two new types of seals.

The first was the Feral Spine Seal, a three-Ring Seal Art that released the Feral Beast’s spines as a ranged attack. Any target struck would grow identical heavy spines on their body, which would severely limit their movement.

The second was the Evil Seal, an eight-Ring Seal Art that released a shockwave of the Feral Beast's energy. Any target unable to resist it would have all of their energy sealed off entirely.

This experience made Han Wu realize that the Four Guardians Seal was an excellent method for rapidly acquiring new seals. It needed to be used more frequently! The powerful beasts of the Sealed Civilization were about to find themselves in good hands.

Chapter 805 - The Coiling Dragon Forest

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Han Wu and Qin Shuang spent three days combing the archive for information about the Sealed Civilization, but found nothing related to the Magic Sealing Wave. So, Han Wu went to the city lord and told him he needed to move on to a larger city to continue his search.

The city lord was sad to see him go, but knew he had no way to keep Han Wu. A young and powerful fighter like him was never going to settle in Panyang City. So, rather than trying to hold him, the city lord generously prepared some travel provisions for the road.

Han Wu accepted without argument. He took the money and asked for a horse as well. Their next destination was the Coiling Dragon Forest, a long way from Panyang City. According to the records, a powerful sect called the Sealing Gate Sect operated inside that forest. The sect held an extensive library of texts and taught various Seal Arts to students.

Unfortunately, gaining entry to the Sealing Gate Sect was not a simple matter. The only way in was to pass through the exceedingly dangerous Coiling Dragon Forest. That place teemed with innumerable magical beasts and marked certain death for the ordinary traveler.

For Han Wu, however, it was a treasure trove. The more beasts, the better. The Feral Beast in his consciousness space looked forward to some new company.

With provisions in hand, Han Wu and Qin Shuang mounted up and rode out. Three days of travel brought them to the edge of the Coiling Dragon Forest.

Even from the edge of the forest, Han Wu could feel the pressure emanating from within. The pressure was strangely unified rather than coming from scattered sources, which gave him the initial impression that the forest itself was alive.

“This should be interesting,” Han Wu murmured to himself.

On the road, he had taught Qin Shuang the seals he had mastered. The Feral Spine Seal and the Evil Seal were bound to the Feral Beast and could not be taught, but she picked up both the Reaper Seal and the Four Guardians Seal successfully.

The only downside was that Qin Shuang did not have a Soul Microcosm of her own, which meant using the Reaper Seal would draw her soul into Han Wu’s Soul Microcosm. While this would not cause lasting harm to her, the resulting temporary false death was not useful in combat. Her remaining practical option thus became the Four Guardians Seal, which was already a stroke of exceptional luck for her.

The Four Guardians Seal’s unique capabilities meant Qin Shuang could also use it to seal powerful magical beasts and absorb their abilities. One powerful Seal Art was worth more than a hundred ordinary ones.

Of course, she still preferred beasts with the lightning attribute. After all, her purpose for this trip was twofold: finding information on the Magic Sealing Wave and grasping the incomplete form of the Lightning Jurisdiction. Accumulating more lightning-attribute Seal Arts would directly support the latter.

The horse refused to set one hoof inside the Coiling Dragon Forest, so Han Wu released it, and the two of them went in on foot. They had barely crossed the treeline when magical beasts attacked.

Having studied the archive records, they easily identified the creatures before them as Sparkfoxes, three-Ring magical beasts. Though individually weak, they were difficult to handle because they roamed in packs and were exceptionally fast.

Han Wu did not need to waste a powerful Seal Art on something this weak, so he casually launched a volley of Feral Spines. A thick, heavy coat of rigid spines grew over the Sparkfoxes’ bodies with every hit, restricting their movement and slowly wrapping the creatures into immobile balls, sealing them.

Qin Shuang didn’t stand idle either. Her Thunder Sparrow Seal effortlessly handled the three-Ring Sparkfoxes. All it took was one seal per fox, and the foxes went down without a sound, each neatly wrapped in lightning threads.

Fire-red beads rolled across the ground, each holding a sealed Sparkfox that could be used as a fire-attribute energy source. Han Wu collected them into his bag.

As they ventured further in, more magical beasts appeared. The strongest among them was a seven-Ring Giant Horned Rhino, which Han Wu dragged into his consciousness with the Four Guardians Seal.

The Giant Horned Rhino maintained its arrogant disposition until it caught sight of the nine-Ring Feral Beast in the neighbouring cage, at which point it immediately deflated.

Han Wu didn't even need to threaten it. The Giant Horned Rhino voluntarily surrendered its power, granting Han Wu a seven-Ring skill called Rhino Horn Unseal.

This was not a Seal Art but a seal-breaking technique, effective against physical seals like the Feral Spine Seal. It was a modest addition for someone with twelve Rings like Han Wu, but it was still better than nothing.

The trees of the Coiling Dragon Forest grew increasingly dense and tall as the pair continued inward. As they traveled, Han Wu noticed something remarkable on the trunks of ancient trees. Clear dragon-shaped patterns coiled along the bark like living creatures.

"Han Wu, do you know what those are?" Qin Shuang asked with wide eyes.

Han Wu thought for a moment. "If I were to guess, a powerful dragon corpse is probably buried nearby. These trees absorbed the dragon energy leaking from the body, and the patterns formed as a result."

Qin Shuang's eyes lit up. The dragon in question was undoubtedly impressive for its corpse to release enough energy to mark the trees across an entire forest. A dragon's body was invaluable. Even Qin Shuang, with one foot in the realm of Major Gods, wanted it.

"The Sealing Gate Sect is also located in this same area," Han Wu added. "The corpse and the sect are likely connected."

"Let's find the Sealing Gate Sect first and figure it out from there," Qin Shuang agreed.

Han Wu nodded, and the two ventured deeper into the forest. The trees grew broader and more imposing as they went. Trees with trunks over ten meters in diameter became a common sight, and the dragon-shaped patterns on the bark grew more lifelike. They were getting closer to the heart of the forest.

After sealing two eight-Ring Thunder Apes, they spotted a tall structure not far ahead. It was built atop a massive tree stump that was nearly a thousand meters in diameter. The plaque hanging from the structure was readable even from a distance.

They had found the Sealing Gate Sect.

Chapter 806 - The Sealing Gate Sect

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Han Wu and Qin Shuang climbed up to the enormous stump and stood before the tall structure. The characters on the plaque were imposing. Before they could knock, the gate opened to reveal a child of roughly ten years old.

The child bowed to them and asked, “Are you here to study Seal Arts?”

Han Wu and Qin Shuang exchanged a glance. They did not state their real purpose and nodded silently.

“Then please follow me into the main hall so we may see which elder is willing to take you in,” the child said.

On the way, Han Wu asked how the child knew to open the door the moment they arrived. Was it some form of foresight?

The child let out a small laugh. “There are people watching everything within ten kilometres of the Sealing Gate Sect. Why do you think we’re built so high?”

Han Wu found it logical. Sometimes, the easiest method was also the most effective. Build tall, see far. Simple.

They soon arrived at the main hall. Four old men and one elderly woman were seated inside, making scattered conversation with no particular purpose.

When Han Wu and Qin Shuang walked in, the elderly woman stood and declared, “I’m taking this girl.”

“Now, Jin Hua, that’s not how this works. The girl gets a say, too,” objected an old man.

Turning to Qin Shuang, the old man persuaded, “Join my school. All my students are strong, and I promise you won’t be asked to do any heavy lifting.”

“Huo Xiang, you’ve got some nerve. Can’t you see they came together?” joked a second old man, rising from his seat. “And those students of yours, they’re a sorry-looking bunch with nothing but muscle between their ears. What would they have in common with this young lady?“

Glancing at Han Wu and Qin Shuang, the second old man introduced, “My name is Mu Xu, and I’m the most capable of the five elders here. You can’t go wrong with me.“

Another elder named Shui Ta cleared his throat. “Mu Xu, you really have no shame. Do you really think the rest of us would be scared of you if we weren’t on your home turf in this forest? Come fight me in the river.”

Throughout this banter, the final elder sat completely still and said nothing.

Shui Ta turned to the silent elder and asked impatiently, “Do you have anything to add? Say something, Tu Bie.”

Elder Tu Bie stood up with a long-suffering expression. He had spent his entire life studying diligently and had never wronged anyone. His one regret was the name his teacher had bestowed upon him. What kind of decent person was named Tu Bie?[1]

“I have one thing to say. Anyone who joins my school can give themselves their own name,” Elder Tu Bie said in a low, serious tone.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang immediately said they wanted to go with Elder Tu Bie. With the selection ceremony settled, Han Wu and Qin Shuang followed Elder Tu Bie back to his school, called the Earth Gate.

Elder Tu Bie was a reticent man, but he did take the time to explain the Sealing Gate Sect’s rules. Anyone capable of making it through the Coiling Dragon Forest to reach the Sealing Gate Sect could join without further test. After joining, the elder would assess the new student’s attributes and Ring Count to determine which Seal Arts to teach.

Elder Tu Bie rummaged around and retrieved a crystal orb. As a demonstration, he pressed his palm to the orb, and the colour shifted, eventually settling on a patch of black stone inside the orb. Two additional elemental forms appeared alongside it, indicating that his primary attribute was the special Black Earth element, with the secondary attributes of fire and metal.

The orb also displayed a large “10,” indicating Elder Tu Bie’s Ring Count.

From the records, Han Wu knew that ten-Ring Seal Masters were genuinely rare. Even an empire with hundreds of millions of people would have no more than five, but the Sealing Gate Sect had five elders alone.

Based on his cursory observations, the five of them appeared to be evenly matched in strength. In other words, the Sealing Gate Sect had at least five ten-Ring Seal Masters, making it a power on par with huge empires.

Unaware of Han Wu’s thoughts, Elder Tu Bie gestured for the two of them to try the orb. Han Wu let Qin Shuang go first. She had already guessed that Han Wu wanted to avoid exposing his real strength, as it could draw attention and complicate their intelligence gathering, so she decided to test the orb’s precision.

She pressed her hand to it and felt a force pull at her energy. Using her consciousness to steady herself, she tried to resist the absorption.

After a few seconds of resistance, the orb displayed a result. Her attribute was a given, but importantly, it only showed her Ring Count as eight Rings. Qin Shuang relaxed. The orb could be tampered with.

Seeing that Qin Shuang had passed safely, Han Wu felt comfortable doing the same. He touched the orb and held back as much of his energy as he could from being absorbed. Qin Shuang almost giggled aloud at the results. The man the Sealed Civilization had rated at twelve Rings was only a seven-Ring Seal Master in the eyes of the orb.

Elder Tu Bie still found it entirely reasonable. Seven and eight Rings were both strong results. A decade or two of training under him, and it was possible for them to reach ten Rings. However, when he looked carefully at Han Wu's attributes on the orb, Elder Tu Bie found himself confused.

The attributes listed were absurd in their variety. Metal, wood, water, fire, earth, light, dark, wind, ice, lightning. Every standard element was present. There were also unusual attributes in the mix, including destruction, creation, harmony, and evil. The number of attributes on display surpassed anything Elder Tu Bie had ever seen in his lifetime.

"I suppose the word for this is all-element?" Elder Tu Bie muttered in shock.

Having every element meant being able to learn every Seal Art. However, more was not necessarily better. Mastery was more important than variety. Learning too many Seal Arts spread the practitioner thin and drove success rates down.

Elder Tu Bie stared at Han Wu in concern. A teacher could guide their student to the door, but the student had to walk through it on their own. He could only hope that Han Wu would come to understand that having many attributes was not a virtue, and that mastering a few strong Seal Arts was the real path.

"Now then, as your initiation reward, you may each go to the Seal Hall and select a Seal Art matching your assessed Ring count," Elder Tu Bie said.

Han Wu felt a stab of regret. If he had known there was an initiation reward tied to the test result, he would not have held back so much. Unfortunately, it was too late to change anything. He could only swallow the loss and follow Qin Shuang to collect their respective Seal Arts.

1. Tu Bie here literally means earth tortoise ↩

Chapter 807 - Veritas the Wicked Dragon

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 807 - Veritas the Wicked Dragon

The Seal Hall stood at the center of the Sealing Gate Sect and was the most important building in the sect. On the way, Han Wu and Qin Shuang passed numerous patrolling guards. The guards seemed to know they were Elder Tu Bie's new students and did not stop them.

The guardian inside the Seal Hall was another elder, though older in appearance than Elder Tu Bie and the others, which likely meant he was even stronger. Han Wu and Qin Shuang respectfully stated their purpose.

The old guardian glanced at them and raised a hand. Two items floated over. One was a sheet of paper for Qin Shuang that listed ten eight-Ring Lightning Seal Arts for her to choose from. The other was a booklet for Han Wu that contained every seven-Ring Seal Art in the Sealing Gate Sect's collection.

Qin Shuang quickly chose one called the Chain Lightning Seal. It created a seal that bounced between targets via a conductive lightning chain. Though not particularly amazing against a single enemy, it was stupidly powerful against groups.

Han Wu carefully scanned the booklet and found one that suited him perfectly. It was called the Elemental Flux Seal. The minimum requirement was having five elemental attributes. Each additional element also increased the success rate by 2%. The Elemental Flux Seal was quite literally made for someone with many elemental attributes, like Han Wu.

The guardian then retrieved their selected Seal Arts and informed them that these could only be studied inside the Seal Hall. Removing them from the Seal Hall was strictly prohibited, and they would suffer serious consequences if they violated this rule.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang each claimed a practice room to study their respective arts. The quiet environment helped Han Wu concentrate. With his twelve-Ring strength, learning a seven-Ring Seal Art was akin to a professor reviewing a middle school exam. The entire process was effortless, and it only took three hours for Han Wu to master it.

The seven-Ring Elemental Flux Seal effectively had the power of a nine-Ring Seal Art in his hands thanks to his sheer number of attributes. After mastering it, Han Wu did not leave immediately. As far as anyone here knew, he was only a seven-Ring Seal Master. Learning it too quickly would only bring suspicion and make it harder for them to gather intelligence.

Thus, he stayed in the practice room, eventually drifting off to sleep while waiting.

"Defier, is that you? Defier?" someone called in his dreams.

After a moment, Han Wu shot up. Only a member of the Great Dragon race would know that title. Was there really a dragon inside the Sealing Gate Sect?

He listened carefully and heard it again. It was faint but unmistakable.

“Defier, it really is you!” The voice was overjoyed.

“I’m the Defier,” Han Wu said, on guard. “Who are you?”

“I’m Veritas, the Wicked Dragon. Break the seal now and get me out!” Veritas hissed urgently.

“The seal? Where?” Han Wu asked.

“It’s right beneath your feet. The entire building is part of the seal. Destroy the building, and my dragon soul can break free.”

Han Wu was not particularly moved. “Let me ask you one question first: Why exactly should I save you?”

There was a long moment of silence.

“Save me, and I’ll give you the location of a treasure that only I know,” Veritas finally said. “One that even a Dragon King would envy.”

Han Wu struggled not to grin. In certain regards, Han Wu was technically already the Black Dragon King. Still, he couldn’t quell his curiosity about this treasure.

“I don’t trust you. Give me access to the treasure first,” Han Wu said directly.

“Save me, and I’ll give you the information,” Veritas replied, agitation audible in its tone. “If not, we have nothing to discuss.”

Han Wu laughed coldly. “Then we have nothing to discuss. You’re the one sealed up, not me. I won’t stay here forever. Who knows how many years it’ll take for you to meet another of your own kind once I leave.”

Realizing it had no chips to negotiate at all, Veritas gave in. “Fine. I’ll tell you. But you have to swear to come back and free me once you have the treasure.”

“I swear on the name of the Defier,” Han Wu vowed. “If the treasure you describe is real and I obtain it, I’ll come back and free you from this seal.”

“Very well, the treasure is hidden beneath an altar to the northeast of this forest. Breaking through the altar requires a powerful unsealing technique. I happen to have a ten-Ring unsealing technique here.”

Han Wu's smile widened. "Then share it with me."

Veritas conveyed the technique in the language of the Great Dragons. Han Wu carried the title of Defier and had absorbed Alpheus's blood, making him a half-dragon even without a full transformation, so he could understand the language well enough.

After translating the technique, he started practicing it. A ten-Ring unsealing technique was much harder to learn than the seven-Ring Elemental Flux Seal. It took an entire day and night for him to fully comprehend and master it.

The technique was called the Wicked Dragon Ascension, and it was highly effective at breaking seals that were fixed to one spot.

Once he was done, Han Wu left the Seal Hall. Qin Shuang's cultivation of the Chain Lightning Seal had been smooth. Her nine-Ring ability meant learning an eight-Ring Sealing Art was an easy task.

Qin Shuang was intrigued upon learning the situation with Veritas. After all, what kind of treasure could make even a Dragon King envious?

Han Wu cautioned her not to be too optimistic. Great Dragons were a powerful race, but not all of them could be trusted. Veritas, the Wicked Dragon, could very well be lying.

Before heading out to search for the treasure, they needed to prepare. The next day, he informed Elder Tu Bie of their departure before leaving.

On their journey, the two combed the Coiling Dragon Forest for beasts with unusual elemental attributes. Any unusual element type, regardless of Ring Count, was pulled into his consciousness using the Four Guardians Seal. The Feral Beast suddenly found its once-quiet existence growing considerably more lively. Its days of sleeping and staring off into space were dotted with periods of intimidating the newcomers.

Three days later, they arrived at the described location.

Han Wu activated Wicked Dragon Ascension. His gathered energy formed an enormous grey-scaled Great Dragon hundreds of meters long, which dove into the altar. The altar shattered, and an overwhelming evil surged out from the wreckage. A roar shook the world.

"You pathetic trash of the Sealing Gate Sect, the infamous Wicked Dragon is free!"

Chapter 808 - Elemental Flux Seal

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 808 - Elemental Flux Seal

Han Wu peered up at Veritas. It was still only in its dragon soul form, but even then, the pressure it emanated was strong enough to feel as though Han Wu was facing a World life form. This was only Veritas's soul. How strong was its complete form?

Veritas roared down at the two tiny figures below, eyes fixed on Han Wu.

"Insignificant human, why is the aura of the Defier on you?" Veritas demanded.

"Because I'm the Defier. You told me there was a treasure here that would make even a Dragon King envious. Where is it?"

Veritas laughed. "You're without doubt the most foolish Defier I've ever met. I only said that to make you destroy this altar and free me."

"Then what's under the Sealing Gate Sect?" Han Wu asked again.

"Beneath the Sealing Gate Sect is a million-year-old ancient tree empowered by Seal Arts. That rotten tree ate into my body and absorbed my power, which left me no choice but to abandon my physical form and escape the seal as a soul!"

Han Wu had anticipated something along these lines. He had come to destroy the altar, fully prepared to be deceived by Veritas, but the dragon had unknowingly been right. There really was something here worth making a Dragon King envious. It was Veritas's own soul. Han Wu genuinely wanted a soul this large and pure for himself.

Veritas remained oblivious to Han Wu's greedy eyes. Instead, its gaze drifted over to Qin Shuang.

"Foolish Defier, in consideration of your dragon bloodline, I'll let you go. Your companion, however, stays. It's been a long time since I've had fresh meat."

Furious that Veritas would bite the hand that fed it, Han Wu activated his Seal Arts. "Eight-Ring Evil Seal!"

The energy took on the form of the Feral Beast and charged at Veritas, but the Feral Beast shattered on impact. The seal failed.

Veritas laughed mockingly. "Is that all you've got? Foolish Defier, since you freed me, I'll give you one chance. I'll stand here and let you try to seal me. Show me what you can do."

Han Wu was more than willing to accept those terms. Since the Evil Seal didn't work, he switched to the eight-Ring Reaper Seal. The pale phantom manifested behind him, reached

out, and grabbed Veritas's soul. It pulled and pulled, but only managed to tear off its own arm. The Reaper Seal was nowhere near Veritas's level.

Han Wu changed tactics once more. "Elemental Flux Seal."

As a seven-Ring Seal Art, it would normally have been weaker, but its power scaled with every elemental attribute its user had. In the three days before coming to the altar, Han Wu had roamed the Coiling Dragon Forest and captured beasts with unusual elemental attributes using the Four Guardians Seal.

Hundreds of special elemental types now resided in his consciousness. Drawing on all of them at once meant his Elemental Flux Seal had grown to match an eleven-Ring art in power.

The Elemental Flux Seal activated, and hundreds of elemental types burst forth simultaneously and severed all other energy flows in the surrounding space. Veritas needed to absorb Soul Energy and Wicked Energy to survive, but the Elemental Flux Seal cut off both sources, draining its strength enormously.

It was at this moment that Veritas finally recognized Han Wu as dangerous. It tried to escape, but there was nowhere to run. The Elemental Flux Seal had already closed off every exit.

Veritas was cornered with no way to escape. It watched helplessly as hundreds of elemental threads wound around its body like fine silk. While each individual thread was thin, a hundred working together were more than enough to hold a dragon's soul. All that awaited it was being sealed.

Sensing its fate, Veritas decided it had nothing to lose by pleading again. "Noble Defier, I beg your mercy. In the name of our shared bloodline, please forgive me this once. I do actually know of a treasure a Dragon King would envy. Release me, and I'll take you there myself."

Its tone had completely shifted. The derision had been exchanged for respect and reverence. This was the voice of someone adaptable.

Unfortunately for Veritas, Han Wu was not going to listen this time. He tightened the elemental threads further to reinforce the seal. Once he was certain Veritas could not break free, he activated his highest-rated Seal Art, the Four Guardians Seal.

Dozens of chains shot out from Han Wu's torso and pulled Veritas toward his consciousness. Once inside, everything about Veritas would belong to Han Wu.

Veritas could tell this was not a good situation and struggled furiously. Even with Han Wu exerting full effort, he could not drag Veritas all the way in.

Qin Shuang stepped up and activated her own nine-Ring Four Guardians Seal. Dozens of her own chains shot out from her torso, latching onto one of Veritas's legs and one of its wings. Veritas was being tugged from two directions simultaneously.

Is this a tug of war? it wondered bleakly to itself.

Even in its diminished state, Veritas was still a Great Dragon, and a Great Dragon stood above all things. Veritas roared in fury, but it broke off into a wail as its soul was torn to pieces. Its leg and wing, pulled by Qin Shuang's chains, disappeared into her body.

The pain of a torn soul caused Veritas to briefly lose focus. By the time it recovered, it had already been dragged into Han Wu's consciousness. The other beasts within Han Wu's consciousness immediately went quiet, not even letting out so much as a squeak in fear of disturbing the dragon.

As the original alpha of Han Wu's consciousness space, the Feral Beast felt it prudent to assert itself, and it let out a warning cry in Veritas's direction. "Behave yourself, or I'll hit you."

"Get out of my face," Veritas roared back.

The Feral Beast trembled, experiencing the same helplessness it had felt facing Han Wu.

Han Wu then entered the space, his presence as a twelve-Ring Seal Master pressing down on Veritas.

"You have two options. Lend me your power, or die. Your choice."

Chapter 809 - Wicked Dragon Ascension

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 809 - Wicked Dragon Ascension

Veritas was shocked at Han Wu's strength. Even in its prime, it had not been much stronger than Han Wu. With its soul separated from its body, it was only at roughly forty percent of its peak strength. It was clearly no match for Han Wu. Locked up and faced with Han Wu's overwhelming might, Veritas decisively surrendered.

"Respected Defier, from this day forward, you are my boss. Use my power however you like. My power is your power. Your power is still your power," Veritas pandered.

The submissive act left even the Feral Beast feeling disgusted. It hadn't expected a dragon to grovel better than it.

Han Wu nodded with satisfaction and left.

The moment he was gone, Veritas turned on the Feral Beast and snarled, "You were just laughing, weren't you? I'll have to teach you a lesson."

An Wicked Energy whip formed and lashed the Feral Beast repeatedly. The Feral Beast fell over itself, bowing and proclaiming Veritas its superior. Han Wu was undoubtedly number one in the chain of command, but Veritas could settle for being second. Thus, despite its frustration, Veritas was forced to let the Feral Beast live.

After defeating Veritas, Han Wu absorbed its power and gained a significant boost. Wicked Dragon Ascension, strengthened by Veritas's presence, reached the legendary eleven-Ring tier. Beyond that, Veritas's Soul Energy and Wicked Energy also merged the eight-Ring Reaper Seal and the eight-Ring Evil Seal, forming the powerful eleven-Ring Seal Art: the Wicked Dragon Soul Reaper.

Han Wu had gained Wicked Dragon Ascension and Wicked Dragon Soul Reaper, both eleven-Ring techniques, from this encounter. It was a productive trip.

Qin Shuang also obtained Veritas's leg and wing. Though they did not carry Veritas's consciousness, they still granted her two Seal Arts: Wicked Dragon Stomp, a nine-Ring seal that locked down a target's leg movement, and Wicked Dragon Sky Lock, a nine-Ring seal that blocked a target's ability to fly. Both were highly practical, and Qin Shuang was pleased with them.

As the two of them finished dealing with Veritas and were preparing to leave, the surroundings suddenly shifted. The trees twisted to form a cage that enclosed Han Wu and Qin Shuang.

Fire and steam condensed in the air. The ground trembled underfoot, and sharp stone spires pushed up from the earth. Someone was using Seal Arts to contain them.

"Who's there? Show yourself!" Han Wu shouted, releasing his true strength.

His twelve-Ring presence forced the seal back. The fire, steam, shaking ground, and stone spires all subsided. Only the trees continued their slow coiling.

The five elders from the Sealing Gate Sect appeared above them: Jin Hua, Mu Xu, Huo Xiang, Shui Ta, and their own reluctant teacher, Tu Bie.

"Did the two of you enter the Sealing Gate Sect just to destroy the altar sealing the Wicked Dragon and release it to threaten the world?" Elder Tu Bie asked solemnly, a hint of sorrow in his tone.

Although Han Wu and Qin Shuang hadn't been his students for long, it still hurt to see a student follow the wrong path.

Han Wu started to explain, "Elder Tu Bie—"

"Silence!" Elder Shui Ta cut him off. "You have no right to appeal to him after what you've done? You two entered the Sealing Gate Sect with ulterior motives. The evidence is plain to see. I say we seal them here and now so they can cause no harm to the world."

"Agreed," Elder Huo Xiang said.

"I'm in," Elder Jin Hua added.

Elder Mu Xu prepared to act, trees still coiling slowly under his command. "Let's not waste time."

"Wait," Elder Tu Bie called out.

"Tu Bie, the facts are right in front of you. What's there to hesitate about? Look at them. They clearly have real strength yet chose to hide it. They joined your school under false pretences, then moved to destroy the altar and release the dragon. Their actions are inexcusable." Elder Shui Ta sneered.

Elder Tu Bie stood his ground. "They were still my students, brief as it may have been. I owe them a chance to explain themselves. Go ahead. Tell me, why did you do this?"

Han Wu and Qin Shuang held no resentment toward the Sealing Gate Sect. If anything, they felt some measure of gratitude toward it. There was no reason to escalate this into a fight.

"Teacher, the real reason we came here is to find intelligence on the Magic Sealing Wave. As for destroying the altar, that was the dragon's manipulation. But we've already subdued the dragon's soul. It'll cause no further trouble," Han Wu explained.

The five elders exchanged glances. They knew of the Magic Sealing Wave. It was an ancient thing, classified as top secret even within the sect. However, all five took Han Wu's claim that they had subdued the dragon soul as an excuse to buy time.

The Sealing Gate Sect had suppressed the Wicked Dragon for years, but it constantly fought the seal. It was not something that could be easily defeated.

As far as the five elders were concerned, Han Wu's explanation meant only one of two things. Either he was trying to deceive them for long enough to escape, or the dragon had already possessed him and was trying to lower their guard so it could infiltrate the Sealing Gate Sect and break whatever remained of the seal. The five elders were not letting them go regardless.

“There’s no saving them at this point.” Elder Tu Bie sighed. “Seal them.”

At his word, all five elders combined their Seal Arts. The five elements came together. The sky and earth shifted as elemental energies roiled. This combined Seal Art from five ten-Ring Seal Masters reached, at minimum, eleven-Ring strength.

Han Wu knew words alone would not work. Arguing further was a waste of time. It was better to break through the seal and let his real strength convince them.

Mind made up, he activated Wicked Dragon Ascension, the eleven-Ring unsealing technique he had gained from absorbing Veritas. Energy gathered, forming an enormous dragon hundreds of meters long, which dove directly into the five-element seal.

The five elders poured more energy into resisting Wicked Dragon Ascension’s power. For a time, the two forces remained locked against each other with neither side able to break the stalemate. Below, Qin Shuang released the Chain Lightning Seal. The lightning chain flew out and threaded through all five elders.

An eight-Ring seal against ten-Ring Seal Masters had an extremely small success rate, well under one in one thousand. However, Qin Shuang’s mastery over lightning, combined with the chain’s conductivity, meant the chain could continuously loop through them. While the individual success rate was low, the repetition meant being caught was just a matter of time.

Elder Shui Ta’s lightning compatibility was the worst of the five and was caught first. The Chain Lightning Seal bound him. The combined seal’s power dropped sharply the moment one of the five elements was missing from the formation.

Han Wu seized the opportunity to attack the weakened seal with Dragon Ascension, shattering it.

The backlash struck the five elders at once. All five coughed up blood and fell from the air. Han Wu and Qin Shuang rushed to catch each of them and bring them down safely.

The winners of this battle were clear.

Chapter 810 - Qin Shuang’s Ascension

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After Han Wu and Qin Shuang set the five elders down, they sat beside them, waiting for them to recover.

The five elders couldn't understand Han Wu and Qin Shuang's intentions. The backlash had hit all five of them, and their defences were at their lowest. This was the ideal moment to finish them off, yet Han Wu and Qin Shuang made no move against them.

"Elder Tu Bie, I've already told you my purpose. I came to the Sealing Gate Sect to find intelligence on the Magic Sealing Wave. Can you tell me?" Han Wu asked seriously.

Elder Tu Bie glanced at the other four elders. Still mistrustful of Han Wu, the other four shook their heads in warning.

"Before that, let me ask you one question on behalf of all five of us," Elder Tu Bie said with a sigh. "Why didn't you kill us? You could've easily found the intelligence on the Magic Sealing Wave and the dragon's seal if you had. No one would be able to stop you."

Han Wu smiled. "Elder Tu Bie, I hold no hostility toward the Sealing Gate Sect. You've been good to us. I've kept that in mind. I only want to know about the Magic Sealing Wave. It matters to me."

The sincerity in Han Wu's voice led the other four elders to start believing him.

Elder Mu Xu, the strongest of the five, spoke up. "I can see the altar is broken. The dragon soul must've escaped the seal, but I haven't detected it leaving the Coiling Dragon Forest. Where did it go?"

"It's in my consciousness. I sealed it inside my body. That way, I can draw on its power whenever I need to," Han Wu explained.

The elders' eyes widened with genuine wonder.

"To think a human body could actually suppress the Wicked Dragon," one of them remarked. "Truly beyond belief."

"Could you seal more of the dragon's body as well?" Elder Mu Xu asked.

Han Wu nodded. "I'd only benefit from sealing the dragon's body. I trust my own strength, and you already know that I'm capable of suppressing the dragon."

The elders almost cried. The Sealing Gate Sect had been founded to seal the Wicked Dragon, gradually weakening its power through prolonged sealing. Unfortunately, this meant the dragon's seal required reinforcement every year, a responsibility the sect had upheld for several hundred years.

If Han Wu could completely seal the Wicked Dragon, the sect's founding mission would be completed ahead of schedule. Every member would be free to live as they chose.

"If you can remove the threat of the Wicked Dragon from us, we'll be more than happy to share what we know about the Magic Sealing Wave," Elder Mu Xu proposed.

"Perfect," Han Wu and Qin Shuang said in unison.

This was good news for the Sealing Gate Sect, but for Han Wu, it was a windfall. Absorbing more of the dragon's body would increase his strength, and getting the intelligence on the Magic Sealing Wave would protect him and his allies from it on the battlefield. It was a win-win situation.

Han Wu took the five elders straight back to the Sealing Gate Sect without delay and absorbed what remained of the dragon's body.

With the help of the five elders, the whole process only took three days. After centuries of sapping its energy through the seal, the Coiling Dragon Forest had actually absorbed a significant portion of the dragon's body. Han Wu recovered only around sixty percent of the dragon's original strength.

Veritas's strength returned to roughly seventy percent of its peak thanks to the unification of body and soul. Feeling the change, it immediately crashed into the bars of its cage inside Han Wu's consciousness.

Han Wu immediately knew what Veritas was attempting. Having regained its strength, it felt bold enough to test whether it could break through the bars and escape. In response, Han Wu released his presence and pinned Veritas flat to the cage floor, then opened the Feral Beast's cell and let it chew on Veritas's body.

When the Feral Beast saw its cell door open, it felt an overwhelming urge to make a run for it. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. The Coiling Dragon Forest was more than expansive enough to hide in.

As the Feral Beast was entertaining these thoughts, it caught Han Wu's eyes, and all thought of escaping vanished. Han Wu's expression said everything it needed to know. Some things weren't just forbidden in action but in thought as well. The consequence could well be one's life.

Unable to defy Han Wu, the Feral Beast could only walk into Veritas's cell as instructed and, following Han Wu's directions, take bites out of Veritas. Veritas howled in pain and rage, but even so, it dared not curse Han Wu. It could only curse the Feral Beast.

Basking in the pleasure of pushing around a being stronger than itself, the Feral Beast bit with increasing enthusiasm until it could not stomach another mouthful and sat back

satisfied. Meanwhile, Veritas needed time to recover and had no energy left to resist in the short term.

Han Wu finally removed his pressure. “Feel free to try escaping at any time. Don’t worry. I won’t kill you. I’ll just bring you to the edge of death.”

Veritas trembled. Han Wu was far more suited to the title of Wicked Dragon than it was.

With the matter of the dragon’s seal resolved, the Sealing Gate Sect showed Han Wu and Qin Shuang the intelligence on the Magic Sealing Wave as promised.

Based on the sect’s classified records, they learned that the Magic Sealing Wave was the most powerful sealing technique in the Sealed Civilization—a fifteen-Ring Seal Art!

No Seal Master was powerful enough to use it without limitations, so all circulating examples of the Magic Sealing Wave were manufactured as physical objects. However, it was difficult to produce, so the number of these objects in circulation was not large.

Fortunately, the Magic Sealing Wave wasn’t infallible. With its creation came the development of a counter, called the Magic Seal Breaker. Unlike the Magic Sealing Wave, which was too powerful to be used freely, the Magic Seal Breaker was highly specialized and targeted only the Magic Sealing Wave. This meant its Ring rating sat at a relatively low ten Rings.

The records also clearly noted which faction had documents on the Magic Seal Breaker. As gratitude for Han Wu’s help to the Sealing Gate Sect, the five elders used the sect’s name to source the Magic Seal Breaker for Han Wu and Qin Shuang. They only needed to wait a few days for it to arrive.

Han Wu was glad to take the time off. He and Qin Shuang spent those days in the Coiling Dragon Forest hunting lightning-attribute magical beasts, sealing each one into Qin Shuang’s consciousness with the Four Guardians Seal. After absorbing many lightning-attribute Seal Arts, she successfully deepened her understanding of the Lightning Jurisdiction and officially ascended to Major God.

Within the Sealed Civilization, however, this was not marked as a Major God breakthrough but instead a process to upgrade herself from a nine-Ring to a ten-Ring Seal Master. Upon reaching ten Rings, Qin Shuang absorbed the power of the Sealed Civilization’s Law and gained a passive seal-type ability called the Thunderseal Edict.

Whenever Qin Shuang released a lightning-attribute attack, there was a 1% chance it would trigger the Thunderseal Edict effect on the target and randomly seal away a portion of their strength.

While the percentage itself wasn’t high, this ability ignored the difference in strength between the two parties entirely. Regardless of whether Qin Shuang fought a Divine Being

or a God King, the trigger chance remained at 1%. That was a lot of leeway, and Han Wu was genuinely curious about what it would look like when Qin Shuang used this ability at full intensity.

: Chapter 811

Chapter 811 - Lovesick

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 811 - Lovesick

Han Wu and Qin Shuang studied the Magic Seal Breaker immediately after obtaining it. Learning a ten-Ring unsealing technique posed no great challenge to Han Wu with his twelve-Ring cultivation, and he fully mastered it within half a day.

Doing so allowed him to understand how the Magic Seal Breaker could undo a fifteen-Ring Magic Sealing Wave seal despite only being a ten-Ring unsealing technique. The Magic Seal Breaker only worked on the Magic Sealing Wave and not any other seal art, even a one-Ring seal. With that context, the ten-Ring rating on the Magic Seal Breaker seemed almost superfluous.

It took Qin Shuang three days before she, too, mastered the Magic Seal Breaker. Their mission was a success. Before leaving, their teacher, Elder Tu Bie, presented them with parting gifts on behalf of the Sealing Gate Sect.

Qin Shuang received a short blade. It was no ordinary weapon. Eleven-Ring Seal Arts had been inscribed into it, and sealed within was an eleven-Ring Thunder Crane. The seal could be broken during critical moments to release the Thunder Crane and launch an attack. When not in use, the seal could be closed to draw the creature back in. It was practical and convenient.

Han Wu, on the other hand, received a powerful twelve-Ring seal technique called the Five Element Seal—the complete version of it at that. The founder of the Sealing Gate Sect had created this technique, but no member since then had had the talent and all five elemental affinities to master it. This was why the Sealing Gate Sect had to split the technique across five divisions, with five elders combining their efforts to perform a watered-down version of it.

Han Wu was thrilled when he received the technique. This was the most powerful seal art he had ever come across. He didn’t yet know what it was capable of in a different civilization, but he was already itching to get back to the Divine Civilization and test it.

After bidding farewell to Elder Tu Bie and the others, Han Wu and Qin Shuang communicated with the Sealed Civilization's Will to leave the place. When they passed back through the membrane of the Sealed Civilization's Will, Han Wu's full power came flooding back into him. His abilities, Divine Aspects, Divine Authority, Divine Jurisdictions, Divine Skills, and physical strength all returned at once.

The same happened to Qin Shuang. However, though she had already grasped the initial form of the Lightning Jurisdiction, she still needed to return to the Divine Civilization to complete her Major God ascension.

The pair then journeyed back to Imperial College in the Divine Civilization, where Qin Shuang used her access privileges to request an Exquisite Skill Gem from the college. Once everything was in order, she entered a training hall and called in Han Wu, Jing Jing, Sun Qingnian, and a few others to stand guard for her.

With her preparations complete, Qin Shuang submitted a request to the Will of the Divine Civilization to start her Major God ascension. The civilization's Will locked onto her and poured energy into her body.

Bolts of lightning rained down, striking her repeatedly until she was drenched in blood. Han Wu's chest ached at the sight, but he could not step in. Doing so would only hurt Qin Shuang's chances of successfully breaking through. Every bit of suffering had to be borne by her alone.

Fortunately, Qin Shuang's foundation was solid, and she cleared the trial without much trouble. After becoming a Major God, Qin Shuang gained a new ability called Electrostrike, which greatly enhanced the potency of her lightning control and pushed her already formidable attack power to yet another level.

"I did it! I actually did it!" Qin Shuang cried, throwing herself at Han Wu, pouring all her excitement into the embrace. Ascending to a Major God meant a great deal to her, as she had come from a God family.

"Congratulations," Han Wu said, gently patting her on the back.

Sun Qingnian chimed in with his own congratulations, though Han Wu's sharp ears caught a distinct strain behind the words.

After making her breakthrough, Qin Shuang needed time to stabilize, so she returned to her dormitory to train and consolidate her gains. Jing Jing still had the divine war to attend to and thus didn't linger either.

Before she left, Han Wu handed her the unsealing technique, the Magic Seal Breaker, and asked her to pass it along to Xu Hai, the Wisdom God King, along with a message that he would be back soon.

Jing Jing's departure meant only Han Wu and Sun Qingnian were left.

"Tell me, what's been going on with you lately?" Han Wu asked, not wanting to beat around the bush.

Sun Qingnian let out a bitter smile. Nothing got past his best friend. "To put it simply, my lover, my mistress, and my wife have all ended up in the same place."[1]

Han Wu mentally ran through the relationships. Sun Qingnian's lover was Shi Shan, the Blazing Warrior God, whom Han Wu had met before. He had married Jin Tuantuan in the Divine Weapon Civilization, and she had recently completed the paperwork to become an official citizen of the Divine Civilization, successfully awakening her divine realm in the process. As for the mistress... that was a new one.

"I'll let the fact that you were chasing women across foreign civilizations go," Han Wu said with an unimpressed look. "But who's the mistress?"

A sheepish expression appeared on Sun Qingnian's face. "Ms. Lina."

Han Wu's scalp went numb. That was impressive, even by Sun Qingnian's standards. He had truly outdone himself.

"You didn't even spare your teacher?!" Han Wu asked, on the verge of tearing his hair out.

"What can I say, the heart wants what it wants," Sun Qingnian said helplessly.

"When did you and Ms. Lina get together?"

"During the trip to the Giant Shadow Civilization."

Han Wu felt a sudden urge to grab Sun Qingnian by the collar. "You never go very long between women, do you? I'm staying out of this mess. You're on your own."

"Brother, you're my only real friend," Sun Qingnian begged, grabbing his arm and refusing to let go. "You can't just leave me hanging."

"What do you want me to do? This is beyond even me. I'm not cut out to be your wingman in something this complicated."

"I've already analyzed the situation. The main issue is that my baby can't quite accept sharing me with someone else. If I can resolve that, I can handle the rest. So, I came up with a plan. My baby has always wanted to fight you. If you beat her, she'll feel down, and I can comfort her. That might be enough for her to forgive me."

"So basically, you want me to beat up Ms. Shi Shan," Han Wu said flatly.

Sun Qingnian nodded. “That’s right. But don’t be too rough. She’s my baby. I’ll feel terrible if she gets seriously hurt.”

“Do you even have a heart left to feel terrible with? Because all I see is someone with three hearts for three women.”

Despite Han Wu’s words, he already knew he was going to help. They had been through life and death together. He couldn’t just watch Sun Qingnian die in his own romantic disaster.

Sighing, Han Wu relented, “Just this once.”

Sun Qingnian lit up.

1. GG bro ☜

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: Chapter 812

Chapter 812 - Fighting Shi Shan

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Shi Shan had no desire to see Sun Qingnian. That fickle man had broken her heart. She could overlook him finding women in foreign civilizations, but she could not tolerate him doing the same in the Divine Civilization, much less bringing them back with him. The thought made her want to render him down into lamp oil and burn him alive.

The only reason she was willing to meet up with Sun Qingnian was to have a chance to fight Han Wu. Shi Shan was still furious at Sun Qingnian, but the prospect of facing Han Wu in battle was appealing enough to trump that. As the Blazing Warrior God, she had enormous confidence in her combat ability. Even the knowledge that Han Wu was a World life form didn’t frighten her in the slightest.

At the meeting place, Sun Qingnian immediately tried to pull Shi Shan aside and explain himself, but Shi Shan casually pushed him back with a burst of flame. “Don’t ruin my mood for this fight.”

Sun Qingnian stepped back, silently urging Han Wu forward with a look and motioning for him to hit her hard, but not too hard.

Han Wu gestured back as if to say, “That’s a tall order.”

Standing before Shi Shan, he could feel her power clearly. Despite not releasing any flames, she radiated a heat far beyond anything an ordinary person could produce.

“Ms. Shi Shan, let’s keep it friendly,” Han Wu suggested at the start of the fight.

However, Shi Shan couldn’t contain her fighting spirit. She launched herself at him in a single step, fist blazing, and threw a punch at his face. “Keeping it friendly won’t let me fight to my heart’s content. I’ve got a lot of resentment to let out!”

Han Wu sidestepped her flurry of attacks with ease. With his strength, he didn’t even have to draw on any of his Divine Authorities. Avoiding Shi Shan’s strikes cost him nothing.

The realization that he could effortlessly dodge all her attacks only fired Shi Shan up further. The illusion of a phoenix appeared, pouring tremendous power into her body, and a ring of fire ignited in the air behind her.

It was a Divine Ring! Only World life forms had one, but the not-yet World rank Shi Shan had manifested one! Han Wu could sense that her Divine Ring was not fully formed, but the flames within it were no ordinary fire—they were the powerful Phoenix Flames!

With the Divine Ring amplifying her strength, Shi Shan temporarily became a World life form. Her attacks grew fiercer, and her every movement carried a scorching authority, with an unmistakably noble, imposing air.

As Han Wu watched her, he found himself thinking of Qin Shuang. Both Shi Shan and Qin Shuang were pure single-element users with elements that were violent and offensively dominant. While Qin Shuang lacked the Phoenix bloodline, she had Annihilating Lightning. Her ceiling would ultimately be higher than Shi Shan’s.

Sun Qingnian watched anxiously from a distance. All he could see was Shi Shan attacking relentlessly while Han Wu continuously dodged. He feared that Han Wu wouldn’t be able to beat her. If that was the case, this whole plan was a bust.

“Come on, Han Wu, do something,” Sun Qingnian murmured.

Han Wu’s senses were sharp enough to catch that. Glancing at Sun Qingnian, he gave him a nod. He was ready to ramp it up.

After sidestepping another burst of Phoenix Flames, Han Wu raised a hand. Dozens of elemental spheres of various types materialized and fired toward Shi Shan simultaneously.

Shi Shan assumed it was a barrage attack and called up a wall of Phoenix Flames shaped into a phoenix shield to deflect the spheres. In moments, nearly a third of the fire-element spheres were destroyed. The ones that survived, however, transformed into thin threads that wrapped around Shi Shan, binding her.

“Elemental Flux Seal!” Han Wu called out, triggering the seal.

All the elements within Shi Shan’s space were instantly thrown into chaos. Her access to the fire element was cut off, and the Phoenix Flames on her body were snuffed out. The Divine Ring behind her also dissipated.

The elemental threads also locked her body in place, leaving her unable to move. Her fearsome power had been sealed in the blink of an eye. Shi Shan fought to break free, but to no avail.

This experience gave Han Wu a new understanding of the Elemental Flux Seal. It was originally a seven-Ring Seal Art, but with multiple elements enhancing it, its power was enough to rival an eleven-Ring seal.

Despite losing a third of its strength to the Phoenix Flames and being reduced to the strength of a ten-Ring seal, it still held out. This basically meant a ten-Ring seal had a strong chance of working against a World life form.

As this conclusion was derived from a single test, the certainty of it remained up in the air, but it still gave Han Wu a useful benchmark for real combat going forward. Han Wu stared at the sealed Shi Shan as she struggled futilely to break free. The match was over.

“Ms. Shi Shan, the fight is decided. I have things to attend to, so I’ll take my leave.” Han Wu hastily left before she had a chance to reply.

As Shi Shan watched him leave, she couldn’t help but replay the entire fight in her head. Han Wu had done nothing but dodge, and in the end, a single move had completely neutralized her. In other words, she couldn’t even survive one of his attacks.

That realization caused Shi Shan’s confidence to collapse. She had issued the challenge, yet she, a teacher, had been beaten in one move by a student. The humiliation was grave.

Sun Qingnian broke into a grin. He had been waiting for this. Stepping forward, he patiently comforted her, doting on her with care. The rattled Shi Shan needed someone to talk to, and Sun Qingnian was right there. With his track record of being bold, attentive, and utterly shameless, he had a decent shot at winning back Shi Shan’s heart.

Han Wu, meanwhile, had returned to the divine war through his divine realm. The war had continued during the few days he had been gone, and a clear winner had yet to emerge.

Recently, the Slaughter Faction had gained a significant number of students from Warfare College and had greatly expanded its forces. The Wisdom Faction, on the other hand, had taken a few small losses and lost some outposts.

From a strategic standpoint, the damage wasn't severe, and Han Wu was confident he could reclaim every lost outpost. Before that, however, he needed to report to Xu Hai and let him know he was back.

The moment he walked into the Wisdom Faction's command zone, he spotted a Heavenrender Epistian carrying a bruised and bloodied Jia Gui back. Someone had clearly beaten him up.

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Chapter 813 - Jia Gui Got Beaten Up

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 813 - Jia Gui Got Beaten Up

"What happened?" Han Wu asked, stopping the Heavenrender Epistian, simultaneously channeling his Life Aspect to heal Jia Gui's injuries.

The Epistian looked uncomfortable, but aware of Han Wu's status, explained the situation after only a brief moment of hesitation.

The short version was that Jia Gui had gone out on patrol and encountered an advancing Slaughter Faction army. Spotting Wei En among their ranks, he immediately berated her, rattling off insults like "ingrate" and "betrayer" without missing a beat. Then, for good measure, he also announced that he had once touched Wei En's body and seen her completely naked.

Wei En was furious. Fortunately, as the founder of the Saintess Club, her ability to spin a narrative was unmatched, and in just a few sentences, she turned the story around. Suddenly, it was Jia Gui who had used his authority to coerce her, and the entire Wisdom Faction was being dragged along with it.

The musclehead students from Warfare College fell for it entirely. They transformed into knights of justice and charged at Jia Gui to avenge Wei En.

Even five of them would have still been manageable, but more than fifty students had surged at him, all convinced they were doing the right thing. Terrified, Jia Gui fled, but his

abilities were still sealed with the Magic Sealing Wave, and the power of a World life form hadn't been enough to escape.

The students had thus run him down and pummeled him. If not for his physical strength and natural recovery, plus reinforcements from the Wisdom Faction, the fifty students could've killed Jia Gui.

A mix of anger and amusement stirred within Han Wu. The former was because Wei En had not only defected to the Slaughter Faction but was now smearing the Wisdom Faction's name, burning every bridge behind her. The latter came from the fact that fifty Warfare College students had managed to beat up Jia Gui, a World life form. That had to be some kind of embarrassing record for World life forms.

With Han Wu's treatment, Jia Gui recovered quickly and soon came to. Upon seeing Han Wu, his expression took on the look of a man who had found a lifeline.

"Han Wu, you have to back me up on this!" he begged, face wrinkled in misery. "Over fifty Warfare College lecturers teamed up against me. I fought bravely, but alas, two fists can't beat a hundred hands. Look what they did to me."

Jia Gui had upgraded the mob of students into lecturers. If Han Wu hadn't already heard it from the Epistian, he would've actually believed that sincere explanation.

"I don't even know what to say to you. You've only gotten worse," Han Wu said, genuinely disappointed.

Back when he'd recruited Jia Gui for a match against the Divine River Civilization, the man had been useless but at least passable in a fight. Now, he couldn't even hold off a group of Demigods, and all he had to show for it was an exaggerated explanation. It was truly sad.

That said, Jia Gui was still on the Wisdom Faction's side. Han Wu wasn't going to stand by while he got pushed around.

"Wait here. I'll go report to my mentor first. I'll come back and deal with this after," Han Wu said firmly.

At that moment, Han Wu suddenly remembered that the Magic Sealing Wave still sealed Jia Gui's abilities, so he performed the unsealing technique, the Magic Seal Breaker, to lift the seal.

When Jia Gui felt his abilities and Divine Aspects flooding back, he immediately shouted in joy, "Now if they come after me again, I can actually run away!"

Han Wu was at a loss for words. This guy only ever thought about running.

With that, Han Wu headed into the command room and reported everything from the mission to Xu Hai. He also passed along the news that Jia Gui had spotted Wei En among the Slaughter Faction's forces.

Xu Hai's expression darkened. More than ten members of the Saintess Club had followed her out of the Wisdom Faction and into the Slaughter Faction. Moreover, these defectors were actively encouraging other students to leave. Thirteen such incidents had already occurred. If this didn't stop, it could become a serious problem in the future.

Unfortunately, as a lecturer, Xu Hai wasn't in a position to act personally. Wei En was a specialist in information warfare. Any opening she could exploit would be turned into an attack on the Wisdom Faction. Who knew how many uninformed students would leave then? The risk simply wasn't worth it. A student would have to handle Wei En.

Han Wu was the obvious choice.

"Han Wu, I'll leave the Wei En matter in your hands," Xu Hai said.

"Leave it to me, Teacher. I'll make sure she regrets it," he promised.

After leaving the command room, Han Wu sought out Jia Gui, and the two of them headed back to the ambush site. The area was packed with students from the Slaughter Faction. The Warfare College students were treating the divine war like daily combat drills.

The Imperial College students had strengths in invasions and the nurturing of their own core race, but they were no match for the Warfare College in actual combat. In fact, a number of outposts had already fallen under the combined assault of the Warfare College students.

Seeing this, Han Wu wasted no time. He summoned a swarm of locusts, then released the Wicked Dragon Veritas from the Four Guardians Seal inside his body.

Veritas had spent this time recovering from its injury, though in truth it had been faking continued injury to avoid drawing Han Wu's attention. Its sudden release brought a wave of panic, as it had no idea what Han Wu had in mind.

Han Wu pointed at the enemies. "Veritas, don't say I never gave you a chance. Clear out at least eighty percent of the enemy in that area, and I'll let you go free."

Veritas couldn't believe its ears. "Noble Defier, are you serious?"

"I swear on the name of the Defier."

Veritas immediately came alive. After enduring captivity, it had come to value freedom above all else. It would push its life to the limit for a chance to be free.

“Noble Defier, please enjoy the performance,” Veritas roared, spreading its wings and flying toward the enemy.

Jia Gui watched this unfold in horror. “Han Wu, where did you get another Great Dragon? This one feels like it’s already a World life form. It might even be able to match me!”

Han Wu said nothing. He had long since given up trying to understand Jia Gui’s delusions of grandeur.

: Chapter 814

Chapter 814 - Thief or Whore?

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The Wicked Dragon Veritas charged into the skies above the enemy formation with ferocity. Then, it entered the Anti-Flight Domain, and it plummeted from the air.

As a born flyer, Veritas had no experience falling from any height, so it hit the ground hard, without a shred of technique to soften the landing. Fortunately, it was a Great Dragon. Its tough hide and scales absorbed the impact without a scratch.

Han Wu’s locust army, by contrast, was well-practiced. The moment they started to fall, they shifted into Small Locust Blades. The blades couldn’t fly, but they could rely on Telekinesis to pierce down at the enemies below.

Any units without strong defenses were cut down with ease. Only those with thick hides and tough builds managed to hold out a little longer.

When Veritas saw the locusts massacring the enemy units, it immediately let out a furious roar. “Stop killing them! These enemies are mine. I need to kill them to earn my freedom!”

The locust army, however, answered to no one but Han Wu and kept cutting through the units in waves. Many enemy units fell to the Small Locust Blades.

Veritas could not bear to watch. It forced itself to move for the sake of gaining its freedom. Even grounded by the Anti-Flight Domain, a Great Dragon's fighting talent covered far more than aerial combat. It unleashed a powerful roar, and sound waves laced with Wicked Energy tore through the weakest points in the enemy ranks, causing huge droves of enemy units to collapse.

Before long, Veritas's rampage caught Wei En's eye. The sight of the commanding Great Dragon reminded her of Han Wu's Great Dragon army, and she couldn't help but fantasize over having one of her own. Facing Han Wu with a Great Dragon at her side would certainly make her look less outmatched.

Nevertheless, Wei En knew she couldn't tame Veritas alone. She needed the help of her many admirers. So, she deployed her signature skill once more, and with just a few words, her admirers arrived at the same conclusion on their own. It wasn't that Wei En wanted the dragon, but they wanted to give it to her as an expression of their love.

"Charge! Take that wild dragon down!"

"Thank the heavens for this gift. Let's capture it for the goddess Wei En to use as her mount!"

"Dragon, surrender now, or you'll regret it!"

The Warfare College students turned their sights on Veritas and unleashed their power. Unfortunately for them, they had badly misjudged it.

Veritas radiated a presence similar to Jia Gui's, but the two were nothing alike. Jia Gui was about as effective as wet cardboard. Even on a good day, he could at most squeeze out ten percent of his potential. Veritas, on the other hand, could easily push out two hundred percent of its potential, and that was on top of having a Great Dragon's physique.

The Warfare College students were unaware of this. In fact, after beating Jia Gui, they had convinced themselves that World life forms weren't that impressive after all. They were quickly humbled.

Veritas fought like nothing they'd faced before, and casualties soon appeared.

While Veritas proved to be no easy target, its powerful savagery only made Wei En want it more. Taming it would do a great deal for her ambitions. Just as Wei En prepared to draw on one of the treasures the Butcher had given her, Han Wu appeared.

"Long time no see, Senior Wei En," he said casually.

Wei En's breathing sped up. Cold sweat ran down her spine.

"Oh? You're not taking off your clothes today?" Han Wu mocked. "I thought you wanted to discuss life with me."

Purple markings surfaced on Wei En's face from the surge of emotion, but Han Wu remained unfazed.

“I heard you've been going around telling people the Wisdom Faction is full of thieves and whores,” Han Wu continued without missing a beat. “So tell me, Senior, when you were part of the Wisdom Faction, which one were you?”

With a flash, Han Wu suddenly appeared directly in front of her. Wei En tried to back away, but he grabbed her hand.

“Don't stay silent, Senior. You wanted to seal me, didn't you? Here’s your chance. Go ahead and try,” he said, twisting her arm into an angle the body was never meant to turn.

Despite the pain, Wei En refused to make a sound, convinced that screaming would only make her look weak.

“Not bad, you’re tough.” Han Wu reached for her other arm. “Let’s see if you can remain this quiet when every bone in your body is broken.”

Wei En tried to resist but couldn’t break his hold. Though they were both Major Gods, in terms of actual power, she was nowhere near Han Wu’s level.

“Are you even a man if you’re picking on a woman?!” Wei En spat through the pain, indignation in her voice as if taking the moral high ground.

“Whether I’m a man isn’t something you need to worry about, Senior.” Han Wu reached into his coat and produced a recording device, which he held up in front of her. “Senior Wei En, if you’d rather not have your naked body printed and distributed to every corner of Imperial College, I suggest you look into this and clear up every rumor you’ve spread about the Wisdom Faction.”

“Dream on. I’ll never do what you say.”

“Have it your way. Your body will become an unforgettable memory for all the juniors.” Han Wu moved to strip her.

Wei En had never suffered humiliation like this before. Enduring the pain, she reached for one of the treasures the Butcher had given her. It was a Teleport Jade Talisman. Once shattered, it would instantly transport the holder back to the talisman set location. A blink later, she was gone.

Even Han Wu had not anticipated that she would have such an item. It completely threw off his plan.

At that moment, Veritas finished its rampage. It had cut down a massive number of units and was buzzing with excitement. Its freedom was within reach! After sweeping the area clean of enemy units, Veritas flew back to Han Wu’s side.

It blinked expectantly at him, clearly trying to nudge Han Wu into keeping his word. “Noble Defier, I’ve done as you asked and killed over eighty percent of the units in this area. Will you release me now?”

“Of course.” Han Wu smiled. “Just give me two minutes. I need to call someone over first.”

Veritas didn’t quite follow. Why couldn’t Han Wu just release it before calling that person over?

Shortly after, the person Han Wu had called arrived. Alpheus, the Black Dragon King, descended, gazing at Veritas with an air of superiority. Veritas had no idea why another Great Dragon had been summoned, but it soon found out.

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Chapter 815 - Imperial College Scandal

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“I, Han Wu the Defier, hereby declare Veritas the Wicked Dragon free,” Han Wu declared.

Veritas’s eyes filled with tears. It had been sealed for hundreds of years inside the Sealing Gate Sect, then locked away in Han Wu’s Four Guardians Seal almost immediately after. It had almost given up on freedom, convinced it would spend the rest of its life under Han Wu’s thumb. Yet here Han Wu was, actually keeping his word and letting it go.

“Noble Defier, thank you!” Veritas cried out in joy.

It got up and immediately tried to fly away, afraid that Han Wu would change his mind. As Veritas took flight, Alpheus, standing at Han Wu’s side, suddenly launched itself into the air as well, closing the distance in moments.

Veritas thought this other dragon of noble blood was simply departing elsewhere and called out warmly, “Respected Black Dragon King, wherever you’re going, safe travels.”

“Much appreciated,” Alpheus replied, slamming Veritas into the ground with the precision of a hawk attacking its prey.

Both were World life forms, but Alpheus was a king and had honed its strength through long years of battle. Its strength sat at the stronger end of a World life form. Veritas,

worn down by years of sealing and Han Wu's captivity, with part of its soul stripped away, had barely reached the early edge of a World life form. It was no match.

Three quick exchanges later, Alpheus had Veritas pinned. The instant Alpheus subdued it, everything clicked into place for Veritas. This was Han Wu's scheme from the start! Release it only so Alpheus could catch it.

Veritas thought Han Wu was more deserving of the title "Wicked Dragon" than it was.

"Will you be my subordinate?" Alpheus asked.

Do I even have a choice? Veritas thought.

The answer was obviously no. Veritas, ever flexible when needed, agreed without much fuss. Serving a king of the dragon race wasn't exactly a bad deal.

"Wise choice. Serving the great Black Dragon King will be the honor of your life," Alpheus preened before proceeding to formalize the contract between them.

Had Han Wu tried to force Veritas into directly signing a contract with him, Veritas would've refused to the end. Making a dragon submit to another life form with only a bit of dragon blood in him was no different from trampling on the pride of Great Dragons. Doing odd jobs without a contract was one thing, but signing a formal agreement was another matter entirely.

A dragon-to-dragon contract, however, was a different story. This produced an interesting result. Veritas had gone from being Han Wu's subordinate to becoming a subordinate of Han Wu's subordinate.

The status drop sucked. Freedom had lasted all of three minutes, only for it to fall an entire rank in the hierarchy. At least Alpheus mentioned that following Han Wu meant that pure Energy Stones were abundant. That took the edge off the sting well enough for Veritas to move past it.

As for the battle against the Slaughter Faction's army, though the Wisdom Faction had undoubtedly won, the ringleader, Wei En, had escaped. There was no telling how much chaos she'd cause after this.

Sure enough, within half a day, word came from Imperial College. Wei En had posted on the campus forum, accusing Han Wu of forcing her to undress. The moment it went up, the Saintess Club members piled into the comments, condemning Han Wu and demanding that he make amends with his life, all the while hurling insults at the Wisdom Faction.

A fake story had already taken shape. According to it, Wei En had suffered repeated harassment at the hands of a senior Wisdom Faction leader. She couldn't bear the humiliation and defected to the Slaughter Faction.

The divine war between the Wisdom God King and the Slaughter God King had long since attracted widespread attention, and Wei En's story naturally spread throughout the Divine Civilization like wildfire. The Wealth Faction pressured the major media outlets in the Divine Civilization into silence, but that didn't stop the smaller outlets beyond their reach from swarming in, piling exaggerations onto an already invented story, and broadcasting it far and wide.

Rumors didn't need to be true to travel fast. Within a short time, a scandal tied to Imperial College was circulating across the whole Divine Civilization. One headline even dragged Xu Hai's name into the mess, claiming that the Wisdom God King and another lecturer had shared the same woman.

The scandal continued. It not only battered the Wisdom Faction but also dealt a genuine blow to Imperial College's reputation. Even when Imperial College issued a formal statement noting that Wei En's claims were unsupported by any evidence and constituted a false accusation, many were inclined to believe the school and the Wisdom God King were simply covering for each other.

Their reasoning was straightforward enough. What girl would risk her own reputation like that?

When Han Wu heard that reasoning, he couldn't help but laugh in disbelief. What kind of logic was that? Were there no women of poor character in the world?

Wei En had thrown herself into a smear campaign against the Wisdom Faction for the sake of the Slaughter Faction's victory in the divine war. Even the wise Xu Hai was at a loss. He had no counter to someone willing to throw away her own reputation to deal a blow. Wei En had nothing left to lose.

Han Wu was just as stuck. He could probably manage a covert assassination of Wei En even if she were hiding deep inside the Slaughter Faction's base, but slowing the momentum of a public smear campaign was beyond him. This was harder than any battle.

After a round of discussion, the Wisdom Faction's senior leadership could only come up with one answer for dealing with Wei En's attack: endure it.

However, the damage only compounded the longer they did nothing. A growing number of students from both Demonic Imperial College and Imperial College chose to distance themselves from the Wisdom Faction. Some believed the rumor, while others were warned off by their families. Either way, they wanted nothing to do with the Wisdom Faction.

As the Wisdom Faction's numbers dropped, the Slaughter Faction saw an influx of recruits, all arriving in the name of upholding justice for the goddess Wei En. They were convinced that they were doing the right thing.

This imbalance pushed the Wisdom Faction’s frontlines back across the board. They were struggling to hold their ground.

Chapter 816 - That’s Not Justice at All!

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Xu Hai had previously considered the damage a smear campaign could do to the Wisdom Faction, but he still hadn’t imagined it could hit this hard. If things continued this way, the Wisdom Faction would be finished.

Han Wu was also trying to find a way out. He had asked to meet with the Wealth God King g and request his help. Zhao Zihong told him that it would be a piece of cake for him to make the rumor disappear, but that he wouldn’t do it.

This was a divine war, and the rumor was a form of attack. If the Wisdom Faction couldn’t withstand this blow, it would be better if they just dissolved now and saved everyone the trouble. On top of that, Zhao Zihong made it plain that if the Wisdom Faction could not produce an effective counter, he would withdraw his financial backing.

That hit Han Wu hard. The Wealth Faction’s support was a large part of the reason the Wisdom Faction had been able to hold its ground against the Slaughter Faction at all. If the Wealth Faction pulled out, the Wisdom Faction’s defeat was all but sealed. Xu Hai would not survive the war.

Han Wu wasn’t about to let this underhanded tactic bring his mentor down, but he couldn’t figure out a solution either.

“If I were strong enough, I could just wipe out the Slaughter Faction entirely and make the rumor pointless,” Han Wu said self-deprecatingly.

He had been growing strong quickly, but it seemed it still wasn’t fast enough—not enough to make a difference when a critical blow struck. Despite racking his brain day and night, he could find no solution. How was he supposed to pull the Wisdom Faction out of this?

Xu Hai was in the same boat. He had studied history and read countless military tactics, but he couldn’t come up with a reliable method for countering a smear campaign. The Wisdom Faction seemed destined to collapse.

As Han Wu was at his wits’ end, a call came in from Sun Qingnian. Frustrated, Han Wu declined, figuring Sun Qingnian was just calling to thank him for helping him win Shi

Shan back. Sun Qingnian didn't give up, though, and stubbornly called again. Han Wu answered with a sigh.

"Han Wu, I made up with my baby!" Sun Qingnian exclaimed.

In no mood to discuss Sun Qingnian's romantic affairs, Han Wu replied flatly, "Got it."

As he was about to hang up, Sun Qingnian hastily said, "I know you've been stressed out over the rumor situation. I think I have a way to handle it. Tell me where you are, and I'll come to you."

Though skeptical, Han Wu gave his location anyway. Even Xu Hai, the Wisdom God King, couldn't solve the problem; what could Sun Qingnian, a mere God, do? Still, Han Wu had nothing better to try and nothing left to lose, so he decided to hear him out.

Sun Qingnian soon arrived with Shi Shan in tow. Shi Shan had apparently forgiven Sun Qingnian for having his fingers in three pies at once and was practically glued to his side.

"Han Wu, I'm here to solve your problem!" Sun Qingnian proclaimed.

Han Wu was unconvinced. It was one thing if Sun Qingnian had come to teach him how to chase women, but fixing a political disaster was another matter entirely.

"You and Xu Hai are looking at this too narrowly. You need to look at the nature of the problem. Why did that rumor take hold and spread so widely?" Sun Qingnian asked.

"Why?"

"Because the divine war is part of it. There's also a group of passionate people fanning the flames—people who feel personally invested. Some of them genuinely fear something similar happening to them and want to see someone stand up for themselves, but some are just fishing in muddy waters and playing the victim card.

"If a girl with a clean and upstanding reputation comes forward and says she was coerced or harassed, that becomes the truth in the eyes of the public, no matter if it actually is or not.

"You and Xu Hai have been trying to argue the truth of the rumor, but that's clearly going nowhere. People aren't interested in your evidence. They don't actually care about the rumor. They just want their idea of justice to be enacted, even if that idea of justice is not justice at all," Sun Qingnian explained.

The clarity with which Sun Qingnian had grasped the situation left Han Wu stunned. It was at this moment that he finally became convinced that Sun Qingnian could actually counter this.

“So what do I do?” Han Wu asked.

“Simple. Shatter the justice they think they’re defending, and get the Saintess Club members to convince themselves that they and Wei En are not the same kind of person,” Sun Qingnian explained.

“How exactly do we do that?”

“That’ll take a little finesse. I have a bold idea, but I need one good piece of evidence to make it work.” Sun Qingnian chuckled, eyes gleaming with cunning. “By the way, did you actually see Wei En naked?”

Han Wu was caught off guard. That was a sharp turn in the conversation. However, as it was Sun Qingnian, Han Wu didn’t worry about it feeding any new rumors and answered honestly, “I did.”

“Perfect. We’re going to find someone who can extract memories and pull the image of Wei En from your mind.”

Shortly after the memory extraction, several photos of Wei En were printed out. As they came directly from Han Wu’s head, the resolution matched exactly what he had seen.

Sun Qingnian picked them up, clicked his tongue a few times, and sighed. “Han Wu, I have to say, you’re too upright for your own good. A beautiful woman is standing right in front of you, but you couldn’t even bring yourself to look properly. Look at this resolution. You can’t make out a thing. These are completely unusable.”

Shi Shan let out a cold snort from the side but said nothing. Sun Qingnian flinched visibly. Still, the job had to get done. Blurry photos were less effective than clear ones.

“If you want a clear one, my mentor might have one,” Han Wu said.

Sun Qingnian and Shi Shan turned to stare at him with stunned silence.

“Is it true, then, what the rumors say? Did the Wisdom God King Xu Hai actually... coerce Wei En?” Sun Qingnian blurted out.

Han Wu sighed. “My mentor’s Divine Jurisdiction can monitor everything that happens within a certain area. He likely has a video saved somewhere.”

Sun Qingnian and Shi Shan both exhaled in relief at that explanation.

“Say that clearly next time,” Shi Shan said, pressing a hand to her chest. “You nearly ruined my image of the Wisdom God King.”

With that, they tracked down Xu Hai, gave him the time and location to search, and after going through his recordings, found the full sequence of Wei En being blasted away naked in clear resolution.

Sun Qingnian edited out a portion and showed them a wicked grin. “With this, Senior Wei En is finished. Han Wu, today I’m going to show you what it means to fight fire with fire.”

Chapter 817 - The Rumor Collapses

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 817 - The Rumor Collapses

Somewhere in the Divine Civilization was a fairly unknown, third-rate school called Troll College[1]. Their students mostly spent their days lazing around, scrolling through news in their dorms.

“Wei En got coerced! Everyone, write a hundred comments today to push this story. Anyone who doesn’t owes the rest of us a round!”

“Nothing gets me angrier than people like that. What kind of Wisdom God King is this guy? He looks proper on the outside but is actually rotten to the core.”

“Brothers, someone just shared something from an Imperial College contact.”

“What? Post it.”

The students clicked the link in the group chat and read the caption.

“Spent the night, 300 Divine Essence.”

Below the caption was a photo. Lustful expressions appeared on all the men’s faces as they zoomed into the naked figure, eyeing the fair skin and the beauty mark on the chest. They then glanced at the person’s face, and every one of them froze.

“Is that... the goddess Wei En?”

“Faked for sure. Let me run it through my detector.”

The result came back negative. The photo was not altered. It was real.

“Check the comments.”

Over a thousand comments had already flooded in below the post.

“Isn’t that the goddess Wei En? The photo must be faked.”

“Photo’s real. I just checked. I’m surprised. I was just in the comments ripping into the Wisdom God King. How am I supposed to deal with this?”

“I’ve done it too. Two hundred Divine Essence, four hours. Truly no limits.”

“Wei En, I gave you everything. You took everything.”

“Wei En, come out and face this!”

***

Wei En had just fallen asleep when a barrage of calls woke her. The Slaughter Faction had rewarded her generously for landing a damaging blow on the Wisdom Faction, and she had been drifting off, mind filled with pleasant thoughts of a bright future attached to the Butcher.

Wei En answered one of the calls to hear a Saintess Club member frantically relaying the news, even forwarding her a link. The comments below the post had already crossed a million. Some of the comments were people asking for her current rates.

Fury boiled up within Wei En. She was a pure little angel, yet the comments seemed to view her as someone willing to sell her body for the right price. The rage nearly caused her to completely lose her composure.

Logging on, she fired back at comment after comment, insisting that the photo was fake. However, following that post were hundreds more, each with photos of her, all unclothed. With them came over a hundred people claiming to have paid for her time, at a pretty steep rate at that.

If a single person brought it up, it could still be dismissed as slander. When a hundred people said it, it became near undeniable in the eyes of the public, regardless of whether it was actually true. It wasn’t just empty claims either. They had photos as proof. People checked every photo, but none showed any signs of editing.

Some Saintess Club members knew Wei En well enough to recognize her from the beauty mark in the first photo and couldn’t help the seed of doubt that was sown within them.

The faith those members had placed in Wei En crumbled. They had believed her an immaculate saint, only to discover she had been trading her body for resources behind closed doors. Wanting nothing more to do with her, they began withdrawing from the club.

This only marked the beginning of the collapse.

As the mass withdrawal from the Saintess Club continued, Imperial College issued a statement. Wei En had acted in a manner unbefitting of her character and had caused serious damage to Imperial College's reputation. Thus, all honors and titles she had received from the college were hereby revoked, and she would be held accountable.

The stated reason for the action was that Wei En had made groundless accusations without evidence, resulting in reputational harm to both the Wisdom God King, Xu Hai, and the Imperial College.

At the Wisdom Faction's request, the college had chosen not to specify the details, but the deliberately vague statement caused the public to take it as indirect confirmation that Wei En had really slept with others for money. Those previously on Wei En's side immediately turned on her.

She had a listed price, so what were these claims of coercion? Did the Wisdom God King look like someone who couldn't afford two or three hundred Divine Essence? He could probably spare 2 or 3 million without blinking. This was clearly an extortion attempt gone wrong, and when the Wisdom God King didn't pay up, she'd resorted to slander.

Moreover, none of her accusations were backed by a single concrete piece of evidence. Not even a photo. Wei En had nothing. She had relied entirely on her looks to make people believe her. In the end, her looks alone couldn't hold up against the damning images online.

In a single day, Wei En went from someone under widespread protection to someone everyone wanted to tear apart. By the second day, many of the new recruits joining the Slaughter Faction's side withdrew. The righteous crusaders no longer had a reason to fight against the Wisdom Faction.

On the third day, the students who had withdrawn from the Wisdom Faction began acknowledging their mistake and applied to rejoin. A number of previously unrelated students felt guilty about their part in spreading the story and applied as a way of making amends.

By the fifth day, every outpost the Wisdom Faction had lost was recovered, and they had even taken several of the Slaughter Faction's territories on top of that. The tide had completely turned.

The Slaughter Faction issued a statement the very next day. They had held a formal meeting to discuss Wei En's actions and decided to expel her from the faction.

The Butcher hadn't intended to be this harsh, but many Warfare College students had voiced their dissatisfaction with the situation, having joined under the impression that they were protecting an innocent girl.

This situation made it clear that Wei En had simply been using them as weapons. From what had been dug up, this wasn't even the first time she'd done something like this. She evidently only viewed that as another batch of useful idiots.

As part of the Warfare College students' complaints, they gave the Butcher an ultimatum: either Wei En left or they did. The Butcher wasn't about to give up the Warfare College students, so after weighing his options, he decided to cut his losses and drop Wei En.

This both calmed the Warfare College students and salvaged some of the Slaughter Faction's reputation. It was better late than never.

Thus, Wei En lost everything in a smear campaign that she started, becoming the main casualty of her own war. Her name was ruined, and her future was destroyed.

1. As in online trolls ☜

Chapter 818 - Assassination Tactics

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 818 - Assassination Tactics

Back in the Wealth Faction, a grin of pride stretched across the Wealth God King's face when he received word that the Wisdom Faction had won the smear campaign. "Han Wu has a way about him. He found a way out despite that awkward position."

"From what I know, the one who actually led the Wisdom Faction out of that mess wasn't Han Wu," said a God King, speaking to Zhao Zihong as an equal. "Someone else did it. This person is a freeloader, a Casanova who's sleeping with at least three women in the Divine Civilization alone, with an estimated thirty-plus other girls in various foreign civilizations without regard to their ages.

"Setting aside his personal taste, what caught my attention was his approach to the rumor problem. When you can't fix the problem, aim the spearhead at the person making it. He reminds me of my younger self."

The admiration in the God King's voice surprised Zhao Zihong. This God King—the Information God King—controlled the flow of all information into the media within the Divine Civilization, and was ranked just below Zhao Zihong in the Wealth Faction.

"So you want to take on a disciple?" Zhao Zihong asked curiously. It seemed like the logical next step when the Information God King was so freely praising a freeloading nobody.

“Sun Qingnian has potential, but he’s not quite there yet,” the Information God King said with a shake of his head. “Whether I take him depends on the Divine Jurisdiction he develops. If it relates to information in any way, he’ll be worth accepting.”

Happy to help an old friend find a promising student, Zhao Zihong instructed, “Increase our investment in the Wisdom Faction by fifty percent, and prepare a special reward for Sun Qingnian!”

Meanwhile, at the site of the divine war, the Wisdom Faction had found new life. The returning students cleared away the low morale, and Xu Hai was enjoying the good turn of events when the additional investment from the Wealth Faction arrived.

They had invested another 100 million Divine Essence and sent five more God Kings to assist. Morale in the Wisdom Faction surged, as if injected with a shot of adrenaline.

News of this investment would undoubtedly draw in another wave of students and talented individuals who wanted to be part of a winning side. They would become the Wisdom Faction’s foundation going forward.

At the same time, Sun Qingnian received a special reward from the Wealth Faction. It was a brush that contained a strange energy.

The moment he held it, that energy flowed through the brush and into his body. It didn’t strengthen him physically or improve his resistance to any element. The only change he noticed was that he could now observe a person’s expression and detect their mood. He could even catch glimpses of their thoughts.

This new power captivated Sun Qingnian. He could use it to pick women up with greater ease. As he held the brush, he also grew increasingly certain that it hid even greater secrets, though its other functions would take time to uncover.

After taking his reward, he headed back to Imperial College alone. Shi Shan stayed behind to help the Wisdom Faction in combat.

The Slaughter Faction was not yet a vulnerable target. They had taken a loss in terms of public opinion, but their quick dropping of Wei En had mitigated that somewhat, and the hit to their actual fighting strength was limited. They still had plenty of powerhouses left to fight the Wisdom Faction.

However, the Slaughter Faction no longer held an advantage in numbers. The influx of students joining the Wisdom Faction meant they actually had a surplus of cannon fodder.

Unfortunately, cannon fodder couldn’t do much against powerful life forms or anti-World life form equipment. The Wisdom Faction would’ve already thrown its sheer number of cannon fodder at the Slaughter Faction’s command center if that were the case.

Still, cannon fodder had value, and the steady pressure of sheer numbers helped them eat away at the Slaughter Faction's territory, bit by bit. In response, the Slaughter Faction switched to a different tactic: assassination.

A bounty list was issued targeting key figures in the Wisdom Faction. This list included the various God Kings in the Wisdom Faction, as well as Han Wu, Jing Jing, and Shi Shan.

In fact, Han Wu's bounty was actually higher than some God Kings, at 30 million Divine Essence, second only to Xu Hai.

The Slaughter Faction's elite fighters all pivoted to assassination. In the early phase of the bounty campaign, they went after smaller targets in the Wisdom Faction as they were easier. Going after the targets with higher bounty was a risky gamble.

The real problem arose when the bounty list circulated beyond the Slaughter Faction, catching the eyes of professional assassin organizations and independent God Kings. The rewards were simply too good to ignore. Killing even one minor God King in the Wisdom Faction carried a reward of anywhere between 100,000 and 20 million Divine Essence.

Han Wu's bounty stood out among these at 30 million Divine Essence. That kind of money could fund an entire mid-tier faction. Moreover, he was just a Major God, which made him seem manageable to most assassins.

The assassination attempts against Han Wu came one after another. The moment he stepped outside the command zone, even just to go to the toilet, three to five assassins would materialize and try to take him out. Even World life forms joined in on the assassinations.

Han Wu had zero tolerance for assassination attempts. Those below the World rank were crushed on the spot and fed to his units. For World life forms, he first used Stellar Plunder to strip their Microcosms, Divine Ring, and divine weapons, then crushed them and fed them to his units.

However, the strength of assassins only increased with every failed attempt, to the point that even Han Wu felt pressured.

This made him realize he needed to work on improving his strength. There were many aspects of his power he could develop, but he wasn't sure which would bring the best return, so he asked Xu Hai to assess it with his Mind Eye.

Xu Hai activated his Mind Eye and examined Han Wu's full range of powers. Even with his exceptional intelligence, he found himself stumped. Han Wu simply had too many powerful abilities. Elevating any one of them came at the expense of neglecting the others.

In the end, Xu Hai ranked Han Wu's upgradable powers in order of priority.

The Divine Weapon Atlas came first. Not only did it contain powerful divine weapons, but it also housed an ancient king's soul whose value far exceeded that of a legendary Armament Spirit.

The Machine God came second. Its ability to equip chips without limit meant its potential was essentially boundless.

The Five Element Seal ranked third. Once mastered, Han Wu could handle World life forms with ease.

Han Wu looked over the list, but couldn't bring himself to choose only one to improve. After mulling it over, he wondered if he could create a fusion approach that upgraded everything at once.

: Chapter 819 - V

Chapter 819 - V

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Back in Imperial College, Han Wu rented a quiet training room to work on improving himself. He started with the Divine Weapon Atlas, the ability Xu Hai had ranked first in potential. When he summoned it, he discovered that every Divine Weapon inside had gained an Armament Spirit. Though stunned, the discovery brought an undeniable thrill of elation.

When he had returned from Divine Weapon Civilization, only five of his ten Divine Weapons had carried powerful Armament Spirits. Those five were the Locust-V Gatling Gun with the soul of the ancient king, the Explosive Locust Blade with its Vermilion Bird, the Locust Soul Orb with its White Tiger, the Abyss Armor with its Black Tortoise, and the Locust Dragon Seal with its Azure Dragon.

The Small Locust Blade, the Gluttonswarm Ring, the Dark Curse Nail, the Heavenly Demon Spike, and the Giant Locust Blade originally had no Armament Spirits, yet had somehow gained them since Han Wu had last checked.

Han Wu could already guess whose work this was—the king.

Every one of the new Armament Spirits was well-suited for their respective Divine Weapon. The Small Locust Blade's forte was in its overwhelming numbers, though building its numbers up required time. The king had given the blade the Taisui Armament

Spirit to address that weakness. Though it provided no offensive boost, the Small Locust Blade's durability recovered a hundred times faster than the normal rate.

The Gluttonswarm Ring could summon Glutton Locusts. The more the locusts consumed, the stronger the ring became. The king had thus given it the Taotie Armament Spirit, which primarily boosted the appetite and eating speed of the summoned Glutton Locusts.

The Dark Curse Nail pinned targets in place by their shadows, so the king paired it with the Umbral Mouse Armament Spirit, the same race that was in Han Wu's divine realm. The Dark Curse Nail could now not only pin shadows, but also transform into a mouse if it missed and chase the target's shadow. This greatly increased its hit rate.

As the Heavenly Demon Spike specialized in piercing, the king had given it the Golden Unicorn Armament Spirit to push that piercing power to its absolute limit.

Finally, the Giant Locust Blade saw its power rise as its size increased, making it the most destructive of the five. It was granted the Xingtian Armament Spirit, which allowed the Giant Locust Blade to extend to 20,000 meters in length, multiplying its destructive power by at least 10,000 times.

The five weapons had only recently acquired their Armament Spirits, so their grades were still low and incomparable to the original five. Once their grade increased, though, their strength would likely ascend to a new level.

Calling Locust-V out, Han Wu praised, "Locust-V, you've given me quite a few surprises."

As the Armament Spirit of Locust-V, the soul of the king appeared. He wore fine robes as before, but the authority that he once exuded was gone entirely. However, with his full memories restored, he still carried himself with an unprecedented maturity.

"It is I who should thank you," the king said gratefully. "Thank you for saving the Divine Weapon Civilization, and thank you for saving my people."

If one were to trace it back far enough, the residents of the Divine Weapon Civilization were indeed his descendants, so his words were true.

"I now know everything. The legendary Armament Spirit is formed from the negative energy that I've purified. It can also catalyze the birth of new Armament Spirits within Divine Weapons. I lack that exact ability myself, but I can absorb emotional energy to create Armament Spirits and manually give them to Divine Weapons. You're more than welcome to bring more Divine Weapons into the Atlas. I'll help give each of them a compatible spirit."

Han Wu was ecstatic. Armament Spirits played a critical role in determining the power and potential of a Divine Weapon. Having a large supply of Divine Weapons with Armament Spirit was a huge boon for both himself and the followers in his divine realm.

His divine realm housed highly intelligent races such as the Scorching Dwarves and the Epistians. With enough resources and materials, new Divine Weapons were set to be crafted every day. Combined with the king's efforts, it was only a matter of time before he had a massive collection of Divine Weapons with Armament Spirits. The thought alone made his heart race.

Nevertheless, that was a long-term strategy. He still needed a more immediate way of becoming stronger in the short term.

Han Wu glanced at Locust-V. It had formed from the Mechanical Locusts, and the Mechanical Locusts were connected to the Machine God. What would happen if he merged the two?

Summoning the Machine God, Han Wu decided to directly ask both the king and the Machine God about their thoughts on this. One was a machine, the other was technically a Divine Weapon. By right, the two had nothing to do with each other, and Han Wu expected the two of them to refuse.

Unexpectedly, they agreed without hesitation. The king explained that he had never tried giving an Armament Spirit to a machine-type Divine Weapon, so he wanted to see what would happen.

The Machine God, on the other hand, wanted a soul. It was nothing more than strings of code that had gained consciousness, and it wanted a soul to help it gather more data, such as emotional data and the resonance of a soul. Studying that would help it evolve.

With their consent, Han Wu had no reason to waver. He used Merge on the two of them.

The Machine God and Locust-V started to fuse together. The process was incredibly slow. Han Wu realized that Merge alone was likely insufficient at this level, so to speed things up, he activated Omniversal to boost Merge, pushing the progress forward rapidly.

Han Wu watched as the Locust-V and Machine God became one. They were neither Locust-V nor the Machine God. He had a shorter name now, V.

"This is a strange sensation," V said in wonder. "I can feel the temperature. I can feel pain. There is also a mysterious energy circulating through me... No, that's not energy. Perhaps it should be called the breath of life."

Han Wu gasped. "What?"

Among known civilizations, there were many power systems and races, but at a fundamental level, they all fell into distinct categories. Machines were machines, undead were undead, and living beings were living beings.

Even Jing Jing, the supremely powerful Soul Queen, still belonged to the skeleton race despite being nearly indistinguishable from a human. Han Wu had never heard of an existence that was simultaneously a machine yet alive.

He quickly tried to check V's information panel. A mass of garbled characters appeared before him. Rubbing his eyes, he tried again, thinking his eyes were playing tricks on him, but V's panel remained scrambled.

His eyes weren't the problem. His permissions, granted by the Divine Civilization, simply could not read V's information. In other words, the Divine Civilization itself couldn't identify what V was. V was an existence beyond even the Divine Civilization's comprehension. He was an unknown entity.

"What kind of existence have I created?!" Han Wu gaped at V, disbelief written across his face.

Meanwhile, V was taking in everything around him with curious eyes.

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Chapter 820 - Sparring and Assassination Attempt

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 820 - Sparring and Assassination Attempt

V studied his palm. "This sensation is extraordinary..."

As the mechanical arm moved, the metal shifted like flowing water, reshaping itself according to his will. Gatling, cannon, flamethrower, long blade, and great sword appeared and disappeared one after another, cold steel and firearms cycling back and forth with just a thought. Even with his hand in weapon form, V could still feel temperature and tactile senses, as if the metal of his body were flesh and blood.

After several failed attempts to read V's information, Han Wu gave up and decided instead to test V's strength through direct combat.

The two moved to the Imperial College's training arena, where Han Wu specifically selected the strongest and most durable training ground the college had. Once they were transported inside, they both released their power.

Han Wu went straight to his strongest form, the True Black Dragon King Transformation. A 10,000-meter-tall Black Dragon King appeared, emanating overwhelming darkness and power.

V transformed in response. In an instant, his frame grew to 1000 meters, with countless cannon barrels emerging all across his body. The barrels immediately started to charge up with energy.

When Han Wu saw the dense array of barrels, his heart went cold. These were powerful laser cannons, and their combined firepower was terrifying. If he took a direct hit without using Conversion, he would lose at least a layer of dragon scales, even with his True Black Dragon King Transformation.

Wanting to test V's capabilities, Han Wu moved to dodge. Every barrel on V's body swung to track him.

"Dynamic Capture System ready!" V called out.

Over a hundred laser beams fired at once, and every single one found its mark. Despite being 10,000 meters tall, Han Wu moved at extreme speeds that made it difficult for regular cannons to aim at him. V, however, landed every shot. Han Wu was baffled.

Nevertheless, the laser cannons were useless against him. Conversion absorbed all of the energy and transformed it into Dark Energy, which he shaped into an enormous hand and slammed down toward V.

The latter analyzed the situation before generating new commands. "Energy cannons confirmed ineffective. Switching combat mode: close-range engagement. High-Speed Thrusters ready. Activating!"

As the giant hand forged from Dark Energy slammed down, darkness corroded everything within a fifty-kilometer radius. The impact of the attack left a massive crater in its wake, but V was not in it.

Several thrusters blazed at his back, launching him forward at high speed directly into Han Wu. Both his hands morphed, one into a long blade and the other a great sword, which he then used to unleash a flurry of slashes.

Han Wu's True Black Dragon King scales were extremely durable, and ordinary blades struggled to break through them. V's weapons experienced similar difficulties piercing the scales at first, but V adapted quickly.

Upon realizing that his blades could not injure Han Wu, he immediately searched his memory for weapon-forging methods and started manufacturing a Divine Weapon on the spot.

Smelting, tempering, refining, and finally, a low-temperature quenching to shape the final form. In moments, an exceptionally sturdy Divine Weapon appeared in V's hand, and one of Han Wu's scales shattered with V's next attack.

This new combat data allowed V to further improve his approach. A superior Divine Weapon formed in his hand. This time, when the blow landed, it didn't just crack the scales; it opened a bloody wound.

Han Wu had taken a wound while in Black Dragon King form! The wound closed at a visible rate under the effect of Undying, but the shock it left was noticeable.

V's attacks kept coming. Each new exchange fed him more data. Another Divine Weapon was already forming while he analyzed Han Wu's combat patterns and calculated which angle of attack would deal the most damage. Every thought during combat was spoken aloud as if they were notifications of system commands.

As Han Wu listened to V deconstructing how to destroy him, a pang of nervousness struck him. Sparring with V was equivalent to feeding him an enormous amount of data about his fighting style. V would use that data to eventually develop the perfect counter to defeat him. The longer the fight continued, the worse his odds became.

Cold sweat ran down Han Wu's back. V was a hundred times more frightening in this form than the Machine God had ever been. V's strength had only just crossed into the World rank, but given some time and enough data, he would likely be able to cut down foes on the Microcosm rank with ease. It was possible he could even hold his own against Subcosm rank opponents without falling behind.

The only solution Han Wu could think of was to use his most powerful strike to end things before V gathered any more data. As the two finished their analyses and prepared to resume fighting, V suddenly turned to attack the empty air.

Han Wu frowned. *What's going on?*

On second glance, he saw a figure emerge from the explosions. The person's presence was almost nonexistent, their aura no stronger than still air. It made them seem nearly invisible. Even Han Wu, with his powerful perception, had not noticed how close the intruder had gotten.

"What're you...? How did you detect me?" the figure asked in shock.

V meticulously started recording everything it could about the intruder. Meanwhile, Han Wu raised his guard and carefully observed the figure.

"This assassination really is difficult." The person sighed, eyes cold as they fixed on Han Wu. "He truly is worth 30 million Divine Essence."

Han Wu was quite conspicuous at 10,000 meters tall. From the intruder's perspective, he was as good as a stationary target.

"I'll finish the assignment before dealing with this freak!" the figure cried before vanishing from Han Wu's sight again.

Han Wu cleared his mind and tried to perceive his surroundings carefully, but he still couldn't locate the person.

At that same time, V used the gathered data to run a full scan and finally detected them at Han Wu's neck. Moving quickly, he intercepted the lethal strike, saving Han Wu's life.

The seriousness of the situation finally dawned on Han Wu. He hastily reverted to his normal form and activated his Pressure Ring. Caught under that heavy pressure, the figure could no longer conceal themself. Han Wu and V both unleashed powerful attacks to kill the assassin on the spot.

Han Wu made sure to seize the Divine Jurisdiction and Divine Authority that dropped upon the intruder's death. He was stunned to find that the assassin was a genuine God King with the Concealment Jurisdiction.

No wonder Han Wu hadn't been able to sense them at all. He hadn't even known that a Divine Jurisdiction dedicated to concealment existed.

But how did V manage to locate them so accurately every time?

Han Wu decided to ask V.

Chapter 821 - Demon King Transformation Stage Three

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 821 - Demon King Transformation Stage Three

"How did you detect him?" Han Wu asked.

V turned to look at him. "I analyzed your perception earlier and found that it essentially works by scanning for living beings. Very few life forms can slip past it because of its sensitivity.

“My detection, on the other hand, works in two parts. The first part operates with the same principle as yours and scans for living beings. Meanwhile, the second part screens everything inorganic and inanimate within a certain range.

“The assassin’s power must’ve suppressed his presence entirely, which was why neither your perception nor my first scan located him. My second scan, however, works by filtering out anything inorganic and inanimate. Within a short window of time, I detected an anomalous shift in the area where he was hiding, something that defied normal physical logic. That was how I found him.”

V’s explanation impressed Han Wu. He had always had great confidence in his perception, but this encounter showed him its limits.

“Don’t worry too much about it. The precision and range of your perception mean it’ll work the vast majority of the time.” V smiled with his metallic face.

The expression stunned Han Wu. V seemed more and more like a person—or more accurately a life form—by the minute. This gave Han Wu another idea. If V was a Merge of machine and life, could Han Wu use his Replicate to copy V’s capabilities onto himself?

Wanting to try it immediately, he explained his idea to V. The latter nodded eagerly. He had only recently gained life and was hungry for more data to help him adapt and evolve.

The two of them clasped hands, and Han Wu activated Replicate. V’s unusual circumstances meant that progress moved at a painfully slow pace, so Han Wu activated Omniversal to boost Replicate's efficiency, but even then, it still took three hours.

Once the process was complete, Han Wu instantly triggered it. The transformation was immediate and total. Flesh turned to metal, and energy converted into power cells. His heart and brain also underwent changes that were difficult to describe.

Han Wu thus transformed from a cheerful, easygoing young Major God to an armored mech. Even his view of the world changed beyond recognition.

Everything lost its color and became clusters of swatches; his ears were filled with a chaotic stream of signals that had no obvious meaning; breathing became optional; and every part of his body became something he could consciously regulate.

It felt as though he had become the administrator of his own body, able to adjust countless parameters to shift between states. Even something as simple as raising his hand required at least 10,000 computation steps to execute, let alone anything as complex as an attack.

Despite the constant high-frequency calculations, Han Wu felt no discomfort at all. His brain-turned-core had tremendous processing power. Even while engaging in physical combat, its usage rate was a mere 10%.

That meant 90% of his processing capacity was left idle. This wasn't because it couldn't be used, but because Han Wu's present range of instructions simply didn't demand that level of processing.

"Fascinating..." Han Wu remarked, already experimenting with pushing the usage rate higher.

An all-out physical attack brought it to 10%. Activating his Divine Ring in V-form to summon his Microcosm brought it to 15%. Even in his strongest state, the True Black Dragon King form, the rate only increased to 25%.

Han Wu ran out of abilities to stack, yet 75% of the core remained completely idle. In other words, he could only draw on 25% of V-form's true power.

What do I need to do to grow stronger? Han Wu wondered to himself.

In response to his thoughts, his core began cataloguing every Divine Jurisdiction, Divine Aspect, Divine Power, Divine Skill, and Divine Ability within Han Wu's arsenal. It ran a full integration and calculation.

Han Wu watched as the core's usage rate leaped to 90% during this process. *Is the path to becoming stronger that difficult to calculate?*

Three minutes later, the calculation was complete. The core presented Han Wu with an astonishing proposal. It suggested that Han Wu use the Demon King Transformation as the foundation upon which to stack the Seal Arts, the Divine Weapon Atlas, Replicate, Merge, Undying, Energy Materialization, the Conversion Jurisdiction, the Duel Jurisdiction, and several other abilities to construct an entirely new form.

The proposal was tentatively named the Demon King Transformation Stage Three.

This was easier said than done, however, as merging all of these different powers into a single ability was going to be absurdly difficult. It would require enormous resources, vast amounts of Divine Essence, and significant time, all while keeping the core running at 100%.

Even the wealthy Han Wu found himself drawing a sharp breath when he read through the list of requirements. Resources and materials were one thing; the issue was Divine Essence.

He needed the Divine Essence in his account to sustain the operation of his Microcosms, the ongoing construction of the Soul Microcosm, and several other projects. He had no leeway for a major withdrawal. Besides, the seven-figure Divine Essence he had on hand didn't even cover the cost of completing the Demon King Transformation Stage Three.

Aside from that, there was the matter of time as well. The ongoing divine war meant every moment counted. Assassination attempts like today's could also strike at any point, and guarding against them ate into his schedule considerably.

How could he buy time while also acquiring the large quantity of Divine Essence he needed? Han Wu set his V-form core to work on the problem. The conclusion he reached was... unorthodox.

It was simple. All he had to do was die.

Chapter 822 - Fetterbane Dragonforge

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 822 - Fetterbane Dragonforge

Dying was easy for Han Wu. Making it convincing, though, required preparation and the right connections. He knew plenty of high-level contacts, but the Slaughter God King had almost certainly already identified them. Reaching out to any of them carelessly would set off alarm bells. If the ruse were exposed, the whole scheme would collapse. He needed someone suitable to "kill"him.

Since he had no candidates of his own, Han Wu considered his options and ultimately contacted Commerce, whose network within the Wisdom Faction was the most extensive, to come up with a solution.

Commerce arrived quickly after receiving Han Wu's invitation. After hearing the plan, he couldn't help giving a thumbs-up. The idea was brilliant. Faking Han Wu's death to swindle 30 million Divine Essence from the Slaughter Faction cost them nothing while offering enormous profit in return.

There was no way Commerce would sit this one out. Still, business was business even between close friends. He wouldn't contribute his efforts for nothing.

After negotiating the terms, they reached an agreement. If the scheme succeeded, Han Wu would pay Commerce 1 million Divine Essence as his fee. If it failed, neither side would gain anything. Han Wu didn't care how much Commerce would spend to make it happen. All that mattered was that the plan proceeded smoothly.

Within a single day, Commerce found the right candidate. That individual came from another civilization and had cooperated with Commerce before, making them a trustworthy partner. Their civilization had also suffered the Butcher's invasion in the past, which meant they hated the Slaughter Faction deeply enough that there was

absolutely no risk of them leaking the plan. Most importantly, this partner was genuinely powerful. If Han Wu didn't use any of his Divine Jurisdictions, this person could realistically kill him.

Satisfied with the choice, Han Wu activated Avatar Creation and split off a copy of himself that possessed the 567 Martial Castes' powers. That avatar then created another minor avatar. This final avatar represented an almost negligible fraction of Han Wu's total self. Even if it died, Han Wu would suffer no real damage and could recover after a short rest.

That confidence was what made the fake-death scheme viable. The partner killed the avatar, then received instructions from Commerce, and brought Han Wu's head to the Slaughter Faction to claim the bounty.

The Slaughter Faction reacted with both excitement and caution when someone arrived with Han Wu's head. After a series of verifications, they concluded that the head did indeed belong to Han Wu. Only one detail seemed unusual. The power reading detected from the head was unusually low.

The partner had already prepared an explanation. They claimed to have used a secret technique to seal Han Wu's power before killing him.

The Slaughter Faction accepted the explanation without suspicion. To prove that the faction honored its promises, they even held a ceremony to award the payment.

Once the partner received the money, they kept only their agreed share with Commerce and returned the rest. It wasn't as if the partner had never considered taking the entire reward. Before accepting the job, they had also signed an agreement with Commerce. Breaking it would invite consequences they couldn't afford to bear.

In the end, Han Wu's "death"netted him 29 million Divine Essence and a period of peace. He used that time to pour immense resources, Divine Essence, and countless hours into researching Demon King Transformation Stage Three.

While studying the Five Element Seal Arts, Han Wu used his V-form's astronomical computation power to analyze every detail of the seal. The twelve-Ring Five Element Seal was now fully under his control, ready for use whenever he wished.

However, the deeper he delved into it, the more a new idea took shape. *Why do I need to activate it manually? I want to create a self-sustaining Five Element Seal barrier that operates continuously without requiring any direct input from me.*

Every elemental barrier required a core. Han Wu took out his Divine Weapons, excluding Locust-V, which had fused with the Machine God.

Of the nine powerful Divine Weapons, Han Wu assigned the Heavenly Demon Spike, Gluttonswarm Ring, Small Locust Blade, Explosive Locust Blade, and Giant Locust Blade as the five elemental cores representing Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth, respectively.

The Dark Curse Nail, Locust Soul Orb, Abyss Armor, and Locust Dragon Seal couldn't be integrated into the seal, so Han Wu kept them close in reserve.

Half a month passed as he devoted himself to research day and night. Guided by his core calculations, Han Wu finally completed the framework for Demon King Transformation Stage Three.

He cautiously activated Demon King Transformation Stage Three, and he underwent a massive transformation. demonic energy, Dragon Fear, pure mechanical aspects, his Divine Weapons, the power of the Seal Arts, and the presence of the Divine Jurisdictions erupted simultaneously.

He transformed into a colossal monster standing 100,000 meters tall. A dark-gold metallic shell enveloped him, blending the traits of demon, dragon, and machine. He resembled a mechanically forged demon dragon, and he exuded an overwhelmingly domineering aura.

Nine Divine Weapons floated around him. Five of them automatically activated the Five Element Seal Arts, targeting every enemy life form within a ten-kilometer radius.

The moment an enemy approached, the Five Element Seal would trigger. Those caught within it would, at minimum, suffer severe suppression of their powers. At worst, they would be sealed completely and reduced to an energy source for Han Wu to siphon from.

The barrier's greatest advantage was its ability to eliminate large numbers of ordinary units without requiring any effort from Han Wu. Its drawback, however, was its limited effectiveness against World opponents unless Han Wu personally activated the Five Element Seal.

Beyond the barrier, the full range of applications offered by his two Divine Jurisdictions and his numerous abilities still remained for Han Wu to uncover through actual combat.

Even while standing motionless in this form, Han Wu could already sense that his power had surpassed the Microcosm tier and reached a new level. In theory, it could be classified as Subcosm rank.

Han Wu carefully considered this extraordinary form before finally settling on an improved name for it: Demon King Transformation Stage Three, the Fetterbane Dragonforge!

Fetter represented the sealed aspect; *bane* symbolized demons and demonic energy; *dragon* embodied the Great Dragons' essence; and *forge* represented the mechanical aspect, the Divine Weapons, and the infinite possibilities.

Han Wu clenched his fist and felt the surging energy inside him. “This divine war ends with me.”

With a frame spanning 100,000 meters, even his quietest words carried the force of a heavenly thunderclap. Every unit across his various Microcosms sensed the enormous power radiating from him and knelt in reverence, stirred by their God’s presence.

Even the Origin of Mutation, which had been conducting an experiment in its lab, quickly set aside its work and rushed out to see what was happening.

“Vessel, why can’t I detect your genes? This form is absolutely incredible. Would you let me study it? I promise I won’t dismantle you into spare parts!” the Origin of Mutation called out excitedly.

“Go play somewhere else,” Han Wu answered without missing a beat.

“So petty!” the Origin of Mutation grumbled. But it soon noticed the newly living V. Compared to Han Wu, V appeared weaker, yet his structure matched Han Wu’s post-transformation body. There wasn’t a trace of genetic material anywhere.

“New friend, can I study you?” the Origin of Mutation asked with a chuckle.

V showed no irritation at all. If anything, he sounded eager. “Really? Then I want all the data you collect during the study!”

“Deal!” the Origin of Mutation replied delightedly.

: Chapter 823

Chapter 823 - Han Wu Attacks

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At the site of the divine war, both factions remained locked in combat. However, the Wisdom Faction had lost the advantages it once held. News of Han Wu’s death had spread across the battlefield. Many students contacted Xu Hai to verify whether the report was true.

Naturally, Xu Hai knew it was false, but Han Wu had asked him to keep the matter secret. Unable to reveal the truth, Xu Hai answered every inquiry with silence. The students took

that silence as confirmation that Han Wu had truly fallen. The loss of such a powerful combatant devastated the morale of the Wisdom Faction's students.

The Slaughter Faction seized the opportunity and captured several strongholds, reclaiming the upper hand.

The Butcher had even started planning a final offensive with his commanders and strongest units. He intended to storm the Wisdom Faction's command post in one decisive strike.

While the Slaughter Faction's leadership discussed tactics, an urgent report arrived from the front lines.

A Major God ran into the command room. "Trouble!"

The Butcher glared at him. He considered the behavior disrespectful. Still, he had been trying to restrain his violent tendencies, so he suppressed his irritation and told the Major God to give his report.

"Lord Slaughter, the Wisdom Faction has launched an attack!"

"They attacked? They're marching into their own graves, then. Isn't that good news?"

"They're just a bunch of students. What trouble could they possibly cause? Let them come. It saves us the effort of hunting them down."

"Even if the Wisdom God King personally led the charge, none of them would leave alive."

The Major Gods of the Slaughter Faction were excited. To them, the enemy's advance was nothing more than an opportunity.

The reporting Major God lowered his voice. "But the one leading the assault is not the Wisdom God King. It's..."

He looked at the Butcher seated on his throne and hesitated.

"Speak. It's not as if I am going to eat you," the Butcher said.

"It's Han Wu. He's leading a massive skeleton army. They've already broken through the first defensive line and reached the central defensive line," the Major God finally blurted out.

"Impossible. Absolutely impossible!" The Butcher shot to his feet. "Han Wu was assassinated. His head is in the trophy room right now. I personally verified it. It was genuine."

“But I saw him with my own eyes. Han Wu was commanding his units on the battlefield,” the Major God said quietly.

The Butcher’s expression darkened. He had spent 30 million Divine Essence rewarding Han Wu’s killer, yet this Major God kept insisting that Han Wu was alive. Didn’t that mean he had wasted all that money for nothing? The humiliation only deepened.

The Butcher’s gaze sharpened. He genuinely wanted to kill the man on the spot to vent his anger. However, capable Major Gods were rare, so he forced himself to hold back.

The Butcher finally relented. “Where is he now? I want to see this myself.”

Han Wu was capable of almost anything due to his vast array of powers. After the Major God’s report, the Butcher could no longer determine with certainty whether Han Wu was truly dead. He pulled up the video using his authority and checked the battlefield.

Han Wu was standing in the middle of an endless skeleton horde and commanding the battlefield with total confidence. Countless units crumbled beneath the skeleton horde before they could mount any resistance.

The bold skeleton-wave tactic was unmistakable. The Butcher had seen Han Wu fight with those undead forces multiple times before, so he was certain that the man in the video was Han Wu himself. In other words, he had been deceived, and someone had swindled him out of 30 million Divine Essence.

The Butcher’s eyes turned bloodshot. Someone actually conned me out of 30 million Divine Essence!

Several Major Gods quickly stepped forward to calm him.

“Lord Slaughter, do not let this cloud your judgment. No matter how strong Han Wu is, he’s still not a God King and cannot wield his true Divine Jurisdiction.”

“Eliminating him would be trivial for you. What we must focus on right now is his units. Given the skeleton horde’s scale, it already rivals those undead disasters capable of exterminating entire civilizations. It must be suppressed immediately. Otherwise, no matter how many followers we send out, the undead will kill them with ease.”

The words had the intended effect. The Butcher gradually calmed down. His humiliation could wait. Holding the defensive line came first. The skeleton-wave tactic worked on a compounding principle. The more enemies fell, the larger the horde became. If left unchecked, the Slaughter Faction’s cannon fodder would be wiped out within days.

“Deploy part of the anti-World life form equipment. Fire the Hellfire Shells and burn those skeletons to ashes,” the Butcher ordered.

The Slaughter Faction's Major Gods nodded in agreement. Hellfire Shells were artillery rounds developed by the Divine Civilization and filled with white phosphorus. They possessed extremely low ignition thresholds and could combust at room temperature, releasing extreme heat capable of reducing bone to cinders. They were extremely effective against the undead.

At his command, the Slaughter Faction's central defensive line loaded the Hellfire Shells and launched them into the skeleton horde. The shells detonated and scattered white phosphorus over a vast area. The substance clung to the skeletons, and the searing heat turned entire stretches of bone to ash.

The skeletons' unstoppable advance finally ground to a halt. As more Hellfire Shells rained down, the enormous horde began to shrink.

As the skeletons' true master, Jing Jing was furious. She had painstakingly raised those skeletons over time, and she could not accept watching them burn to nothing.

However, she had no effective counter to the Hellfire Shells. Neither her soul barrier nor bone shields could withstand them. The moment a Hellfire Shell made contact, everything ignited. No matter how many Divine Points she poured in, she was only delaying the inevitable. She had no way to eliminate the threat the Hellfire Shells posed.

Han Wu quickly noticed the situation. V gathered data on the Hellfire Shells and promptly compiled a report. Although the Hellfire Shells were powerful, several viable countermeasures existed. The report outlined multiple options for Han Wu to choose from.

After reviewing them, he made his selection. He would forge the Bone Dragon, the species with the highest magical resistance and physical attack power among all undead.

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Chapter 824 - Creating Bone Dragons

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Bone Dragons were an undead species with two methods of creation. The first occurred naturally. When a Great Dragon's corpse decomposed while its soul remained intact, the lingering soul would bond with the bones and transform into a Bone Dragon.

The second was artificial. High-quality bones were shaped into a dragon skeleton before a dragon soul was introduced and fused with it to create a Bone Dragon. Usually, an artificial Bone Dragon had lower potential than a natural one. Under the current circumstances, however, Han Wu had no choice but to rely on the artificial method.

He could fuse high-quality bones at any time, but dragon souls were far harder to obtain. The Great Dragons in his divine realm had followed him for so long that he felt attached to them. He couldn't bring himself to extract their souls.

Without a dragon soul, a Bone Dragon couldn't be created. Dragon souls were the key to the Bone Dragons' exceptional magical resistance. Time was short, and Han Wu had no room left to hesitate. Gritting his teeth, he selected the lowest-ranked Great Dragon among his units, the Wicked Dragon, and summoned it out.

Veritas had no idea what it was about to face. When it saw Han Wu's warm, cheerful face, it assumed something good was coming.

Han Wu tried to sound as amicable and reassuring as possible. "Good boy, don't be scared. I'm just going to take a small portion of your dragon soul. You've been through this before. Grit your teeth, and it'll be over."

The moment Veritas heard that, it immediately spread its wings to flee. *Take a portion of my dragon soul? That's going to tear a dragon apart from the inside out!*

Veritas had experienced separating its own soul from its body before, but that had been a desperate attempt to escape a seal. There was nothing routine about it!

Han Wu had no intention of letting it escape. He used the Five Element Seal and unleashed the full power of all twelve Rings to lock Veritas in place. The powerful seal reminded Veritas of the time it had been trapped within the Coiled Dragon Forest.

"Good boy. It'll be over quickly. Once we're done, I'll find you some Spirit Stones. I guarantee that you'll recover completely." While continuing to reassure it, Han Wu had Jing Jing use her incomplete Soul Jurisdiction to split Veritas' soul.

Jing Jing's technique was steady, precise, and thorough. Veritas' soul had been divided into nineteen portions in no time at all. Veritas retained one portion for itself while she took the other eighteen.

The severe loss of its dragon soul caused Veritas' strength to plummet rapidly. It fell below the Earthsunder rank and eventually stabilized at the Sage rank. Signs of mental regression and memory loss even appeared.

Han Wu sighed and patted Veritas on the head as it stared blankly ahead. "Stay a little slow for a few days. I won't forget what you've done for me."

He then sent it back into the divine realm to play in a quiet corner.[1]

Han Wu then activated Merge and combined the remaining bone fragments from the skeleton horde. Following the physical structure of a true Great Dragon, dense dragon bones gradually took shape, each one stronger than ordinary dragon bones. Piece by piece, the fused bones assembled into the main frame of a Bone Dragon.

Jing Jing placed a dragon soul into the Bone Dragon and guided the process with her Soul Jurisdiction. One hour later, the first Earthsunder Bone Dragon was complete.

Jing Jing then selected a Flame Aspect from the spoils she had collected during the divine war and drove it into the Bone Dragon. Once the Flame Aspect merged with the soul, the first Bone Dragon went through another transformation. A bone crown resembling a Divine Ring appeared above its head. Green phosphorus ignited across the crown. A World Phosphor Bone Dragon had been born.

The moment it was reanimated, the Phosphor Bone Dragon charged directly into the area blanketed by Hellfire Shells. The shells struck it and exploded into flames, yet the white phosphorus fire had no effect on it. If anything, it strengthened the Phosphor Bone Dragon.

Emerald flames spread from its head across its entire body, imbuing every strike with potent phosphorus fire. Enemy units were driven back step by step and could only rely on the anti-World life form arsenal to keep the Phosphor Bone Dragon at bay.

The success of the first Bone Dragon confirmed that their plan was working. Han Wu and Jing Jing immediately continued creating more. As the process consumed increasing amounts of bones, the skeleton horde rapidly diminished. At the same time, Jing Jing's power increased with every new Bone Dragon added to her command.

In a short period, Jing Jing gained eighteen lower-grade Microcosms, and the Bone Energy they produced strengthened her continuously. Fueled by their power, she experienced a sudden realization. She gathered all that energy together and discovered that it was enough to temporarily push her into the World rank. The power couldn't last long, but for Jing Jing, it was still a significant breakthrough.

"Thank you, my God, for granting me this power," Jing Jing said reverently.

Han Wu waved it off. Jing Jing growing stronger pleased him even more than it pleased her. He also realized that cultivating her was relatively simple compared to his other units. All she truly required was a large supply of bones and corpses. Wherever war existed, bones followed. Combined with his Merge, it would be almost impossible for Jing Jing not to become powerful.

He was already considering how to give Jing Jing a significant boost once the divine war ended, whether through an opportunity or a location. However, that could wait for later. Winning the divine war came first.

“Bone Dragons, charge!” Han Wu ordered.

The eighteen newly formed Bone Dragons obeyed and marched steadily. They endured the barrage of Hellfire Shells and crashed into the Slaughter Faction’s central defensive line. Everywhere they passed, death followed.

Han Wu absorbed the rich Death Energy surrounding the battlefield and formed another small Death Microcosm within himself. Meanwhile, Jing Jing activated her Divine Skill and converted the corpses into undead before stationing them at the rear as material to restore the Bone Dragons.

Under the Bone Dragons’ overwhelming assault, the central defensive line collapsed. The anti-World life form equipment detected the World life forms threatening its range and immediately activated. Powerful World attacks erupted from the equipment. Meteorites rained down, lightning storms tore through the battlefield, and even hurricanes swept across the area.

Each attack carried the force of natural disasters. The eighteen Bone Dragons relied entirely on their overwhelming magical resistance and raw physical strength to push straight through every attack and reach the equipment.

The equipment’s guards rushed forward to intercept them. They hadn’t reached the World rank themselves and stood no chance against the Bone Dragons. Within moments, all of them were defeated.

The anti-World life form equipment now lay completely exposed before the Bone Dragons. Through their fragile souls, the Bone Dragons asked Jing Jing what to do next.

Jing Jing replied, “Bring back anything that can be carried. Destroy the rest.”

She had no intention of leaving a single useful resource behind for the enemy.

The Bone Dragons understood immediately. They opened their jaws wide and tore into the anti-World life form equipment. Valuable as it was, the equipment couldn’t withstand a Bone Dragon’s bite force.

Before long, the Bone Dragons destroyed everything and returned to Jing Jing’s side with whatever materials they had managed to salvage.

With the central defensive line broken, Han Wu looked through the breach and saw the Slaughter Faction’s core area along with its final defensive line. That was the last barrier standing between them and victory.

1. Bro got lobotomized... 🤛

Chapter 825 - Slaughter Jurisdiction

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The Slaughter Faction's final defensive line bristled with anti-World life form equipment arranged in dense formation. Any World life forms that entered its range would face a barrage of heavy fire. On top of that, every World life form under the Slaughter Faction's command was stationed there.

Even with eighteen World Bone Dragons and the World units from his divine realm, Han Wu still felt his strength was insufficient against the final defensive line. It was like a football match where the opposing team had crammed every single player in front of the goal. How was anyone supposed to score?

"This is going to be tough," Han Wu said.

Upon hearing that, Jing Jing stepped forward and stood beside him. "My God, I will stand with you until the very last moment!"

Han Wu glanced at her and smiled. "You make it sound like I'm about to die in battle. That's not what I meant. What I want to do is break through that final defensive line without taking casualties. That is what's going to be tough. What do you think?"

"My God, what do you plan to do?" Jing Jing asked.

"I'll start with a distraction to catch them off guard and see what happens. If it works, I'll move in myself," Han Wu said, opening the gate to his Microcosm.

He summoned two of his core followers: the Dark Locust and the revived Bow God Bart.

"You two, try to destroy the anti-World life form equipment on that defensive line," Han Wu ordered.

Both nodded and obeyed immediately. Bart had the Void Hunter Catalyst, which let him open spatial tunnels and teleport with ease. He started gathering energy while searching for the correct location.

"Get ready!" Bart called out.

Dark Locust prepared. The moment the tunnel opened, Dark Locust dove straight through and appeared behind the defensive line. The moment he emerged, a nearby World life form destroyed the spatial tunnel. Immediately afterward, dozens of powerful attacks locked onto Dark Locust and fired simultaneously.

More than World attacks combined would have threatened even Han Wu himself, much less Dark Locust. He understood his mission clearly. Before those attacks could land, he detonated himself.

A massive explosion ripped through the final defensive line. A dark mushroom cloud erupted into the sky and blasted open a gap in the formation, throwing everything into brief chaos.

Han Wu seized the opportunity and barked, “Bart, open the tunnel!”

Bart opened another tunnel. Han Wu barged through it and immediately activated his strongest state. “Demon King Transformation Stage Three, Fetterbane Dragonforge!”

A 100,000-meter-tall figure appeared. Monstrous demonic pressure darkened the sky and shook the earth. Countless cannon barrels appeared across Han Wu’s frame as he drew energy from every Microcosm he possessed before unleashing a barrage in every direction. In that singular moment, Han Wu became a Subcosm weapon platform!

Not a single World life form that had survived Dark Locust’s Self-Detonation escaped. Han Wu’s barrage tore every one of them apart. The anti-World life form equipment scattered across the battlefield was reduced to scrap metal.

The entire battle lasted three seconds. It was enough time for the Butcher to react. He sensed the annihilation of his faction’s powerful units and the destruction of the anti-World life form equipment almost instantly. The rage inside him was powerful enough to burn the world down.

“Die!” The Butcher’s roar thundered through the air. His terrifying God King aura erupted as a massive eight-faced war hammer, 10,000 meters in diameter, smashed toward Han Wu’s colossal Fetterbane Dragonforge form.

Han Wu had just exhausted the energy supplied by his Microcosms and could only endure the attack. The moment the hammer struck, a sharp crack rang out. His dark gold metal muscles fractured beneath the impact. Dark gold blood sprayed through the air as he crashed to the ground.

The Butcher’s single blow had inflicted severe injuries, but he had no intention of stopping. The eight-faced war hammer was the physical manifestation of his Divine Authority, and he used it as a surprise attack. What came next was his true ultimate move.

“Slaughter!” His roar tore through the battlefield. A torrent of crimson blood erupted from the Butcher’s body, and an endless sea of blood pulled Han Wu into a special, sealed space.

Inside, the Slaughter God King sat upon a throne of bones and corpses piled 1 million meters high. From atop it, he looked down at Han Wu’s comparatively tiny 100,000-meter frame as though staring at a child.

“You should feel proud. You’re the first I’ve chosen to kill with my Divine Jurisdiction,” the Butcher declared.

Han Wu realized how dangerous his situation was. He had never expected the Butcher’s Divine Jurisdiction to be a hundred times more powerful than anything he had faced before, whether from the minor God Kings or the assassin with the Concealment Jurisdiction.

This sea of blood, bones, and corpses filled him with weakness and drained his strength. Even his Subcosm combat power couldn’t resist the influence. This was what a truly powerful Divine Jurisdiction felt like. Beneath such an overwhelming power, everything else became meaningless.

“Die!” the Butcher commanded.

Endless blood rose from the sea, forming into blades and swords, while countless corpses rose from the mountain of bones, armed themselves, and charged toward Han Wu.

Under the Slaughter Jurisdiction, these corpses and blades were undying and indestructible. They would fight Han Wu until he drew his very last breath.

Han Wu had no intention of giving up, so he activated his Conversion and Duel Jurisdictions. Every centimeter of steel muscle across the Fetterbane Dragonforge surged with fighting spirit.

Fight. Keep fighting. As long as I still breathe, I will fight to the end!

At that moment, Han Wu was like a candle. As long as it burned, it would continue radiating light and heat. Meanwhile, the Butcher’s Divine Jurisdiction resembled an endless darkness that swallowed every trace of light the candle produced.

The darkness was limitless, but the light was not. Han Wu could only hope to find a crack in the Butcher’s defense before his own strength ran out.

Outside, Jing Jing only saw Han Wu vanish the instant he broke through the final defensive line. She didn’t need time to realize that the Slaughter Faction had used some technique to hide him. Every second he remained out of sight only mounted the danger he faced.

She had no idea how to break the technique, nor did she know what method the Slaughter Faction had used. However, she understood one thing clearly. If she wiped out the Slaughter Faction, it would certainly help free Han Wu.

Jing Jing unleashed her full power and opened her divine realm. A tsunami of skeleton soldiers poured into the final defensive line and pressed straight for the Slaughter Faction's command post.

Along the way, she expended enormous amounts of Divine Power and converted all of the fallen World life forms into her own skeleton soldiers. Though their strength declined after reanimation, with some even falling below the World rank, they still served a purpose.

Inside the command post, the Butcher was physically present, but his full awareness had been immersed in his domain. He was using his Divine Jurisdiction to trap Han Wu while fighting him directly. He had no time to concern himself with what was happening outside.

The other Major Gods saw Jing Jing unleash another flood of skeleton soldiers and quickly responded with their own strongest techniques to counter them. In an instant, powerful units imbued with light, lightning, fire, and other attributes specifically meant to suppress the undead emerged.

Even the terrain itself was terraformed. Holy mountains and blessed grounds imbued with light, lightning, and flame attributes were summoned across the battlefield. Merely stepping onto them was enough to purify the skeletons.

Under the combined assault of so many Major Gods, Jing Jing's skeleton horde tactic proved ineffective. Her defeat drew closer with every passing moment.

"God, I am not strong enough," Jing Jing muttered in despair.

Chapter 826 - Han Wu vs. the Butcher

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 826 - Han Wu vs. the Butcher

Inside the Slaughter God King's special domain, Han Wu battled countless corpses in his Fetterbane Dragonforge form.

The corpses ranged from weak to powerful, and their numbers seemed endless. No matter how hard Han Wu pushed forward or how many techniques he unleashed, he couldn't break through their encirclement.

Even so, as the battle dragged on, Han Wu kept growing stronger. His Conversion Jurisdiction transformed the energy generated by all of his Microcosms into eight enormous hands. Each strike from those hands annihilated vast swathes of the corpses.

Meanwhile, his Duel Jurisdiction was slowly unlocking itself with every exchange. At the same time, his core operated at full capacity, using its enormous processing power to search for a way to break through the Butcher's defenses. Whether it would find a solution before death arrived remained unknown.

The Butcher could sense Han Wu steadily growing stronger through the endless fighting. The realization left him both impressed and envious. *What a talent. Why could someone like this not serve under me?*

"Xu Hai is a lucky man, but his luck ends here," the Butcher muttered.

He had no interest in watching Han Wu slowly wear down. He wanted Han Wu dead quickly. He fixed his gaze on Han Wu, and nine pupils surfaced one after another within his left eye. He was drawing upon the Nine-Eyed Evil God's power.

As the nine eyes appeared, another barrier formed within the Slaughter Jurisdiction domain. It was the familiar Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal, though this version dwarfed the one Huang Shengjun had used in the past. The moment the seal activated, Han Wu could still sense his Microcosms' existence, but he could no longer access them or summon any followers.

That was only one ability of the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal. Its other ability allowed it to seal individual powers directly. Han Wu had experienced its sealing ability firsthand before, and the memory was still fresh.

The situation was already dire enough. If the seal stripped away nine of his powers on top of everything else, the battle would be completely unwinnable. Based on the knowledge he had gained in the Seal Civilization, countering a seal required understanding its structure.

Han Wu had no time to study the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal's structure right now. That left only one option. He had to seal the enemy first before the seal reached him.

He made his decision at once. The five Divine Weapons orbiting him unleashed their power, and the terrifying twelve-Ring Five Element Seal descended. Almost simultaneously, the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal fired a beam directly at Han Wu, aiming to seal one of his powers.

Han Wu met it head-on with the Five Element Seal.

The two seals clashed. The Small Locust Blade, acting as one of the Five Element Seal's cores, intercepted the beam and took the hit in Han Wu's place. Immediately after, Han Wu sensed the blade go still, as if it had fallen into a deep sleep. He could no longer control it.

One of the nine eyes above closed. That alone told Han Wu that the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal had sealed one of his Divine Weapons instead of one of his powers. Eight Divine Weapons were still floating around him.

The remaining pupils continued firing sealing beams, but he used his Divine Weapons to intercept every attack. Losing his Divine Weapons was unfortunate, but it was far better than losing nine powers.

The Butcher grew more agitated as his tactic failed. A black blade lined with nine pupils appeared in his hand, radiating dense negative emotion.

Han Wu narrowed his eyes at the sight of it. If his guess was correct, that black blade contained the powers of both the Dark King and the Nine-Eyed Evil God. Its strength was immeasurable and could not be underestimated.

With his nine Divine Weapons sealed, only Locust-V remained within the Divine Weapon Atlas. However, Locust-V had fused with the Machine God, who should currently be inside the divine realm. Even so, Han Wu decided to try summoning him.

That was when he discovered the loophole. V emerged from the Divine Weapon Atlas and arrived beside Han Wu.

Han Wu was pleasantly surprised. The Divine Weapon Atlas had somehow bypassed the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal's restrictions and pulled V through. That alone was impressive.

He also recalled how Huang Shengjun had attempted to seal his Avatar Creation, only to forcibly summon Han Wu's true self instead. That proved the seal had loopholes worth studying further. However, now wasn't the time for that.

"V, switch to your weapon form," Han Wu commanded.

V complied immediately. His mechanical frame clicked and shifted before transforming into a 10,000-meter-long gun, fitted with hundreds of barrels. It was a massively enlarged version of Locust-V.

Han Wu, standing 100,000 meters tall, gripped the 10,000-meter-long Locust-V and fired at the corpses swarming toward him. The bullets pierced effortlessly through them and flew toward the Slaughter God King behind them.

The Butcher's black blade flashed. Enormous blade auras destroyed every incoming round before they streaked straight toward Han Wu.

Han Wu adjusted the Locust-V's configuration. The hundreds of barrels merged into a single cannon barrel, and a concentrated laser beam erupted from it.

"Starfall Laser Cannon!"

The laser beam cancelled out the Butcher's blade auras and burned through every obstacle in its path. It finally reached the Butcher himself, but a shield formed from dense negative energy intercepted the blast and stopped it from breaking through.

At first, they appeared evenly matched. However, the shattered corpses around Han Wu were already reassembling themselves. One by one, they retrieved their blades and attacked Han Wu again.

Han Wu had no choice but to redirect his fire. He raised Locust-V and fired straight upward at the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal space above him. The seal was extraordinarily tough. Despite enduring the full force of the bombardment, it didn't crack.

"Han Wu, you cannot destroy the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal!" the Butcher roared and began gathering energy. The terrifying power accumulating around him, along with the boundless negative energy, made it evident that his next strike wouldn't be simple.

"Is that so? I happen to be someone who doesn't take no for an answer. Let me try and see. Runic Ring!" Han Wu roared back.

A Divine Ring composed entirely of runes emerged behind him. It was the Runic Ring he had taken from the Ninth Guard. Runes specifically designed to break barriers rapidly spread across Locust-V.

The resulting Starfall was fundamentally different. Supercharged with barrier-piercing power, the laser beam tore through the Nine-Eyed Evil God Seal and caused it to collapse.

The Butcher didn't care. His strongest strike was already fully charged. "You should feel honored to die beneath my strongest move. World-Slaughtering Slash!"

Chapter 827 - Peerless White Blade

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 827 - Peerless White Blade

The Butcher unleashed his strongest slash. The sea of blood reversed along its path. Every corpse in the Slaughter Jurisdiction domain latched onto the strike and poured limitless power into it.

Han Wu watched the slash descend. His core analyzed its destructive force, but even at full capacity, it couldn't identify a weakness in time. The conclusion was clear: the slash possessed enough power to reduce his Fetterbane Dragonforge form to dust.

Any resistance was pointless. Thus, he let go of Locust-V, summoned his Origin Microcosm, and placed it between himself and the incoming strike.

The Butcher scoffed. A mere Microcosm blocking his ultimate attack, one empowered by his Slaughter Jurisdiction, was laughable. The World-Slaughtering Slash was powerful enough to reduce hundreds or even thousands of Microcosms to shards.

Yet when the strike collided with the Origin Microcosm, it accomplished absolutely nothing. The Origin Microcosm possessed a special property called Stasis. External force couldn't destroy it. Not even the World-Slaughtering Slash could break through it.

Watching Han Wu's Microcosm stop his unstoppable strike nearly drove the Butcher insane. *Even that wasn't enough?*

Han Wu seized the moment while the Butcher let his guard down. He grabbed Locust-V again, activated the Runic Ring, and coated the weapon with anti-barrier runes.

"Starfall Laser Cannon!"

He fired straight upward at the blood-colored space above. The beam, modified by the anti-barrier runes, punched a hole through the Slaughter Jurisdiction's barrier. A blinding pillar of light erupted across the battlefield, visible from every corner of the field.

At that moment, deep within the Wisdom Faction's territory, a 100,000-meter-tall magic tower stood in the command area. Numerous minor God Kings had constructed the massive structure with huge quantities of resources.

Xu Hai stood at its peak. The instant he saw the pillar of light pierce the sky, excitement flashed across his face. *It worked. Han Wu found the Butcher's location.*

With the position confirmed, Xu Hai finally had a way to defeat him. "All Wisdom Faction members, pour your energy into the tower!"

The minor God Kings and numerous Major Gods had already received advance notice and were standing ready. They channeled their energy into the tower at once. Segment by segment, the structure lit up all the way to its peak.

At the peak, the energy formed a massive Eye of Wisdom. This was a Divine Skill that Xu Hai had created with his Divine Jurisdiction.

"Lock onto the pillar of light and fire the precision strike," Xu Hai ordered.

The Eye of Wisdom released a beam toward the area Han Wu had marked. Xu Hai's gaze turned toward the Slaughter Faction's territory in the distance.

When Han Wu had first proposed taking Jing Jing and attacking the Slaughter Faction, Xu Hai had refused. The Butcher was formidable, backed by the War Faction, and likely had countless hidden trump cards. However, Han Wu had ultimately persuaded him with the Fetterbane Dragonforge's sheer power.

Han Wu had done it! With nothing but his own strength, he had drawn out the Butcher alone. No one had ever accomplished such a feat. It also gave the Wisdom Faction a chance to deliver a decisive blow.

"Victory will be ours," Xu Hai said confidently.

The Eye of Wisdom's beam landed on the marked coordinates. Brilliant light engulfed the area, and every enemy target within a ten-kilometer radius was eliminated. The Butcher was no exception.

Han Wu watched the Butcher disintegrate under the Eye of Wisdom's beam. Yet something felt wrong. No Divine Jurisdiction dropped after the Butcher's death. Not even a Divine Aspect emerged.

Confused, Han Wu searched the location where the Butcher had died and found only the black blade. The beam had destroyed the nine eyes of the Nine-Eyed Evil God embedded within it, leaving nothing but nine hollow holes.

Han Wu picked up the blade. Instantly, an enormous flood of negative energy poured into him. The Dark King's will attempted to seize control of him. Without hesitation, Han Wu activated Divine Authority 2. Formed from his four Divine Aspects of Life, Light, Creation, and Peace, Divine Authority 2 drove away every shred of negative energy.

Han Wu tightened his grip on the black blade as he warned the Dark King within, "Submit or be purified. Choose."

It should have been a newly born legendary Armament Spirit. Instead, excessive negative energy had corrupted it and twisted it into something evil. If used properly, it could have rivaled the original king spirit in power.

Unfortunately, the Dark King was consumed by resentment and refused to submit.

Han Wu showed it no mercy, pouring Divine Authority 2 into the black blade. It cost him 1 million Divine Essence before every trace of negative energy inside was purified. The entire blade turned pure white. At last, the Dark King reverted to what it had always been meant to become: a true legendary Armament Spirit.

The purification had reduced its raw power several times compared to what it had been as the Dark King, which was admittedly a loss. Even so, Han Wu wasn't disappointed. A weapon spirit that obeyed him was far more valuable to him than one that didn't, regardless of how powerful the latter could be.

Since the black blade had been fully purified and turned white, its old name no longer suited it. Han Wu renamed it after the legendary Armament Spirit it now housed. Its new name was Peerless White Blade.

Peerless released a series of soft, clear tones, as if celebrating its new name.

Han Wu stored Peerless within his divine realm.

Jing Jing rushed toward him and wrapped him in a tight embrace. Crystal-like tears fell from the corners of her eyes. "God, I am sorry. I wasn't strong enough to protect you."

A handsome young man and a beautiful woman locked in a tight embrace should have been a touching sight. However, Jing Jing's considerable height left Han Wu completely buried against her, making him look like a kid.

He coughed to get her attention. Jing Jing's embrace was comfortable, but he still wanted to preserve at least a little dignity as her god. When he tried to straighten up, Jing Jing only tightened her hold, as if she wanted to press him into her very bones.

"Jing Jing, this is a battlefield. Let me keep a bit of dignity. What if someone sees?" Han Wu asked quietly after realizing that he couldn't break free.

At last, Jing Jing released him. Han Wu quickly glanced around. Thankfully, no one else was nearby, and he let out a silent sigh of relief. No matter what, he was someone who had fought the Slaughter God King on equal footing. It would have been embarrassing if anyone had seen him getting smothered by a woman.

Once everything had settled down, a sudden realization struck Han Wu. *Why is the divine war still ongoing? The Slaughter God King is dead, and the victor is clear.*

The thought immediately made him realize something was wrong. Since the divine war hadn't ended, that meant both faction leaders were still alive.

Han Wu had charged into the Slaughter Faction alone, broken through the final defensive line single-handedly, and drawn the Butcher out. Then he had done everything he could to mark the Butcher's position for the Wisdom Faction.

If the Butcher was still alive, what would he do next?

"Fuck! The Butcher must have used the direction of the Eye of Wisdom's beam to trace my mentor's location!" Han Wu said in alarm.

Chapter 828 - The Butcher Strikes Back

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 828 - The Butcher Strikes Back

After releasing a beam powerful enough to eliminate even a God King, the entire Wisdom Faction was exhausted. Their energy had been depleted, and for a short time, they could no longer provide the Wisdom God King with any meaningful support.

“Finally, it’s over. Our master will be pleased,” the Banquet God King said excitedly.

Wang Fugui waited, but the Will of the Divine Civilization never announced their victory.

The other God Kings waited as well. The declaration never came.

Standing atop the tower, Xu Hai immediately realized something was wrong. Han Wu would never betray him, which could only mean that the Eye of Wisdom had failed to kill the Slaughter God King.

If the Butcher had survived, what would he do next? The answer came quickly.

Xu Hai looked out across the battlefield and saw a rapidly forming trail of blood racing straight toward the magic tower. He didn’t need to think further to know who was coming.

If the Wisdom Faction’s members had still been at full strength when the Butcher entered their territory, he would have walked into his own death. However, every member was now drained. Sending them into close combat against the Butcher would be suicidal.

With no better options, Xu Hai commanded, “The Butcher is on his way and will arrive soon. All members, evacuate the battlefield immediately.”

He wasn’t giving up hope. Keeping them on the battlefield served no purpose anymore and would only hinder what came next.

Wang Fugui and the others immediately understood his intentions. He was protecting them. The Butcher was notorious for ignoring the rules. If he arrived and killed them, even the Wealth God King wouldn’t be able to hold him accountable, since they were now technically members of the Wisdom Faction.

“Brother Xu Hai, I praise your generosity and righteousness. I won’t waste more words of gratitude. If you survive today, whatever you need from us in the future, we will do without hesitation.”

The various minor God Kings spoke in turn before teleporting away one by one.

Although they belonged to the Wealth Faction, Zhao Zihong had sent them to assist the Wisdom Faction. Without his permission, they couldn’t leave on their own accord, even if remaining meant certain death.

Now that Xu Hai had commanded them to leave, he was effectively saving their lives. How could they not feel grateful to him?

Once they were gone, only Xu Hai, Commerce, and Jia Gui remained on the battlefield.

Jia Gui wanted to flee as well, but Commerce held him firmly in place and refused to let go.

Xu Hai smiled bitterly. “Why are you two still here?”

Commerce smiled back. “High risk, high reward. I’ve invested everything I have into the Wisdom Faction. I can’t just stand by and watch it collapse.”

Xu Hai was impressed. Others might call Commerce reckless or money-obsessed, but to Xu Hai, he was someone willing to stand with him through thick and thin.

“Li Xiulian, why are you dragging me along? Let go of me. I have no desire to stay here and die with you!” Jia Gui shouted in panic. He could already feel the Butcher’s pressure. Soon, it would be too late to escape.

Commerce ignored Jia Gui and turned to Xu Hai. “Since it has come to this, I’ll be direct. I want to make a deal with you.”

“What deal?” Xu Hai asked as he tapped into the magic tower to restore his energy.

“Let me sell Jia Gui to you as a slave in exchange for all the remaining resources and Divine Essence in the Wisdom Faction’s account,” Commerce said.

Xu Hai frowned for a moment before realizing what Commerce was trying to do. Commerce wasn’t trying to exploit the crisis. He was using the guise of a transaction to strengthen himself.

They had worked together against the Divine River Civilization before, and Xu Hai knew Commerce had a Divine Talent that accumulated wealth from transactions and converted it into strength. It was a one-time attack, but at the right moment, it could create miracles.

“I agree,” Xu Hai said.

“I don’t agree!” Jia Gui protested. “Why should I be sold off as someone’s slave?”

Commerce finally explained, “Jia Gui, this only benefits you. If the Wisdom Faction loses and Xu Hai dies, your slave status will become void automatically. If the Wisdom Faction wins, you will become one of its founding members. Even if you’re nominally Xu Hai’s slave, given his character, he will never mistreat you.

“You’re still only a God right now. To ascend into a Major God, or even a God King, you’ll need enormous resources. If the Wisdom Faction supports you, what do you think your future will look like? Think carefully.”

Jia Gui listened in silence before nodding. “You know what? You make a fair point. I won’t lose anything even if I’m sold off. Fine, I agree. I was born to be a slave anyway!”

Commerce exhaled in relief. If Jia Gui had refused, the deal would have fallen apart. Thankfully, he knew Jia Gui well enough to make it work.

The moment the trade was completed, Commerce felt a surge of power flow through his Divine Talent.

At that moment, the Butcher arrived. The bloody aura he emanated changed the sky and darkened the earth.

The Butcher revealed himself fully. He held his eight-faced war hammer in one hand. Blood drenched his body, and his killing intent had become almost tangible.

“Xu Hai, prepare to die!” the Butcher howled.

He couldn’t afford to waste time. He had no idea when Han Wu would notice something was amiss and return. He needed to kill Xu Hai before Han Wu came back.

He swung the massive eight-faced war hammer down toward the magic tower. If that blow connected, the tower would crumble instantly. Once Xu Hai fell from the tower, he would never survive a second blow.

Just then, Commerce sensed that his moment had come. As the hammer crashed downward, he stepped forward and unleashed every last bit of power stored within his Divine Talent in a strike capable of annihilating the heavens.

The strike was on par with a Subcosm life form’s attack. It collided with the eight-faced war hammer and sent a violent shockwave in every direction. The hammer shattered into pieces, and even the Butcher was driven back three steps in disbelief.

Commerce had exhausted every iota of power in that single blow and instantly reverted to being nearly useless in combat. However, as any seasoned merchant knew, the one thing you could never do before an enemy was reveal your weakness. Even without the strength to continue fighting the Butcher, Commerce kept his composure and gave him a look that suggested he was merely warming up. Every second he could buy mattered.

: Chapter 829

Chapter 829 - Victory

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Commerce stared at the Butcher and warned, “This isn’t your playground. Leave.”

In reality, his hand was trembling behind his back. He knew exactly what he could and couldn’t do. He also knew that all his assets were tied to the Wisdom Faction. If it fell, the debt alone would bury him for the rest of his life. Thus, even at the cost of his own life, Commerce had to stand his ground before the Butcher.

The latter was actually intimidated by him. Many people in the Divine Civilization could suppress the Butcher, but only a handful could destroy his Divine Authority with a single blow.

Although the Butcher had never paid close attention to Commerce’s information, he knew enough about him. Most of the intelligence focused on Commerce’s business achievements. Nothing about his combat ability had ever come up. Encountering this level of strength from him today genuinely caught the Butcher off guard.

Still, something about it felt wrong to his instincts. Even so, Xu Hai was right there in front of him. Killing Xu Hai meant winning the divine war, and the Butcher refused to let that chance slip away.

The Butcher took one step forward. Commerce kept his expression calm, but his stomach churned.

The Butcher took another step, and cold sweat soaked Commerce’s back. He was silently praying for Han Wu to return.

The Butcher stepped forward again, returning to the position where he had stood before being blasted backward. Cracks were beginning to show in Commerce’s carefully

maintained composure. At that moment, he prayed that the Butcher wouldn't take another step.

The Butcher raised his fist to test Commerce's strength with an attack. The latter had already started silently drafting his last will. He wanted to run, but his legs had given out. Even if they hadn't, he couldn't outrun the Butcher's fist.

The Butcher attacked. Before the fist connected with Commerce's head, a barrier appeared in front of him. The Butcher's powerful blow slammed into it, and ripples spread across its surface.

It was Xu Hai. At the very last second, using his Wisdom Jurisdiction and the energy he had recovered, he had constructed a barrier refined through dozens of iterations, strong enough to withstand even a God King's strike.

Protected by the barrier, Commerce finally exhaled and collapsed to the ground. Death had felt a hair's breadth away. Jia Gui, who was shielded behind the barrier, finally dared to poke his head out. He sprinted to Commerce's side and dragged him into the magic tower.

"Li Xiulian, you were incredible just now! I may actually start admiring you a little," Jia Gui said sincerely.

Commerce let out a long breath. "I had no idea I could do that either. Also, stop using my full name."

"Alright, Xiulian!" Jia Gui replied immediately.

Commerce considered smacking him senseless. It wasn't his surname that bothered him. It was his given name!

Outside, the Butcher realized that he had been played and erupted with fury. He channeled energy into both fists and hammered the barrier repeatedly. The barrier was resilient, but not indestructible. Under the Butcher's relentless assault, every punch spread more fractures across its surface.

Xu Hai could only channel the magic tower's energy to repair the barrier as quickly as the Butcher damaged it. Inside the tower, Commerce and Jia Gui were doing their best to recover while feeding additional energy into the magic tower.

It was as if the Butcher was fighting against all three of them at once instead of Xu Hai alone. His rage continued to rise. If only his Divine Authority hadn't been shattered, this barrier would have turned to dust in a single blow.

"Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!" he roared, the outburst sounding almost like an admission of his weakness.

Standing atop the magic tower, Xu Hai had already spotted Han Wu returning. Hold on. Just a little longer, and victory will belong to the Wisdom Faction!

Han Wu tore through the rows of Major Gods from the Slaughter Faction blocking his path. The instant he set foot into Wisdom Faction territory, Xu Hai used his authority to teleport Han Wu directly to his side.

Han Wu appeared atop the magic tower. He looked down at the Slaughter God King, who had faked his death and slipped away, and smiled.

“Butcher, we aren’t done yet. Come on, let’s keep going!” Han Wu leapt from the magic tower, transformed into the Fetterbane Dragonforge, and charged straight at the Butcher.

The Butcher threw everything he had into the battle, but he no longer had the means to resist. Without the black blade, he knew that he wasn’t Han Wu’s match. Now that Han Wu had caught up to him, escape was impossible.

Nonetheless, as a God King, the Butcher had his pride. He refused to die by Han Wu’s hand. He forced some distance between them with a bitter smile and shouted at Xu Hai atop the magic tower. “Xu Hai, I did not lose to you!”

Then he turned toward Han Wu. “Kid, I admit you are powerful. I will die first, but this isn’t over between us!”

After speaking, he detonated himself. The explosion blasted Han Wu back more than ten meters. The magic tower was caught in the blast as well, and one of its corners was destroyed. The structure almost collapsed.

With the Slaughter God King’s death, the divine war came to an end. The victor was the Wisdom God King, Xu Hai!

The rewards included the vast battlefield itself, along with the complete Slaughter Jurisdiction that had belonged to the Butcher. Xu Hai also gained countless additional spoils, all of which Xu Hai needed to catalogue himself.

Han Wu let out a long breath. “Finally. It’s over.”

He exited the divine war and returned to his dorm. The extensive fighting had left him utterly exhausted, and he needed rest. He slept for three full days before waking. During that time, Undying completely healed every injury he had sustained.

When he finally woke, he found a pile of unread messages. Most were congratulatory messages from fellow students. His identity as a student of Wisdom God King was already common knowledge at Imperial College and Demonic Imperial College.

The remaining messages were more personal, from people close to him.

Qin Shuang reported that her incomplete Lightning Jurisdiction had fully stabilized and invited him to exchange notes whenever he had time. She was available anytime. Jing Jing mentioned she needed to enter seclusion for a period to consolidate her units. Sun Qingnian said that, through the pen the Wealth God King had gifted him, he had grasped a concept for a Divine Jurisdiction suited to himself and was on the verge of ascending into a Major God.

Commerce left a message explaining that Zhao Zihong had invited him to participate in a very lucrative project. The reward for assisting the Wisdom Faction had already been deposited into his account, and Jia Gui's share had been included in the same transfer.

Xu Hai also left a message asking Han Wu to visit him once he was awake.

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 830 - Teacher, Your Wife Is Right

<h4 data-testid="heading" class="font-set-b18 flex items-start !font-sans sm:font-set-b26">Chapter 830 - Teacher, Your Wife Is Right

After replying to Qin Shuang and the others' messages, Han Wu left his dorm.

Imperial College was quiet during summer break, with most students already back home. Only a handful remained behind to train and sharpen themselves.

Everyone who saw Han Wu greeted him. His story had spread across the college's forums. He had single-handedly driven the Slaughter God King to his death. Whether the rumors were entirely true no longer mattered. In the eyes of Imperial College's students, he had already become something of a legend.

During the three days Han Wu had been sleeping, news of the Wisdom God King defeating the Slaughter God King had sent shockwaves throughout the entire Divine Civilization. Few could believe that an actual divine war had ended in less than a month. The outcome shattered every record in the history of divine wars.

Most surprising of all was the victor. Anyone familiar with the Wisdom Jurisdiction understood that its real strength lay in its potential. It required years of study and deep research before it could produce overwhelming combat power.

Xu Hai hadn't possessed his Divine Jurisdiction for long, so his battle prowess couldn't be so impressive. By contrast, the Slaughter Jurisdiction granted its bearer raw, immediate power from the moment it was obtained.

Most had expected the Butcher to win this divine war. The final result defied most people's expectations. Some individuals paid handsomely to obtain firsthand accounts from participants in the divine war and eventually discovered that the person who had guided Xu Hai to ultimate victory was a student.

Those with sharp instincts gathered every scrap of information available and posted it to Imperial College's forum. In a single night, the name Han Wu became known to everyone, whether they were students, graduates, or people both on and off campus.

Han Wu himself ignored the attention. He walked to Xu Hai's office as usual and knocked on the door.

Two seconds later, Xu Hai's voice came from inside. "Come in."

Han Wu pushed the door open and found several unfamiliar faces inside. He did recognize one of them, however. It was Su Lan, the attractive goddess who shared a close relationship with Xu Hai.

Han Wu had heard some gossip from Sun Qingnian before. Apparently, Xu Hai and Su Lan had once shared feelings for each other. No one knew why they never ended up together. According to Sun Qingnian, Xu Hai remaining single at his age had something to do with Su Lan. Recently, the two had also been seen together more frequently. Whether old feelings would rekindle remained anyone's guess.

Xu Hai stood and called out, "Han Wu, come sit beside me."

The unfamiliar faces all turned toward Han Wu. They had already seen the information circulating online. Although they found it difficult to fully believe that Han Wu had driven the Butcher to his death, they also couldn't dismiss it outright. Either way, caution was necessary. Han Wu could one day become the youngest God King in history.

Before taking his seat, Han Wu gave Su Lan a respectful bow. Her mood visibly brightened, and she smiled.

Han Wu sat down while Xu Hai resumed the meeting. The discussion focused on the Wisdom Faction. Before the divine war, these visitors had lacked confidence in the Wisdom Faction and hadn't invested in it. Now that the Wisdom Faction had emerged victorious, they saw an opportunity for profit and rushed over to secure long-term investments and shares.

Xu Hai understood their motivations perfectly. As long as none of them had betrayed the Wisdom Faction during the divine war, he was willing to accept their investment.

Naturally, investment led to discussions about territory management and revenue distribution. Xu Hai was well-versed in those matters. He had already managed a

substantial amount of territory before the divine war, and now he simply had even more of it.

Territory was only a small part of the meeting's agenda. The main topic was the Wisdom Faction's future direction. Without question, that direction was expansion through conquest. Who to conquer, how to proceed, and what to do afterward sparked fierce debate among everyone present.

Han Wu understood the general ideas but lacked familiarity with most of the specifics. He sat and listened cluelessly until the meeting finally ended. Once the visitors left in satisfaction, only Xu Hai, Su Lan, and Han Wu remained in the office.

Xu Hai casually cast a barrier around the room to block their voices before speaking. "Now that it's just us, I won't hold anything back. My survival in this divine war was all thanks to Han Wu. Without him, I wouldn't be standing here today."

"Sir, you are overstating it," Han Wu said modestly.

"Han Wu, excessive modesty is arrogance. That is something you should work on," Su Lan said gently.

Han Wu smiled bitterly. "Sir, your wife is right."

Su Lan's face flushed red at once. Beside her, Xu Hai blushed until even his ears were red.

"Han Wu, y-you..." Xu Hai stammered, unable to find the right words.

Han Wu pretended to be confused. "What is it, sir? Was I wrong?"

Su Lan looked at Xu Hai, her beautiful eyes filled with expectation.

Xu Hai relented under their gazes. "You're not exactly wrong."

Su Lan beamed. The moment she smiled, the entire room seemed to fill with a warm, pleasant fragrance.

Xu Hai glanced sideways at Han Wu and told Su Lan, "I had planned to wait until things settled down before confessing properly. I didn't expect this young man to get ahead of me."

Su Lan winked at him playfully and said quietly, "You can make it up to me later."

The look left Xu Hai slightly dazed, but he recovered quickly and returned to business.

“Let’s discuss the important matter. Han Wu, your contribution to this divine war is beyond question, so I’m awarding you something.” Xu Hai reached into his divine realm and produced an object.

The moment Han Wu saw it, he inhaled sharply. He recognized it immediately. Back when he inherited the Blood Coliseum, he had seen one before and even absorbed it. It was a complete Divine Jurisdiction, specifically the Butcher’s Slaughter Jurisdiction.

“Sir, that’s a complete and powerful Divine Jurisdiction. It’s far too precious. I can’t accept it,” Han Wu said quickly. “I already have two Divine Jurisdictions. I can’t absorb a third. Giving it to me would be a waste.”

“Han Wu, I’m giving it to you precisely because I’ve already considered everything. I’ve examined your situation using my Wisdom Jurisdiction, and I understand it fully. You have two incomplete Divine Jurisdictions, but they aren’t enough. Do you know why some Major Gods deliberately delay their God King ascension even when the opportunity is in front of them?”

“Is it because of the Divine Jurisdiction?” Han Wu guessed.

“Exactly. As your strength grows, the incomplete Divine Jurisdictions you’ve grasped may no longer suit you. That’s why you need additional Divine Jurisdictions available as alternatives,” Xu Hai explained.

: Chapter 831

Chapter 831 - The Law of Time

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“But how?” Han Wu asked. “I can’t absorb any more Divine Jurisdictions.”

At the moment, he also had a complete Concealment Jurisdiction in his hands. While it was only a minor Jurisdiction, he had known upon touching it that he had no way to absorb it.

Xu Hai smiled. “That’s not something you need to worry about. I’ll show you the way. The most popular method in the Divine Civilization right now is to use powers and abilities as the vessel for reserve Divine Jurisdictions. The stronger the abilities, the more powerful the Divine Jurisdiction they can hold, and you have no shortage of abilities.”

Han Wu nodded in understanding.

“But there’s one thing you need to do before you use this method,” Xu Hai continued. “You need to push your existing Divine Jurisdictions to their absolute limit. Only when your Divine Jurisdictions are developed to the point of approaching a complete Divine Jurisdiction can you use this method to absorb the reserve Divine Jurisdictions. How are your two Divine Jurisdictions coming along?”

Han Wu checked the data of his Divine Jurisdictions. His Conversion Jurisdiction had already reached 85% while his Duel Jurisdiction was at an astonishing 98%. If Han Wu wanted to ascend into a God King, he only needed to push his Duel Jurisdiction to 100%.

However, after his recent growth, Han Wu had started to feel that the Duel Jurisdiction was not quite a perfect fit for him. He also had no desire to ascend into a God King so soon.

With great power came great responsibility. Ascending into a God King meant taking on certain kinds of responsibilities from the Will of the Divine Civilization. Han Wu simply wasn’t ready to shoulder that yet. He wanted to build a stronger foundation first.

Xu Hai was visibly surprised at Han Wu’s progress. He had never expected Han Wu to have pushed his Divine Jurisdictions to such a level so quickly.

Only Han Wu himself knew how many battles and close calls this had taken. His strength had only grown at this terrifying pace because he had pushed himself. Even as a Major God, he had already reached the power level of a Subcosm life form, and his two Divine Jurisdictions played no small role in that.

Xu Hai couldn’t help but wonder, If Han Wu absorbs a few more reserve Divine Jurisdictions, just how powerful will he become? Han Wu could surpass the God King of Death upon ascending and become the strongest individual in the Divine Civilization.

This thought was one Xu Hai kept to himself. The God King of Death was shrouded in mystery, and the strength he had revealed so far could only be the tip of the iceberg. The most pressing matter for the time being was getting Han Wu to push his Duel Jurisdiction to the limit.

Han Wu also needed training of suitable intensity. Xu Hai thought over recent events, trying to find something to put Han Wu to work on.

At that moment, Su Lan asked, “Isn’t He Xu organising an escort mission to the Battleborn Civilization? The Titan Stone from the Battleborn Civilization is excellent for tempering one’s physical body, and that region is in the middle of a war. Arranging for Han Wu to go would do a great deal to help him push his Duel Jurisdiction forward.”

Han Wu was puzzled, having never heard of He Xu before.

“He Xu is also my student and is seven cohorts your senior. He’s helped me with various matters even after graduating,” Xu Hai explained. “The Titan Stone of the Battleborn Civilization really is excellent for tempering the body, and that region is currently at war. Joining this escort mission would help you advance your Duel Jurisdiction greatly. I’ll send you the relevant information. Go over it carefully, and let me know once you’ve decided.”

Han Wu nodded. He didn’t know much about the Battleborn Civilization, and he had never even heard of the Titan Stone before. After receiving the information, Han Wu returned to his divine realm to read it. The moment he arrived, he received a prayer from the Origin of Mutation.

“Vessel, get over here quickly. I’ve got a minor situation on my hands, and I need your help,” the Origin of Mutation said.

Han Wu hurried to the research base that the Origin of Mutation had set up in the Life Microcosm. As he stepped through the door, he sensed a powerful pressure radiating outward from inside the base. Even Han Wu felt a hint of danger from it.

“What on earth have you been researching this time?” Han Wu asked, rushing into the lab.

Inside, the Origin of Mutation and V were staring at Huang Shengjun inside a culture pod where he was serving as the test subject. The Origin of Mutation was gleefully modifying Huang Shengjun’s genes, while V collected all the data generated during the modification.

Nearby, Yakushi Nan, now fully transformed into a tentacle creature, scribbled furiously in their little notebook.

“Vessel, you’re here! Did you feel it? The presence coming off him is extraordinary!” the Origin of Mutation exclaimed, visibly vibrating in excitement.

Han Wu clicked his tongue. He had indeed felt it. That overwhelming pressure had startled him into thinking something had gone wrong, leading him to assume that the Origin of Mutation had created some kind of abomination.

“This test subject is truly remarkable. Through my research, I’ve found that the vast number of lives he carries is connected in some way to the Law of Time,” the Origin of Mutation explained eagerly.

“The Law of Time? Tell me more,” Han Wu said, interest piqued.

From the little he knew of it, it was an extraordinarily rare Law. The Divine Civilization’s records stated that divine realms themselves were built on a foundation of the Law of Time, which was why the flow of time inside the divine realm differed from the outside.

This trait of divine realms had allowed the Divine Civilization to flourish. Even a fragment of the Law of Time would be invaluable to Han Wu’s growth.

“In my research, I found that each time one of his lives ends, it returns to a specific state, which I call the initial state. In this initial state, his strength is fixed, his energy is fixed, and even his soul is fixed.

“My theory is that the deal he made with the Nine-Eyed Evil God was to have his existence locked to a specific point in time. No matter what happens after that, once he dies, he simply resets to that point,” explained the Origin of Mutation.

Han Wu recalled his battles with Huang Shengjun. Huang Shengjun had recovered with full energy and strength each time Han Wu had cut him down, and always exactly the same. That seemed to prove the Origin of Mutation’s theory correct.

“Right now, I’m mutating his genes to see if I can draw out the energy locked inside him,” the Origin of Mutation continued. “The process requires letting him grow stronger first. I was worried he might break free, so I called you over to stand guard.”

Han Wu nodded. The pressure radiating from Huang Shengjun was growing. Han Wu drew Peerless and fixed his eyes on Huang Shengjun. If anything went wrong, he was ready to cut him down and end the experiment.

The eyes of the heavily altered Huang Shengjun inside the culture pod fluttered open. All nine pupils in his eyes flickered, and when his gaze landed on Han Wu, they blazed with sharp light.

“Han Wu, our business isn’t finished!” Huang Shengjun roared.

Strangely enough, he sounded nothing like Huang Shengjun and more like the Butcher.

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Chapter 832 - Huang Shengjun Escapes!

“You’re right, our business hasn’t finished, has it?” Han Wu smiled. “I don’t care if you’re the Butcher or Huang Shengjun. You’re not the first to challenge me inside my own divine realm, and you won’t be the last. Let’s see what you’ve got.”

With that, Han Wu unsheathed Peerless and slashed down, unleashing a fierce blade pressure that sliced Huang Shengjun’s body in half. Despite this, Huang Shengjun climbed out of the wrecked pod as if nothing had happened.

“You can’t kill me. Only I can kill myself,” Huang Shengjun smirked, body exploding as if to emphasize his words.

The force of the detonation reduced the surrounding equipment to rubble and sent Han Wu and the others flying more than ten meters back.

Huang Shengjun shot out from the explosion, all nine pupils shining with a sinister light. Exploding himself had allowed him to break free from the gene modifications that the Origin of Mutation had forced upon him by reverting himself to his initial state.

Han Wu leaped to his feet and used the Five Element Seal to disrupt Huang Shengjun's escape. The twelve-Ring sealing technique locked Huang Shengjun in place, and Han Wu sighed with relief. It was fortunate that he knew sealing techniques. If not, Huang Shengjun's seemingly endless lives and his self-detonation would have made it difficult to deal with him.

As Han Wu turned to order the Origin of Mutation to begin extracting the Law of Time from Huang Shengjun, five of the nine pupils in Huang Shengjun's eyes went dark, and the Five Element Seal dissolved before he self-detonated again.

This second explosion was weaker than the first. Han Wu pushed through the explosion and closed in, this time activating the eleven-Ring Elemental Flux Seal. The newly revived Huang Shengjun was sealed once more, but in the very next instant, four pupils went dark, and the seal broke again.

Once free, Huang Shengjun immediately exploded himself again. Han Wu used every sealing technique he had, but still could not keep Huang Shengjun sealed.

Huang Shengjun was in the same but opposite dilemma. No matter how many times he self-detonated, Han Wu would just absorb energy from his divine realm to recover.

When Huang Shengjun realised he had no way to do any real damage in this state and that continuing would only waste his remaining lives, he decided to run.

The Origin of Mutation had no intention of letting such a perfect specimen escape and moved to capture him, only to be caught instead. Even though the Origin of Mutation's physical body was far superior to Huang Shengjun's, the latter's techniques were better. The Origin of Mutation struggled but could not break free.

"Send me out of your divine realm, and I'll spare your underling. Otherwise, I'll kill it." Huang Shengjun threatened Han Wu.

His voice was as rough and coarse as the Butcher's, making it impossible for Han Wu to tell whether the person in front of him was Huang Shengjun, the Butcher, or an amalgamation of the two.

"Vessel, don't listen to him. This body of mine isn't something he can destroy," the Origin of Mutation said with a scoff.

Huang Shengjun sneered. “Is that so?”

With that, he self-detonated five times consecutively. The lack of recovery time between explosions meant the Origin of Mutation’s entire body was reduced to a bloody mess, and its life force was draining rapidly. Only when Huang Shengjun finally stopped did the Origin of Mutation have a moment to regenerate.

After enduring the chain of explosions, the Origin of Mutation no longer dared to speak so boldly. If it had been forced to endure any more explosions, it could’ve actually been blasted until its life force was exhausted.

“Now send me out of your divine realm, or I’ll kill him,” Huang Shengjun warned.

Han Wu had already quietly called for Xu Hai, but Huang Shengjun wasn’t going to give him time to arrive. The Origin of Mutation’s life was precious, and Han Wu wasn’t willing to risk it.

“I can let you leave my divine realm, but you have to release him first,” Han Wu bargained.

“This ain’t a negotiation. I’m telling you to send me out!” Huang Shengjun started another series of detonations.

Ten consecutive explosions later, and the Origin of Mutation was in the worst state it had ever experienced. A full third of its body was completely obliterated, and the remaining two-thirds were drenched in blood. A few more explosions like that and it could actually die.

“Stop. I’ll send you out,” Han Wu relented.

Stalling for time clearly wouldn’t work. Left with no choice but to comply, he opened a gate that led out of the divine realm.

Sensing that the gate did indeed lead outside, Huang Shengjun said, “We’ll meet again, Han Wu.”

Flashing Han Wu a vicious smile, he shoved the Origin of Mutation to the side and passed through the gate.

Han Wu watched as Huang Shengjun left his divine realm. Even now, he had no way of knowing if that was the original Huang Shengjun, the Butcher, or a combination of both. He only knew that Huang Shengjun’s ability to break the seals had something to do with the Nine-Eyed Evil God.

The Origin of Mutation came to Han Wu’s side. “It’s my fault. I let my guard down. If I hadn’t, he never would’ve grabbed me.”

Han Wu shook his head. “He chose this moment to escape. It was clearly planned well in advance. It’s a good thing that none of the other units in the divine realm were harmed.”

Shortly after, Xu Hai finally transported himself into Han Wu’s divine realm. He had come at full speed after receiving Han Wu’s message, but it was too late.

“Sir, Huang Shengjun has escaped. I suspect the Butcher’s soul has been transferred into Huang Shengjun’s body,” Han Wu reported.

Xu Hai’s expression immediately turned serious. He had been at odds with the Butcher long enough to know the man’s cunning and treachery well. Possessing Huang Shengjun was definitely within his means.

“I’ll issue a command and put every informant to work on hunting down the escaped Huang Shengjun. As long as he hasn’t fled to another civilization, he won’t escape punishment from the Divine Civilization.”

Despite this assurance, Han Wu remained concerned about Huang Shengjun’s bizarre abilities. The unending chain of self-detonations was brutally effective. He himself had no answer for it, and it was hard to imagine that anybody else could counter it either. Capturing Huang Shengjun would be difficult.

Nevertheless, there was nothing he could do. This moment left Han Wu feeling abruptly aware of his own weakness. Even with his strength at the Subcosm rank, he still had no way to resolve unexpected situations such as this. He clearly needed more experience.

“Sir, I’ll accept the escort mission to the Battleborn Civilization. I need the training. The only way I can face every adversary and protect the people I care for is by growing stronger.”

Xu Hai nodded with a smile, pleased that Han Wu was mature enough to acknowledge this. “Good. I’ll make the arrangements. A little advice from me, the Battleborn Civilization may not be as powerful as the Divine Civilization, but it still has plenty of strong individuals. Even with your considerable strength, they may not all be opponents you can handle. Be careful on this trip.”

“I’ll keep it in mind,” Han Wu replied.

: Chapter 833

Chapter 833 - Fatherly Love

The next day, Han Wu and Qin Shuang headed to Lucky Cape Harbour in the Divine Civilization, where He Xu was already waiting.

“Junior Han Wu, over here,” He Xu called with a wave when he spotted them.

The two of them made their way over quickly.

“Greetings, Senior Brother He Xu,” Han Wu greeted.

He Xu raised an eyebrow at the title. Senior and senior brother were two different forms of address. The former merely meant they had studied at the same academy, while the latter denoted their having the same teacher and was thus far more intimate.

“Junior Brother Han Wu,” He Xu greeted, amending his address to match Han Wu’s.

Glancing at Qin Shuang, he added, “You must be Junior Qin Shuang. It seems rumors of your beauty were largely underplayed.”

“You flatter me, Senior He Xu,” Qin Shuang replied.

With introductions out of the way, He Xu went on to brief them about the mission. “You’ve both gone through the information that Sir Xu Hai sent you, right? Our task is to escort Prince Zhan Fanyin of the Battlecraze Empire back home so he can inherit the throne.

“We may face ambushes from the other princes of the Battlecraze Empire as well as assassination attempts from their main adversary, the Underlaw Empire, on this journey. It will be dangerous.”

Han Wu nodded. “We’ve read through everything, and we’re confident we can complete the mission.”

He Xu smiled. Having already learned of Han Wu’s true strength from Xu Hai, he found himself believing Han Wu’s words. Han Wu was a Subcosm rank fighter, making him an absolute powerhouse both within the Divine Civilization and without.

“It’s good that you’re confident, Han Wu, but stay cautious. Poison and long-range sniping are standard assassination methods for the Battleborn Civilization. We’ll need to stay vigilant,” He Xu warned.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang nodded. With that, they boarded the chartered ship. The ship looked small from the outside, but its interior space was surprisingly large. It was at least 10,000 sq km. A magnificent palace had even been built within.

In the palace, Han Wu and Qin Shuang found the individual they were there to protect, Zhan Fanyin, prince of the Battlecraze Empire. His exceptionally delicate features had Han Wu mistaking him for a woman at first glance.

His willow-leaf brows and cherry blossom lips resembled a beauty straight out of a painting. The only things that betrayed him as a man were his Adam's apple and flat chest.

While Han Wu and Qin Shuang sized up Zhan Fanyin, the latter was doing the same to them. He didn't even spare Han Wu a second glance, immediately judging him as an above-average-looking young man who was nowhere near his own standard.

When his gaze landed on Qin Shuang, however, Zhan Fanyin was visibly taken aback.

"My beautiful lady, forgive my boldness, but I fell deeply in love with you the moment I laid eyes on you. I have only one question for you: would you be willing to become my consort?" Zhan Fanyin dropped to one knee and reached out to take her hand.

Han Wu stepped in front of Qin Shuang to block the prince. "Consort? No need. Considering this is our first meeting, I'll forgive you, but I'm telling you right now, she already has someone. I'm her boyfriend."

Zhan Fanyin's brows knitted, eyes darting between Han Wu and the flustered Qin Shuang. It seemed impossible to him that someone as unremarkable as Han Wu could be Qin Shuang's boyfriend.

"Beautiful lady, if you're being forced into this, just blink and I, Zhan Fanyin, will not allow anyone to bully a girl as gorgeous as you," Zhan Fanyin declared, desperate for even the smallest sign of interest from Qin Shuang.

Qin Shuang pointedly didn't blink her big eyes at all. "I'm Han Wu's girlfriend. Prince Zhan Fanyin, please accept this reality and do not think of any further inappropriate thoughts."

"No!" Zhan Fanyin gasped.

The news hit him like lightning. He had finally taken a liking to a girl, only to find she already had a boyfriend.

Is heaven punishing me for being too handsome? he wondered. But then, so what if Qin Shuang and Han Wu are dating? They aren't married, and even if they were, divorce still exists. If divorce is off the table, I can always turn her into a widow.

Zhan Fanyin didn't particularly care about how he got his hands on Qin Shuang, as long as she was his in the end. He turned a murderous glare upon Han Wu. If Han Wu died, Qin Shuang would surely come to him eventually.

Irritation welled up within Han Wu when he sensed the killing intent. Han Wu would've slapped Zhan Fanyin if he weren't their escort target.

"I refuse to give up," Zhan Fanyin announced in a clear challenge to Han Wu. "I want to compete for her fairly."

This naturally pissed off Han Wu. "She's my girlfriend. Why on earth should I compete with you? Is there something wrong with your head?"

"Common peasant." Zhan Fanyin scoffed, eyes filled with lofty superiority.

The last thread of Han Wu's tolerance snapped, and he stepped forward to slap Zhan Fanyin.

The sound rang out through the palace, loud enough to reverberate hundreds of meters. The strike left Zhan Fanyin stunned. For a moment, he could not process what had just happened.

Qin Shuang hastily pulled Han Wu back. Regardless of his attitude, Zhan Fanyin was still the target of their escort mission.

"How dare you hit me?" Zhan Fanyin cried angrily. "Even my father has never struck me!"

"Your father never hit you, so I did it for him. You're welcome. If you'd like, I can give you a thorough firsthand understanding of what fatherly love feels like," Han Wu said unapologetically.

Zhan Fanyin unsheathed a flexible sword from his waist and lunged at Han Wu. "I'll fight you to the end!"

Han Wu guided Qin Shuang out of the way before calmly sidestepping every one of Zhan Fanyin's slashes. When an opening appeared, he didn't hesitate to give Zhan Fanyin another three weighty slaps.

Zhan Fanyin's smooth, fair complexion swelled, and he only became more desperate to cut Han Wu down.

As Han Wu's palm rose for another strike, He Xu stepped in and pulled Han Wu back, pushing Zhan Fanyin to the side with his other hand.

"Junior Brother, that's enough. I think he's learned his lesson," He Xu said, glancing at Zhan Fanyin with a touch of pity.

Half his face had swollen up enormously. His own father probably would not have recognised him.

Han Wu lowered his hand a little reluctantly. “As you say, Senior Brother.”

He Xu smiled bitterly. From the resentful look in Zhan Fanyin’s eyes, he could already tell there would be more clashes ahead.

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Chapter 834 - The Divine Authority Greatsword

The ship set sail for the Battleborn Civilization.

He Xu, Han Wu, and Qin Shuang’s mission was to escort Zhan Fanyin. The ship’s crew was made up of Demigods whom He Xu had recruited. They were responsible for the ship’s daily administration and served as cover for a normal merchant convoy.

Zhan Fanyin had calmed down considerably after the beating from Han Wu and no longer dared to pester Qin Shuang. This also left Han Wu more time to talk with He Xu.

Having received some intelligence on Han Wu from Xu Hai, He Xu made sure to pay close attention to his junior brother, even using the ship’s combat simulator to spar with Han Wu in their free time.

The simulator used virtual units identical to their own. When fighting with equal numbers, Han Wu rarely won against He Xu. Even though the individual strength of his units had since improved, they remained naturally weaker against talented opponents.

This didn’t discourage Han Wu in the slightest. Han Wu understood his strengths clearly. His units were not built for one-on-one fights, but to overwhelm the enemy with sheer numbers.

Several rounds of sparring allowed He Xu to identify both Han Wu’s strengths and weaknesses. Han Wu’s raw strength was undeniable, but his control over his Divine Aspects, Divine Authorities, and Divine Jurisdictions fell far short of He Xu’s standard.

He Xu understood that this was likely due to Han Wu’s quick advancement, so he took the time to patiently guide Han Wu in these aspects. Han Wu and Qin Shuang listened with interest. Real field experiences were far more practical than the theoretical knowledge taught by the lecturers.

Divine Aspects were the most basic element that even a Demigod could possess. In the beginning, it served simply as a vessel for Divine Skills, with one Divine Aspect representing either one or more Divine Skills.

Deeper understanding and mastery of the Divine Aspect, however, allowed its use to be extended well beyond merely housing Divine Skills. A holder could use their Divine Aspect as the basis for creating entirely new Divine Skills from existing ones, or even deepening and strengthening their own techniques until they formed new Divine Skills tied to that Aspect.

Han Wu had not reached the level yet.

Divine Aspects aside, his Divine Authorities also had significant room for development. Divine Authorities held part of the power of every Divine Aspect one had and were usually used to suppress enemies and inspire fear. Still, that was only the surface-level application.

A far more advanced use was to temper one's Divine Authority into a weapon. Weapons forged from one's Divine Authority tended to develop powerful characteristics of their own and grew alongside their wielder. It was more versatile than any divine-ranked equipment.

Han Wu couldn't help but recall the Butcher when he heard this explanation. The Butcher's favorite weapon, the Eight-Faced War Hammer, had been a powerful weapon forged from his Divine Authority. If the Commerce God King had not shattered that Eight-Faced War Hammer when the Butcher tried to confront Xu Hai, the outcome could've been much different.

Unfortunately, He Xu didn't have much to offer on Divine Jurisdictions. He had only recently advanced to Major God a year or two ago, so his understanding of Divine Jurisdictions was on par with or perhaps even less than Han Wu's. Even so, he could still teach Han Wu how to draw on his Divine Jurisdictions more precisely to enhance his strength.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang keenly listened to He Xu's advice. After taking in his detailed explanations, they returned to their respective rooms to mull over the application of their Divine Aspects and Divine Authorities.

Qin Shuang held five Divine Aspects and one Divine Authority. They were all lightning-related and shared many common principles, which made them relatively easy to grasp.

Han Wu had a much more challenging situation, as his eight Divine Aspects and two Divine Authorities were all completely different from each other. This meant he had no choice but to work through them one at a time.

He started not with the simpler Divine Aspects, but with Divine Authority 1, which carried the essence of death, destruction, war, and darkness. It was unmistakably a powerful offensive force, and the most suitable for forging into a weapon.

Tempering one's Divine Authority into a weapon was no easy feat. Every day, Han Wu spent enormous effort just to compress his Divine Authority down to the size of a greatsword. Occasionally, he also needed to spend some Divine Essence to lock the form in place.

After eight full days, a black greatsword made from his own Divine Authority finally took shape in Han Wu's hands. The blade was black as ink and radiated a bitingly cold killing intent. If you leaned in close, you could hear something like the clash of 10,000 soldiers from within.

The moment the greatsword was formed, it took on a permanent trait called Annihilation, which caused the wounds it inflicted upon living beings to become extraordinarily difficult to heal. This effect would spread from the injury like a parasite gnawing at the bone, endlessly corroding the victim's life force until they died.

Against non-living objects, it would damage their internal structure and cause damage that could not be repaired.

Satisfied, Han Wu looked forward to finding a few opponents to test the blade on.

At that moment, the ship suddenly stopped. Han Wu sensed something was wrong and ran out to check the situation. He Xu immediately signaled Zhan Fanyin to hide before standing guard over him.

More than ten ships of different types had surrounded them.

: Chapter 835

Chapter 835 - Wargod Han Wu

He Xu's Demigod recruits went out to meet the intruders, with one of them posing as the ship's captain to ask their purpose. The leader of the surrounding ships was a beastman with a scar running across his face. His broad back and bear-like build were quite literal.

"You've never heard of the great Ghost Bear Bandits? Are you courting death?" the beastman, Ghost Bear, shouted from atop one of the ships as he glared down at the Demigod acting as captain.

The Demigod captain was a cunning fellow. Although he had never heard of the Ghost Bear Bandits, that didn't stop him from flattering them. "So it's the illustrious Ghost Bear Bandits! I've long heard of your great reputation. Seeing you in person is even more impressive."

As he spoke, he pulled a small box from his pocket. Inside lay a blue pearl. It had no special power, but it was a rare and precious gemstone worth at least 100 Divine Essence.

"I've always admired you, Boss Ghost Bear. Please accept this precious gem as a token of respect. Boss Ghost Bear, I humbly ask you to look the other way and spare my insignificant life. I would be deeply grateful," the Demigod captain said sincerely.

Ghost Bear didn't even glance at the priceless blue pearl in the man's hand. "You think cheap junk like that can fool me? Who gave you that gall? Men, board the ship, take everything of value, and kill everyone!"

In an instant, the surrounding ships simultaneously launched grappling hooks that latched onto Han Wu's ship. Bandits swarmed up the lines and poured onto the ship.

The captain immediately realized that these people hadn't come for valuables. Their true target was almost certainly the assassination of the Battlecraze Empire's Prince Zhan Fanyin.

"Bandits aboard! Open your divine realms and release your units! We cannot let them break through!" the captain shouted.

Han Wu stood at the rear, his eyes burning with the desire for battle. He had just been looking for someone to test his blade on, and now volunteers had delivered themselves to him. This day couldn't have gone better!

The Demigods' units varied in power. The strongest aboard the ship were Lord life forms. The Ghost Bear Bandits, however, were numerous. Each ship carried more than 10,000 bandits, bringing the total force beyond 100,000. Even the weakest amongst them was at the Heroic rank.

Faced with the Ghost Bear Bandits' assault, the Demigods' units had no choice but to fight with everything they had.

The situation made Ghost Bear doubtful. These people were nothing more than a handful of weak, second-rate guards. They were not qualified to escort a prince of the Battlecraze Empire.

Ghost Bear frowned in uncertainty. Is this the wrong ship?

The intelligence he had received claimed that whichever ship appeared at this location and time would be carrying a prince of the Battlecraze Empire. Perhaps the prince's ship had suffered a malfunction during the journey and arrived late.

"Doesn't matter whether there's a Battlecraze Empire prince on board or not. This ship crossed my path, so its luck ran out. Serves it right to get robbed. That's just fate," Ghost Bear muttered.

Han Wu heard every word from where he stood behind him and asked, "You, Bear. Who sent you to assassinate the prince of the Battlecraze Empire?"

Ghost Bear leapt in fright and spun around, finally seeing Han Wu clearly. "Who are you? How dare you sneak up behind me and call me Bear? Are you not afraid that I'll cut you down?"

"Stop spouting nonsense and answer my question," Han Wu said, then released his Divine Authority.

The aura of darkness, death, destruction, and war descended upon Ghost Bear. The pressure nearly crushed both his body and mind. He almost dropped to his knees.

Still, Ghost Bear had lived long enough to forge nerves of steel alongside his Earthsunder strength. That power was the foundation of everything he relied upon.

"Brat, you're courting death. I'll send you on your way!" Ghost Bear howled and attacked Han Wu.

Han Wu's brow twitched slightly. His Divine Authority 1 materialised into a greatsword within his grasp. Before Ghost Bear could even register the movement, Han Wu was already behind him. A streak of black blade light swept through the air, and Ghost Bear watched his massive fist drop to the ground before his eyes.

Then indescribable pain came. It spread inward from the wound. Everything the darkness touched—skin, flesh, even bone—turned jet black. The agony never eased for even a moment.

"What did you do to me?" Ghost Bear roared through his pain.

Han Wu ignored the question and simply repeated, "You, Bear. Who sent you to assassinate the prince of the Battlecraze Empire?"

Ghost Bear only screamed in pain and refused to answer.

Han Wu cleanly severed the beastman's other fist as easily as slicing through a melon.

Ghost Bear's agony doubled.

“Will you talk?” Han Wu asked.

At last, Ghost Bear broke under the pain, weeping. “Fine, I’ll talk! I’ll tell you everything! I don’t know who hired us. The person who approached me wore a mask. All I remember is a clove flower tattoo on their face... I’ve told you everything I know. Please spare me!”

Ghost Bear dropped to his knees and begged for mercy. As an Earthsunder life form, losing both hands wouldn’t reduce his combat power by much. He could still live comfortably in this region with his abilities. He didn’t want to die. He wanted to live a long life.

Unfortunately for him, his opponent was Han Wu.

Han Wu ignored Ghost Bear’s pleas, sat beside him calmly, and recorded the data on how Ghost Bear’s wounds responded to strikes from the greatsword made from his Divine Authority. This data was essential to his growth, so he needed as much firsthand observation as possible to understand the blade’s true nature.

Ghost Bear mistakenly assumed Han Wu intended to spare him. In reality, Han Wu remained focused on the severed hands. Every inch the black energy advanced was a great reward in itself.

Unable to endure the relentless pain, Ghost Bear noticed the blackness creeping farther up his arms and bit down hard. He used his own teeth to tear both arms off at the shoulders. Once the black energy lost contact with his body, the spread stopped immediately. The wounds still hurt, but the pain was far more bearable than before.

Ghost Bear let out a breath of relief, but Han Wu was displeased. Ghost Bear had bitten off the wound sites and ruined the data collection. As such, he delivered two clean strikes to the beastman’s thighs instead. Worried that he would repeat the same trick and bite off his own legs, Han Wu added a third slash across the lower back. He simply didn’t believe that Ghost Bear could bite through his own lower back.

With three separate sources of unbearable agony, Ghost Bear lost the will to live. He slammed his head against the ground and killed himself on the spot.

As Ghost Bear died, the corrosion spreading from the wounds ceased. Han Wu had collected only partial data, and the results were far from comprehensive. Left with no other option, he turned his attention to the bandits who had boarded the ship. In the next instant, Han Wu moved like the wind and struck each target once.

Before long, the bandits’ screams echoed throughout the ship.

Someone spotted Ghost Bear’s corpse and cried out, “Boss Ghost Bear is dead! Run!”

Han Wu snorted. “You started this robbery, and now you want to flee halfway through? Did I say you could?”

He launched himself into the air and drove the greatsword through the Ghost Bear Bandits’ ships. Under its Annihilation trait, every ship crumbled like paper.

With their ships destroyed, the bandits had nowhere left to escape. One after another, they raised their hands in surrender.

The Demigods aboard the ship stood stunned by what Han Wu had just displayed. He had singlehandedly wiped out the Ghost Bear Bandits without summoning a single unit. A combat record like that deserved the title of Wargod.

“Wargod Han Wu, what would you like to do with these prisoners?” the captain asked respectfully.

Han Wu counted the surrendered prisoners. There were more than 50,000, all Heroic rank or higher. Even a God would struggle to assemble a fighting force of that scale.

Still, these were cunning bandits responsible for countless crimes. Letting them live would be like leaving buried landmines behind. The question was how to make the best use of them.

Han Wu thought for a moment and came up with a plan. He summoned his Life Microcosm and swept all the prisoners inside. They would become experimental material for the Origin of Mutation, as well as sacrifices for future use. Once the Life Microcosm reached a sufficient capacity, he would sacrifice the whole batch and eliminate any possibility of future trouble.

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 836 - Your Face Stopped Hurting?

With the bandit threat resolved, Han Wu returned to the palace aboard the ship and reported the situation.

When Zhan Fanyin saw him return unharmed, a flicker of disappointment crossed his eyes. He had genuinely hoped Han Wu would die in the battle. That way, he could pursue Qin Shuang without interference.

Zhan Fanyin scoffed. “*Hmph*! You’re harder to kill than I thought.”

Han Wu chuckled. “Not me. You’re the hard one to kill.”

He then turned to He Xu, “I’ve confirmed it. The Ghost Bear Bandits were robbers in name only. Their real mission was to assassinate Zhan Fanyin.”

He Xu nodded. He had already expected the journey to be filled with incidents. They were already past the halfway point of the route, and this was only the first assassination attempt. Overall, things were progressing relatively smoothly.

“Good work, Junior Brother Han Wu. Did you discover who sent the bandits to carry out the assassination?” He Xu asked.

Han Wu shook his head. “No. Ghost Bear, the one leading them, didn’t know who was behind it either.”

Zhan Fanyin snorted with laughter. “I don't think you failed to find out who ordered it. You’re just pretending to create a sense of danger, so I’ll think I need your protection.”

Han Wu and He Xu looked at Zhan Fanyin simultaneously, both wearing the same faintly pitying expression. They were Major Gods in the Divine Civilization. While neither stood at the absolute peak, they were still far above ordinary people, as distant as the sky from the earth. They had no time to play such pointless games with Zhan Fanyin.

“Prince Fanyin, I trust Han Wu’s character. He would never joke about something like this. I ask that you show proper respect to the people protecting your safety,” He Xu said.

Zhan Fanyin didn’t take it to heart, though he at least refrained from arguing further while in He Xu’s presence.

Han Wu continued, “I also learned something else from Ghost Bear. The person who hired them wore a mask, but they had a clove flower tattoo on their face—”

“You’re lying!” Zhan Fanyin cried, rushing forward to seize Han Wu by the collar while glaring into his eyes.

From his reaction alone, Zhan Fanyin clearly recognised that person.

“Whether I’m lying or not, you already know the truth. Let go of me,” Han Wu said calmly.

He had no interest in involving himself in disputes over tattooed strangers. Anyone who dared to interfere with his mission would be dealt with accordingly. Once they reached the Battleborn Civilization and delivered their escort target to the palace, he would gather the Titan Stone and push his Duel Jurisdiction to its absolute peak.

“Apologize to my brother, Yuwen, for slandering him!” Zhan Fanyin said, each word deliberate. His expression suggested that he would bite Han Wu if the apology didn’t come.

Han Wu turned to He Xu. “He brought this on himself. You saw it.”

He Xu covered his face helplessly.

Han Wu took that as permission and slapped Zhan Fanyin hard across the face. He kept slapping him as he said, “I think you’ve forgotten your place. You want me to apologize? Sounds like you want to be the one apologizing.

“Your brother wants you dead, and you refuse to accept that. That’s your problem, not mine. Don’t think your good looks will stop me from hitting you. What’s this? Your face stopped hurting already? Let me fix that for you.”

After seven consecutive slaps, Zhan Fanyin’s handsome face became swollen and red again.

He Xu finally coughed. “Junior Brother Han Wu, that’s enough. Keep going, and you’ll kill him.”

Han Wu stopped. “Develop some judgment and stop provoking people you can’t handle. Your strength is what it is. I’m already holding back. One real hit from me would finish you.”

Zhan Fanyin covered his face, humiliation and helplessness written across his expression. He had assumed that He Xu would step in and stop Han Wu. Instead, he had sided with Han Wu. Not a single person on the ship was on his side.

He Xu sighed and tried to console him as well. “Han Wu has a sharp temper, so stop provoking him. As for that brother of yours... keep your guard up. We’re from the Divine Civilization, so we don’t understand the Battleborn Civilization’s internal affairs. Still, the intel Junior Brother Han Wu gathered leaves little room for error. Whether it’s true or not is for you to judge.”

His advice never reached Zhan Fanyin. The only thing on his mind now was how to get away from He Xu’s group as quickly as possible. He genuinely feared that Han Wu would one day beat his handsome face beyond repair.

The ship continued onward. Han Wu’s impressive performance against the bandits had earned him the respect of every Demigod on board. In any era, the strong were revered.

During his spare time, Han Wu continued refining his Divine Authority weapons. Divine Authority 1 had been fully forged. His next target was Divine Authority 2.

Divine Authority 2 carried the essence of life, light, creation, and peace. It was clearly ill-suited for use as a weapon. An unsuitable form would only diminish the Divine Authority weapon's effectiveness and introduce weak traits.

Han Wu couldn't allow that. For several days, he repeatedly turned the problem over in his mind, searching for the right approach to shaping Divine Authority 2.

Five days later, the ship entered the Battleborn Civilization's territory.

As outsiders entering the civilization, they were subject to restrictions imposed by its Will. Demigods who entered would have their strength reduced to the level of ordinary people, so He Xu didn't bring the Demigod crew inside. He left them behind to guard the ship and wait. The only ones entering the Battleborn Civilization were He Xu, Han Wu, Qin Shuang, and their escort target, Prince Zhan Fanyin.

Once they confirmed their entry point, the four entered together. The moment they crossed the Battleborn Civilization's boundary, He Xu, Han Wu, and Qin Shuang all felt an immediate change. Their connection to their divine realms had been sealed.

Han Wu, a World powerhouse, could still summon his Microcosm despite the suppression, but he could no longer call out any units from within it.

Their individual abilities, Divine Aspects, Divine Authorities, and Divine Jurisdictions weren't restricted, which came as an unexpected bonus. Their personal combat strength stayed largely intact, so they remained powerful.

Unlike the other three, Zhan Fanyin was returning to his home civilization, so his strength surged dramatically as a result. A magnificent totem appeared on his back: an iron throne forged from countless swords. It looked savage and imposing at the same time.

This was the power wielded by the Battlecraze Empire's royal family, the Iron Throne Totem. With it, Zhan Fanyin's strength leapt from the Sage rank straight to the Heavenrender rank.

The surge of power filled him with confidence. Once again, he felt unstoppable and turned to Han Wu. "I challenge you. If you lose, you'll leave Qin Shuang forever."

Huh? Han Wu stared at him in confusion. *Did his brain break the moment he stepped back onto his home soil?*

"Your face stopped hurting?"

That single remark made Zhan Fanyin explode with rage. "That was then. This is now. I'll defeat you with my noble Iron Throne Totem and make you lose without complaint."

Han Wu understood now. *He truly believes he can win.*

“Fine. Come on. I’ll fight you with only one arm. Otherwise, I’ll feel like I’m bullying you,” Han Wu said confidently. He was curious to see just how strong the Battleborn Civilization’s core power actually was.

“You’ll pay for your arrogance.” Zhan Fanyin growled. Behind him, the Iron Throne Totem solidified into physical form.

Chapter 837 - Back to the Capital

Zhan Fanyin drew a long sword from the solidified Iron Throne Totem. Fresh blood still clung to the blade, as if showcasing the glorious battles it had once decided.

Han Wu’s sharp eyes fixed on the sword. From its quality alone, he could tell it was no weaker than an 8-Star Divine Weapon. For Zhan Fanyin’s Heavenrender strength, it was a fitting weapon.

“Today, I’ll wash away the shame of every humiliation I’ve suffered these past few days!” Zhan Fanyin declared as he unleashed a sweeping slash at Han Wu.

A blood-red blade aura surged straight toward him. Han Wu didn’t even produce a weapon. He simply turned sideways and stepped clear of the attack.

Having failed on the first attempt, Zhan Fanyin grew agitated. He swept his long sword rapidly, weaving a dense, airtight web of blade auras that closed in around Han Wu.

This time, Han Wu had no room to simply dodge. He raised his right hand, and the Divine Authority greatsword appeared in his grip. A single slash tore the entire web apart.

In the next instant, he was already standing behind Zhan Fanyin. The latter drove the Iron Throne Totem forward like a war chariot and hurled it at Han Wu before thrusting the hundreds of swords that formed the throne toward him.

Han Wu brought the greatsword down in one strike. The powerful Iron Throne Totem shattered and scattered across the ground in a heap of sword fragments.

Zhan Fanyin froze in place. Han Wu put away the greatsword, stepped forward, and slapped Zhan Fanyin’s face. This one carried at least thirty percent of Han Wu’s strength behind it. It was noticeably harder than any of the previous slaps.

The slap caused Zhan Fanyin’s face to swell dramatically. This truly was a slap worth six.

The slap snapped him out of his daze. He dropped to his knees in disbelief and clawed at the Iron Throne's shattered fragments.

"How is this possible? The Iron Throne is supposed to be invincible!" Zhan Fanyin sobbed.

Han Wu had completely shattered the sense of superiority Zhan Fanyin had spent twenty years building.

Worried that Han Wu had actually injured Zhan Fanyin, He Xu hurried forward to pull Han Wu away and help Zhan Fanyin to his feet. After he spent some time consoling him, Zhan Fanyin stopped crying.

Han Wu watched from the side and snorted. "Crying and sniffling. You are acting like a little girl."

The words reached Zhan Fanyin's ears, and he burst into tears again. Like pear blossoms caught in a rainstorm, the unswollen half of his face gave the whole scene a certain tragic beauty.

"Stop talking," He Xu scolded Han Wu. "This boy is hard enough to coax once he starts crying."

Han Wu waved dismissively. He genuinely couldn't understand why the Divine Civilization would go to such lengths to return Zhan Fanyin to the throne. Given his temperament and character, handing him an empire to rule would probably lead to its collapse within three days. Sending him to the throne was practically the same as sending him to his death. Did such a prince really need to exist?

Once He Xu finally managed to calm Zhan Fanyin down, he approached Han Wu and warned him again not to provoke Zhan Fanyin. They were already close to the Battlecraze Empire, and if the empire's generals spotted the bruising on Zhan Fanyin's face, it would reflect poorly on all of them.

Han Wu reluctantly agreed to restrain himself.

The group continued onward. The journey from the boundary of the Battleborn Civilization to the empire's capital required at least ten days. During the trip, Zhan Fanyin no longer provoked anyone, though he occasionally shot Han Wu resentful looks whenever they stopped to rest.

Han Wu didn't mind in the slightest. Frankly, he loved nothing more than seeing people hate him while being unable to do anything about it.

Before long, however, their luck ran out. While passing through an oasis, they encountered a second wave of assassins. This time, the attackers had learned from their

previous failure and didn't reveal themselves. Instead, they quietly laced the food and water sold at the oasis with poison.

The attempt was completely useless against Han Wu and the others. Han Wu could tell that the food was poisoned with a single taste.

The poison was potent enough that even World life forms would struggle to resist it. However, Han Wu had the Five Poisons title, along with the Life and Light Aspects. His poison resistance had already reached its limit. On top of that, his physical constitution already exceeded that of ordinary World life forms, so this level of poison had no effect on him.

The assassins responsible for planting the poison were quickly tracked down and dragged out one by one before being lined up in front of Zhan Fanyin for questioning.

Zhan Fanyin had spent weeks suppressing his frustration and was eager for an outlet. He showed no mercy as he drew a green, poison-laced sword from his restored Iron Throne Totem and forced confessions from the assassins one after another.

The assassins were all tight-lipped regarding who had sent them. However, from their totems, Zhan Fanyin already knew the answer. He simply couldn't bring himself to accept it.

After that incident, the group seemed to have stirred a hornet's nest. Assassinations came almost daily, whether through poison, long-range sniping, ambushes, or disguises. Each time, however, Han Wu, He Xu, and Qin Shuang kept a few attackers alive and handed them over to Zhan Fanyin for questioning.

With each new witness, the conviction Zhan Fanyin had clung to started to crumble. No matter how stubbornly he resisted, he could no longer deny the truth. Zhan Yuwen, the older brother who had always treated him kindly since childhood, genuinely wanted him dead.

Within only a few days, Zhan Fanyin changed completely. He became quiet and withdrawn, cautious and watchful, with a cold, calculating edge beneath the surface.

Han Wu and the others were pleased to see the change. They had no interest in the factional struggles within the Battlecraze Empire. They only cared whether Zhan Fanyin could successfully inherit the throne after his return. Only then would the escort mission truly be complete.

Finally, the group arrived at the empire's capital, Battle City.

Zhan Fanyin's return sent shockwaves through every major faction in the city. Some celebrated his return, while others were simply stunned. Ambushes had been arranged along every stretch of the route, so how had Zhan Fanyin managed to return alive?

Regardless, Zhan Fanyin was already outside Battle City. Royal protocol demanded that he be formally welcomed into the city before heading back to the palace.

Outside the city, Zhan Fanyin had already changed into a magnificent set of royal robes. He stood before the gates, waiting for the welcoming party. The three escorts stood beside him like guards, quietly watching the surroundings. With the mission so close to completion, none of them wanted any trouble at the last moment.

Thankfully, no one was bold enough to attempt an assassination in broad daylight and in full public view.

Before long, a ceremonial procession emerged from the city. At its head stood a striking man with sword-like brows, handsome features, and masculine vigour. A clove flower-shaped mark at the corner of his eye, however, softened the forcefulness of his presence.

Zhan Fanyin stepped forward half a pace and called out, “Brother Yuwen!”

The three escorts moved half a step forward as well to shield Zhan Fanyin.

“Fanyin, you’re finally back. Was the journey smooth?” Zhan Yuwen wore an expression of warm concern. Anyone unaware of the situation would have mistaken him for a kind and caring older brother.

“Smooth enough. We just ran into a few flies along the way,” Zhan Fanyin replied lightly, gaze fixed on Zhan Yuwen.

Zhan Yuwen smiled and placed both hands on Zhan Fanyin’s shoulders. “That’s exactly the spirit our Zhan family needs. I truly underestimated you before, Fanyin. Come. Father wants to see you.”

Chapter 838 - Royal Family Gossip

Moving through the city, Zhan Yuwen rode at the front on a tall horse, talking and laughing in Zhan Fanyin’s direction.

Zhan Fanyin maintained a blank expression. He had already seen through Zhan Yuwen’s facade, but he still couldn’t understand why Zhan Yuwen wanted him dead.

The throne? Zhan Fanyin had never cared about it. If Zhan Yuwen had spoken honestly, Zhan Fanyin would have handed it over without hesitation.

Before long, the group arrived at the palace gates. Everyone was required to dismount and surrender their equipment before entering. Han Wu and the other three were stopped and asked to hand over their gear.

Han Wu only smiled. Did the people from the Battleborn Civilization truly believe they could search for a Major God's equipment?

To avoid suspicion, He Xu and Qin Shuang casually produced a few items and handed them over. Han Wu followed suit. He reached into his inventory, pulled out several hundred Small Locust Blades, and stacked them onto the inspector's tray.

The inspector nearly buckled under the weight. He couldn't understand where Han Wu had been hiding several hundred blades, nor how he had carried such weight without showing the slightest burden.

They continued onward until they reached the chamber of the Battlecraze Empire's old king. Two Microcosm generals stood guard outside. They allowed the two princes to enter, but stopped Han Wu and the others.

Han Wu and the others had no intention of accepting that arrangement. Their mission was to protect Zhan Fanyin's safety. If he stepped into that room and Zhan Yuwen stabbed him in the back, who would take responsibility? Until Zhan Fanyin ascended the throne, their mission remained incomplete.

Han Wu unleashed his power and knocked both generals to the ground within moments. The disturbance immediately triggered a wave of guards, who raised their totems and prepared to cut Han Wu down.

Zhan Fanyin stepped in at the right moment and stopped them. He explained to Zhan Yuwen that the three were his escorts from the Divine Civilization. Their sole purpose was to protect him. They weren't assassins.

Zhan Yuwen understood the Divine Civilization's reputation well. If a real fight broke out, the Battleborn Civilization's powerhouses would be unable to stop them. He studied Han Wu and the others for a moment before reluctantly agreeing to let them enter the chamber as well. At that point, he finally understood how Zhan Fanyin had managed to return to Battle City safely.

Inside the chamber, the trio stayed quietly behind Zhan Fanyin. The latter moved like a child, rushing to the old king's bedside and burying himself there.

"Father!" His voice cracked with grievance he could no longer suppress.

The old king slowly opened his eyes. The illness had left him frail, and death was clearly near. Still, before the end came, he had at least lived long enough to see his youngest son return safely. One final wish had been fulfilled.

“You’re back. You’re back...” the old king said warmly as he stroked Zhan Fanyin’s head.

Then he glanced up and noticed Han Wu and the others. Although he was on the verge of death, the weight of his authority remained. A single glance from him placed brief pressure on Han Wu and the others. It wasn’t the kind of pressure that could harm the body or soul. It came from years of occupying the highest seat of power and the commanding presence that position had cultivated.

Even so, Han Wu and the others immediately realized that the old king wasn’t someone to be trifled with. Unfortunately, he was already nearing the end. Even a miracle couldn’t keep him alive at this point.

“You must be the envoys from the Divine Civilization,” the old king said slowly.

He Xu stepped forward. “Yes. We came under the Wisdom God King’s orders to escort Prince Fanyin home.”

“You’ve worked hard.” The old king’s voice was hollow, as if he could pass away at any moment. “Might I ask you to do one more thing for me?”

He Xu didn’t refuse immediately. Instead, he asked the old king to elaborate.

The old king raised a hand and signaled for everyone else to leave, keeping only Zhan Fanyin beside him.

“I’ll be honest with you. My eldest son, Zhan Yuwen, has coveted the throne for many years. As long as he lives, Fanyin will never have a smooth path to the throne. So my request is this: Help me kill Zhan Yuwen.”

Han Wu and the others fell silent. Even Han Wu felt surprised by the old king’s ruthlessness. The man was already with one foot in the grave, yet he still wanted to drag a son down with him to secure another’s future. He was brutal to the very end.

Faced with the old king’s request, the trio exchanged glances and chose to decline.

“We apologize. The mission we accepted was to escort Prince Fanyin back to the Battleborn Civilization and help him ascend the throne. It doesn’t include eliminating rivals. We cannot comply with your request,” He Xu said.

The old king showed no disappointment. He merely let out a long, slow breath.

“I actually have a question,” Han Wu said, “Zhan Yuwen and Zhan Fanyin are both your sons, yet in terms of character and temperament, Zhan Yuwen seems more suited to rule. Why not name him your heir?”

He Xu shot Han Wu a sideways glance and silently cursed his bluntness. A question like that was hardly appropriate. Nevertheless, He Xu was also curious about the answer. Gossip was human nature, and even Gods were no exception.

The old king was silent for a moment before answering, “Because Zhan Yuwen’s royal bloodline is impure.”

“Oh?” Han Wu found the story growing more interesting by the second.

He Xu and Qin Shuang showed no outward reaction, but their attention sharpened as they listened carefully to every word that followed.

Zhan Fanyin was the most astonished of all. He had called this man his older brother for over twenty years. Was the old king saying that Zhan Yuwen wasn’t his son, but another man’s?

The old king explained, “Zhan Yuwen is my son. That is beyond question. But his mother came from a branch family of the Underlaw Empire’s royal family, so he carries their royal blood. The clove flower mark at the corner of his eye is the royal mark of the Underlaw Empire.”

Han Wu was slightly disappointed. The gossip wasn’t nearly as dramatic as he had hoped.

He Xu could not help interjecting, “That still doesn’t mean he needs to die.”

The old king’s gaze deepened. “If he were willing to stand by Fanyin’s side and serve him faithfully, I would spare him. But Yuwen’s ambitions are too great. He will not stay in his place. If he inherits the throne, the Underlaw Empire’s royal blood will enter the Zhans’ royal lineage.

“Once that happens, the future kings of the Battlecraze Empire will no longer be able to inherit the Iron Throne Totem. That is a disgrace that no member of the Zhan family could ever wash away.

“So before I die, I must have him removed. Otherwise, the royal bloodline will be tainted.” As the old king spoke, he suddenly coughed violently and spat out a mouthful of blood.

The sight made everyone present realize just how little time he had left.

Once he dies, how many people will truly support the inexperienced Zhan Fanyin’s claim to the throne? He Xu frowned. This was a real problem. After all, they couldn’t personally assassinate Zhan Yuwen.

Chapter 839 - Handing Over The Blade

That night, Zhan Fanyin slept in the old king's chambers, the safest place in the palace. Han Wu and the others were assigned rooms nearby. Once they returned to their quarters, the three gathered to discuss their next move.

"If killing Zhan Yuwen would solve the problem, it'd be simple enough. I could take care of him tonight, and we'd finish the mission early," Han Wu said.

He had done that kind of thing countless times in the civilizations he had passed through before. Killing a prince meant nothing to him. If something stood in his way, even wiping out an entire country wasn't beyond consideration.

He Xu immediately shut him down. "Junior Brother Han Wu, this situation is different from what you're imagining. The civilizations you dealt with before were either unrelated to the Divine Civilization, hostile to it, or simply far weaker. Bullying them carried no consequences.

"This time is different. The Battleborn Civilization and the Divine Civilization are on friendly terms and have formally signed a non-interference agreement. If we assassinate Zhan Yuwen, it will count as meddling in the Battleborn Civilization's internal affairs. That would also mean the Divine Civilization would be the first to break the agreement. The consequences would be beyond anything you could take responsibility for."

Han Wu frowned. If killing Zhan Yuwen wasn't an option, were they supposed to just remain here and wait? Wait to see whether Zhan Fanyin or Zhan Yuwen outlasted each other?

Qin Shuang was already considering alternatives. "Royal power struggles come down to who has the stronger backing. We could approach it from that angle."

He Xu shook his head. "I've read Zhan Fanyin's file. He stayed in the Battleborn Civilization until he was fourteen, then the old king arranged for him to train in other civilizations. He just returned. What supporters do you think he has?"

Hearing that, Han Wu felt stuck. Matters involving royal families were endlessly complicated.

"The old king is barely hanging on and can hardly do anything. We can't touch Zhan Yuwen directly. Are we just supposed to sit here and do nothing? At this rate, Zhan Fanyin may never become king," Han Wu said with frustration.

He Xu explained, "There is a way, just not within the Battlecraze Empire. From what I know, the Underlaw Empire has a powerful clan, the Ganfeng Clan. Zhan Yuwen defeated

them in battle before, and they hold a deep grudge against him. We could use them to kill him."

Han Wu considered it a solid plan. If the Underlaw Empire's forces killed Zhan Yuwen, then even if the civilization's Will came looking for answers, it couldn't blame Han Wu and the others. At most, they would be the ones who had handed over the blade, not the ones who wielded it.

"Then Qin Shuang and I will head to the Underlaw Empire tomorrow and find a way," Han Wu declared.

He Xu nodded. "That's our only option. I'll stay behind and protect Zhan Fanyin. Nothing will go wrong."

After finalizing the plan, they returned to their rooms to rest.

The next day, Han Wu and Qin Shuang quietly slipped out of the palace. Following the information He Xu had provided, they set off toward the Underlaw Empire at full speed.

According to the map, an ordinary person would need at least thirty days to make the journey. Han Wu and Qin Shuang, however, possessed extraordinary strength. Traveling without rest, they crossed the distance in just two days and entered the Underlaw Empire's borders.

The architecture differed noticeably from the Battlecraze Empire. The buildings appeared more refined and elegant. Using the information they had obtained, Han Wu and Qin Shuang located Citrus Town, a settlement under the Ganfeng Clan's territory.

After a brief search through the town, Han Wu easily found the clan's castle. That night, Han Wu and Qin Shuang slipped silently into the castle and entered the patriarch's bedroom without detection.

The patriarch, Will Ganfeng, was over seventy years old. His wife had died of illness when he was thirty, and afterward he devoted himself to the wars between the two great empires, never remarrying.

Later, the Axe Legion led by Zhan Yuwen annihilated the Orange Legion under the Ganfeng Clan's command. Will Ganfeng, a man who had spent most of his life on the battlefield, couldn't bear the blow of seeing his legion destroyed and retreated to the clan's territory to recuperate.

That night, he had gone to bed early and was half asleep when he heard someone call his name. He snapped fully awake. Behind him, an orange-colored citrus tree totem emerged and condensed into a staff that dropped into his hand.

“Who’s there? Show yourselves!” Will Ganfeng pointed the staff toward the source of the disturbance. Despite his age, every movement carried the precision of a veteran, as though drilled into him 10,000 times over.

Han Wu snapped his fingers, lighting the candles throughout the room. In the dim candlelight, the outlines of Han Wu and Qin Shuang were indistinct, but Will Ganfeng could sense that they were powerful. One of them radiated an aura that far surpassed his own.

Faced with a powerhouse of that level, Will Ganfeng restrained himself from acting rashly. He was already in the twilight of his years. Dying didn’t particularly frighten him. However, many clan members lived within the castle, and they represented the clan’s future. He couldn’t put them at risk.

Han Wu spoke first. “Patriarch Ganfeng, we come with no ill intent.”

Will Ganfeng kept his guard up regardless. “Then why break into my bedroom in the middle of the night?”

“I’ll be direct. You know Zhan Yuwen, I assume,” Han Wu said.

Will Ganfeng shot to his feet. His sleeping robe billowed under the force of his aura, making his unstable emotions obvious.

“Did he send you?” Will Ganfeng asked angrily.

Han Wu waved a hand. “No, no, you misunderstood. Quite the opposite. We’re his enemies.”

Will Ganfeng wasn’t convinced. From the moment Han Wu and Qin Shuang entered his bedroom, he had treated every word with suspicion. No decent person broke into a seventy-year-old man’s room in the dead of night.

“We came here to ask you to come out of retirement and eliminate Zhan Yuwen.”

Will Ganfeng’s suspicion deepened. “With your strength, killing Zhan Yuwen shouldn’t be difficult. Why come to me?”

Han Wu smiled. “Because we’re not in a position to act directly. Given the deep hatred between the Ganfeng Clan and Zhan Yuwen, we decided to bring this opportunity to you.”

“I have no interest in assassinating Zhan Yuwen,” Will Ganfeng said flatly. He didn’t trust Han Wu or Qin Shuang in the slightest, so no matter what Han Wu said, he had no intention of agreeing.

Han Wu and Qin Shuang had expected that response, but they were not in a rush.

“You may not be interested in Zhan Yuwen’s life or death, but do you care about the lives of the Ganfeng Clan?” Han Wu asked calmly.

Will Ganfeng’s expression immediately turned serious. “Which member of the Ganfeng Clan are you referring to?”

“All of them,” Han Wu answered without hesitation. “I may not be in a position to move against Zhan Yuwen, but that doesn’t mean I can’t move against the Ganfeng Clan. Patriarch Ganfeng, think carefully.”

“You’re threatening me?” Will Ganfeng’s aura surged around him.

Han Wu released his Divine Authority in response. “You can see it that way.”

The overwhelming pressure destroyed numerous items throughout the room. Nearby clan members rushed over after hearing the commotion, only for Will Ganfeng to shout them back outside.

With the safety of his clan members at stake, Will Ganfeng had no choice but to agree. “All right, you win. I’ll do what you ask.”

Chapter 840 - Just Messing Around

Will Ganfeng settled the clan members’ concerns, changed into his robes, and left the castle with Han Wu and Qin Shuang. Under the clear moonlight, he finally got a proper look at the two of them.

What a devious young man and a lovely young woman. That was Will Ganfeng’s first impression of the pair. He assumed Qin Shuang had come along because Han Wu had somehow coerced her.

“Tell me your plan,” he said.

“Killing Zhan Yuwen only takes three steps,” Han Wu said. “Step one, I will bring him in front of you. Step two, you kill him. Step three, you run. Simple, right?”

Will Ganfeng’s first instinct was to turn around, walk back into his castle, and shut the door. Could that even be called a plan?

“Zhan Yuwen is no weakling, and he’s surrounded by many guards at all times. I can’t guarantee I can kill him,” Will Ganfeng said bluntly.

That answer left Han Wu at a loss. If Will Ganfeng couldn't kill Zhan Yuwen, then the entire trip would have been pointless.

"Then let's do this. Attack me with everything you have. Let me see what you can do," Han Wu said. He had no choice but to judge Will Ganfeng's strength for himself.

The two found an open area and took their positions. Will Ganfeng summoned his orange citrus tree totem, which transformed into a staff in his hand. As he channeled his power, a wind-attribute Microcosm materialized before him. Boundless Wind Energy flowed into the staff and eventually formed a wind orb the size of a barrel.

Will Ganfeng didn't rush to fire. Drawing on decades of battle experience, he compressed the wind orb down to the size of a fist over the course of thirty seconds. Its destructive power multiplied a hundredfold in the process.

Once the compression was complete, Will Ganfeng aimed the staff at Han Wu and released the wind orb. It crossed the distance and struck Han Wu head-on. On impact, it expanded rapidly, and the force sent Han Wu flying in an arc before he crashed onto the ground.

Will Ganfeng was momentarily alarmed. He worried that he had killed Han Wu with the attack. Then again, if Han Wu died, there would be no longer any need to assassinate Zhan Yuwen.

The next moment, that hope was dashed. Han Wu sat up completely unharmed. Not even his clothes had wrinkled.

Will Ganfeng felt as if he was looking at a ghost. He had spent years developing his wind orb, yet it had done absolutely nothing to Han Wu despite landing at point-blank range.

Han Wu rose, brushed the dust from his clothes, and clicked his tongue. "Not bad. The charge time is a little too long. Also, spherical wind attacks aren't very effective against single targets. I can show you a different form of attack."

He demonstrated as he spoke. A wind-attribute Microcosm was summoned in front of him. It was Steelcutter Swordwind's own Microcosm. A large quantity of Wind Energy surged out and gathered at his fingertip.

Will Ganfeng stared wide-eyed. He had controlled Wind Energy for decades, yet he had never once seen anyone manipulate it directly through their finger instead of through a staff.

Under Han Wu's control, the Wind Energy took the shape of a cone. Spinning at extreme speed, it generated friction against the air until electricity and fire began building inside the cone.

Once he gathered roughly the same amount of Wind Energy that Will Ganfeng had used, he launched the wind cone toward a hillside ten kilometers away.

The cone blazed brightly as it flew. The instant it struck the hill, it exploded with a tremendous blast. The impact tore a massive crater into the hillside. Its destructive power was at least ten times greater than Will Ganfeng's wind orb despite consuming the exact amount of energy.

Will Ganfeng stood frozen in shock. He lost his footing and dropped to his knees with a thud. The look he gave Han Wu was filled with awe.

Genius. Prodigy. Creator of new techniques. Those words crossed Will Ganfeng's mind, but none of them fully captured Han Wu's talent.

"Young man, no, Teacher, please accept me as your student. If you take me in, I'll go wherever you point and kill whoever you name!" Will Ganfeng said emotionally.

Han Wu could only sigh. "I was just experimenting and giving you a way to think about it. My real strength isn't magic, it's close-range combat."

Instead of calming Will Ganfeng down, the explanation made him more fervent. Han Wu had just been messing around and had already exceeded the limits of what Will Ganfeng could achieve. That only reinforced how necessary it was to take him as a teacher.

"Teacher, please accept me as your student! I will follow all the rules a student should follow and serve you with everything I have!" Will Ganfeng pleaded.

Han Wu clicked his tongue. Having a man over seventy serve him was the kind of story that would follow him all the way back to the Divine Civilization.

"If you want to learn something, I'll teach you, but first you have to kill Zhan Yuwen. Consider that our deal. As for becoming your teacher, forget about it." Han Wu politely rejected Will Ganfeng's request to become his disciple.

Even so, Will Ganfeng was absolutely delighted. He felt as though he had found a new passion beyond war itself. Under Han Wu's guidance, he mastered the wind cone technique Han Wu had demonstrated in a single day. He then combined it with his own experience and created several techniques of his own.

The progress gave Will Ganfeng real confidence in killing Zhan Yuwen. He firmly believed that with the wind cone technique, he could ensure that Zhan Yuwen had nowhere left to escape.

Once the decision was made, Han Wu and Qin Shuang brought Will Ganfeng with them and rushed back to Battle City at top speed. Under the cover of night, they quietly

smuggled him into the palace. There, they reunited with He Xu, whose expression was grim.

During the five days Han Wu had been away, quite a bit had happened in Battle City. Ninety percent of the Battlecraze Empire's generals had openly declared their support for Zhan Yuwen as the next king. Of the remaining ten percent, those who claimed they were waiting for the old king's decision were, in reality, simply unwilling to take the risk. Once the old king died, they too would flock to Zhan Yuwen's side.

In other words, Zhan Yuwen had already secured the support of nearly ninety-five percent of the empire. Under such overwhelming dominance, even if Zhan Yuwen refused the throne, the generals would probably carry the crown to his doorstep and place it on his head themselves.

Under those circumstances, even if the old king announced Zhan Fanyin as his successor, it would make no difference. On top of that, the old king's health continued to decline by the day. Even if he wanted to support Zhan Fanyin, he had no strength to do so.

"Senior He Xu, don't worry. Leave what comes next to Master Will here. He will clear every obstacle in our way," Han Wu said as he introduced Will Ganfeng to He Xu.

Seeing how much respect Han Wu showed He Xu, Will Ganfeng immediately became much more polite.

"Rest assured. I will carry out my teacher's instructions and cut down Zhan Yuwen!" Will Ganfeng declared, pounding his chest confidently.

Chapter 841 - The New King's Coronation

That night, He Xu entered the old king's chamber and laid out their plan to use Will Ganfeng to kill Zhan Yuwen. While the old king did not trust Will Ganfeng, he trusted He Xu and the others. After learning of the plan, he patted his youngest son, Zhan Fanyin, on the head and then peacefully closed his eyes for the last time.

News of the old king's passing had already spread across Battle City that same night. Generals flooded into Zhan Yuwen's residence and demanded that he become the new king.

Zhan Yuwen complied with the generals' wishes. At dawn, he donned the crown and entered the royal palace to sit upon the long-coveted throne under the watchful gazes of the assembled generals.

Unbeknownst to him, Will Ganfeng and Han Wu hovered a hundred meters above the throne.

“Target is in position. Kill him,” Han Wu instructed bluntly.

Will Ganfeng immediately gathered the power of wind into a wildly spinning wind cone. The friction even generated electricity and fire within the cone’s interior. Taking aim at the throne, he released the wind cone. It crossed the hundred-meter distance in an instant.

The wind cone exploded with a blast of lightning and fire, blowing Zhan Yuwen to pieces on the spot. The saluting generals stood frozen in shock.

At that moment, bells tolled, and Zhan Fanyin entered the great hall of the palace, draped in royal robes and wearing the crown. He Xu and Qin Shuang stood at his sides, escorting him.

The generals watched in disbelief as Zhan Fanyin climbed the steps and approached the shattered, blood-soaked throne. Grief turned his eyes red. He had lost both his father and his brother within mere hours of each other. He had no one left.

The generals finally snapped back to their senses and glared furiously at Zhan Fanyin atop the platform.

“Traitor! You murdered the new king!”

“You killed your own brother for the throne. You’re no different from an animal!”

“Kill the usurper! Avenge the new king!”

The generals summoned their Microcosms one after another and unleashed their power. Over thirty generals were present, and two-thirds of them had already reached the World rank. Their combined pressure threatened to bring down the entire palace.

At that moment, Han Wu entered with his Divine Authority greatsword. The Subcosm-rank pressure he radiated pinned everyone in place.

“Did any of you actually see him kill the king?” Han Wu’s question silenced the generals.

Zhan Yuwen was indeed dead, but it was true that none of them had actually seen Zhan Fanyin do it.

One loyal general forced himself to stand despite Han Wu’s pressure. “Zhan Fanyin must’ve hired outsiders to assassinate the new king! He killed his own brother for the throne. This is a crime deserving of death! He’s unfit to be royalty, unfit to be here. He should be thrown in prison and hanged!”

“First, let me make one thing clear,” Han Wu said, glaring at the man. “The old king passed the throne to Zhan Fanyin, not Zhan Yuwen. Do any of you have a problem with that?”

The generals could not openly admit that they had supported Zhan Yuwen because they had no faith in Zhan Fanyin.

Han Wu continued. “As for Zhan Yuwen’s killer, the culprit is standing right there at the entrance.”

All the generals turned toward the door where Will Ganfeng stood.

Once everyone’s attention was on him, Will Ganfeng declared loudly, “You savages of the Battlecraze Empire, I killed Zhan Yuwen!”

“Who’s this old man? He looks familiar.”

“That’s Will Ganfeng! Why’s he in the Battlecraze Empire? How did he get into Battle City? How did he sneak into the palace?”

“The new king’s Axe Legion defeated Will Ganfeng’s Orange Legion. It makes perfect sense he came for revenge!”

“Then what are we waiting for? Seize him! Avenge the new king!” one general roared.

None of the other generals moved.

“Are you brainless? He has the guts to stand there and admit he’s the killer. Who do you think gave him that courage?”

The generals raised their heads to look at the four figures on the dais. Zhan Fanyin materialized the Iron Throne Totem in place of the ruined throne and sat upon it with bloodshot eyes.

“All hail the new king!” Han Wu bellowed, pinning everyone down further with his overwhelming Divine Authority.

The generals’ bodies grew heavy. Those not yet at the World rank buckled and dropped to their knees. Even the World rank generals felt as though someone were pressing down on their shoulders, forcing them to kneel and acknowledge the new king.

They attempted to resist, but the ever-increasing pressure quickly took that choice from them. In moments, every general in the hall was kneeling in submission. The servants assigned to conduct the coronation carried out the ceremony as rehearsed. The only difference was that the new king had changed from Zhan Yuwen to Zhan Fanyin.

The ceremony concluded quickly, marking Zhan Fanyin as the new king of the Battlecraze Empire. The generals also swore their loyalty to the new king under Han Wu's threat.

The entire ceremony was a farce, but this was the mission Han Wu and his companions had been assigned.

After the ceremony, the generals were allowed to leave. Zhan Fanyin stared at the scattered remains on the ground and finally broke down into wailing sobs.

He desperately tried to pick up the chunks of flesh from the floor, but could not piece together a whole brother. Han Wu and his two companions sighed at Zhan Fanyin's pitiful state.

"Senior He Xu, if I told him that those generals will probably rebel, do you think he'd completely fall apart?" Han Wu asked He Xu.

He Xu shot Han Wu a helpless glance. "Are you the devil? Give this poor kid some time to grieve. He's had it rough."

"Nothing we can do about it. He was born into royalty, and the old king forced him to become the new king to carry on the bloodline." Han Wu felt no pity for Zhan Fanyin.

In his view, this was Zhan Fanyin's chance to grow. However, if Zhan Fanyin failed to rise to the occasion, he would most likely die. If the generals' rebellion did not kill him, an enemy nation's invasion would. Everything depended on Zhan Fanyin's choices.

After roughly ten minutes of crying, Zhan Fanyin wiped his tears and approached the three of them. His eyes were still red as he expressed his gratitude. This time, when he looked at Han Wu, the resentment in his gaze was replaced by a trace of appreciation.

If Han Wu hadn't suppressed those generals during the ceremony, Zhan Fanyin would not have survived the coronation. Han Wu had saved his life.

Zhan Fanyin also understood that if he did not act quickly, the Battlecraze Empire would not even survive the day. The only people he could rely on were these three from the Divine Civilization.

Chapter 842 - Return to the Divine Realm

After becoming king, Zhan Fanyin issued a command that same day to assemble the army and attack the Underlaw Empire.

This was actually Han Wu's idea. He called it fighting chaos with chaos.

Zhan Fanyin faced two problems. The first was internal dissent within the Battlecraze Empire, as Zhan Yuwen's gruesome death had left the generals unwilling to accept the new king. The second was the looming threat from the Underlaw Empire.

Even though the Battlecraze Empire had ordered a media blackout on the old king's death, no secret stayed hidden for long. The Underlaw Empire would undoubtedly make its move sooner rather than later.

Thus, Han Wu suggested that Zhan Fanyin order the potentially rebellious generals to attack the Underlaw Empire's forces, turning the internal turmoil into an external conflict.

Regardless of whether they won or lost, it would buy Zhan Fanyin time to adapt. If he performed well during the war, he could even win over the military's loyalty.

When this order was issued, the generals who had been preparing to rebel shelved their plans. The Battlecraze Empire and the Underlaw Empire were blood enemies. Nothing mattered more than fighting the Underlaw Empire!

The generals redirected their assembled forces toward the Underlaw Empire. Meanwhile, the Underlaw Empire had just learned of the old king's death and was preparing to take advantage of the situation when they were attacked. The Battlecraze Empire had launched an all-out offensive before their troops could even set out!

This unconventional approach completely caught the Underlaw Empire off guard. The old king had just died. The Battlecraze Empire was supposed to be in mourning! Instead, they launched a full-scale invasion. What kind of mourning ritual was this?

The Underlaw Empire hastily shifted to engage in full-scale warfare.

The war lasted half a year. During this time, He Xu stayed by Zhan Fanyin's side as his personal guard, while Han Wu and Qin Shuang went out to search for the Titan Stones, though occasionally returning to offer advice.

Zhan Fanyin implemented each of Han Wu's creative and unconventional strategies, with surprisingly good results. The generals, unaware that Han Wu was secretly advising Zhan Fanyin, believed the strategies were Zhan Fanyin's own, and their approval of him steadily grew.

After six months, the war ended in a truce. Both sides suffered heavy losses, and their economies took a severe hit. The people struggled to survive.

Without the war to consolidate his position, Zhan Fanyin had no choice but to focus on rebuilding the Battlecraze Empire's economy. He Xu turned out to be an excellent teacher for this.

Under He Xu's guidance, the Battlecraze Empire's economy grew rapidly in a short period. The people's living standards improved from widespread famine to having two meals a day. Zhan Fanyin's repeated display of practical insight caused the generals' approval to skyrocket, and they gradually forgot about the rebellion.

Within a year of Zhan Fanyin's crowning, the Battlecraze Empire's economy recovered to its level under the old king. Though still far from the prosperity of the old king's peak, Zhan Fanyin had managed to hold things together and secure his seat upon the Iron Throne.

During this same period, Han Wu had used the Titan Stones to develop his Duel Jurisdiction to 100% and awakened a new Divine Jurisdiction effect called the Duel God Physique.

[Duel God Physique: The battle will never stop for as long as life persists. Every fight serves as nourishment for the Duel God Physique's growth.]

In theory, Han Wu could've advanced to a God King while in the Battleborn Civilization and gained a free ability, but he chose not to.

The Duel Jurisdiction could not fully satisfy his goals. Only once he found a Divine Jurisdiction that could fulfill all of his ambitions would he advance to God King.

If he truly could not find one, he could always load his backup Divine Jurisdictions onto his abilities and select the most suitable one for his God King advancement.

After wrapping up their affairs in the Battleborn Civilization, the three of them chose to leave. As repayment for their help, Zhan Fanyin used his authority as king of the Battlecraze Empire to request the Battleborn Civilization for three slivers of its Will, which he gifted to the trio as thanks.

Han Wu and the others accepted without hesitation. With that, they exited the Battleborn Civilization and returned to the Divine Civilization. Their return was met with praise from Xu Hai, who had already received the news from the Will of the Divine Civilization.

The three of them had truly done well in maintaining the friendly relationship between the Divine Civilization and the Battleborn Civilization. The only downside was that the war had killed a lot of people.

Thankfully, the Will of the Battleborn Civilization understood the nature of its two empires. They were the type to start fighting the moment nobody was watching. A war that thinned out some numbers would at least keep them peaceful for a while.

Their excellent performance naturally also came with rewards. Xu Hai distributed three reward packages to them and then left to tend to Wisdom Faction matters. The three opened their packages to great satisfaction.

He Xu obtained a cultivation technique that could help him improve the development of his Divine Jurisdiction. Qin Shuang received a new type of element called Chaos Storm, which could absorb all other elements and convert them into lightning.

Han Wu's reward was the most unique of all. He received a miniature divine realm Core with five levels. Once implanted into his divine realm, it would allow his Core to equip additional Sacred Objects up to five levels.

For Han Wu, this was a huge gain. Given the enormous population of his core race, even the slightest boost per locust would translate into a massive overall improvement. The miniature divine realm Core only had five levels, so it could only equip a Rank 5 Sacred Object at most. Deciding which Sacred Object to use would require some careful thought.

After receiving their rewards, they returned to their respective divine realms. Han Wu patiently organized everything he had gained throughout his summer break.

The semester was about to start. Once classes resumed, he would be a third-year student, one step closer to his fourth year.

"Chaotic Starfield. Just wait until I reach my fourth year..." Han Wu muttered as he went over his gains.

During this trip to the Battleborn Civilization, Han Wu had learned to forge Divine Authority weapons under He Xu's guidance and successfully crafted a Divine Authority greatsword. He already had ideas for his second Divine Authority, though it still needed more refinement before taking its final form.

The second gain was the Duel God Physique, derived from the Duel Jurisdiction. Upon activating it, Han Wu discovered that the Duel God Physique was a transformation-type ability, similar to the Demon King Transformation.

Han Wu planned to invest some resources into merging the Duel God Physique with the Demon King Transformation, granting it the effect of growing stronger through combat.

Then, there was the sliver of the Battleborn Civilization that Zhan Fanyin had gifted him. Han Wu watched as it floated silently before his eyes. With this, Han Wu could craft a totem of his own.

Chapter 843 - The Grand War Games

Han Wu had researched the totems while in the Battleborn Civilization. In doing so, he learned that a totem was created by choosing a particular being or object as a target of worship and imprinting its image.

The resulting image was the totem. Holders of a totem could borrow a portion of the totem's power for combat or support.

Their nature bore similarities to the Divine Civilization's divine realm. The aspect of units worshiping their Gods was similar to the Battleborn Civilization's humans revering their totems.

The Battleborn Civilization's Will was essentially a blank canvas with no totem imprinted on it. After some contemplation, Han Wu decided to imprint his own image onto the Will and fuse it into the Laws of his Origin Microcosm.

As the Law took effect, every living being within the Origin Microcosm felt a resonance. Their totems awakened. In an instant, a totem bearing Han Wu's likeness appeared behind every living creature in the Origin Microcosm, allowing them to receive various forms of assistance from Han Wu.

Some were enhanced with Divine Skills, while others were granted partial usage rights to certain Divine Weapons. They could even summon a clone infused with Han Wu's power to deliver a devastating strike. The stronger the summoner, the stronger the clone.

With the power of the totem, every unit in the Origin Microcosm received a significant boost. Pleased, Han Wu considered his remaining resources. He needed to convert them into strength as quickly as possible.

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Over ninety percent of the Divine Civilization's war fanatics were gathered at the Divine Civilization's War Camp, the headquarters of the War Faction. The God King of War, Zhong Heng, had just summoned all members of the Major God rank and above for a meeting.

"So, the Butcher killed himself?" the God King of War asked in a low voice.

Several Major Gods below him nodded vigorously as they frantically defended themselves.

"Chief, this really wasn't our fault. That kid Han Wu was too powerful. We couldn't stop him!"

"Chief, it's not that we're too weak. The enemy was just too strong."

“The Butcher couldn’t kill Xu Hai. That’s his own failure.”

A thunderous slam cut them off. The table splintered into pieces from Zhong Heng’s strike. The Major Gods immediately shut their mouths. Nobody dared provoke him.

“A group of soldiers, and you couldn’t beat one teacher leading a bunch of students? You’ve brought dishonor to the War Faction!” Zhong Heng snarled.

None of the Major Gods below dared to speak.

“Just looking at you lot makes me sick.” The God King of War sneered. “Leave. I don’t care whether it’s to pioneer new territories in foreign civilizations or to fight for resources in the Heaven Stair Civilization. Either way, I don’t want to see your faces for the next three years.”

“Thank you for your mercy, Chief.” The Major Gods hastily bowed in gratitude before scurrying out, ready to depart for foreign civilizations.

In their view, the God King of War was already being generous in not killing them. After all, their failure had cost the War Faction a God King!

Zhong Heng’s mood improved slightly after the Major Gods previously under the Butcher left.

“Get me a full report on Han Wu and send it to my tent,” he ordered the remaining Major Gods at the meeting. “The Butcher’s death will not go unanswered! His death means his War Family has no successor, but the Three Armies cannot have a vacancy. Which family is stepping up to fill it?”

The remaining Major Gods at the meeting grew excited. The War Faction controlled the Three Armies and the Thirteen War Families.

The Thirteen War Families were thirteen clans devoted to cultivating the War Aspect. They formed the War Faction’s foundation, with over sixty percent of the faction’s members coming from these families.

The Three Armies were the three most powerful and wealthy forces within the War Faction. Previously, the Butcher, Pious, and Evilspawn led the Three Armies, with the Butcher being both the strongest and also the first among them to ascend into a God King.

Zhong Heng felt it a genuine shame that he had not been able to grow further, but the War Faction would not decline because of one man’s death. His position needed to be filled.

“Chief, let’s fight for it! Open the Grand War Games. Whoever comes out on top earns the Three Armies seat.”

“Fight! Fight!”

“My battle-axe is thirsting for blood!”

A smile crossed the God King of War’s face at the fervent fighting spirit of those below. “Very well. Let’s fight. The Three Armies seat isn’t won with words, but through warfare.”

Thus began the War Faction’s grand event, the Grand War Games.

Wanting to select the strongest candidate, Zhong Heng expanded the selection pool beyond the War Faction to the entire Divine Civilization. The War Faction viewed anyone with the War Aspect as practically half a member already.

News of the Grand War Games quickly became the hottest news across the Divine Civilization’s media outlets, second only to the results of the divine war between the Slaughter God King and the Wisdom God King.

Many of those with a War Aspect signed up, regardless of whether they held positions in other factions. The chance to lead one of the Three Armies was simply too lucrative to pass up. The War Faction’s resources were split in half, with the Three Armies taking the first half and the rest being distributed among all other members.

Moreover, the War Faction didn’t care about one’s background. As long as you could fight, you were a brother. There were no downsides either, as while other factions never publicly endorsed their members holding concurrent positions in the War Faction, they had never forbidden it either.

Han Wu was in closed cultivation when his best friend Sun Qingnian came knocking with this news.

Sun Qingnian held up a poster and waved it in front of Han Wu’s face. “Han Wu, I think you should enter the Grand War Games!”

Han Wu frowned the moment he spotted the bold “War Faction” text on the poster. He had just fought a battle against the War Faction not long ago. Entering their tournament seemed a bit rash.

“Forget it. I’ve got plenty of enemies in the War Faction. Going there would just invite trouble.”

“Han Wu, you’re wrong. The rules of the Grand War Games don’t allow War Faction members to gang up on you. If you win the Three Armies title, you’ll not only gain massive resources but also resolve your conflict with the War Faction from the root. The God King of War can’t exactly watch his own people fight each other.”

Though tempted, Han Wu remained hesitant. “I’m already the Holy Son of the Death Faction and the Wisdom Faction. Joining a third faction doesn’t seem right.”

“Listen to me,” Sun Qingnian urged. “You have to enter the Grand War Games. Xu Hai won’t criticize you if you win the Three Armies title. In fact, he’ll probably praise you for being both brave and clever! The God King of Death might even create a whole new branch on the Death Faction’s roster just for you! Just trust me. I’m studying journalism now. Would I lie to you?”[1]

Han Wu couldn’t help but believe Sun Qingnian’s earnestness.

1. First girls, now guys, next up, xenos ☜

Chapter 844 - Seize the King First

There were three parts to registering for the Grand War Games. The first was filling out personal information to verify that the applicant was a legal citizen of the Divine Civilization.

The second involved confirming the applicant had a War Aspect—Han Wu also had a Peace Aspect, the opposite of war, but chose not to reveal it in case the screening system flagged him.

The third step was detecting each participant’s rank. This was used to separate those of different levels into different brackets.

The rules allowed anyone with a War Aspect to participate, but the eligible ranks spanned a wide range: Demigod, God, Major God, and even God King.

God Kings almost never participated due to their pride. Rather than entering the War Faction’s event, they would rather establish their own faction and be their own boss.

That left three tiers: Demigod, God, and Major God. These three would compete in separate brackets before being combined for a final showdown, eliminating the luck factor that could dilute the Three Armies’ prestige.

Once, a mediocre Major God had gotten through the bracket through sheer luck, fighting only Demigods the entire way, and accidentally earned a Three Armies seat. His combat ability was so lacking that he was killed in battle shortly after earning the title.

The embarrassed War Faction was forced to hastily organize another Grand War Games. Thus, the third screening step came into being.

After passing all three steps, Han Wu became one of several hundred thousand contestants. The registration closed, and three days later, the day before the Imperial College's new semester commenced, the preliminary rounds began.

Several hundred thousand contestants had to survive five consecutive ten-to-one elimination rounds. After making his preparations, Han Wu was transported into the arena.

It was a vast region with ten contestants scattered across its corners. The preliminary rounds had no rules. Contestants could use any method to eliminate the other nine.

"No rules? I like that." Han Wu smiled, summoning his Origin Microcosm.

A swarm of locusts poured out. Ordinary locusts made up half, with the rest being various specialized branches. As this was only the preliminaries, Han Wu did not release his Locust Dragon legion, Epistian legion, or Great Dragon legion. He didn't want to scare the other contestants.

The locusts fanned out across the arena, searching for the other nine contestants. Through the information relayed via the strands of faith, Han Wu quickly identified the nine contestants' positions and units.

Han Wu ordered his locusts to directly target the contestants, not wanting to waste time battling their units.

The locusts activated their newly acquired totem power. In an instant, totems bearing Han Wu's image appeared behind every locust. The sky was filled with Han Wu!

One by one, clones of Han Wu leaped from the totems and charged the nine contestants in suicidal attacks. Some wielded Divine Weapons, some activated Black Dragonification, and some used Seal Arts.

The nine Major God contestants were not weak by any means. It was merely that they were unfortunate enough to face Han Wu. While each individual clone was not particularly strong and couldn't break through their defenses, the barrage of attacks from ten billion clones was impossible to endure.

All nine soon forfeited, and Han Wu advanced to the next round. In the next round, Han Wu used the same strategy of seizing the king first. He ignored the other contestants' units and focused solely on hunting down the contestants themselves.

The other contestants weren't fools. They could think of the same tactic. The problem was the execution. Any units sent to assassinate Han Wu were instantly destroyed.

Han Wu continued to advance. Across four consecutive rounds, he ended every battle in record time and broke through.

In the fifth round, Han Wu encountered a formidable opponent with an extremely powerful talent that allowed him to absorb all his units and gather their strength into his own body.

Absorbing every last one of his units allowed his power to break through to the World rank. Han Wu's locusts alone weren't enough against an enemy of this caliber.

When Han Wu received this information, he charged straight in for a head-on fight. In the end, Han Wu used the Divine Authority greatsword to shatter the man's defenses and claim victory, thus winning the final preliminary round.

Han Wu had deployed 800 billion locusts across the five preliminary rounds, yet their casualty rate was below 1%!

Even Han Wu found the results outrageous. This astonishing result could be attributed to the totem's power. The locust army barely needed to engage in close combat at all, relying instead on long-range burst attacks to overwhelm their opponents.

Unbeknownst to Han Wu, the image of him engraved on the totems had actually become one of the biggest highlights of the preliminaries.

Clearing the preliminary rounds meant Han Wu had advanced to the top 64. He only needed to win six more battles to claim the Three Armies seat.

Unfortunately, his standout performance had caught the attention of the War Families. The rules of the Grand War Games were set in stone. Even the War Families could not change them. Outside the tournament, however, there were no rules.

The War Families quickly dug up Han Wu's contact details from his registration and sent a call request. Han Wu had just finished the preliminaries and was preparing to head back to Imperial College for the opening ceremony the next day when he received the call from an unknown channel.

After a brief hesitation, he decided to answer.

"I need you to withdraw from the Grand War Games voluntarily. Otherwise, the consequences will be more than you can handle," the voice on the other end threatened.

Han Wu was amused. "I'm curious. What consequences can you possibly make me face?"

"Your family—"

"Sorry, I'm an orphan. If you can find my parents, I'll actually thank you."

"Your school—"

“I’m the top student at Imperial College. If you can get Imperial College to expel me, I’ll be impressed.”

“Your life—”

“I just cornered the Slaughter God King into killing himself. Come and try me.”

The line went dead.[1]

“You didn’t even look up my background before trying to threaten me?” Han Wu chuckled. “You’re going to need more than that.”

1. Fear the man who has nothing else to lose, or is too strong to lose anything ☜

Chapter 845 - The Valedictorian Speeches

The top 64 advancement matches were scheduled for ten days later. Han Wu had no idea why the War Faction had arranged a ten-day rest period, but he didn’t ask either.

Back at Imperial College, Han Wu continued mulling over the allocation of his surplus resources. Holding the Slaughter Jurisdiction in his hand, he contemplated which ability to load it onto.

Once loaded onto an ability, the Slaughter Jurisdiction would inevitably cause that ability to undergo a fundamental change in nature.

Han Wu had a wide variety of abilities: Sacrifice (Exclusive), Life Infusion, Merge (Exclusive), Famine, 567 Martial Caste, Demon King Transformation, Reincarnation, Replicate (Exclusive), Energy Materialization, Undying, Avatar Creation (Exclusive), Omniversal, Divine Weapon Atlas, and more.

This meant he could easily host multiple backup Divine Jurisdictions. The question, however, was which ability to load the Slaughter Jurisdiction onto. Han Wu consulted V and had him run calculations to predict the possible outcomes.

V processed both Han Wu’s data and the Slaughter Jurisdiction’s data before finally producing a table listing the predicted outcomes. Based on this, Han Wu narrowed it down to two abilities: Sacrifice and Reincarnation.

The Slaughter Jurisdiction would only produce positive transformations when loaded onto these two.

There was a 97% chance of it fundamentally altering Sacrifice, with the likely effect of Sacrifice being triggered every time a living being was killed using Slaughter. The items produced from this would be equivalent to the victim's life force.

Reincarnation, on the other hand, saw a 99% chance of alteration. Its likely effect was pulling the souls of living beings killed using Slaughter into Han Wu's still-incomplete Soul Microcosm, the Underworld. It would then be his choice to turn the souls into energy or reincarnate them into his other Microcosms.

Both options were excellent, and Han Wu liked them equally. Unfortunately, he could only choose one.

After some thought, Han Wu chose to load it onto Sacrifice. Receiving a reward every time he used Slaughter to kill a living being was nothing to scoff at. The payoff against powerful life forms with abundant life force would be enormous.

Reincarnation's effect of pulling in souls carried a risk, as there was no guarantee they would willingly submit once they entered the Underworld. If they caused any damage while resisting, Han Wu would need to spend Divine Essence to fix it.

Thus, Han Wu chose Sacrifice, which guaranteed a profit with no downsides.

Following Xu Hai's previous teachings, Han Wu spent six months in his divine realm loading the Slaughter onto Sacrifice. The outcome matched V's prediction exactly. Sacrifice underwent a fundamental transformation with the resulting effect precisely as predicted.

Through the process, Han Wu also gained a deeper understanding of Slaughter. As the merged ability was new, he would need to develop it from scratch. The only way to develop it was through killing.

Han Wu could use Slaughter to send his units into a frenzy. Any living being that his units killed while in that state would go toward unlocking the Slaughter Jurisdiction.

At 100% development, Han Wu could activate Slaughter's effect, the Slaughter Barrier. When deployed, all the beings he had ever slaughtered would become his soldiers, fighting endlessly on his behalf. Unlocking further effects beyond that required him to ascend as the Slaughter God King.

Han Wu had no plans to become the Slaughter God King just yet. For now, he merely wanted to develop Slaughter and boost his strength. The timing was not right anyway, though the advancement matches in nine days could give him an opportunity.

As Han Wu was about to rest, Xu Hai sent a message reminding him to attend Imperial College's freshmen welcome ceremony at two in the afternoon. As the third-year valedictorian, Han Wu was required to give a speech.

Han Wu checked the time. It was already 1:59.

Scrambling out of his divine realm, he raced to the designated location at breakneck speed and arrived just in time for the segment where successive valedictorians took the stage.

Xia Tian, the fourth-year valedictorian, glanced at Han Wu's frantic appearance and teased, "You really cut it close, Junior. What's kept you so busy?"

Han Wu laughed it off. "Nothing much. Just entered the Grand War Games and developed the Slaughter Jurisdiction a little."

Feng Fanchen, the second-year valedictorian, felt an enormous weight on his shoulders when he overheard this.

Feng Fanchen was the grandson of Feng Shiren. The latter had recently earned commendations from the college for helping to defend against the Thirteen Guards, with Feng Fanchen also benefiting as a result.

Backed by a flood of resources, he had successfully broken through to the Demigod level. His grandfather had also prepared some suitable Divine Aspects for him. As long as he progressed steadily and awakened his Divine Skills, he would ascend into a God during his second year.

Despite this remarkable pace, he was still far behind Han Wu. This frustration was hard for Feng Fanchen to stomach. He believed himself talented, and his family was far stronger than Han Wu's, yet he simply could not catch up. It was infuriating.

Han Wu noticed the junior behind him and asked, "What's your name, Junior?"

His frequent and prolonged absences from classes meant Han Wu probably could not even recognize all his classmates in the same year, let alone the juniors. Fortunately, all his classmates recognized him.

"Good to meet you, Senior Han Wu. My name is Feng Fanchen," Feng Fanchen greeted respectfully. "I'm Feng Shiren's grandson."

"Oh, Feng's grandson. Not bad. I'm pretty close with your grandfather," Han Wu said casually.

Feng Fanchen was speechless. He could not shake the feeling that Han Wu was messing with him, but he had no proof.

When it came time for the speeches, Xia Tian's refined and elegant demeanor earned enthusiastic cheers from the younger students, while Feng Fanchen's noble and composed manner made many of the junior girls swoon.

Han Wu, on the other hand, simply got on stage, said a few polite lines, and walked off. It looked like he couldn't care less, which irritated some of the freshmen.

"What's so special about this third-year valedictorian? It's just a title."

"He can't even be bothered to give a proper speech. Who does he think he is?"

"This kind of person deserves to be a valedictorian?"

A second-year student standing beside the freshmen broke into a cold sweat.

"You guys need to stop talking about Senior Han Wu like that. Trust me, it won't end well for you."

"My great-grandfather is a dean of this college. Why should I be scared of some valedictorian?" one freshman asked arrogantly, clearly ignorant about recent news.

The second-year hastily covered the freshman's mouth. "Don't say another word. Let me put it this way. Senior Han Wu could be the third-year valedictorian, the fourth-year valedictorian, or even the valedictorian of the entire college if he wanted to.

"Push him far enough, and he'll make sure no other year has a valedictorian. Your great-grandfather is a dean, so you can walk around Imperial College like you own the place. But if you cross Senior Han Wu, he could make it so your great-grandfather is no longer a dean."

"Is he the chancellor's secret love child or something? Is he that powerful?" the freshman asked, stunned.

"It would almost be better if he were, but no, he has zero family connections to anyone in the college's leadership." The second-year's eyes gleamed. "Do you know about the recent war between the Slaughter God King and the Wisdom God King?"

The freshman nodded. "Of course. Wisdom God King Xu Hai turned the tide and defeated the Slaughter God King."

"Well, here's some insider information. Senior Han Wu was the one to kill the Slaughter God King!"

The freshman's jaw dropped. "Holy crap!"

After a long pause, the freshman took back his earlier criticisms. "What did Senior Han Wu say in his speech again? Absolutely brilliant. Best speech I've ever heard!"

Chapter 846 - World Rank Divine Weapon

The valedictorian speeches passed without much incident. Next came the customary segment where graduating fourth-year students gave back to the college by donating to the younger students.

This year's graduating students donated a pitiful amount. The donation list was so sparse that even Han Wu couldn't bear to look at it.

The reason for this was the Saintess Club. Wei En and her members had squeezed the male students of the same year dry, leaving them nothing to offer.

While scraps were better than nothing, Han Wu couldn't bring himself to compete with the juniors over them. Xia Tian and the others also skipped the charity event, choosing to organize expeditions to foreign civilizations for their classmates to secure resources instead.

Without big players like Han Wu and Xia Tian grabbing things up, the charity event was at least somewhat worthwhile for the first and second years.

Back in his divine realm, Han Wu continued working to increase his strength. He took out Peerless, the Divine Weapon he had obtained during the divine war.

This Divine Weapon also contained the Peerless Armament Spirit, which could subtly cause other Divine Weapons in its presence to develop Armament Spirits of their own, raising their potential.

Peerless had nine empty slots where nine evil eyes once lay. After the Butcher's defeat, the Nine-Eyed Evil God withdrew its power, leaving the slots vacant. These slots weren't useless, though. They could be fitted with treasures to enhance Peerless.

Han Wu was pondering possibilities when V proposed embedding the other nine Divine Weapons from the Divine Weapon Atlas into the slots.

Using Merge, Han Wu could then fuse all nine Divine Weapons with Peerless to create a truly unparalleled Divine Weapon! V was the soul of the ancient king, and Han Wu valued his advice, so he decided to try it.

After inserting the Small Locust Blade into the first slot, Peerless transformed. Its quality improved, its Armament Spirit grew stronger, and it awakened a powerful new technique called Stellar Rain Slash.

Han Wu found an open plain to test it. Given the destructive potential, he only used a tenth of his full power, but even then, the results were staggering.

Stellar Rain Slash condensed tens of millions of energy blades around Han Wu. When he swung, the blades surged forward like a river and riddled the ground with holes. Han Wu could only imagine its full power—hundreds of millions of energy blades unleashed at once.

Given their individual destructive force, even a Microcosm would probably be ground to dust. Peerless truly lived up to its name!

Han Wu continued fusing his remaining Divine Weapons into the empty slots. Soon, the final weapon, the Locust Dragon Seal, was merged in. Peerless rapidly grew, breaking through the boundaries of a standard Divine Weapon and entering an entirely new tier.

V informed Han Wu that Peerless had become a World rank Divine Weapon!

At that moment, a new Microcosm formed in Han Wu's consciousness. It was the Divine Weapon Microcosm.

Han Wu's Divine Weapon Atlas flew into the Divine Weapon Microcosm as a beam of light, transforming the space into a blessed land. Any Divine Weapon placed within the Divine Weapon Microcosm would develop an Armament Spirit over time. The longer it stayed, the stronger the spirit would become.

Shortly after, Han Wu received a message from Hammie, the chief of the Scorching Dwarf tribe, requesting to relocate his entire tribe into the Divine Weapon Microcosm. This was because their success rate and quality of forging would improve dramatically with the Microcosm's assistance.

Blacksmiths from other races, such as the minotaurs and humans, expressed the same interest in living there as well.

Han Wu wasn't about to dampen their enthusiasm, so he immediately ordered the construction of teleportation arrays that allowed any units to enter the new Divine Weapon Microcosm with ease.

They were welcome to settle permanently or stay temporarily. Han Wu would also build dedicated forging facilities within the Microcosm and deliver large quantities of mineral resources to support their work.

His actions increased the faith of his units towards him and produced a new wave of Zealots. Hammie himself broke past that to become Han Wu's Saint.

The number of one's Saints was a key measure of their success. Naturally, Han Wu was delighted to gain a new Saint and immediately used Life Infusion on Hammie to push him to become a World life form.

The Scorching Dwarf tribe erupted with excitement. They were one of Han Wu's earliest units, and had finally produced a World life form. After breaking through, Hammie's faith in Han Wu was absolute. He swore to forge a World rank Divine Weapon comparable to Peerless in his lifetime to repay Han Wu's investment.

Han Wu was delighted. Forcing a life form to become a World life form using just Divine Points consumed several times more resources than natural cultivation, but a World rank Saint generated a substantial amount of faith daily. Over time, the returns would far exceed the cost.

At the same time, construction in the Soul Microcosm was nearing completion and would be done in another twenty days or so. Once finished, the Soul Microcosm would serve as Han Wu's dedicated soul storage facility. A steady supply of souls meant Han Wu's units would explode in number, and his pool of talented units would multiply.

With these tasks out of the way, it was time for the Grand War Games once more.

Han Wu readied himself and headed to the War Faction. Before long, the other contestants arrived as well. Scanning the field, Han Wu noticed that two-thirds of them wore badges of the same style.

After a quick check, he learned that these badges were symbols of the War Families. The insignia on each badge indicated which specific family the wearer belonged to. While Han Wu was observing the others, they were observing him too. Han Wu could hear the War Family members whispering among themselves when he listened closely.

"That's Han Wu, the one who forced the Butcher to kill himself. Whoever draws him is out of luck."

"Damn it. Wear him down. Whoever faces him, throw every last unit at him. Drain everything he has."

"Understood. I'll teach him that the War Families are not to be trifled with."

"If we don't put him in his place, he'll start to think that the Three Armies seat is easy pickings!"

Han Wu narrowed his eyes and smiled as he overheard the War Family members plotting against him.

Wear me down? Let's see who outlasts whom.

: Chapter 847

Chapter 847 - The Fodder War

The Major Gods of the War Faction watched closely as the matchup chart appeared on the large screen.

Han Wu looked up and saw that his opponent was a contestant named Zhu Yu.

At the same time, Zhu Yu was already staring at Han Wu from a distance. As Han Wu scanned the crowd, their eyes met, and Han Wu noticed the badge on Zhu Yu's chest. Zhu Yu was also from the War Family.

No need for courtesy, then.

The commencement of the matches saw all sixty-four contestants being teleported to their respective arenas. Mere seconds after Han Wu entered, he heard seven notifications signifying that seven contestants had forfeited.

Seven War Family members had advanced to the top thirty-two without lifting a finger. Han Wu scoffed. He never thought the War Faction would rig things so openly.

Noticing his expression, Zhu Yu smirked. "War comes in many forms. Buying off opponents behind the scenes is just another kind of warfare. Those who forfeited didn't lose out either. Their compensation will definitely be more than what you'll be left with after this."

"And what do you think I'll be left with?"

"No idea, but I've heard your core race is pretty weak. You might not even survive the first round!" Zhu Yu pointed at the sky.

Han Wu peered up and saw the first round's requirements displayed across the sky.

[Fodder War!]

[Requirements: No Heroic rank or above units allowed on the battlefield. Contestants themselves are prohibited from fighting.]

Han Wu's expression turned solemn. This rule felt strangely specific.

"Don't doubt the rules," Zhu Yu said confidently. "All Grand War Games follow the same format. There are six battles to make it from the top sixty-four to first place, each with different rules. The goal is to select a well-rounded champion for the Three Armies seat.

“Han Wu, your profile has been shared across the War Families’ intelligence network. Your personal strength is impressive, but that doesn’t mean you’re our match when it comes to units.

“One last warning: don’t underestimate any of the War Families, especially those whose entire foundation is built on warfare!”

Han Wu was growing impatient with Zhu Yu’s blabbering. “Has anyone ever told you that you talk too much?”

“Since you won’t listen, let’s fight.” Zhu Yu huffed. “We’ll see who has the last laugh.”

With that, Zhu Yu opened his divine realm and summoned his units. Massive, well-armored orcs carrying giant clubs, warhammers, and battle axes marched out in squad formation. Each squad consisted of a hundred Common orcs, ten Elite orc warriors, and one Unique orc captain. Over 10 million of these squads emerged. Zhu Yu had clearly invested considerable effort into training his units.

“My orcs are Common by birth, but their natural defense and regeneration are outstanding,” Zhu Yu boasted. “Their overall combat power is no less than that of a natural Elite life form. Your locusts’ self-destruct tactic won’t work on them.”

Han Wu scanned the orcs. Their stats appeared before him.

If he were allowed to fight personally, a single attack would wipe them all out. Unfortunately, the rules only permitted Unique units and below, putting Han Wu at a disadvantage. His units were individually weak, and fodder war was not his strong suit. Still, it was too late to back out, so Han Wu summoned every eligible unit he had.

His Microcosms descended and opened their gates. A swarm of locusts blotted out the sky. Common locusts, Bomber Locusts, Magma Locusts, Primal Locusts, Heavenly Demon Insects, Abyss Bugs, Dark Curse Bugs, and more flew out. There were over a hundred billion of them.

The sheer numbers astonished Zhu Yu, but it was still somewhat within his expectations. He knew from the gathered intelligence that Han Wu’s unit count was enormous. Unbeknownst to Zhu Yu, however, this was merely the start.

Next came the Epistian legion at roughly 5 million strong, each a Unique life form dressed in fine mage robes. Then came the minotaur legion, the Tigermen legion, the half-dragon legion, the Scorching Dwarf legion, and more. One well-equipped force after another appeared.

Zhu Yu’s face darkened with each new one, but even then, Han Wu wasn’t quite done yet.

Following the units came a massive tide of rats from Han Wu's Life Microcosm. The dense black swarm would give anyone with musophobia a heart attack.

Zhu Yu was already regretting his alliance with the other War Family members. They had agreed to use any means necessary to drain Han Wu's strength, making it hard for him to forfeit without possible consequences from the others.

Despite this, Han Wu was still not yet at his limit. Another wave of 100 billion different species of life forms emerged from his Microcosms. These were units that had undergone Random Evolution, and each bore the mark of Han Wu's core race.

Zhu Yu stared at the wave upon wave of enemies surrounding his orc army, on the verge of breaking down. Rats in front, beast hordes behind, the various species on both flanks, and the locusts raining death from above. This was an unwinnable battle.

"This arena's a bit small," Han Wu said offhandedly. "I can only fit about two-thirds of my fodder units here. The last third depends on how well you do."

His words tipped Zhu Yu over the edge. This is only two-thirds?! Where's the humanity? The intelligence report said that Han Wu's units were weak! They're individually weak, yes, but the report should've been clearer about the numbers! A lot and a trillion aren't the same thing!

Zhu Yu suspected the intelligence gatherers were stupid. After a few seconds of serious thought, he raised his hand and announced, "I forfeit!"

The agreement with the other War Family members can go straight to hell.

There was no point in fighting against this many fodder troops. Even if all of Zhu Yu's units died, they would almost certainly not make a dent in even a tenth of Han Wu's forces. The impact on Han Wu would be practically zero. So why bother?

Zhu Yu's forfeit annoyed Han Wu. He had been gearing up for action, ready to give his units a workout. Yet, the opponent had quit right after he had taken the time to summon them.

Nevertheless, the Grand War Games were fair, and after confirming Zhu Yu's forfeit, Han Wu was declared the winner of the first match, advancing him to the top thirty-two.

Han Wu sighed as Zhu Yu's orcs were recalled.

How much would my Slaughter Jurisdiction have progressed if I had slaughtered all those orcs? How many treasures would Sacrifice have produced? Next time, I won't give my opponent a chance to surrender!

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

: Chapter 848

Chapter 848 - The Elite War

Winners advanced, and losers were eliminated.

It did not take long for Han Wu to face his second opponent. This one wore a War Family badge as well.

When the man saw Han Wu, his expression turned grim. “Didn’t expect to run into you this round.”

Han Wu had no interest in talking, instead glancing up at the second round’s rules in the sky.

[Elite War]

[Requirements: Only units between Heroic rank and High Lord rank allowed. Contestants themselves are prohibited from fighting.]

Han Wu wasted no time summoning his Microcosms and calling out every eligible unit. His opponent did the same.

The War Family member’s face fell as he took in Han Wu’s army. He had summoned 3 million Liger Beasts, each clad in specialized battle armor and wearing fierce expressions. They were clearly a well-trained elite force.

Han Wu’s side, however, was on a completely different scale. Eligible locusts alone numbered over 5 billion. Counting the various other legions and the Random Evolution beasts, the total reached roughly 10 billion. Each unit could spit once and drown all 3 million Liger Beasts.

The opponent’s expression turned bitter. He was no newcomer. Having spent years in the War Faction, he understood his limits clearly. He was not among the top, but he was not a bottom-tier fighter either. Yet, as he stared at the young man across from him, at least ten years his junior but somehow cultivating units on a scale that defied comprehension, he couldn’t help but question himself.

He raised his hand, ready to forfeit. “I—”

Han Wu immediately ordered his units to roar at full volume to drown out the man's voice. Swarms of locusts surged forward to block his body from view while the remaining units attacked.

It only took one round of assault for all 3 million Liger Beasts to be wiped out, and Han Wu advanced to the top sixteen.

This wave of killing excited Han Wu. The orders he gave were within the Slaughter Jurisdiction's framework and triggered Sacrifice's effect, meaning every Liger Beast slain counted as an individual Sacrifice.

His Origin Microcosm was now piled with treasures generated through the effect. These treasures weren't high-grade enough to boost Han Wu personally, but he could use them to strengthen his units.

Han Wu also made sure to check the Slaughter Jurisdiction's development progress. Unfortunately, 3 million Liger Beasts only contributed 3 hundred-millionths of a percent. At this rate, it would require many more intense battles to fully unlock the Slaughter Jurisdiction.

In the third round, the top sixteen matches, Han Wu faced yet another War Family member. Given that two-thirds of the sixty-four had come from War Families, minus the seven who forfeited at the start, it would've actually been more surprising if he had not matched with one.

This opponent was more seasoned than the previous two, and upon seeing Han Wu, he introduced himself. "I'm Ding Jia, a Major God of the War Faction. My brothers in the faction nicknamed me Withered Bones."

Han Wu's brow twitched. A God with a title usually meant an impressive track record. For instance, Shi Shan, Sun Qingnian's girlfriend, was nicknamed the Flame Wargod. This man was clearly in a different league from the previous two.

"I'm Han Wu," Han Wu said, returning the greeting. "I don't have a nickname."

"Your name alone is already legendary. You forced Butcher into choosing self-destruction. That's genuinely admirable."

Han Wu wasn't here to be complimented.

"Let's skip the pleasantries and fight," he said, glancing skyward at the third round's rules.

[Elite War]

[Requirement: Only units between King rank and Heavensunder rank allowed. World rank units cannot participate. Contestants themselves are prohibited from fighting.]

Han Wu summoned his eligible units. This time, his numbers dropped sharply. The locust army totaled just over 2 million. Other units couldn't even form complete squads. The total was under 3 million.

Ding Jia's heart skipped as his eyes swept over Han Wu's forces. Just under 3 million was not a large number, but they were between the King rank and the Heavensunder rank. He even spotted Great Dragons among them.

"Han Wu, you're truly formidable. I'm outmatched."

Han Wu thought Ding Jia was about to forfeit and felt frustrated at his own impatience. Ding Jia hadn't even summoned his units yet, meaning he couldn't harvest treasures through Sacrifice.

Contrary to Han Wu's expectations, Ding Jia opened his divine realm. Vine Giants, each at the King rank or above, slowly marched out. There were 200,000 of them. Most were at the King rank, with only twelve reaching the Heavenrender rank.

These numbers alone already proved Ding Jia's strength, but 200 thousand against 3 million was still a huge disadvantage. Han Wu could already see his units winning easily.

As Han Wu was about to order the attack, Ding Jia called out, "Combine!"

The 200 thousand Vine Giants pressed together, bodies intertwining into a single Vine Giant standing ten thousand meters tall. Countless vines formed a Divine Ring behind it, confirming that the combined Vine Giant's power had reached the World rank.

The Grand War Games did not penalize this. Ding Jia's move was entirely legal. Ding Jia stared at Han Wu. "You're strong, but you're no match for me while under the limitations of these rules. Forfeiting is your best option. I can't guarantee what happens next otherwise."

Han Wu frowned at the towering Vine Giant. A World rank Vine Giant was a tough opponent, but he could destroy it in a single blow if he were to fight personally.

Unfortunately, the rules prohibited his participation. Even the strongest of his units, the Great Ice Dragon Leng Ning, was only at the Heavenrender rank. Challenging a World rank opponent was a tall order. Only a fool would sacrifice so many strong units in a battle with such an obvious strength gap.

As Han Wu raised his hand in preparation to forfeit, the Great Ice Dragon Leng Ning suddenly descended beside him.

“Han Wu, trust me,” she urged. “I can win! Even if I die, the Revival Stone will bring me back!”

Han Wu gazed at his old comrade, a spark of trust igniting within him. “Very well. I’ll take the gamble. If you die, I’ll forfeit immediately.”

“I won’t let you down.” Leng Ning’s cold voice echoed in his ears.

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Chapter 849 - Divine Skill Showdown

Having obtained Han Wu’s approval, Leng Ning spread her wings and soared. Frost gathered in her maw as she aimed her dragon breath at the Vine Giant.

Ding Jia scoffed. “You’re overestimating yourself!”

Vines shot out from the giant’s body, some forming a massive shield that blocked Leng Ning’s dragon breath while others lashed out toward her.

She dodged most of them, but one latched onto her tail. More vines sprouted from the first and wrapped around her entire body.

Thousands of thin needles then grew from the vines, piercing into her flesh. This was Vine Giant’s signature technique of siphoning the enemy’s life force to strengthen itself.

Its victims would be left as dried husks with their blood, marrow, and energy completely drained. Ding Jia had earned the name Withered Bones from this horrific method.

Han Wu watched Leng Ning closely, choosing to believe in her.

The vines on the giant’s body swayed in delight as it siphoned Leng Ning’s energy. A Great Dragon’s energy was exceptionally high-quality, and breaking it down to absorb would take a long time.

Suddenly, Leng Ning unleashed a wave of freezing power that shattered the vines wrapped around her and broke free. A terrible foreboding sat heavily in Ding Jia’s stomach when he saw this.

“Expel the absorbed energy, now!” he ordered.

It was too late. Leng Ning roared, and the energy that had been absorbed into the Vine Giant responded. The stolen power erupted, unleashing a devastating cold that froze the Vine Giant's vitals solid.

Some vines weren't fully frozen, but their attack speed had slowed and posed no threat to anything above the King rank.

"Charge!" Han Wu cried, seizing the opportunity to rush the Vine Giant.

Leng Ning sacrificed half of her energy to create this opening, and he wasn't about to squander it.

Over 2 million locusts activated their totems simultaneously. Their energy was strong, and the Han Wu clones they summoned could deliver attacks at roughly the Earthsunder rank. This barrage of attacks slammed into the frozen Vine Giant at once, shattering massive segments of its vines and exposing the cores of the individual Vine Giants.

The locusts did not hesitate to dive in and start chewing. The cores were crunchy like ice and packed with energy. Some locusts even ranked up and advanced a full tier.

The other units also joined the assault. Powerful blows broke the combined form back into individual Vine Giants.

In an even fight, Han Wu had the numbers advantage. It was 3 million against 200 thousand. There was no way he could lose.

Before long, the locusts had devoured most of the 200 thousand Vine Giants. Ding Jia had no chance of a comeback. Han Wu won this round and became the only contestant in the top 8 who wasn't a War Family member.

This battle also made Han Wu acutely aware of his own shortcomings. While he had plenty of units with diverse capabilities, few could punch above their weight class. He would have to find a way to obtain an ability that would let his units fight opponents of a higher rank.

After the battle, Leng Ning was recalled to the Origin Microcosm for treatment. She had lost a large amount of her energy. Fortunately, eating Ice Stones would allow her to recover within three months. She might even grow stronger as a result.

Han Wu, on the other hand, had no time to rest as the quarterfinal matches commenced immediately.

After the previous three battles, Han Wu had gained a decent understanding of how the Grand War Games worked, and figured this round would finally call for World rank combatants.

In Han Wu's divine realm, the Great Dragons were furious when they heard about Leng Ning's injury. Leng Ning was the Great Dragon tribe's princess. They had watched her grow up. For her to be hurt this badly was unforgivable!

The enemy had it worse, true, but the Great Dragons still felt the need to vent their burning anger. They were waiting for Han Wu to summon them in the next battle so they could show the enemy the meaning of a dragon's fury.

However, when Han Wu entered the arena and read the rules displayed in the sky, he froze.

[Divine Skill Showdown]

[Requirement: No units allowed. Only Divine Skills can be used.]

Han Wu read the rules carefully.

It seemed each side would receive 1,000 Heroic rank puppets. These puppets could receive Divine Skill enhancements just like normal units. The first one to have all their puppets destroyed was the loser.

Han Wu cracked his knuckles. "Fine. You want to play it this way? Let's see who comes out on top!"

The opponent shot Han Wu a confident smirk. "We, the War Families, have trained in Divine Skill application since the Demigod stage. Our combinations have been perfected over decades. You've studied Divine Skill synergy for a year or two at most. How can you compete with families that have spent decades, even centuries, refining theirs?"

With that, the Major God revealed his five Divine Aspects. They were all top-grade: War, Barbarous, Slaughter, Berserk, and Life. Each Divine Skill was designed to enhance unit strength.

After years of study and practice, some of his mastered techniques had been elevated to the Divine Skill tier. One full rotation of Divine Skills later, and all 1,000 of his puppets carried over thirty Divine Skill buffs. Their combined combat power had increased a hundredfold and reached the King rank.

Han Wu assessed the situation. This was clearly an attempt to target him. He had eight Divine Aspects, but he couldn't buff his puppets with over thirty-plus Divine Skills. Fortunately, Divine Skills weren't limited to support.

Han Wu revealed his Destruction Aspect, which took the form of the Skull Guillotine. It granted a 25% chance of instant killing its targets upon activation. Channeling his Divine Points, he covered all 1,000 enemy puppets along with the Major God himself.

“Let’s see if today is your lucky day or mine,” Han Wu murmured.

The Skull Guillotine fell. 253 of the 1,000 puppet soldiers were instantly destroyed. The Major God survived by sheer luck.

Nevertheless, Han Wu’s absurd opening blow shook the Major God to his core. This was the first time in his life that he had brushed so close to death. The hundreds of battles he had fought before did not compare to the terror of that single strike. Composure crumbling, he forfeited on the spot.

Han Wu had been ready to reveal more Divine Aspects and buff his own puppets for a head-on clash, but it seemed that wasn’t necessary.

Chapter 850 - Divine Authority Mirror Shield

Winning the match meant Han Wu was among the top 4.

Before he could even catch his breath, the fifth match—the semifinal—began. Han Wu entered and read the display in the sky.

This round’s rules were different again. No units. No Divine Skills. The match was a Divine Authority duel.

If Han Wu had encountered this a month ago, he would’ve had no choice but to surrender. Back then, his use of Divine Authority had been shallow at best, limited to intimidation and suppression.

Fortunately, under He Xu’s instruction, his Divine Authority control had improved greatly. Though Han Wu hadn’t fully mastered it by any means, he was still firmly competent. It was thanks to this that he didn’t panic upon seeing the rules.

Han Wu calmly drew his Divine Authority greatsword. Forged from his first Divine Authority, it radiated the aura of death, destruction, war, and darkness. One look was enough to know this weapon meant business.

His opponent was a woman with tan skin and fierce eyes that radiated a wild energy. She looked at Han Wu not as an opponent, but as prey.

“So you’re Han Wu? The man who drove the Butcher to his death?” she asked. Her voice was androgynous. Not beautiful, but not unpleasant either.

“More or less.”

Han Wu knew the Butcher wasn’t actually dead. He had merely implanted himself into Huang Shengjun’s body using the Nine-Eyed Evil God’s power, though his whereabouts were presently unknown.

There was no need for the War Families to know this, though—not that they would even believe him if he told them. The Will of the Divine Civilization had verified the Butcher’s death, hence the declaration of the Wisdom Faction as the victors. Even if they believed him, Han Wu feared the Butcher’s former subordinates would regroup and target the Wisdom Faction if they learned the truth.

Only Xu Hai was aware that Han Wu was secretly searching for the Butcher in Huang Shengjun’s body.

His vague answer irritated the woman. “Yes or no. What does more or less mean? Either way, it doesn’t matter. I’m Lie Ying, and I won’t go down like that coward the Butcher did. You’re not strong enough to beat me.”

Han Wu eyed Lie Ying. The vast majority of the War Faction were male. For a woman to have fought her way to the top 4 meant her strength had to be formidable.

As Han Wu readied himself, Lie Ying flicked her wrist, and her Divine Authority condensed into a long whip. It radiated the aura of war, darkness, and lightning, along with two other energies Han Wu couldn’t identify.

Lie Ying attacked before Han Wu could react. The whip cracked toward him like a lunging serpent, and Han Wu blocked with his Divine Authority greatsword. Its Annihilation trait was devastating against non-living matter, but unexpectedly did not affect Lie Ying’s whip.

The whip struck from impossible angles. Before long, Han Wu’s body was covered in lacerations. Darkness and lightning seeped in through the cuts. Unfortunately, Han Wu couldn’t convert these energies without access to his Divine Jurisdictions.

His Black Dragon King bloodline could resist the darkness's corruption, but it could not fully negate the lightning’s paralysis. As the wounds accumulated, Han Wu slowed down, which only led to a flurry of deeper gashes.

Lie Ying, meanwhile, was completely unscathed. She maintained a relaxed posture and toyed with Han Wu like he was a caged monkey.

If this continued, Han Wu would inevitably lose. Still, he had fought his way to the semifinals, and Leng Ning had been seriously injured for his sake. He simply could not let everyone’s efforts go to waste.

“My Divine Authority whip is specially designed for training prey. Those wounds hurt, don’t they? There are two more Divine Aspects woven in. They’re called Pain and Hunt. Little boy, you’re nothing but prey before me!”

Han Wu’s struggles only delighted Lie Ying. This was the thrill of the hunt.

Gritting his teeth through the pain, Han Wu forced himself up, right hand tightly gripping the Divine Authority greatsword. He held out his left hand, where a second Divine Authority weapon was taking shape.

Lie Ying’s eyes widened. Divine Authorities weren’t rare, but she had never seen anyone possess two. That made Han Wu an ultra-rare prey.

Interest piqued, she pulled her whip back and cracked it against herself twice. Her tan skin flushed crimson as she entered a state of heightened frenzy. An ultra-rare prey like Han Wu was worth taming properly. The mere thought of conquering him made her pulse race.

She lashed the whip in quicker strikes than before. The serpentine weapon snaked through the air with a barrage of sonic booms.

At the same time, Han Wu’s second Divine Authority had taken the form of a massive shield with a surface polished smooth as glass. Han Wu called it the Mirror Shield.

Han Wu raised the Mirror Shield as Lie Ying’s whip lashed forward.

The whip entered the mirror as if it were passing through water. Once inside, it went limp. No matter how Lie Ying pulled, she couldn’t get it free.

This was the effect of Han Wu’s second Divine Authority, born from his Peace Aspect.

Lie Ying frantically yanked the whip with all her might. Han Wu angled the Mirror Shield to let the reflective surface capture her fully. She saw a mirror image of herself inside the shield, furiously pulling the whip. It looked as if she was locked in a tug-of-war with herself.

This was the combined effect of his Creation and Life Aspects. The Mirror Shield created a living copy of Lie Ying to match her strength. As long as Han Wu’s energy remained active, the mirror image of Lie Ying could fight the real one to a draw.

Nevertheless, Han Wu had not created the Mirror Shield just for a stalemate.

The Mirror Shield abruptly erupted with blinding light. Lie Ying failed to dodge and was hit full-on.

The frenzy she had induced from whipping herself rapidly faded. The Light Aspect's purification effect dispelled all active buffs from anyone caught in its flash.

Despite this, the mirror image of Lie Ying remained buffed in her frenzied state. The balance tipped instantly, with the mirror Lie Ying wrenching the whip away from the real one.

Han Wu seized the opening, charged forward, and battered her with his Divine Authority greatsword. The unarmed Lie Ying was eliminated with ease, marking Han Wu's victory in the semifinals.