The People's God: Sacrificing Trillions to Ascend

Chapter 851 - The Finals Commence

The Grand War Games' finals were about to begin. The War God King personally descended upon the arena to inspect the quality of this year's Grand War Games. He reviewed the profiles of the two finalists.

The first was Liu Jincheng. He was a Major God, a thirty-year veteran of the War Faction, and a participant in more than 10,000 wars. His most impressive battle had been holding back an enemy civilization's 1.9 billion-strong army with only 300 million of his own. His title was Iron Wall.

The second was Han Wu. He was a Major God, the Holy Son of the Death Faction, the Holy Son of the Wisdom Faction, and a third-year student at Imperial College. His notable achievement came during the recent divine war between the Slaughter Faction and the Wisdom Faction, where he had forced the Slaughter God King into a corner and ultimately caused the Butcher's death through his own strength.

When Zhong Heng read Liu Jincheng's profile, he nodded in satisfaction. Meanwhile, when he reached Han Wu's, his expression darkened. He had reviewed Han Wu's file a few days ago and had already planned to suppress him as much as possible to answer to the late Butcher and the War Families. Yet Han Wu had fought his way into the finals.

Was Han Wu's next step to claim victory outright and secure a seat among the Three Armies? If that happened, it would become far more difficult for Zhong Heng to act against him. His only opportunity to deal with Han Wu was now, preferably during the finals.

If Liu Jincheng could crush Han Wu decisively, that would be the best outcome. It would showcase the War Faction's strength and eliminate Han Wu in a completely legitimate manner; two birds with one stone.

The Grand War Games, however, operated under its own rules. Even Zhong Heng couldn't interfere with the finals directly. He could only rely on other methods to achieve his goal.

“Liu Jincheng has been quite active lately. Considering his contributions to the War Faction, take the token containing the Power of the Mountain from my treasury and give it to him as a reward,” Zhong Heng instructed the adjutant beside him.

The adjutant’s eyes flickered with understanding as he immediately grasped Zhong Heng’s intent. “Chief, your generosity is something Liu Jincheng could never repay in this lifetime.”

“Stop wasting time and go.”

“Yes, sir.” The adjutant rushed off to carry out the order.

Just then, two of the Three Armies, Pious and Evilspawn, arrived.

Pious greeted Zhong Heng with a bow and asked, “Father, the finals are about to begin. Which contestant do you favor?”

Zhong Heng glanced at his foster son, and his mood improved slightly. Rather than answering directly, he replied with a question of his own, “Who do you think is more likely to claim the seat among the Three Armies?”

Evilspawn spoke without the slightest restraint. “Obviously, Han Wu, the one who cornered the Butcher. If he could force even the Butcher into a corner, then Iron Wall, who’s weaker than the Butcher, stands no chance.”

Zhong Heng shot Evilspawn a look. *This hulking idiot only grew muscles and not brains. Can he not think for even half a moment before opening his mouth? At this rate, his brain will atrophy from disuse.*

Pious read the atmosphere and answered accordingly, “I think Liu Jincheng has the better odds. After all, he’s known as Iron Wall. Even I would need to put in serious effort to defeat him.”

Hearing those words, Zhong Heng finally allowed himself a small smile. That was the kind of answer he wanted to hear. His foster son always knew exactly what to say. Compared to Pious, Evilspawn had nothing but raw strength and resembled more than an oversized chimpanzee.

At that moment, the adjutant returned. The token containing the Power of the Mountain had been delivered to Liu Jincheng.

Liu Jincheng was no fool. With the finals approaching, Zhong Heng had chosen this exact moment to send him a reward, especially one perfectly suited to his talent. The message behind the gesture was obvious.

Liu Jincheng knelt and bowed toward the distant figure. “Chief, rest assured. I will not disappoint your expectations.”

With both sides ready, the finals commenced. Han Wu and Liu Jincheng descended into the arena at the same time.

Han Wu immediately checked the rules displayed across the sky.

This time, the requirements were surprisingly simple. Two words summed it up: [No restrictions!]

That was right. As the final match of the Grand War Games, the only rule was that there were no rules. Contestants were encouraged to fight with everything they had, free from all limitations.

Han Wu smiled. This rule suited him perfectly!

As Han Wu’s opponent, Liu Jincheng devoted his full attention to observing Han Wu. The latter’s name had spread through the War Faction like wildfire after the Butcher’s death, and Liu Jincheng already knew of his accomplishments. Yet when he actually saw Han Wu in person, he was taken aback. After all, he looked like an ordinary, cheerful young man.

How did he force the Slaughter God King to his death with those skinny arms and legs? That has to be a joke.

In that instant, Liu Jincheng concluded that Han Wu couldn’t possibly have killed the Butcher. More likely, the Wisdom God King had used some powerful Divine Jurisdiction ability to corner the Butcher but didn’t want to reveal it, crediting the kill to Han Wu instead. It had to be Xu Hai’s way of elevating Han Wu’s reputation.

After reaching that conclusion, Liu Jincheng’s attitude toward Han Wu shifted completely. His caution vanished, and he looked at Han Wu the same way one would a child.

“Han Wu, I admit it wasn’t easy for you to reach the finals, but the Grand War Games are a serious affair. One moment of carelessness could cost your life,” Liu Jincheng warned.

Han Wu was too absorbed in the joy of the no-restrictions rule to hear him. Liu Jincheng, however, mistook his silence for fear, which boosted his confidence enormously.

“Since you insist on pushing forward, I won’t try to dissuade you. Let our abilities speak for themselves,” Liu Jincheng said.

“Then let’s begin,” Han Wu replied.

With that, the match officially started.

Han Wu opened his Microcosms without hesitation. His Great Dragons, who had long been eager for battle, emerged at once. Under Alpheus's lead, they unleashed their combined technique: the Chaos Dragon Breath.

Liu Jincheng's units emerged from his divine realm as well. His core race consisted of Rock Golems, Heroic life forms by birth.

At Liu Jincheng's command, numerous Rock Golems arranged themselves into a wall formation in front of him before the Chaos Dragon Breath could arrive. The attack was immensely destructive and easily blasted through more than a dozen layers of Rock Golems.

Even so, Liu Jincheng had well over 100 layers of Rock Golems shielding him. The Chaos Dragon Breath managed to breach only a few dozen layers of his defense. To Liu Jincheng, that amounted to nothing. With a wave of his hand, he could replenish them immediately.

Seeing that even the Chaos Dragon Breath could not break through the Rock Golems' defenses, Han Wu decided to take matters into his own hands. Peerless appeared in his grip. Today would be the day the blade became a legend throughout the War Faction.

: Chapter 852

Chapter 852 - Peerless Slashes

With nine Divine Weapons fused into it, Peerless had become a World weapon. The moment Han Wu drew it, the heavens and earth changed color. Endless dark clouds gathered overhead, lightning crackled, violent winds roared, and torrential rain poured down. At the same time, the ground trembled, cracks split open across the surface, and molten magma flowed through the fissures.

The War God King shot to his feet, and his gaze fixed on Peerless in Han Wu's hand. He could tell that the weapon had surpassed the limits of a Divine Weapon and reached the World rank.

"To cause such a disturbance in the heavens and earth through a Divine Weapon's power alone is truly extraordinary!" Zhong Heng exclaimed.

Pious also turned toward Han Wu, greed flashing in his eyes. A fine sword belonged to a worthy hero. Han Wu was no hero. A weapon of that caliber should belong to Pious.

Beside him, Evilspawn drew his own Divine Weapon, a vicious 9-Star God battle axe. He compared it to Peerless, then tossed it onto the ground.

“His is better. I’m taking that blade later!” Evilspawn declared.

Pious nearly cursed out loud. Do you have to be so blunt? You like it, so you want to take it? What kind of logic is that? Does he think the War Faction is some kind of bandit’s den?

As a fellow member of the Three Armies, Pious felt Evilspawn was seriously damaging their reputation.

Zhong Heng rubbed his temples as he looked at Evilspawn. He had watched him grow up step by step. When he looked back on Evilspawn’s history, one word described him perfectly: reckless. If he liked something, he would take it. If someone refused, he would take it by force. That was how Evilspawn operated. He had clawed his way to a seat among the Three Armies through sheer recklessness alone.

Zhong Heng had often thought that if Evilspawn possessed even a shred of common sense, his achievements would have rivaled the Butcher’s. He could have at least become a God King. Unfortunately, although Evilspawn had accumulated plenty of knowledge over the years and could identify a treasure at a glance, his emotional intelligence hadn’t improved in the slightest.

In comparison, my foster son is clearly the superior of the two. The thought made Zhong Heng look at Pious with noticeably greater warmth.

On the battlefield, the moment Han Wu revealed Peerless, Liu Jincheng sensed that something was wrong. Thirty years in the War Faction had given him power and sharp instincts. He immediately recognized Peerless for what it was and wondered whether his defense could withstand a single slash from that weapon.

Lacking absolute confidence, Liu Jincheng acted decisively and activated the treasure Zhong Heng had gifted him: the token containing the Power of the Mountain.

As Liu Jincheng poured Divine Points into it, the Power of the Mountain surged into his Rock Golems. The item shared an almost identical nature with his core race, making the absorption process exceptionally efficient. Nourished by the Power of the Mountain, the Rock Golems swelled like inflated balloons and grew 100 times their original size. Their defensive strength increased a thousandfold.

This power boost was only temporary, but it gave Liu Jincheng confidence. A thousandfold increase in defense was staggering, and he wanted to see how Han Wu would break through that.

Watching Liu Jincheng’s preparations, Han Wu smirked faintly. He had been worried that Liu Jincheng’s units would die too quickly for him to enjoy himself. Now that Liu Jincheng had voluntarily reinforced their defenses, Han Wu could finally unleash every technique Peerless had to offer.

Han Wu made his move. He channeled Divine Points into Peerless, and the slot embedded with the Small Locust Blade lit up.

“Stellar Rain Slash!”

A casual swing generated hundreds of millions of energy blades, forming a river of steel as they surged toward Liu Jincheng. The latter frantically summoned his Rock Golems to defend, forming 100 layers of solid defense in an instant.

The energy blades struck the barrier and shattered one after the other, unable to penetrate it.

Several spectators mocked Han Wu’s attack as flashy but ineffective. Those with sharper eyes, however, could see the true power behind it. Each energy blade was far from weak. The attack had only failed because it faced Rock Golems strengthened by a thousandfold defensive boost. Against any other vassal race with weaker defenses, the battlefield would have become a hellscape of massacre.

Han Wu didn’t let the failure faze him. His next attack was already building. The second slot on Peerless, which housed the Explosive Locust Blade, lit up.

“Infernal Burst Slash!”

Divine Points transformed into towering flames that congregated into a blazing Vermilion Bird that let out a piercing cry. In the next instant, the magma flowing through the cracks in the ground erupted to life. Riding the eruption, it spread its wings and dove toward Liu Jincheng.

A thunderous explosion shook the arena. The Vermilion Bird had self-destructed, releasing endless waves of heat and searing flames that washed over Liu Jincheng. Even behind 100 layers of Rock Golems, he could still feel the unbearable heat. Thirty of his defensive layers melted into magma, and three-tenths of his Rock Golems died instantly.

Han Wu didn’t stop. He wanted to see how many Peerless Slashes Liu Jincheng could withstand. The third technique was already forming, derived from the Locust Soul Orb.

“Soul Shatter Slash!”

Divine Points converted into Spiritual Energy, which then formed the Netherworld White Tiger, its frame stitched together in patches of black and white. The tiger opened its jaws, devoured the souls of the Rock Golems that had just perished, and expanded to 100 times its original size.

Han Wu didn’t order the Netherworld White Tiger to attack. Instead, he kept it crouched beside him.

Zhong Heng's expression grew serious. As a veteran of more than 100 million wars, he recognized the technique's brilliance at a glance. This move wasn't particularly useful against ordinary opponents, but it was lethal against the troublesome spirit- or soul-type opponents. The more souls it consumed, the stronger it became. It was essentially a powerful ally that grew as the battle dragged on.

"Brilliant. Truly brilliant!" Zhong Heng couldn't hold back his praise. Even though he desperately wanted Han Wu to lose, he still found himself admiring Han Wu's skill.

Han Wu was already preparing the fourth Peerless Slash.

"Sky Eater Slash."

The Gluttonswarm Ring in the fourth slot activated.

With a single slash, a colossal mouth descended from the sky and swallowed Liu Jincheng along with all his protective Rock Golems.

Liu Jincheng immediately ordered his units to counterattack with everything they had. It took thirty seconds for them to break free from the devouring maw, but every Rock Golem that emerged looked utterly drained, as if they had been forced to work without rest for three days straight.

Meanwhile, Han Wu's energy was fully replenished by the feedback from Sky Eater Slash. He recovered everything he had spent on the four slashes and could continue fighting without drawing on the Divine Essence in his account.

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Chapter 853 - Might as Well Go All the Way to Show Off

Fear crept into Liu Jincheng's eyes. The power Han Wu had displayed shook him to his core. Years of combat experience told him that if he continued defending passively, Han Wu would eventually cut him down.

"Rock Golems, all forces attack! Crush the enemy before us!" he commanded.

The exhausted Rock Golems obeyed and rose in a battle formation. They concentrated their Formation Might and condensed it into a massive meteorite before hurling it at Han Wu.

Han Wu remained perfectly calm. The fifth slot, which housed the Abyss Armor, lit up. The fifth Peerless Slash was already charged.

“Skyshell!”

Vast energy took the shape of a Black Tortoise that hovered above Han Wu like a protective dome. The meteorite crashed into it with tremendous force, yet the Black Tortoise remained completely unscathed. Meanwhile, cracks spread across the meteorite before it disintegrated.

It was the first time Liu Jincheng had encountered an opponent who could match him in defense. Unwilling to accept it, he repeatedly ordered his Rock Golems to reform their formation and create more meteorites to bombard Han Wu. He needed to see the Black Tortoise dome shatter. He needed to land even a single hit on Han Wu.

Under the dome’s protection, Han Wu had already activated the sixth Peerless Slash.

“Skypiercer!”

Triggered by the Heavenly Demon Spike, the attack took the shape of a horn spinning at incredible speed. It shot from Han Wu’s blade tip.

Liu Jincheng issued an emergency command for his Rock Golems to scatter.

Unfortunately, it was too late. The horn shot forward at the speed of light, piercing through everything in its path. Even after nothing remained to stop it, the spinning horn continued upward and tore straight through the heavens. That single strike wiped out fifteen percent of the Rock Golems, a race renowned for its defensive power.

Liu Jincheng was stunned. He could clearly tell that the attack could effortlessly break his best defenses. If Han Wu had used it earlier, Liu Jincheng would have already died. At that moment, he fully understood the gap between them. Slowly, he raised his hand in preparation to surrender.

Sadly, Han Wu had no intention of allowing that. He was far too perfect a target, and Han Wu hadn’t enjoyed himself yet!

The seventh Peerless Slash was ready, and it triggered the Dark Curse Nail.

“Shadow Realm Slash!”

In an instant, pitch-black shadows blanketed the entire battlefield. Liu Jincheng’s raised hand froze in place, unable to move even a fraction higher. He had been completely restrained. His energy refused to respond. The surviving Rock Golems suffered the same fate and were frozen like statues.

The next moment, the eighth Peerless Slash took shape. This time, it triggered the Giant Locust Blade.

“Colossus Slash!”

A 100,000-meter-long blade of energy swept across the battlefield. All the Rock Golems, even with their frames swollen to 100 times their normal size, were cleaved in half at the waist. Liu Jincheng’s core race was annihilated.

Every War Faction member watching the finals was stunned. A single slash had bisected that many Rock Golems. The sight was terrifying. If used in a war against a foreign civilization, against ultra-giant life forms or structures, the devastation would be unimaginable.

Watching from the stands, Evilspawn nearly lost his mind with excitement. “I want it! I have to get that Divine Weapon!”

The weapon embodied everything Evilspawn desired in a Divine Weapon. It was the weapon of his dreams.

On the other hand, Pious grew serious. He wanted the weapon as well, but unlike Evilspawn, he approached the matter rationally. He had seen firsthand how strong Han Wu was while wielding it. Acquiring it would require strategy, not brute force.

Zhong Heng felt a headache coming. Han Wu’s performance had already secured his victory in the finals. However, if Han Wu secured a seat in one of the Three Armies, how was Zhong Heng supposed to handle the grudge with the Butcher’s War Family? They were counting on him to deliver justice.

Inside the arena, with every unit destroyed, Liu Jincheng had gone numb. He had lost thoroughly and sighed. “You’ve killed all my units. You win. Whether you let me go or kill me is your choice.”

With his units gone, something in him had shifted. Earlier, he had felt fear and worried about what Han Wu would do to him. Now he felt nothing at all. His heart, which had been hanging in suspense, had finally given out.

Even if Han Wu killed him, he no longer cared. At most, it would be one more life lost. His foundation was gone. Without the units he had painstakingly cultivated, he had nothing left to rely on within the War Faction. Whether he lived or died hardly mattered anymore. The choice rested with Han Wu.

Han Wu stared at Liu Jincheng, somewhat hesitant. Liu Jincheng was, at most, a stranger who had left a bad impression. That wasn’t enough reason to kill him. Even so, simply letting him go didn’t sit right either.

Han Wu still had one technique left to try out. So far, he had displayed only ninety percent of what he had. Leaving the last technique unused felt incomplete.

I might as well go all the way! he thought.

Han Wu said, “If you can survive this slash, I’ll let you go.”

Liu Jincheng looked at Han Wu expressionlessly. His face practically said, “If you want to kill me, just do it. No need for the runaround. I’m tired of all this. Just end it.”

Han Wu gathered his remaining energy. The ninth slot, which housed the Locust Dragon Seal, lit up.

Energy surged outward and took the form of an Azure Dragon that radiated boundless majesty. The Azure Dragon released a roar brimming with the might of the Great Dragons.

To Han Wu’s surprise, the Azure Dragon dove into Peerless. He stared at the blade in his hand, visibly confused. A vivid, unmistakable Azure Dragon marking had appeared along its edge. After carefully sensing it, Han Wu understood what it did.

The final Peerless Slash was called Dragon Slayer. It wasn’t an offensive technique, but an enhancement. Any weapon imbued with Dragon Slayer would have its base performance amplified tenfold or more.

Realizing this, Han Wu casually released a Heaven-Earth Severance with Peerless. In an instant, the earth split open. The entire arena shattered and crumbled into ruin.

Liu Jincheng was dumbfounded once again. The slash hadn’t struck him, yet it hurt more than if it had. It meant that Han Wu had never used his full strength throughout their battle. If he had used this technique earlier, Liu Jincheng’s units would have been wiped out long ago.

“What are you standing around for? Get out of here.” Han Wu withdrew his units and left first.

Liu Jincheng hurried after him. Ten seconds after they exited, the arena collapsed completely. The void tore through every inch of the ground. Under its relentless pull, the entire arena disintegrated as if it had never existed.

Every War Faction member who had watched the battle drew a sharp breath. Before this, many of them had believed the reports about Han Wu forcing the Butcher to his death were exaggerated.

Now, however, those reports seemed understated instead. Given the power that Han Wu had displayed, if he had intended to kill the Butcher, there was no way he would have had

the chance to self-destruct. Han Wu had clearly shown mercy and allowed him to preserve a final shred of dignity.

: Chapter 854

Chapter 854 - Invictum

The Grand War Games ended with the arena's destruction. Han Wu had fought through the qualifiers and knockout rounds to claim first place and secure a seat among the Three Armies.

The award ceremony took place before every member of the War Faction. Han Wu stepped onto the podium while War Faction members stood on both sides, most of them belonging to the War Families.

Despite their best efforts to stop him, the War Families had ultimately failed. A non-War Family member claiming a Three Armies seat was a humiliating blow to their collective pride. Still, no matter how bitter they felt, none of them dared voice their opposition. Iron Wall Liu Jincheng was a living example.

His combined strength had once ranked in the War Faction's top ten, yet Han Wu had completely broken him. No one knew how long it would take Liu Jincheng to rebuild his units or how many resources the process would consume. The situation was truly pitiful. At the very least, he was still alive, even if his spirit had been crushed.

Ignoring the members' glares, Han Wu stood on the podium and waited for Zhong Heng to present his reward.

Zhong Heng truly didn't want to hand the Three Armies title to Han Wu, but he couldn't break his word. The entire Divine Civilization was watching. If he refused to grant Han Wu the title and resources today, the War Faction's war-hungry members would overthrow him tomorrow. His position as the War God King would change hands.

Whether he liked it or not, the title had to be awarded. With a hint of resignation, Zhong Heng led the other two Three Armies members onto the stage to present Han Wu's reward. It was a scroll.

The scroll contained a method known as Formation Might. It resembled Divine Authority, but its principle was completely different. Divine Authority originated from a God's Divine Aspect and was a power unique to Gods.

Formation Might, however, focused on units, or more precisely, the armies composed of units. Within an army, each unit's aura was like a drop of water. When countless drops gathered together, they formed rivers, lakes, and even oceans. The fusion of all those auras produced Formation Might, which some also referred to as military pressure.

Han Wu had witnessed Formation Might's power before. The Butcher had used his units' Formation Might to withstand World fighters. Liu Jincheng had also commanded his units to condense Formation Might into meteorites to attack Han Wu.

At its core, Formation Might was about combining small forces into something far greater. It was exactly what Han Wu needed. He happily accepted the scroll.

Pious then stepped forward with another item: a blank waist token forged from an unidentifiable material.

Pious explained, "Han Wu, as a member of the Three Armies, you need to establish your title. Some people base their title on nicknames, such as Liu Jincheng's title, Iron Wall.

"Others base them on their combat style, like the Butcher, whose approach to war was slaughtering entire cities. Some allow the General's Token to absorb their energy and determine the title on its own, like mine. My title is Pious.

"Now it's your turn. Which method would you prefer? Choose carefully. This title will define both your reputation and the power attached to it."

Han Wu considered his combat characteristics and fighting style. Names like Locust Plague and Demon King surfaced in mind, but none of them felt right.

"Forget it. I'll let the General's Token decide," he said.

Pious nodded and showed Han Wu how to connect with the General's Token and allow it to absorb his energy. Soon, the token reacted and started drawing large amounts of energy from Han Wu.

Han Wu felt his Divine Aspects, Divine Authority, and even Divine Jurisdictions contributing portions of their energy to the token. The diverse energies merged within it and slowly condensed into one word that appeared across its surface.

"Han Wu, display your General's Token to all War Faction members!" Zhong Heng commanded.

Han Wu hadn't yet looked at his own title. He raised the token high for everyone to see. Around him, every member craned their necks to read the word on it: Invictum![1]

As one of the War Faction's Three Armies, Han Wu's title was now Invictum.

Once the title fully formed, Han Wu felt a special energy envelop him. After sensing it, a pleased look crossed his face.

This was the effect of Invictum. It granted Han Wu a passive state where as long as he won a battle, he would siphon a portion of the enemy's fortune and apply it to himself or his units. This effect could stack without limit.

The drawback was that Han Wu could never lose. A single defeat would drain all of the accumulated fortune at once.

Han Wu smiled at this drawback. Losing means losing everything? Then I simply have to keep winning!

Just as the crowd was celebrating the birth of a new member of the Three Armies, Evilspawn walked forward, completely oblivious to the atmosphere. "I want your blade. Hand it over!"

Evilspawn's approach to life was simple: save time and speak directly.[2]

Han Wu stared at him in disbelief. Who would walk up to someone and demand their World-rank Divine Weapon for no reason? Was this fellow serious?

When Han Wu didn't respond, Evilspawn bared his teeth. "Give me your blade. Now."

Han Wu turned to Zhong Heng with visible confusion. His eyes were practically asking Zhong Heng, "What is this about?"

Zhong Heng looked like he wanted to bury his face in his hands. He had known Evilspawn was reckless, but he hadn't expected this level of recklessness.

Han Wu's celebration hadn't even ended, and Evilspawn was already demanding Han Wu's Divine Weapon. Zhong Heng wanted to smack Evilspawn across the head and send him to cool off somewhere.

Evilspawn, however, couldn't care less. When Han Wu refused to comply, he threatened directly, "Give me your blade. If you don't, I'll beat you up."

Han Wu finally understood. Evilspawn was nothing more than a bully. He took whatever he wanted, and if someone refused, he would use force. Zhong Heng clearly had no intention of reining him in.

Fine. If they don't deal with it, I will handle it myself. Han Wu cracked his neck, and his joints popped audibly. "You want my World-rank Divine Weapon?"

Evilspawn nodded eagerly. "Hurry up and give it to me. If you don't, I'll invade your divine realm and take it myself!"

That only excited Han Wu further. “You want to invade my divine realm? Then what are you waiting for? Come on. I’ll open the gates for you myself!”

Evilspawn was reckless enough to pull out an Invasion Card on the spot.

Seeing another fight about to erupt, Zhong Heng intervened quickly. He shoved Evilspawn aside, stepped between them, and tried to placate Han Wu.

Pious cooperated by blocking Evilspawn and quietly scolding him. “Are you stupid? Did you forget the Butcher died at his hands?”

Evilspawn was unconvinced. “I’m stronger than the Butcher. I’m not afraid! Let me through.”

Pious nearly blacked out from sheer frustration. Why would that man not listen?

For a brief moment, Pious genuinely considered stepping aside and letting Evilspawn fight Han Wu. If the fool got himself killed, so be it. However, considering the War Faction’s reputation, they could not exactly hold another Grand War Games so soon after the previous one. Thus, Pious held his ground.

Meanwhile, Zhong Heng was telling Han Wu not to take Evilspawn’s behavior to heart. While speaking, he tapped the side of his own head to indicate that Evilspawn was mentally lacking. He had been that way since childhood.

As a courtesy to Zhong Heng, Han Wu let the matter go before turning and leaving.

1. Meaning always victorious ☜

2. Why use more words when fewer do the trick? Return to monke ☜

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: Chapter 855

Chapter 855 - The Lost Continent

Back at Imperial College, Han Wu heard that the annual valedictorian competition was approaching and rushed to sign up.

That was when he was informed that the third-year competition had been canceled. Han Wu was confused. The first-, second-, and fourth-year competitions were all going ahead as normal. Why was only the third-year competition canceled?

The lecturer in charge patiently explained that the third-year competition had been canceled because the third-year students had petitioned for it. Over ninety percent of them had signed the request.

Han Wu was disappointed. This was his one annual chance to thrash—no, engage in friendly competition with them, but they had willingly given it up. At least Elina had stepped up to the challenge last year. It seemed this year was doomed to be bereft of excitement.

Heaving a sigh, Han Wu asked the lecturer, “Could I join the fourth-year seniors’ competition instead?”

“Han Wu, would you like the fourth-year competition to be canceled as well?” the lecturer politely asked in return.

Han Wu had no comeback. The moment he signed up for the competition, the seniors would almost certainly file their own petition to cancel it. There wasn’t a single person left in all of Imperial College willing to fight him. Han Wu almost missed the audacity of his past challengers.

With nothing better to do, Han Wu flipped through the course schedule for his year. It listed the civilizations for the upcoming major classes, but they were all ordinary civilizations, and Han Wu wasn’t impressed.

This problem was inevitable. Han Wu’s standards had grown with his strength, and common civilizations could no longer satisfy his needs. Fortunately, Han Wu had other channels. He opened the task interfaces for the Death Faction, Wisdom Faction, War Faction, and Wealth Faction.

He held high clearance in all four factions, which allowed him to see more dangerous missions that were invisible to regular members. As he skimmed through the missions, one appeared marked with a high-risk symbol. Curiously, it appeared across all four factions’ task boards simultaneously.

Han Wu was intrigued. What kind of mission would make four factions list it on their task boards at the same time?

[Mission: Explore the lost continent.]

[Strength requirement: Major God and above, with Microcosm-rank combat strength or higher.]

[Description: A continent shrouded in mysterious energy has drifted to the edge of the Divine Civilization. It cannot be scanned by any known method. Only a physical expedition might reveal something.]

“Now that’s interesting,” Han Wu muttered.

There were only two possible reasons that a continent could not be scanned by any known method: the continent had some kind of shielding in place, or whatever was on it exceeded their detection range. Either way, it meant the continent held something valuable.

Han Wu had been looking for a way to grow stronger, and this fit his requirements perfectly. Of course, he also made sure to accept the mission from all four factions so that he would receive four sets of rewards when he returned. With that done, he then informed Wisdom God King Xu Hai, Qin Shuang, Jing Jing, and Sun Qingnian of his plan.

As the leader of the Wisdom Faction, Xu Hai was naturally aware of the high-risk mission. Han Wu’s performance in the Grand War Games gave him full confidence in Han Wu’s abilities, so he simply reminded Han Wu to be careful and to come back safely, even if it meant returning empty-handed.

Qin Shuang was worried and tried to talk Han Wu out of it, not understanding why someone of Han Wu’s caliber needed to take such risks. He would still see substantial growth even if he simply stayed at the college and developed his Divine Jurisdiction abilities.

Despite her best efforts, Han Wu would not be swayed. The divine war had shown him that he still lacked strength. If he didn’t push himself, hidden enemies could surpass him in the future. When they came seeking revenge, he would have no means to fight or flee. The only way to face such dangers was to grow as quickly as possible.

Unable to convince Han Wu, Qin Shuang tried a different approach. She would go with him. Unfortunately, she didn’t meet the mission’s requirements. Her strength had not reached World rank, and she had yet to fully master the method of temporarily boosting herself to that level. Thus, she had no choice but to stay behind and train until she could.

Jing Jing, on the other hand, had no such problem. She was a Major God, and her combat strength had also improved significantly after integrating her units. This meant she could temporarily break through into a World life form.

Even if she didn’t qualify, she would’ve undoubtedly found a way to follow Han Wu regardless. Han Wu didn’t bother trying to dissuade her from joining him. If they ran into danger, they could watch each other’s backs.

As for Sun Qingnian, he had fully committed to a support role after comprehending the initial form of a Divine Jurisdiction. He was trying to build an information network that covered the entire Divine Civilization.

When he heard about Han Wu's expedition, he was thoroughly impressed and urged him to be careful. He also casually borrowed one million Divine Essence to fund his information network. One million Divine Essence was a significant sum even to a God King, but for Han Wu, it was nothing.

After lending the Divine Essence and chatting for a while, the two parted ways. With his affairs in order, Han Wu and Jing Jing set out for the lost continent.

It took them five days to reach the edge of the Divine Civilization, even after multiple jumps and travel by ship. From the ship, they could see the lost continent floating in the void like a duckweed. It appeared pitch black to the naked eye. Even with detection-type Divine Equipment, he couldn't gather any information.

As the mission description said, no known method could scan the lost continent. It had to be explored in person. That reminded Han Wu of V.

V was also an existence that the Divine Civilization's known methods could not detect. Perhaps he could pick up something from the lost continent?

Han Wu summoned V and ordered him to scan the distant continent. Shifting forms, V reshaped his arms into a telescope and examined the pitch-black land before them. After a long time of waiting, Han Wu became convinced that V would come up empty as well.

Just as Han Wu had this thought, V suddenly reported, "I can see mysterious races on the continent, and a strange ruin."

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 856 - The Malice of the Lost Continent

This was a huge surprise. Han Wu had only asked V to try on a whim and hadn't expected him to actually detect something. At Han Wu's request, V projected everything he saw for Han Wu and Jing Jing.

Many bizarre life forms walked across the land. Some had green faces and fangs. Some had stick-thin limbs but enormous heads. Some even had no bodies at all, just four wheel-

shaped legs that rolled them forward. Others still wore sharp, triangular helmets and carried large blades.[1] These races were unlike any Han Wu had ever encountered before.

Han Wu then asked V to show the ruin.

A structure resembling an inverted pyramid stood upside down on the continent. A shadowy figure blocked the entrance. Interestingly, the bizarre life forms kept their distance from the ruin.

“These life forms are truly strange,” Han Wu remarked.

“They aren’t life forms,” Jing Jing corrected. “They’re undead.”

That made it even weirder. This lost continent teemed with masses of bizarre undead. Things were getting more interesting by the moment.

As Han Wu was about to move on from the projections, the bizarre undead started to change shape. Within seconds, they took on human forms, and perfectly normal ones at that.

Jing Jing’s translucent eyes shimmered, the spiritual fire within them flickering. “My Lord, they’ve become living life forms!”

“What?”

Life forms and undead were two distinct groups. He had never even heard of a race that could switch between the two.

This peculiar phenomenon only further piqued Han Wu’s curiosity, and he became even more determined to investigate the continent. If he could find whatever allowed the switch and apply it to his units, it would grant them functionally infinite lives, becoming soldiers who could never truly die.

Before Han Wu headed out, he made sure to take precautionary measures. He was concerned that entering the lost continent would seal his ability to summon units.

So, before entering, he summoned every World rank unit he had: Steely, the Origin of Mutation, Dark Locust, Black Dragon King Alpheus, Silver Dragon Erebard, Golden Dragon Smog, Great Lightning Dragon Bakir, Wicked Dragon Veritas, Bow God Bart, Sword God Akanzor, War Angel Amelia, Flame Demon King Karot, Umbral Mouse, Scorching Dwarf Hammie, and more.

From these, he chose Origin of Mutation, V, Steely, Dark Locust, and Umbral Mouse to accompany him. The remaining World rank units were to stay aboard the ship as guards.

He also left behind an avatar as a communication relay. If something went awry on the lost continent, the avatar could coordinate a rescue.

Jing Jing summoned her World rank units as well. Eighteen Bone Dragons appeared. Wicked Dragon Veritas let out a resentful roar when it sensed the Dragon Fear radiating from the eighteen Bone Dragons. Han Wu had carved out a large portion of its dragon soul to create those Bone Dragons, making Veritas their father on a technicality.

Han Wu glanced at the protesting Wicked Dragon, and Veritas immediately fell silent. The only thing or person it feared in this world was Han Wu. In its eyes, Han Wu deserved the title “Wicked Dragon” more than it did.

Jing Jing selected four of the stronger Bone Dragons as escorts and left the rest on the ship. With the party assembled, they set off.

A hostile will pressed down upon them the moment they set foot on the continent. Han Wu’s Subcosm strength was forcibly suppressed and reduced to the Microcosm rank.

The others fared worse. The Origin of Mutation, Dark Locust, V, and Umbral Mouse were suppressed all the way down to Earthsunder rank, while Jing Jing and Steely leveled out at the Heavenrender rank. Jing Jing’s four Bone Dragons, however, were hit the hardest, dropping below Earthsunder to the Sage rank.

This suppression made Han Wu acutely aware of the lost continent’s deep, malicious intent. He also discovered that he couldn’t connect to his divine realm to summon his units. Jing Jing’s access was blocked as well.

Neither of them could summon reinforcements. Fortunately, their Divine Aspects, Divine Authorities, Divine Jurisdictions, and abilities remained intact. They also had the foresight to pack their essentials separately in spatial storage rather than leaving them in their divine realms.

“This place is strange. Everyone, stay alert,” Han Wu warned.

Jing Jing and the units nodded in acknowledgment.

“My Lord, I can send my Bone Dragons to scout ahead,” Jing Jing volunteered.

Han Wu agreed and sent Umbral Mouse along as well. Being reduced to the Earthsunder rank mattered less when it had no combat abilities. Its strong suit was in scouting and stealing after all.

Umbral Mouse and the four Bone Dragons headed out. The mouse returned quickly.

“I’ve scouted everything within a ten-kilometer radius. No major threats detected,” Umbral Mouse reported, proudly patting the chest of her child-sized human form.

“Good work,” Han Wu casually praised. “You can rest.”

Thrilled by the praise, Umbral Mouse scurried over to Han Wu and latched onto his arm before falling asleep on the spot. Han Wu couldn’t help but smile at her soft little whistling snores[2].

An outsider would easily mistake Han Wu for having adopted a daughter. Jing Jing eyed the scene jealously. The spiritual fire in her translucent eyes seemed ready to blaze. Her lord had never held her like that!

Noticing her reaction, Han Wu raised his free arm and gestured for her to come over. Jing Jing did not hesitate to grab his other arm. As an undead, she did not need sleep to recover, but holding onto Han Wu’s arm delighted her nonetheless.

1. Pyramid head! ☜

2. Hugh and Diana energy ☜

Chapter 857 - The Monster Village

After a brief rest, Jing Jing’s four Bone Dragons returned with several hunted wild boars and wolves. It seemed the wild animals on this continent were weak.

After communicating through their soul, Jing Jing learned that a large stretch of wilderness surrounded them. The Bone Dragons had also found a man-made road. Following it would likely lead to civilization.

“Let’s follow the road and see what we find,” Han Wu suggested.

Jing Jing nodded. With the Bone Dragons leading the way, the group set off and soon came upon a small village. Wisps of cooking smoke rose from the chimneys of the houses. People lived here.

“V, scout the village,” Han Wu ordered.

V stepped forward and raised one arm. A faint mechanical hum came from inside his armor, and when it opened, over a dozen bee-shaped drones flew out. The drones projected their video feed directly to the group. Han Wu saw villagers living normal lives, cooking and farming, with children even running through the streets.

It looked exactly like a low-level civilization going about its daily routine. There was barely any danger, yet four different factions had classified the lost continent as a high-

risk mission. This probably had something to do with the bizarre undead monsters V had observed earlier.

“Let’s wait and watch,” Han Wu decided.

Jing Jing nodded in agreement.

The group waited patiently. Han Wu kept an unblinking eye on the drone feed the whole time. As night fell, he heard a strange, eerie sound.

As if in response to the unsettling sound, the perfectly normal villagers tore through their human skin and turned into monsters. They poured into the streets, fighting, killing, or simply wandering. The peaceful little village had become a monster den.

It wasn’t just the people. The animals in the surrounding forest shed their skins and became monsters too. Two mosquitoes even burst open when the sound occurred, each releasing a tiny creature.

The tiny creatures grew rapidly until they reached about thirty centimeters in length. Han Wu studied one closely. Its limbs were thin and its body gaunt, with a cylindrical head that bore a gleaming needle.

These tiny monsters threw themselves at anything that moved, attacking with the needles on their heads. Though bold, they were only Heroic life forms in strength. Even the weakest member of Han Wu’s group was at the Sage rank. A sneeze could blow these things away.

The Origin of Mutation and V each caught one to examine more closely.

“Confirmed. These are undead, and they’re curiously… pure soul entities,” the Origin of Mutation reported after attempting a genetic analysis.

Jing Jing perked up at the mention of soul entities. She released a burst of soul pressure onto one of the tiny monsters. It instantly trembled and made soft chittering sounds. Through the resonance of their souls, Jing Jing understood it was begging for mercy.

Jing Jing relayed this to Han Wu and waited for his decision. Han Wu was interested in the creatures. Something that small was already at Heroic rank. It was unheard of.

“Jing Jing, can you get any useful information from it?” Han Wu asked.

Jing Jing communicated with the tiny monster, but only received two clear signals: begging for mercy and wanting to drink blood.

“Cheeky little thing. Crush it,” Han Wu said.

The Origin of Mutation squeezed the tiny monster until it popped. V did the same with the other one. Their bodies dissipated, leaving behind small blood-red crystals.

Upon closer examination, Han Wu identified them as crystals formed from a combination of Blood Energy and Soul Energy. They didn't contain much energy, but they were rare, so he pocketed them as collectibles.

If even a tiny mosquito could produce a Heroic rank monster, what about the larger creatures? What about the people? How strong had they become? Han Wu was curious, so he led the group down the road into the village.

The village had become a ghost town. Bizarre monsters roamed the streets. Whenever two monsters came within a meter of each other, they fought. The monsters' fighting styles were unconventional, but their soul fluctuations betrayed their High Lord rank.

The discovery shocked him. During the day, these people had been completely ordinary and without power. At night, they became monsters, each at the High Lord rank or above. The gap was staggering. This was only a small village on the edge of the lost continent. The creatures closer to the center were surely even more powerful. Moreover, what was inside that ruin?

While Han Wu was lost in thought, a monster spotted them and attacked. Jing Jing responded instantly by touching its forehead with the power of her incomplete Soul Jurisdiction. The monster detonated, its pure soul body scattering and dissolving. It left behind a crystal half the size of a fist.

This crystal was half Soul Energy, half Earth Energy. More monsters swarmed in, but Han Wu's group was more than capable of handling them. A short battle later, every monster in the village was dead.

Afterward, Han Wu chose to stay. He wanted to see whether the village would reset when the eerie sound came again.

Chapter 858 - Night Parade of Monsters

They waited until dawn. When the first light touched the lost continent, the eerie sound rang out again like a morning alarm, and everything reset.

Grass regrew, walls repaired themselves, and the villagers who had been killed as monsters the night before reappeared in their homes.

Han Wu extended his senses and confirmed that the farmers were going about their day exactly as before. It was as if the previous night had never happened.

Several farmers spotted Han Wu's group and fled back into their homes in terror, bolting their doors behind them. The sight of the four Bone Dragons, Steely, and Dark Locust was too much for ordinary villagers.

Han Wu sent Dark Locust to grab a villager for questioning, making sure to stress that the villager be alive. Dark Locust soon returned with a trembling man reeking of urine and feces. Han Wu was unimpressed. The same people who had turned into High Lord monsters last night were cowering like ordinary peasants.

"Where were you last night?" Han Wu asked.

The farmer babbled incoherently. It took Jing Jing's soul link to translate.

"Spare me, good sir," the man begged. "I have an eighty-year-old mother and a baby at home. Please have mercy on my already motherless child..."

Han Wu frowned. This time, he had Jing Jing ask through the soul link to avoid miscommunication. The farmer said he had been sleeping at home all night and had no idea anything had happened.

A theory was forming in Han Wu's mind. He placed his hand on the farmer's head and carefully sensed the energy within. There was nothing abnormal about him.

Releasing the farmer, he turned to Jing Jing. "I think some kind of time-related law has frozen this continent in a single day. There's also something causing their souls to mutate. Their memories have been tampered with. They don't realize their time has been frozen, but their souls have noticed and have grown violent from the never-ending repetitions of the same day. The slaughter every night is their way of coping."

"The vessel is right," the Origin of Mutation agreed. "It's not just the humans. The wild animals are the same. Even a single fly has accumulated enough power to reach the Heroic rank. I can't imagine how many times this continent has repeated the same day."

"Our only option is to push forward. The ruins might hold answers," Han Wu said.

Jing Jing nodded. "I will follow my Lord's every step."

The group set out at full speed. Everyone except Dark Locust rode the Bone Dragons. They tore through villages and towns along the way. Villagers panicked and screamed about monsters at the sight of the Bone Dragons. Some guards even tried to block them.

Han Wu heartlessly rode straight through the villages, trampling anything in his path. This was not cruelty. These people's lives were frozen in time. Even if he killed them, they

would just reset tomorrow, repeating the same day they had already lived countless times with no memory of the last.

It didn't matter how many times the day repeated; each one felt brand new. At night, when the eerie sound rang out, the entire continent transformed. Their memories awakened. Faced with an inescapable time loop, they revealed their true selves and killed each other for sport. This was the tragedy of the lost continent.

Over the course of one day, Han Wu's group passed through dozens of villages and towns. By nightfall, they found themselves in a large city. The eerie sound rang out as before, and everything changed.

The polished stone streets became covered in a layer of dark red sludge. Paint peeled from the walls. Roars and growls echoed from every corner of the city as mutated souls poured from their homes and staged a living spectacle of a night parade of monsters. Han Wu and his group quickly became their targets.

Despite being faced with far more mutated souls than the night before, Han Wu and Jing Jing showed no fear.

Jing Jing used her incomplete Soul Jurisdiction to project crushing soul pressure, forcing back every mutated soul that approached. Han Wu drew Peerless from his spatial storage and activated Soul Shatter Slash. The Netherworld White Tiger emerged to devour mutated souls by the dozens. The more it ate, the stronger it became.

Steely swung his hundred arms, each wielding an Obsidrum greatsword and creating a wind of blades that shredded everything in range. Dark Locust, under Han Wu's explicit orders not to Self Detonate, transformed into the Dark Curse Nail and pinned enemies down.

The Origin of Mutation, having nothing to experiment on, hid behind Han Wu and watched the fight with bored eyes. Meanwhile, V used various methods to test the mutated souls, gather data, and analyze their weaknesses.

Although Umbral Mouse had no combat abilities, she still assisted in the fight with her support skills. She layered her darkness onto Dark Locust and boosted its kills significantly. At the same time, she also collected the dropped crystals using her Dark Energy and delivered them to Han Wu.

The four Bone Dragons fought hard with every bone in their bodies. Despite the overwhelming numbers, Han Wu's group steadily pushed the mutated souls back.

As Han Wu was caught up in enjoying the fight, the Origin of Mutation called out to him, "Vessel, look at that triangle-head with the big blade. I think it's planning to run away!"

Han Wu's eyes followed the Origin of Mutation's gesture. Sure enough, a mutated soul wearing a triangular cone helmet and carrying a large blade was hesitating at the back of the pack.

It seemed to have decided that its side was losing, because it turned to flee. Before leaving, it snatched two Spirit Stones that Umbral Mouse had not collected yet.

"That one's interesting. Origin of Mutation, bring it back," Han Wu ordered.

"You always make me do the dirty work," the Origin of Mutation complained, but acted quickly regardless. The triangle-head was soon dragged back.

Jing Jing pressed it with soul pressure and asked on Han Wu's behalf, "You have intelligence, don't you?"

The triangle-head nodded. Its long, pointed helmet jabbed into the ground and sent up sparks.

: Chapter 859

Chapter 859 - Evilspawn Arrives

"You're intelligent. Good. That makes things easier," Han Wu muttered with some relief.

The triangle-head was the strongest mutated soul in the area, but against Han Wu's group, it could only take a beating.

Jing Jing continued questioning about the triangle-head on Han Wu's behalf. The group's strength intimidated the triangle-head, so it didn't hesitate to share everything it knew.

The triangle-head's unique mutation allowed it to retain its memories, meaning it was aware that it was trapped in the same day that was looping endlessly. It had tried telling the city's residents during the day, but no one believed it. They thought it was crazy, so it tried to investigate the cause of the loop, but to no avail.

It had even tried to leave the city, only to discover that escape was impossible. No matter how far it ran during the night, it would simply be reset to its starting location at the dawn of the next day. The triangle-head felt like a prisoner in an invisible cage, one with no walls but no exit either.

The group fell into thought after hearing the triangle-head's story. As outsiders, the time freeze did not affect them the same way. They would not reset to a starting point each day.

When Han Wu explained this, the triangle-head's eyes lit up with something resembling hope. It begged Han Wu to investigate the truth, or at the very least, to set it free. It was afraid it would truly go insane if this went on any longer.

Han Wu made no promises. Not only was he not obliged to help, but he also wasn't certain that he could uncover the truth. The best he could do was try. As the triangle-head had provided useful information, Han Wu was willing to take it along and see if he could bring it out of the city.

The group fought their way out of the monster horde and pushed forward with the triangle-head in tow. Their speed easily carried the triangle-head into territory it had never reached before.

Then, the eerie sound rang out again. The triangle-head's body dissolved like burning paper, fading rapidly. It was being pulled back to its starting point.

Han Wu acted fast. Swinging Peerless, he killed the triangle-head, and a cone-shaped crystal dropped into his hand.

"I don't know if I can uncover the truth, but I can try bringing you out of here, even if it's just a small part of you," Han Wu said to the crystal.

The crystal didn't respond. It was just concentrated energy with no consciousness attached.

The group pressed on. The closer they got to the ruin, the stronger the mutated souls became at night. Their progress slowed, but Han Wu wasn't bothered. If anything, he was thrilled.

Stronger souls left behind larger, purer crystals. The haul alone made the trip worthwhile. Jing Jing could directly absorb the crystals to gain immediate power, allowing her incomplete Soul Jurisdiction to develop rapidly and her soul pressure to grow stronger and more refined.

While Han Wu's group progressed smoothly, another ship arrived at the edge of the lost continent. It flew a banner bearing the characters: Evilspawn.

As the ship neared the lost continent, Evilspawn spotted Han Wu's ship parked nearby and detected Han Wu's aura.

"Bring our ship over!" Evilspawn ordered immediately.

His subordinates all knew Evilspawn's famously straightforward personality. There were only two reasons he would approach another ship. Either he wanted something they had, or he had a score to settle. They all hoped it was the latter in a friendly sense, because starting trouble at the edge of the Divine Civilization could get messy.

Evilspawn was strong enough to survive, but his subordinates weren't so confident about their own chances. Aboard Han Wu's ship, Bow God Bart noticed the approaching vessel during a patrol.

"My Lord, a ship is deliberately closing in," he reported to Han Wu's avatar. "Should I shoot it down?"

Han Wu's avatar, being low on power, could not identify Evilspawn's aura. Nevertheless, he decided to err on the side of caution. "Warn them first. If they don't listen, don't hold back."

"Yes, sir!" Bart nodded.

The ship sent a warning signal.

"General Evilspawn, the other ship is warning us not to approach!" Evilspawn's navigator reported.

Evilspawn's eyes gleamed wildly. "They wouldn't dare fire on me. Keep going!"

The helmsman dared not defy Evilspawn, and the ship continued its approach.

Noticing the aggressive intent of the approaching vessel, Han Wu's avatar didn't hesitate."Fire!"

Bart opened a tunnel through the void behind him, and the World rank units on the ship channeled their energy into it. In an instant, a massive blast of power detonated across Evilspawn's ship.

The ship could not withstand the blast and broke apart. Evilspawn himself was only lightly injured, but he and his entire team plummeted onto the lost continent with the ruin of their ship.

Han Wu's avatar watched the distant explosion from the ship with satisfaction. Some fool had charged straight in despite their clear warning. This was deserved.

Bart soon returned with a report. He had identified the ship's occupant as Evilspawn.

Han Wu's avatar was even more pleased. Evilspawn had tried to seize his weapon during the Grand War Games. If not for Zhong Heng's intervention, Han Wu would've beaten Evilspawn black and blue on the spot.

That desire to pummel Evilspawn had now been granted. Still, the avatar knew that Evilspawn's strength meant this small setback would not kill him. Han Wu might encounter Evilspawn on the lost continent itself.

The avatar relayed this intelligence to the main body through their mental link. Inside the lost continent, Han Wu received the message: Evilspawn had arrived!

Han Wu was actually glad that Evilspawn had followed him here. He had tried to take Han Wu's things, so it was only fair for Han Wu to return the favor.

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

: Chapter 860

Chapter 860 - Worship

Han Wu's group pressed forward. They rode the Bone Dragons toward the ruin by day and fought mutated monster souls by night.

After numerous battles, V compiled an analysis of the mutated monster souls' characteristics and discovered that their forms were linked to their daytime personalities.

The arrogant and contemptuous took on mutated soul forms resembling poles, with eyes at the tops of their heads and stick-thin limbs. Gossips, on the other hand, were covered in mouths with stubby limbs like dwarves.

Interestingly, triangle-heads all retained full memories. Most had long since gone mad or numb, but the few who remained sane were intensely stubborn and persistently sought the truth.

V cataloged many more forms and personality correlations. The data supported his conclusion that the mutated soul form was linked to personality.

This finding, however, was not particularly useful to Han Wu's group. For the most part, they killed mutated souls without checking their daytime personalities. All they cared about were the crystals that dropped.

Han Wu made a habit of seeking out the triangle-heads to gather information. Some proved extremely useful.

One particular triangle-head, from the largest city closest to the ruin, had a head that was sharper and longer than any they had encountered before. It was a full three meters and could possibly double as a weapon.

This special triangle-head told them that he had once reached the edge of the ruins. There, a dark shadow had blocked his path and told him that it was not yet time for worship before it struck him.

The triangle-head had returned to the ruin's vicinity multiple times since, but he never encountered the shadow again. In fact, he couldn't even get close. Every time he walked toward the ruins, he would get lost and wander in circles. Going back toward the city always worked perfectly, however.

This information gave Han Wu's group a hint as to what could be happening. The dark shadow was the key. It had said the time for worship hadn't come, and had actively chased the triangle-head away. This suggested it was guarding the ruins under some kind of instructions to prevent entry outside of a designated time.

So when was the right time for worship? That was the question. The continent was locked in a single repeating day. What time of the day was correct? The triangle-head had tried many times and never found the answer. Only Han Wu's group could shadow it out.

There was the issue of the triangle-head getting lost. The triangle-head couldn't find the path to the ruin after that first encounter. The guardian shadow was likely responsible for this. All of these facts combined only made the ruin more fascinating to Han Wu.

"We'll get our answers inside the ruin," Han Wu said to the group.

The triangle-head led the way, and the group reached the ruin's vicinity just before dawn. Han Wu could clearly see the ruin through the trees when the triangle-head began walking in circles in front of them.

Jing Jing communicated with his soul and discovered that his perception was completely different from theirs. He believed he was walking toward the ruin, but couldn't get closer.

Han Wu used his second Divine Authority to break the illusion, snapping the triangle-head out of his confusion. Furious at having been tricked into walking in circles, the triangle-head charged forward in a rage.

He only took a few steps before a dark shadow appeared and swatted him away. The shadow muttered something the group could not understand.

"It is not yet time for worship," Jing Jing translated.

Worship again! Han Wu sent Steely to force his way in, but the shadow merely swatted Steely away and repeated the same line.

Despite this, Han Wu refused to give up. This time, he sent Dark Locust. When the shadow struck, Dark Locust detonated itself, destroying everything in the vicinity. Even the shadow was blasted into black fragments.

“We should be able to get in now that the guard is gone,” Han Wu said, stepping forward.

The Origin of Mutation raised a hand to stop him. “Vessel, let the fodder check first.”

V sent another wave of bee drones toward the ruin. As they crossed the boundary, a new shadow materialized and blasted them all to pieces with a gust of wind.

“It is not yet time for worship,” it repeated.

At that exact moment, the eerie sound rang out, marking the coming of dawn. The triangle-head dissolved into ash and returned to his starting point. Han Wu’s group remained unaffected since they were outsiders.

V sent more bee drones toward the ruin. Surprisingly, this time they passed through without interference from the shadow. According to Jing Jing, its message this time was also different.

“Have a pleasant worship.”

The time for worship was dawn!

Han Wu moved quickly, but when he set foot across the boundary, another shadow appeared and struck him. The blow sent him flying backward.

“It is not yet time for worship,” it repeated.

Han Wu wanted to curse it to death. The worship window only lasts one minute?!

Meanwhile, V’s bee drones continued flying freely within the ruin’s perimeter and soon reached the entrance.

The ruins looked like an inverted pyramid. Another shadow stood guard at the door. Han Wu couldn’t tell if it was the same one that had hit him, since they all looked alike, but this one felt much stronger than the rest—most likely at the Heavenrender level.

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 861 - Who's That Monster? It's Evilspawn!

Han Wu and his group couldn't enter the ruins, so they relied on the bee drones to observe the area from a distance.

When they spotted the dark shadow guarding the entrance, Han Wu didn't dare lower his guard. He had V control a small portion of bee drones toward it, hoping to avoid unnecessary losses.

V carried out the order and directed a quarter of the bee drones toward the entrance. Unexpectedly, the shadow struck and crushed every drone with a single blow.

Since the video feed couldn't confirm the shadow's soul fluctuations, Han Wu had no choice but to order V to withdraw the remaining bee drones back and abandon the attempt to enter the ruins. Instead, they shifted their focus to scouting the surrounding area and gathering as much information as possible.

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On the outskirts of a large city within the lost continent, Evilspawn and his lackeys had regrouped.

Evilspawn was furious about being knocked off the airship. From the day he was born until now, no one had ever left him in such a disheveled state. Even when the War God King had chased him down and beaten him, he hadn't looked this pathetic.

"Han Wu, don't let me catch you, or I'll kill you!" Evilspawn snarled.

His members were all wounded. Unlike Evilspawn, they didn't possess monstrous physical resilience.

"General Evilspawn, what do we do now?" the ship's navigator asked.

Evilspawn forced his underdeveloped brain to think for a few seconds, then answered, "First, we eat!"

The navigator and the other lackeys didn't dare object and followed Evilspawn into the city. Since they were all humanoid, they didn't attract any attention upon entering.

Evilspawn barged into a steamed bun stall and started devouring everything in sight. He emptied the stall within moments, but he still wasn't full. As he turned to leave, the stall owner grabbed his sleeve and demanded payment.

Evilspawn raised his fist and punched the man to death for daring to touch his clothes. A single blow sent blood splattering everywhere.

The surrounding people screamed and scattered. Evilspawn cheerfully bounded toward the next food stall and continued stuffing his face. His lackeys, long accustomed to his brutality, followed behind him. No one dared to reason with Evilspawn. The last person who had tried had been beaten to death on the spot.

Evilspawn ate and drank his way through half the city's stalls before patting his belly and declaring himself about seventy percent full. His lackeys had scavenged scraps along the way and weren't particularly hungry either.

Just as they were about to leave, an eerie sound rang out.

Under Evilspawn's curious gaze, twisted soul monsters emerged from their homes one after another. When they saw Evilspawn, rage flooded their faces, and they radiated resentful dark purple energy.

Across countless cycles trapped within this time loop, this was the first time they had ever shared a common enemy.

Evilspawn couldn't care less about their hatred. He didn't even understand why those monsters were emitting dark purple energy.

"Finally decided to come out? Come on then, all of you! Let me have some fun!" he shouted and summoned his Divine Authority weapon.

A pair of battle axes materialized in his hands. He tore through the mutated soul monsters with ease, and pale purple crystals dropped to the ground.

Evilspawn wasn't smart, but he had a surprisingly sharp eye for valuable items through memorization. He could recognize something precious at a glance.

The moment he picked up one of the crystals, he realized that he had stumbled onto treasure. As such, he ordered his lackeys to collect the crystals for him and continued slaughtering the monsters. Even without units to help him, Evilspawn killed at a terrifying pace.

Meanwhile, the lackeys gathered the crystals without noticing the dark purple energy seeping from them and drifting into their nostrils. As they inhaled more and more of the strange energy, the first victim finally appeared. His eyes turned blood red, just like the creatures here, before he lunged at Evilspawn in a mindless frenzy.

Evilspawn showed no mercy, not even to his own lackey. One punch caved in the man's skull like a watermelon, sending blood spraying in every direction.

The remaining members were horrified by how ruthlessly Evilspawn killed one of his comrades. At the same time, the energy inside them activated. One after another, they lost their minds and attacked Evilspawn.

Evilspawn killed every single one without hesitation. Soon, only the navigator remained. He hid in a corner, trembling as he watched Evilspawn beat his former companions to death one by one. There was nothing he could do.

With no one left to collect the crystals, Evilspawn picked them up himself. Naturally, the dark purple energy seeped into his body as well.

As the amount he absorbed increased, he started having hallucinations. He saw his lackeys mocking, ridiculing, and calling him an idiot to his face. His rage surged. He charged at those hallucinations and killed everything in sight.

That was Evilspawn's perspective. From the navigator's point of view, Evilspawn was talking to himself before dark purple energy erupted from him and transformed him into a monster. Evilspawn then stomped away in a blind rage.

The navigator was right. Evilspawn had become a powerful monster. After Evilspawn disappeared into the distance, the navigator let out a small sigh of relief. He was grateful that he had been smart enough not to touch the crystals. Otherwise, he would have ended up like the others.

In the very next moment, his jaw dropped. The members that Evilspawn had beaten to death started rising from the ground. They transformed into creatures that were nearly identical to the mutated soul monsters from before.

The followers who had died there were now bound to the lost continent forever in their monstrous forms.

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Han Wu's group waited for the eerie sound to return. When it rang out again, Han Wu led everyone to charge through the shadow's defenses and into the ruins. He barely had time to celebrate before a thunderous crash erupted from outside. A feral monster was charging toward the ruins.

Han Wu squinted at it and frowned.

"Is it just me, or does that thing look a lot like Evilspawn?" he asked V.

V scanned the monster and replied, "It doesn't just look like him. That is Evilspawn, one of the Three Armies of the War Faction."

“Oh, really? With how he looks right now, I shouldn’t get punished for hitting him, right?” Han Wu said as Peerless slid into his hand.

The monstrous Evilspawn’s gaze locked onto the weapon, and he charged straight at the ruins.

In the next instant, the shadow guarding the entrance swatted him away. Evilspawn flew through the air and crashed into the distance.

Chapter 862 - Past, Present, Future

Evilspawn had never been particularly smart. After turning into a monster, his intelligence declined even further. He charged forward repeatedly, only for the guardian shadow to knock him back each time. The shadow’s attacks weren’t especially powerful and couldn’t actually wound the monstrous Evilspawn, but they kept him outside.

Drool hung from Evilspawn’s chin as he stared at Peerless in Han Wu’s hand. With his mind gone, he couldn’t recognize Han Wu, yet his obsession with Peerless was still present. That desperate craving caused the dense special energy inside him to spread further, making him grow even stronger.

Han Wu watched him with curiosity. *What on earth has Evilspawn gone through to end up like this?*

V warned, “We need to kill him quickly. He will keep growing stronger if we don’t.”

From V’s compiled reports, Han Wu had learned that emotions and personality traits could be converted into power on this lost continent. If they let Evilspawn continue to rampage unchecked, he would grow without limit.

By the next worship cycle, Evilspawn could become strong enough to break through. If that happened, Han Wu would be in serious trouble. It was better to strike first.

“Then let me give it a try!” Han Wu said.

He gathered energy and swung Peerless, unleashing Stellar Rain Slash. Countless energy blades condensed behind him and surged outward like a river of cutting blades aimed at the monstrous Evilspawn.

The shadow blocking the entrance only prevented things from entering. It had no interest in what left the ruins.

The barrage of energy blades stabbed into Evilspawn and pushed him back 100 meters. Huge chunks of flesh were sheared from his monstrous frame. The injuries were severe, but pain only fueled his anger.

Evilspawn roared, and the power of his rage triggered a third transformation. The wounds from the slash healed instantly, while grotesque limbs sprouted from his torso, twisting him into a form that no longer resembled a humanoid life form.

The transformation made Evilspawn even more powerful. He charged at the ruins again. This time, the shadow's strike failed to push him back. Instead, he smashed right through the shadow and forced his way into the ruins.

Even Han Wu had to admit how impressive Evilspawn was. He had spent a day yesterday trying to break into the ruins and failed. Yet Evilspawn had accomplished it today through sheer brute force alone.

V kept his eyes fixed on Evilspawn and cross-referenced the information he had gathered to find a weakness.

"His weak point is fifty centimeters below his heart!" V said suddenly.

After compiling all available data and observing Evilspawn for so long, V had reached his conclusion through calculations. Han Wu trusted the result completely. He raised Peerless again and channeled energy toward the exact spot V had identified.

"Skypiercer!"

Evilspawn gathered his strength and lunged just as Han Wu unleashed Skypiercer. A spinning spike of concentrated energy drilled directly into the monster's weak point. The spiraling force inflicted devastating damage. It blasted a gaping hole straight through Evilspawn's monstrous frame.

Evilspawn collapsed, and his grotesque limbs rapidly dissolved, revealing his true form. He looked dead.

Han Wu walked over and prodded the corpse with Peerless. Only after confirming there was no response did he exhale. Evilspawn was finally dealt with.

He searched the corpse and found nothing of value aside from a few colorful high-purity crystals. He suspected that Evilspawn had come here naked.

Who goes on an expedition without bringing a single treasure? A person like this deserves to die without anyone collecting the body! Frustrated, Han Wu summoned Dark Locust and had him devour Evilspawn's corpse. He intended to squeeze out every last drop of value.

What Han Wu failed to notice was a single drop of Evilspawn's blood left on the ground where he had fallen. It had escaped Dark Locust's consumption.

After dealing with Evilspawn, Han Wu caught up with Jing Jing and the others, who were battling the shadow guarding the entrance to the ruins.

This shadow was far stronger, at least Heavenrender rank. It only defended and never attacked, yet it could easily block and deflect any assault. Even Jing Jing and Steely working together couldn't break through it.

Having witnessed Evilspawn shatter a shadow through brute force, Han Wu understood that the shadows weren't invincible. He called Jing Jing and Steely back before unsheathing Peerless and gathering his energy once more. This time, he chose the slash with the highest single-target damage output.

"Skypiercer!"

The spinning spike collided with the Heavenrender shadow. No matter how hard the shadow resisted, it couldn't divert the spike. The spiraling force drilled straight through and shattered it.

The group rushed inside. Within three seconds, the entrance sealed itself and returned to its original state. The shadow reformed to guard the door but made no move against those who had already entered.

At last, they could explore the interior of the ruins. They advanced deeper inside and soon arrived at a junction where three paths branched in different directions. Each path bore a sign: Past, Present, and Future.

Three paths, three signs. Which one to choose?

Everyone looked at Han Wu. He waved a hand and chose all of them.

Using Avatar Creation, he split into three avatars. The first carried the Slaughter Jurisdiction along with Divine Authority 1 and took the left path marked Past. The second carried the Conversion Jurisdiction along with Divine Authority 2 and took the right path marked Future. The third carried the fully developed Duel Jurisdiction and wielded Peerless. It took the middle path marked Present.

Jing Jing chose to bring four Bone Dragons and follow the Past Han Wu. Steely and the Origin of Mutation followed the Future Han Wu. Dark Locust, V, and Umbral Mouse accompanied the Present Han Wu. With that decided, all three teams set out simultaneously to uncover the lost ruins' secrets.

Outside, the sky had darkened. The eerie sound echoed once more. Throughout the lost continent, every living being transformed into monsters and resumed slaughtering one another.

Inside the ruins, within a patch of bushes, a single drop of blood reacted to that eerie sound. It rapidly expanded and split before eventually forming a wild, muscular body.

Evilspawn awakened from his daze. *Where am I? What happened to me? What am I supposed to do?*

Then he remembered Han Wu. “I remember now. Where is Han Wu? I’m going to kill him!”

Fragments of his memory returned, and Evilspawn started frantically searching for Han Wu until his gaze landed on the ruins’ entrance.

: Chapter 863

Chapter 863 - Severing the Past

In the Past path, the four Bone Dragons split, with two leading the way and two guarding the rear, while Han Wu and Jing Jing walked in the center.

Jing Jing released an orb of soul light that illuminated their surroundings. Han Wu noticed murals covering both walls. They depicted various scenes, and after studying all of them, he placed together their general meaning.

Long ago, a powerful ruler had governed this land. He had a strange appearance but possessed immense power. He could manipulate people’s emotions and trigger physical transformations. Eventually, war erupted. A powerful warrior fought the ruler in a fierce battle, and both perished. This ruin had been built as a tomb for the two of them.

That was all the murals conveyed. Han Wu didn’t have much expertise in interpreting murals, so he transmitted everything through his consciousness to the other avatars, leaving the detailed analysis to V.

“Emotional power capable of transforming human bodies. That’s interesting.” As Han Wu considered this, he thought of the triangle-heads. Turning people into monsters to achieve a power boost resembled the Origin of Mutation’s Gene Recombination ability, though the underlying principles were completely different.

Jing Jing listened patiently and offered her own insight. “My Lord, I believe this falls under the application of souls.”

As her mastery of the Soul Jurisdiction deepened, Jing Jing’s understanding of souls had grown significantly. She was certain that emotions originated from the soul.

In her understanding, Soul Energy had no inherent attribute. However, when combined with emotions, it could produce various attributes. If she could merge emotion and soul together, Jing Jing believed her Soul Jurisdiction would undergo a massive leap in development. It could even reach completion.

The idea surprised Han Wu, but the more he considered it, the more reasonable it seemed. During the day, the residents outside were ordinary humans with no significant power. At night, they became true undead and gained varying degrees of strength based on their emotions. That alone proved there was a connection between emotions and souls.

As he mulled this over, they reached the end of the Past path. A prismatic coffin sat before them. Han Wu took a deep breath. If his guess was correct, this coffin contained the emotion-controlling ruler’s corpse.

Han Wu slowly approached it, but a wave of pressure suddenly descended. A prismatic humanoid shadow appeared atop the coffin. Though black in color, it somehow radiated a kaleidoscope of colors. It was a prismatic black that resembled iridescence. It was contradictory, yet perfectly fitting.

The prismatic shadow made a series of strange sounds.

Jing Jing translated them. “Get out of my tomb!”

“No!” Han Wu demonstrated the fearless spirit of someone from the Divine Civilization, refusing without hesitation. He even had Jing Jing translate his answer.

As expected, the prismatic shadow turned angry. It shifted form and turned entirely red as scarlet energy blazed around it. It clearly intended to fight.

Fighting was the one thing Han Wu never feared. Although the Slaughter Avatar wasn’t particularly suited for battling soul entities, he still had Jing Jing.

As a Crystal Skeleton, Jing Jing belonged to a royal bloodline among skeletons and could dominate soul entities. Under her command, the four Bone Dragons began changing. Massive amounts of shattered bone fused together, forming a four-headed Bone Dragon. Its power reached the Heavenrender rank.

The prismatic shadow immediately clashed with the four-headed Bone Dragon and scattered it within seconds. However, Jing Jing’s techniques were never simple. With a

wave, the Bone Dragon's fragments congregated around her and assembled into an exquisite suit of Bone Dragon armor.

Clad in the armor, Jing Jing fought the prismatic shadow once more. She was already a Heavenrender life form, and with the four Bone Dragons strengthening her, she had temporarily broken through to World rank.

The two fought to a stalemate against the prismatic shadow. Han Wu seized the opportunity to sneak around to the side of the coffin. The shadow's entire purpose was to guard this coffin.

Han Wu raised his Divine Authority greatsword and brought it down using Heaven-Earth Severance. The coffin shattered, exposing the corpse inside.

No one knew how long it had rested there. Upon contact with air, the flesh and bones rapidly crumbled into dust. All that remained was a prismatic crystal.

The prismatic shadow tried to save the coffin, but it was too late. As the corpse disintegrated, the shadow crumbled with it.

With her opponent gone, Jing Jing hurried over to Han Wu's side.

"Jing Jing, I think this would suit you," Han Wu said as he tossed the prismatic crystal to her.

Jing Jing caught it, sensed the pure Soul Energy contained within, and nodded excitedly. "This is very useful to me. Thank you, my Lord."

The moment she finished speaking, the entire chamber trembled violently. Massive stones crashed from the ceiling, and the entrance sealed shut.

"Run! There must be a trap. Destroying the corpse triggered a self-destruction sequence!" Han Wu shouted.

Swinging his greatsword, he smashed apart every stone in his path and carved a way out.

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On the Future path, things were different.

Han Wu's avatar advanced cautiously with the Mirror Shield in hand. Infused with the light attribute of his Divine Authority, the shield emitted a glow that illuminated the path ahead as brightly as daylight. Nothing could escape his notice.

Steely and the Origin of Mutation accompanied him, each a powerful fighter with distinct strengths.

“The Past path has collapsed. They’re fighting their way out,” Han Wu said out of the blue.

The Origin of Mutation replied, “It isn’t shaking on our end. The two paths must be completely separate.”

Steely spoke up. “My Lord, the wind tells me there is a massive open space ahead.”

“Let’s go check it out, then.” Han Wu led the way with the Mirror Shield. If they ran into enemies, he would blind them with a high-beam blast first and establish dominance.[1]

Soon, the three reached a vast chamber at the end of the Future path. Inside, Han Wu heard a rhythmic clicking sound. It was steady and precise, like clockwork.

The Origin of Mutation’s genetically enhanced senses quickly identified the source. It was coming from underground.

Han Wu aimed the Mirror Shield at the floor. They soon discovered that the ground beneath them wasn’t ordinary stone, but an enormous clock face.

Beneath the glass surface, the hour, minute, and second hands ticked steadily. At the center, anchoring all three hands, stood an upright crystal coffin.

Han Wu could faintly make out a figure inside. This had to be the warrior described in the murals, the one who had fought the emotion-controlling ruler until both of them died.

As Han Wu moved closer to investigate, a nearly transparent shadow materialized above the coffin. The three immediately prepared for combat.

1. Flashbang! ☜

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: Chapter 864

Chapter 864 - Seize the Present

The transparent shadow didn’t attack. Instead, it tilted its head with what seemed like genuine curiosity before it spoke. At first, the garbled sounds were incomprehensible. However, as the shadow continued talking, its voice gradually became clearer until it shifted into a language they could understand.

“You’ve finally come, my future inheritors.”

All three of them looked confused. Only one thought crossed their minds. This thing is trying to manipulate us.

Their guard rose even higher.

Meanwhile, the shadow seemed to have finally found its voice. “Relax. I know full well that this is no longer my era. What little power I have left isn’t enough to kill any of you. Aren’t you even curious who I am, what I did, or why my soul remains here?”

The trio stared at the shadow the way one stared at a noisy parrot. It was talking way too much.

“You’re really no fun at all. Not a single question? I’m going to get depressed,” the shadow said, scratching its head.

Han Wu finally spoke. “State your purpose.”

“Ha! You finally responded!” The shadow perked up. “Let me introduce myself. My name is Shi Nan. I’m a handsome man who’s been dead for a very long time. My power allows me to control time to a certain degree.”

The moment he mentioned controlling time, all three widened their eyes. In any civilization, time was the single most precious attribute. It wasn’t because time had overwhelming offensive power, but because it could produce miraculous effects in virtually any situation.

Their reactions pleased Shi Nan. “But I still died. I fought to the death against a tyrant who treated everyone’s emotions as commodities to be bought and sold. Before I died, I calculated my own future, and what I saw was your arrival. Seeing you now puts my mind at ease.”

Han Wu’s expression softened slightly. What Shi Nan described matched the murals on the Past path, which gave some credibility to his words.

“I’m willing to share a portion of my power with you, but I have one condition,” Shi Nan said.

Han Wu could barely contain his excitement. “What’s your condition?”

Time abilities were exceedingly rare, even rarer than spatial ones. If he could obtain even a single time-based skill, the benefits would be enormous.

“My request is simple. Save every living being on this continent. Because of my battle with that tyrant, this entire continent suffered catastrophic damage. Every living being was affected. By all rights, they should’ve died long ago.

“But in my final moments, I couldn’t bear to watch them suffer. So I used every last bit of my power to freeze the entire continent within a single day. Now that you’re here, there’s hope for them,” Shi Nan revealed.

“How do we do it?” Han Wu asked.

“Seize the present,” Shi Nan said with absolute certainty.

“What does that mean? Explain!” Han Wu pressed.

Shi Nan said nothing more and faded from view. The crystal coffin dissolved along with him. Beneath the floor, the great clock’s hour, minute, and second hands transformed into three beams of light that each entered a different member of Han Wu’s group.

Steely received the second hand. After feeling its power, he understood its use. It could store one second of time. By channeling his power into it, he could save that second and unleash it during any battle. One second didn’t sound like much, but for someone as powerful as Steely, it was enormous. His strikes were so fast that some fights could be decided in a single second.

The minute hand entered Han Wu. He needed to charge it with energy, and once fully charged, it would grant him an extra minute of time. It was neither especially long nor especially short, but if Han Wu wanted to kill, one minute would be enough to take many lives.

The minute hand had plenty of advantages, but also carried one major drawback. Its charging time was extremely long. By his calculations, he would need three full days of continuous channeling just to get one extra minute. As such, the minute hand could only serve as a secret weapon rather than an ability he could rely on regularly.

The Origin of Mutation received the hour hand, the one capable of storing the greatest amount of time. Its benefits were even greater, but its drawback was proportionally worse. The charging time was absurdly long. At the Origin of Mutation’s power level, it would take at least 200 days to fully charge it. There was nothing it could do except accept it.

After Shi Nan’s gifts were distributed, the chamber started to collapse, and the trio rushed toward the exit.

Along the way, Han Wu kept thinking about Shi Nan’s final words. “Seize the present? What does that mean? Could it be connected to the Present path?”

He relayed everything to the Han Wu on the Present path.

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On the Present path, Han Wu and his units were facing a massive problem.

Evilspawn had caught up to them. Worse still, Evilspawn seemed to have merged with some form of energy native to the Present path, making him incredibly powerful.

Han Wu had no choice but to stall and wait for the other two avatars to arrive.

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Chapter 865 - The Coffin of All Beings

On the Present path, Evilspawn had once again transformed into a monster. Greed, rage, and hatred clung to his body, twisting his form further. A tailbone made from segments of bones grew from his body. Each lash of his tail unleashed devastating force. Evilspawn was the strongest he had ever been.

Han Wu, on the other hand, had weakened after splitting off two powerful avatars. Worse still, the tight space prevented him from using the Demon King Transformation, forcing him to fight with the Duel God Physique and Peerless.

V observed Evilspawn's every move. Each motion was new data for V to analyze as he searched for the weak point of Evilspawn's latest transformation.

Meanwhile, Umbral Mouse channeled all of her Dark Energy into Dark Locust, pushing it to 200% capacity. Dark Locust patiently waited for Evilspawn to drop his guard so it could deliver a devastating blow.

The fight dragged on, with Han Wu barely holding the line just to stall for time. Evilspawn, on the other hand, only got stronger with every passing second. Something hidden was fueling him.

"There's something wrong with him. Look at his shadow!" V called out.

Han Wu glanced at Evilspawn's shadow and froze. Evilspawn's shadow remained humanoid despite his monstrous form. That was deeply wrong. Han Wu became certain that something had latched onto Evilspawn and was controlling his body to fight.

Based on the information relayed from the other two paths, Han Wu theorized that another lingering will of a powerful being had attached itself to Evilspawn.

However, according to the intelligence from the other paths, only two powerful beings had fought here. So whose will was this?

While Han Wu pondered this, Evilspawn's strikes grew ever stronger. Cracks spread across the Skyshell protecting Han Wu. It wouldn't hold much longer, and the other two avatars were still some distance away. Han Wu needed another plan.

Retreating from this path wasn't an option. The Past and Future paths had both yielded valuable rewards. The same was likely true for the Present path as well.

People died for lesser treasure. Han Wu firmly believed that growing stronger demanded risk, and this risk was nothing compared to the potential gains.

"Dark Locust, wait for my signal. When I tell you to self-destruct, you self-destruct. Buy me the chance to get past him!" Han Wu instructed.

Dark Locust nodded obediently. It was at Han Wu's command.

When Han Wu found the right timing, he deliberately exposed a gap in his defense to draw Evilspawn's attacks. "Dark Locust, now!"

Dark Locust fearlessly charged toward Evilspawn. Even when Evilspawn's bony tail pierced clean through its body, it didn't stop, resolutely getting close to Evilspawn to Self Detonate.

The explosion swallowed 500 meters of the corridor in absolute darkness. Dark Energy from the blast corroded massive sections of the stone walls. This intense corrosion left Evilspawn severely wounded, but it wasn't fatal. The power of his emotions was already healing him.

Using the darkness as a cover, Han Wu grabbed Umbral Mouse and V, slipped past Evilspawn, and sprinted straight to the end of the Present path. There, Han Wu found a massive burial chamber with skulls lining every wall. In the center, surrounded by the bones, sat an ordinary-looking wooden coffin.

The coffin had no markings or engravings whatsoever. Everything about it screamed simplicity. Closer inspection revealed two characters carved into the coffin, but Han Wu couldn't read them.

V hurried over and cross-referenced the carved characters against all the information he had gathered before concluding that they read "All Beings."

This plain wooden coffin contained the remains of every living thing that had died during the two warriors' battle: beasts, civilians, and powerful fighters alike.

It continuously absorbed the emotional energy radiating from every living being on the continent. The sheer amount stored within was beyond estimation.

The purpose of this coffin was to create a God capable of transforming the entire continent using that energy, and it had, in fact, succeeded.

Unfortunately, this God had no clear will of its own. It was more beast than deity. It had never even made it out of the ruins, let alone saved anyone. At the moment, this created God was actually attached to Evilspawn's body.

Evilspawn recovered and charged into the chamber, teeth bared with snarled threats, warning Han Wu away from the coffin.

Han Wu ignored its clear warnings. Forget keeping away from the coffin; he was going to use Peerless to split it open!

"Dragon Slayer!"

A powerful azure dragon wrapped around Peerless, dramatically boosting its base attributes. Han Wu then followed up with Heaven-Earth Severance.

Evilspawn fought desperately to stop him, but Umbral Mouse was carrying V in his cannon form. A single blast knocked Evilspawn back.

Han Wu's strike landed squarely on the wooden coffin. Heaven-Earth Severance was specifically designed to counter all manner of dark and evil entities, and an amalgamation of emotional energy was no exception.

The coffin cracked, on the verge of shattering, but the will attached to Evilspawn suddenly detached and pulled a trumpet-shaped object from within its own body. It blew into the object with all its might, producing a familiar, eerie sound.

Han Wu's eyes widened. This sound had echoed in his ears twice a day since he had arrived on this continent.

The coffin stopped cracking. As Han Wu was about to deliver another strike, he noticed something deeply wrong.

His body was changing. He was transforming into a monster.

: Chapter 866

Chapter 866 - New God

Han Wu's mind was in chaos as he transformed. It felt as though innumerable personalities were screaming inside his head. His skull was going to burst. Needing time to adapt to this mental shift, Han Wu stopped moving.

The will seized the opportunity to reattach itself to Evilspawn and attack Han Wu. Evilspawn transformed into a monster again. His bony tail lashed toward Han Wu like a whip, tearing away large chunks of flesh with every strike.

Pain jolted Han Wu into action. The swarm of emotion-born personalities in his mind couldn't stay. He was going to purge every last one of them.

"Avatar Creation!"

A human-shaped Han Wu jumped out from behind the monstrous version. He had used Avatar Creation to trap the chaos of new personalities inside the monstrous shell. Stripped of most of Han Wu's power, the monstrous avatar's strength plummeted. One tail whip from Evilspawn reduced it to scattered chunks of meat.

The real Han Wu swung Peerless down on the coffin. This time, the blade punched a hole clean through. The will screamed in agony, and Evilspawn's body convulsed violently.

Han Wu pressed the advantage and continued attacking the coffin with Peerless. Even Umbral Mouse joined in, holding V in cannon form and firing a concentrated energy beam straight at the coffin. The lid was scorched black.

The will's screams reached their peak. Extreme pain and hatred accelerated Evilspawn's monstrous transformation in a sharp burst, but Han Wu unleashed Steelcutter onto the coffin before the change could settle. Razor-sharp wind blades sliced the charred wood into pieces, and the stored emotional energy within was all released at once.

That energy was the will's true body. As it dissipated, the will's power faded with it. Evilspawn's transformation halted, then reversed rapidly and dissolved, leaving his true form unconscious on the ground.

Beside him, the will manifested as a shadow that became increasingly transparent until it vanished entirely. All that remained on the ground was the trumpet-shaped object. Umbral Mouse was quick to snatch it up and hand it to Han Wu.

Shockingly, this object was a divine artifact that could also function as a Rank 8 Sacred Object. Its effect was simple but extraordinary. When blown, it forced living beings to transform into undead. Any injuries sustained while undead were frozen in stasis—neither worsening nor healing—though the undead itself would still function at full capacity.

This meant a single fighter could effectively serve as two separate combat units, with each form having distinct "health bars," so to speak. Han Wu was overjoyed. This was an exceptional Sacred Object!

Unfortunately, his Core was already loaded with the Heart Eater set. There was no room for it. While he had an auxiliary divine realm Core that had been given as a reward, it was only level five and couldn't support this Rank 8 item.

In the end, he stashed it in his spatial storage to figure out once he returned to the Divine Civilization. After securing the treasure, Han Wu looked down at Evilspawn.

He couldn't understand how Evilspawn was even alive. He had killed him. Dark Locust had even devoured the body whole. Yet here he was, possessed by the will on the Present path. If not for his interference, Han Wu was certain he would've cleared this path much faster.

Soon after, the other two avatars finally arrived and merged back into the main body. Han Wu recovered all of his strength, becoming a more or less complete version of himself again.

Jing Jing, Steely, and the Origin of Mutation also rejoined the group.

The Origin of Mutation eyed the burial chamber. "I'm surprised this place didn't blow up after you cleared it."

The moment those words left its mouth, the chamber started splitting open. Cracks ran through the walls. It was going to collapse.

Han Wu couldn't help but curse the Origin of Mutation for jinxing it. The Origin of Mutation was equally speechless. It was just an offhand remark! It was a genetics expert, not some kind of prophet. The chamber's timing was truly impeccable.

Unfortunately, it seemed the chamber was fully committed to collapsing on itself without giving them a second to prepare. The Present path crumbled alongside the other two paths. The ruins were turning into dust and rubble.

Han Wu led everyone toward the exit at full speed. Getting buried alive was not an option. Even at their strength, being trapped under a mountain of rubble would severely limit their possibility of escape. No one spared so much as a thought for Evilspawn as they fled.

At the same time, a piece of rubble fell on Evilspawn's head.

"Where am I?" he mumbled groggily.

Opening his eyes, he abruptly noticed the chamber collapsing around him and snapped awake. As he tried to get up and escape, another massive stone dropped squarely on his skull. His physical resilience was formidable, but the will's possession had drained him severely enough that a single rock was enough to split his head open and knock him unconscious again.

The ruins collapsed behind Han Wu's group just as they escaped. The inverted pyramid crumbled into rubble.

Han Wu didn't care that Evilspawn hadn't made it out. Enemies like him didn't deserve his mercy. This mattered little anyway, as Han Wu had since realized that Evilspawn was now a member of the lost continent.

The lost continent's will had brought him back after Han Wu killed him the first time. Any life saved by that will automatically became part of the lost continent. Having obtained the will's "key"—the trumpet-shaped object—Han Wu had essentially become the owner of the lost continent.

Han Wu took out the key and blew it. The eerie sound spread across the entire continent. Every monster that heard it reverted to its original form. At the same time, memories from their lost years came flooding back. Many residents of the lost continent broke down in tears.

They had made it through this terrible ordeal. Turning toward the source of the sound, they knelt in worship. Han Wu had blown the horn and freed their memories. In their eyes, he was their new God.

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 867 - Turning in the Mission

Han Wu felt the threads of faith connecting to him and was pleasantly surprised. As a god, he immediately recognized what they were: proof that they had become his believers.

Gaining several hundred million believers at once was a reward he hadn't expected. The Faith Points they generated on a daily basis alone would accumulate into a substantial fortune over time.

Moreover, these believers of the lost continent could transform into the monstrous undead. Their combat power was nothing to underestimate. Combined with the treasures from all three paths, this expedition to the lost continent had been an absolute jackpot.

Han Wu closed his eyes and sensed hundreds of millions of glowing points across the continent. Each point represented an inhabitant and served as proof that he now held complete control over this land. Some points were large and bright, while others appeared small and dim. The differences reflected their strength. The brightest point of all lay buried in the rubble of the ruins.

Han Wu smirked. Evilspawn had accidentally become a member of the lost continent, which explained why he kept returning from the dead. That was both his luck and curse.

Every inhabitant was a potential believer that Han Wu could cultivate. Someone as powerful as Evilspawn would generate Faith Points measured in Divine Essence once properly converted. Yet when Han Wu checked Evilspawn's faith, he found almost nothing. Evilspawn had virtually zero devotion toward his new god.

So that's how you wanna play? Refusing to worship the new God?

Using his authority as the new God, Han Wu teleported directly above the ruins. He raised a hand, and every piece of rubble floated into the air, revealing Evilspawn painfully crawling through the debris below.

With a flick of his finger, Han Wu levitated Evilspawn into the air. The latter had fully regained his senses and was no longer affected by the emotional energy, but he hadn't grasped the situation yet. He didn't know who was in charge now.

When he saw Han Wu, he shouted. "Give me your blade, and I'll forgive your offenses!"

Han Wu burst out laughing. He was the new God of the lost continent. What offenses could he possibly have committed? Even if there were offenses, they were the world's fault, not his.

Evilspawn saw Han Wu laughing and grew furious. He felt mocked, and he was absolutely right. Han Wu was mocking him.

"Fight me one on one! The winner takes the blade!" Evilspawn roared.

Han Wu shook his head. "The one thing I hate most is fighting one on one. Why would I fight you myself when I can have everyone attack you instead?"

He summoned all his units. Jing Jing, the Origin of Mutation, and V arrived as well. Outside the lost continent, the main army received the signal from an avatar and brought the ship to dock.

"Beat him. Keep beating him until he worships me as a Zealot," Han Wu ordered.

Steely moved first. He possessed the greatest overall combat power among Han Wu's units and was one of Han Wu's most devout Saints. He would never tolerate a heretic who refused to worship Han Wu.

Evilspawn unleashed his power and fought back. For a while, the two were evenly matched. However, Evilspawn was one of the Three Armies, and his specialty lay in warfare and raw combat strength. Gradually, he forced Steely backward.

Just as he was about to land a killing blow, Steely activated the ability he had gained on the lost continent, the second hand. Time froze around Evilspawn for one second. Within that single second, Steely's hundred arms slashed in a blur. The storm of blade winds reduced Evilspawn to shredded remains.

Unfortunately for Evilspawn, he was now an inhabitant of the lost continent. Han Wu blew the key again, and Evilspawn revived, utterly confused. The memory of being cut to pieces still lingered in his mind. What greeted him immediately afterward was another onslaught from Steely.

After watching the battle, Han Wu noticed that Steely's attacks had grown sharper. After just a single fight, Steely had visibly improved. What would happen after a hundred rounds? A thousand?

Han Wu looked forward to finding out. He instructed the rest of his units to line up and take turns one at a time. If they couldn't beat him alone, they were free to call their friends and gang up on him together.

Afterward, he left an avatar behind to supervise. Its task was simple: blow the key the moment Evilspawn died and ensure his immediate revival.

Evilspawn had officially become a training dummy. Han Wu also planned to bring his core race, the locusts, to train against Evilspawn. More specifically, he wanted them to refine Formation Might by using him as practice. Under his careful arrangements, he was confident that Evilspawn's future would become a living hell.

With the lost continent's matter settled, Han Wu prepared to return to the Divine Civilization. Jing Jing needed time to absorb the crystals that contained the power of emotions, so she stayed behind.

Han Wu welcomed her decision. Although the lost continent was his territory now, it hadn't been formally certified yet. It needed a strong defender.

His top priority was returning to the Divine Civilization, submitting his mission report, and officially registering the lost continent. Only then could he avoid becoming a target for the other Gods.

As for the possibility of strong fighters from foreign civilization coming to cause trouble, that was harder to predict. Still, Han Wu was fairly certain that more than ninety percent of them wouldn't bother traveling all the way to the edge of the Divine Civilization to cause trouble. If things went badly, they could easily end up becoming part of the Divine Civilization's newest border.

Han Wu returned quickly by ship and simultaneously submitted his exploration report to the Death, Wisdom, Wealth, and War Factions.

The four factions responded very differently.

The Death Faction replied, “Good work. Reward issued.”

They also asked whether Han Wu would be willing to sell or lease the key to them so their researchers could study how to convert living beings into undead and then restore them again. If they succeeded, the Death Faction’s overall power would increase by at least fifty percent.

The Wisdom Faction replied, “Outstanding work, prodigy. Apply for any reward you want. Submit a sample of the lost civilization’s writings to the Wisdom Tower for other members to study.”

The Wealth Faction replied, “Well done. Reward issued.”

They also asked whether Han Wu would consider selling the lost continent to them or entering a joint development agreement that would split the profits equally.

The War Faction was the only one that reacted differently. “What the hell? We sent you to explore, and you used the mission as an excuse to claim the entire lost continent for yourself? Now you want a reward? Forget it!”

The War God King personally contacted Han Wu. He insisted that, as one of the War Faction’s Three Armies, Han Wu should demonstrate the spirit of selflessness. He demanded Han Wu hand over the lost continent and the key. In return, the War Faction would grant him higher honors and better treatment. He also demanded tHan Wu release Evilspawn.

Zhong Heng absolutely didn’t want to hold another Grand War Game soon after the last one.

Han Wu smiled at Zhong Heng’s demands and blocked him. He couldn’t care less about staying in the War Faction.

: Chapter 868

Chapter 868 - Rescuing Evilspawn

The War God King was about to issue more commands to Han Wu when he received the notification that Han Wu had blacklisted him and blocked his message.

Zhong Heng was furious. Unbelievable! Kids these days have the audacity to blacklist a God King? Outrageous!

“Get in here! Issue a faction-wide alert. Declare Han Wu a traitor and an enemy of the War Faction. Whoever captures or kills him will be richly rewarded!”

The War Faction officer who arrived looked confused. “Chief, who is Han Wu?”

Zhong Heng practically spat the words through clenched teeth. “Invictum, one of the Three Armies. He defected. Understand?”

“Yes, sir!” The officer was stunned, but he rushed to post the bounty.

When the bounty spread throughout the War Faction, everyone was shocked. Han Wu, also known as Invictum, had only recently earned a seat in the Three Armies. Barely any time had passed. How had he already defected?

Those with connections investigated and were rendered speechless. Han Wu had accepted the same mission from all four factions simultaneously. He had taken fleecing others to an entirely new level.

More importantly, three of the four factions had rewarded him generously and even invited him to collaborate on further development of the lost continent. Only the War Faction had refused to pay and instead demanded that he hand over all his gains.

The contrast was glaring. It was almost as if the War Faction had been begging for Han Wu to defect.

The War Faction’s total contribution to the mission amounted to the lost continent’s coordinates and a promise of future rewards. The other three factions had provided all of that and much more.

Han Wu had conquered the lost continent entirely on his own with essentially zero support from the War Faction, yet Zhong Heng still wanted to take everything.

The scheme was so obvious that even a deaf person could hear the abacus clicking. Even so, Zhong Heng saw nothing wrong with it. As one of the Three Armies, Han Wu was expected to hand over all gains to the War Faction for redistribution. Naturally, the Three Armies would receive the largest share.

What Zhong Heng had miscalculated was simple. If Han Wu had been raised by the War Faction and felt any loyalty toward it, surrendering everything would have been understandable.

Unfortunately, Han Wu wasn't that kind of person. He had earned his position through the Grand War Games. The only benefit he had ever received was a title and its stat bonuses. Beyond that, it had given him nothing.

Han Wu didn't even think that leaving the War Faction would cost him much. Among the factions he belonged to, it ranked seventh within the Divine Civilization. In contrast, the Death Faction ranked second, while the Wealth Faction stood at the very top. Both treated him like a national treasure.

Even the Wisdom Faction was advancing rapidly. Though it remained one of the weaker factions for now, overtaking the War Faction was only a matter of time. With three factions backing him, why would Han Wu fear the War Faction?

News of the situation caused unrest throughout the Divine Civilization. Public opinion on Han Wu was split. Some praised him for resisting the War Faction's exploitation, while others criticized him for acting recklessly. A few radical ones even marched to Imperial College and demanded Han Wu's expulsion.

Imperial College ignored them. The War Faction's pressure was troublesome, but the combined backing of the Wisdom, Death, and Wealth Factions made Han Wu untouchable.

Meanwhile, Sun Qingnian used his newly built intelligence network to suppress the criticism against Han Wu. He planted favorable stories about him, exposed the truth through major outlets, and sent tabloid reporters to uncover scandals involving high-ranking War Faction Major Gods. Reports of secret affairs and match-fixing quickly shifted public attention. Within days, the controversy surrounding Han Wu faded from public discussion.

Even so, the War Faction's campaign against Han Wu wasn't over. If public opinion couldn't bring him down, they would resort to force.

Since Han Wu was inside Imperial College and wouldn't come out, the War Faction turned its attention to the lost continent instead. More than a hundred members formed a strike force and launched an invasion. Officially, their objective wasn't to punish Invictum, but to rescue Evilspawn.

Zhong Heng had learned from the information battle that openly attacking Han Wu would provoke backlash. The three factions protecting Han Wu could respond at any time. Rescuing Evilspawn, however, gave no one grounds to object or retaliate. It demonstrated Zhong Heng's loyalty, gave him the chance to strike at Han Wu, and, if everything went smoothly, could even seize the unregistered lost continent. It was four birds with one stone.

Thus, the war for the lost continent commenced. The first wave of invading units tore through the civilian population with ease. The locals were weak and couldn't resist. In a single day, the invaders slaughtered nearly a third of the continent's inhabitants.

The leading Major God was surprised. A mission classified as high risk has turned out to be this easy? If I had known, I would have come by myself instead of letting Han Wu claim the credit.

Sadly, his greatest mistake was not requesting Han Wu's intelligence report from Zhong Heng before the invasion. That night, when the eerie sound echoed across the continent, every slain inhabitant rose again. They shed their human forms and transformed into monstrous undead.

In a single night, more than 300 million units died across the lost continent. Every life form that perished there lost its original identity and became a permanent member of the lost continent.

The next day, when the eerie sound echoed again, the monstrous undead reverted to their civilian forms. Even the fallen units were revived.

The War Faction invaders were dumbfounded. On the surface, after a full day and night of intense combat, the casualty count on both sides appeared to be zero!

A closer inspection revealed the horrifying truth. Their actual unit losses were massive. The fallen units had become members of the lost continent. They simply hadn't realized it until now.

The War Faction commanders hastily ordered a retreat, but someone had no intention of letting them leave.

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 869 - Evilspawn Ghost Blade

Jing Jing calmly watched as the War Faction invaded. Behind her stood eighteen Bone Dragons and some of Han Wu's elite units.

Their training sessions against Evilspawn had significantly improved each of their actual combat strengths. Evilspawn had yet to submit, but Jing Jing was confident that he would break with time.

Before dealing with Evilspawn, Jing Jing had a more pressing task: trapping the invading War Faction force on the lost continent. The invaders had realized the dangers of this continent and were trying to escape.

Jing Jing led a large group of units toward the edge of the landmass to target the War Faction's fleet. With Bart's assistance, the Bone Dragons and Steely combined their firepower to destroy every ship. The fleeing War Faction forces crashed back down onto the lost continent, where another round of slaughter awaited.

Across three days and nights, the invading units were hunted down and killed. The newly converted had no faith in Han Wu yet, but this was of little concern to him. It was only a matter of time before they were devoted to him. After all, they couldn't truly die, and the only way to stop the beatings was to become Han Wu's believer. Anyone with half a brain knew the right choice, unless they were as stubborn as Evilspawn.

Evilspawn hovered near constantly on the edge of life and death. Each death cost him more of his memories, and soon, he forgot who he was, where he came from, and why he was being beaten. Only one thing remained in his heart. He wanted a blade, and that blade was in Han Wu's hands.

This obsession deepened with every death. It even affected his monstrous form, which piqued the Origin of Mutation and V's interest. They believed that studying him could unlock secrets about the lost continent's laws, so they subjected him to all manner of experiments and tests.

Evilspawn died even more frequently under their combined experimentation. His memories were completely erased, but his obsession with the blade intensified. Eventually, under the influence of the lost continent's laws, his monstrous undead form became a blade.

The gray blade resembled the Peerless White Blade in shape, with nine slots along its surface. Han Wu came to see for himself when he received the report and was genuinely impressed.

Evilspawn's obsession ran deeper than he thought. He had turned himself into a blade just because he couldn't get the real one!

Even as a blade, Evilspawn's subconscious still rejected Han Wu, resisting his attempts to wield it, so Jing Jing picked it up and gave it a few swings instead. She found that its power was comparable to the Peerless White Blade before any Divine Weapons had been equipped into the slots.

Unfortunately, the blade lacked a legendary Armament Spirit, and Jing Jing had no Divine Weapons to bolster it with. After an extensive analysis, V concluded that Evilspawn's blade form did indeed have the capacity to accept other enhancements.

Jing Jing didn't have Divine Weapons, so she decided to try equipping Microcosms instead. Not having her own, she used those of her World Bone Dragons.

As V had predicted, the blade powered up after she equipped nine Microcosms into the blade. Layers of grey bone grew across the previously plain surface, and a thin shroud of Death Energy shrouded it.

Any living being cut by this blade would slowly turn into grey bone, with the wound as the source. Affected areas would have their life force extinguished. The grey bone it produced was also extraordinarily tough, making it an excellent foundation for skeleton warfare.

Jing Jing loved this weapon. Following the naming conventions of the Peerless White Blade, Han Wu called it the Evilspawn Ghost Blade.

With Evilspawn dealt with, Han Wu focused on the new lost continent members. Those refusing to worship him would receive the same treatment as Evilspawn: beaten until they did or until they became inanimate.

In less than three days, every captured unit was converted into Han Wu's believers. The resentment from being beaten actually made them stronger when they transformed into their undead forms, allowing Han Wu to unintentionally profit yet again.

When news of this reached the War Faction, Zhong Heng nearly passed out from rage. His invasion force had inflicted zero damage and instead became Han Wu's reinforcements.

He wanted to lead a force to personally crush Han Wu, but the latter wasn't even a God King yet. Outside of a divine war, a powerful and well-known God King like Zhong Heng attacking someone of Han Wu's level would only provoke outrage. If the other factions backing Han Wu reported it to the Will of the Divine Civilization, Zhong Heng would surely face punishment.

Zhong Heng clenched his fists in frustration. "Is there really nothing I can do about this kid?!"

"Father," Feng Xian called out as he approached. "I heard that Han Wu apparently disrupted one of the True Martial God King's plans years ago. The True Martial God King sent a God after Han Wu, but the attempt failed, costing him his reputation. Why not reach out to the True Martial God King? If we work together, we might find a way to deal with Han Wu."

Zhong Heng nodded. While his personal relationship with True Martial was decent, he tended to forget about his poor friend because the True Martial Faction was perpetually broke. If True Martial could help eliminate this headache, Zhong Heng was willing to consider helping the True Martial Faction financially.

The War God King paid True Martial a visit, and after a warm, cordial discussion, the two reached a consensus. Han Wu needed to die, no matter the cost.

At the same time, with Xu Hai's endorsement, the lost continent was officially certified and added to the Divine Civilization's territory. The lost continent was no longer just under Han Wu's protection, but the Will of the Divine Civilization's as well.

In return, Han Wu had to pay a significant annual tax.[1]The lost continent's population size meant the generated Faith Points fell short of covering the tax, so Han Wu decided to attract others to invest to avoid running at a loss.

He invited the Wisdom, Death, and Wealth Factions to establish research facilities on the lost continent. They would conduct further research and construct infrastructure to help accelerate the continent's development.

All three factions agreed immediately. Contracts were signed the same day, and the construction teams moved in. The lost continent would become a region on par with the Divine Civilization's major cities in just three years.

1. oof ☜

Chapter 870 - The True Martial Heir

Three days after Han Wu's return to Imperial College, Xu Hai called him to his new office.

Xu Hai's status had risen dramatically thanks to his growing power and faction, elevating him to the second most important figure at Imperial College, behind only the chancellor. His new office was grandly furnished. Every inch of it radiated authority.

When Han Wu arrived, he found not only Xu Hai waiting for him but also Feng Shiren and several others from the higher management. Unexpectedly, he also spotted the Bankrupt God King.

The Bankrupt God King—or more politely, the True Martial God King—had once sent someone to kidnap him.

Naturally, Han Wu immediately grew suspicious.

True Martial smiled. "Han Wu, do you remember me?"

"True Martial God King. It's been a while," Han Wu replied, flashing a smile only just large enough to be polite.

"Xu Hai, you've really found yourself a remarkable student," True Martial complimented.

Xu Hai nodded and gestured for Han Wu to sit so they could get down to business.

“Han Wu, we’ve called you here because the True Martial God King has a request,” Feng Shiren said. “The True Martial God King wishes to find an heir at Imperial College. This is a great honor for our institution.”

Han Wu nodded agreeably. A God King coming to recruit an heir from Imperial College was like a Fortune 500 company coming to campus to scout its next CEO.

But what does this have to do with me? Surely the True Martial God King doesn’t want me as the heir? Han Wu snuck a glance at True Martial, only to find the man staring at him with a concerning smile.

Feeling uneasy, Han Wu quickly ran through the situation in his head. While his Duel Jurisdiction and Slaughter Jurisdiction had high compatibility with the True Martial Jurisdiction, he simply had zero interest in becoming the man’s heir. He genuinely looked down on the man.

Moreover, True Martial was petty and cheap. Becoming his heir would mean a life of poverty.

“I wish the True Martial God King the best of luck in finding a suitable heir,” Han Wu rejected smoothly.

True Martial’s expression froze.

Xu Hai suppressed a smile. He knew Han Wu’s personality better than anyone. A simple heir title was never going to lure him, especially not from a middling faction like the True Martial Faction.

“Han Wu, do you have any other thoughts on the matter?” Feng Shiren asked, pointedly clearing his throat.

Han Wu paused, then faked realization. “*Oh*, now that you mention it, I do have a thought.”

True Martial’s face brightened with anticipation.

“I think Feng Fanchen, the second year valedictorian, is excellent. He’d make a fine heir for the True Martial God King.”

True Martial’s smile vanished. Feng Shiren, on the other hand, beamed. Feng Fanchen was his grandson, and hearing the praise made his day.

Seeing that Han Wu refused to take the bait, True Martial decided to drop the act. “Han Wu, I genuinely admire you—”

“True Martial God King, your taste is impeccable. My mentor admires me, too. In fact, he’s planning to have me take over for him one day.” Han Wu gestured toward Xu Hai.

Xu Hai chuckled and played along. “How could anyone not like this kid? The future of the Wisdom Faction rests on his shoulders.”

That shut down True Martial’s pitch entirely. Xu Hai was Han Wu’s mentor. No one could argue against him having Han Wu as his heir.

“Fair enough. I was asking too much,” True Martial relented, deciding to pivot. “However, I have another request. I recently discovered an outer civilization called the Martial Arts Civilization. Its system is highly compatible with my True Martial Jurisdiction, and I want to use it as the grounds for selecting my heir. Unfortunately, my position prevents me from leaving the Divine Civilization easily, so I’d like to commission Han Wu to scout it for me.”

Han Wu smiled politely. “True Martial God King, you have no shortage of capable officers. Send a few Major Gods to do it. Why come all this way to find me? My studies have been very demanding lately. I really can’t spare the time.”

The higher management of the Imperial College nearly choked. Studies? Demanding? Han Wu was Imperial College’s most notorious truant. They were lucky if he even chose to attend one of the six major lectures per semester. Hearing him say that his studies were demanding was beyond absurd.

True Martial was not about to give up so easily, praising Han Wu’s strength and even offering something that made Han Wu’s jaw drop: a complete Divine Jurisdiction.

Han Wu was genuinely shocked. True Martial was famously the poorest God King. Offering an entire Divine Jurisdiction as payment was staggering.

It also set off alarm bells. True Martial wouldn’t be this generous without a reason. The mission was likely a death trap.

“Please find someone else, True Martial God King,” Han Wu rejected firmly. “I’m not up to the task. If there’s nothing else, I’ll take my leave.”

With that, he bowed to his mentor and walked out. The higher management grumbled but didn’t dare say anything in front of Xu Hai.

“Well then, I won’t impose any further. Take care, everyone.” True Martial stood up and left.

Feng Shiren chased after him and tried to pitch his grandson instead. “Han Wu has his commitments, but Feng Fanchen truly is a fine young man. Won’t you consider him?”

“I’d rather have no heir than settle,” True Martial bluntly replied before transporting away.

Feng Shiren stood alone, facing the empty air. “Blind fool. My grandson is excellent.”

At Zhong Heng’s territory, True Martial flatly reported, “Han Wu refused.”

“We expected this.” Zhong Heng assured him. “Doesn’t matter. If he won’t come willingly, I have other methods. I refuse to believe that Han Wu doesn’t have a weakness.”

Chapter 871 - Threatened with a Divine War

The next day, Han Wu suddenly received a call from Qin Shuang.

“Han Wu, something terrible happened! My family is in trouble!” she cried out.

Han Wu immediately grew alert. “What happened?”

“My whole family was doing business in another civilization when they ran into bandits. They kidnapped my family and sent back a letter demanding 5 million Divine Essence as ransom. They want me to deliver it to the Martial Arts Civilization in person! They also said I have to get there within seven days, or they’ll kill the hostages.”

Han Wu frowned when he heard that. *The Martial Arts Civilization. What a familiar name. The True Martial God King just mentioned it yesterday.*

This was obviously aimed at him. Qin Shuang’s family was simply bait to lure him in.

“Don’t panic. I’ll figure something out.” After calming her down, Han Wu reported the situation to Xu Hai.

The latter nearly exploded with rage. He was on the verge of launching a divine war on the spot. After all, it was absolutely outrageous that a God King had resorted to such despicable tactics just to get what he wanted.

“Han Wu, leave this to me for now. I’m going to find that True Martial bastard and get some answers. If it comes down to it, I’ll have the Will of the Divine Civilization to step in and investigate!”

Roughly three hours passed before Xu Hai returned with a grim expression.

“Sir, what happened?” Han Wu asked. One look at Xu Hai’s face told him that things hadn’t gone well.

Xu Hai’s expression darkened. “I confronted the True Martial God King and even brought in the Will of the Divine Civilization to judge the matter. According to the Will, the True Martial God King had no involvement in the kidnapping of Qin Shuang’s family.”

Han Wu slammed his fist on the table. “Impossible. How could there be such a convenient coincidence?”

Xu Hai understood his frustration. “I know you’re anxious, but calm down first. Think carefully. Besides True Martial, who else have you offended?”

Han Wu thought hard. The only other person he could think of was the War God King.

Xu Hai answered for him. “If I had to guess, Zhong Heng most likely arranged the kidnapping of Qin Shuang’s family.”

“Please, sir, seek justice on my behalf. Ask the Will of the Divine Civilization to investigate the War God King instead.”

Xu Hai forced a bitter smile. “It’s too late. Because my accusation against True Martial God King turned out to be unfounded, the Will suspended my reporting privileges for a month.”

“Then I’ll ask other God Kings,” Han Wu muttered.

He immediately sent call requests to Commerce, Death, and Darkness, all of whom he had some connection with. None of the three answered. Each returned the same notification: the recipient was outside their service area.

Han Wu also had the contacts for several minor God Kings within the Wealth Faction. He called them all, and only the Banquet God King was willing to help. Soon, he sent back a message. The Will of the Divine Civilization had determined that Zhong Heng was also uninvolved in the kidnapping.

That result nearly made Han Wu doubt himself. Could it be that he was overthinking things? Was this really just an accident? His instincts told him otherwise. This was definitely not an accident.

“Han Wu, if you need it, I can file a request to launch a divine war against the True Martial Faction!” Xu Hai said seriously.

Han Wu had been inseparable from the founding of the Wisdom Faction. Xu Hai was willing to gamble everything he had to help him.

“Sir, that won’t be necessary for now. Their goal is to lure me into the Martial Arts Civilization. If that’s what they want, then so be it. I’ll go.”

“There will almost certainly be traps waiting specifically for you!” Xu Hai warned.

“I have no other choice.”

After thinking it over, Xu Hai agreed that Han Wu’s personal involvement was the most reliable option. To ensure his safety, however, he summoned the two strongest people under his command: He Xu and Jia Gui. Both were World life forms. At the very least, they could watch each other’s backs.

Han Wu had worked with He Xu before and trusted him. As for Jia Gui, he regarded him as a shield that Xu Hai was sending along to absorb trouble.

Before setting out, Han Wu intended to squeeze every possible advantage from the situation. He called True Martial and stated he was willing to accept the mission to investigate the Martial Arts Civilization. He didn’t mention the kidnapping at all.

Naturally, True Martial knew exactly what was happening. He declared the plan canceled and refused to give him the Divine Jurisdiction he had promised the previous day. He believed he had Han Wu cornered.

Facing this, Han Wu simply smiled and issued a subtle threat. He said he had given the matter some thought and realized that Qin Shuang’s family wasn’t his family. Whether the hostages lived or died had nothing to do with him. He would go to Xu Hai right now and request a divine war against the True Martial Faction. They could see which happened first: the hostages being killed or the True Martial Faction being defeated.

True Martial assumed Han Wu was bluffing. He didn’t believe Han Wu could actually convince Xu Hai to launch a divine war on the spot.

The next moment, however, he received a private message from Xu Hai. The message stated that if Han Wu’s demands weren’t met, Xu Hai would submit the divine war request in three minutes sharp.

True Martial froze. Xu Hai was serious! He was genuinely willing to start a divine war for Han Wu’s sake!

True Martial had hoped to save himself a complete Divine Jurisdiction, but that was clearly no longer possible. Left with no alternative, he initiated a trade with Han Wu and handed over the promised Divine Jurisdiction.

As Han Wu had expected, it was a minor Divine Jurisdiction called Iron Fist. It could enhance the destructive power of punches. It was useless to him, but still a decent prize.

He turned to He Xu and Jia Gui. “The Martial Arts Civilization is dangerous and unpredictable. Since the two of you are willing to come with me, I can’t be stingy.”

Han Wu handed the Iron Fist Jurisdiction to He Xu. He then took out the Concealment Jurisdiction he had been saving and offered it to Jia Gui. “Please accept these.”

He Xu looked at Han Wu and had no intention of accepting. Firstly, as the senior, he couldn’t accept such a generous gift from his junior. Secondly, he was there under Xu Hai’s orders. It was his duty, which made accepting the gift even more inappropriate.

As He Xu was about to politely decline, Jia Gui snatched the Concealment Jurisdiction and hugged it tightly. “No need to say anything else. I understand completely! Refusing such a kind gesture would only be disrespectful.”

Jia Gui then turned to He Xu. “Brother He, Han Wu is a generous man. Returning a gift that’s already been offered would be rude. I’d advise you not to be ungrateful.”

With no real way out, He Xu reluctantly accepted Han Wu’s gift.

Once both of them had taken their gifts, Han Wu felt some of the weight lift from his shoulders.

“Let’s go. Time to move out!” he said.

Chapter 872 - The Martial Arts Civilization

The three of them arrived at Imperial College’s transport point, where Qin Shuang was already waiting.

The moment she spotted Han Wu, Qin Shuang marched up to him. “I knew it! I knew you’d try to sneak off and rescue my family without telling me!”

Han Wu froze. *Am I really that easy to read?*

Even so, he explained himself. “This whole thing is aimed at me. They kidnapped your family because of me. Once I enter the Martial Arts Civilization, they should be released.”

Qin Shuang refused to listen. “I don’t care. If you’re going to the Martial Arts Civilization, I’m going too!”

Han Wu knew her temper well. Once she made up her mind, nothing could change it. If he refused, there was no telling what she would do on her own. For safety's sake, he had no choice but to agree to bring her along.

The group passed through the array to the edge of the Divine Civilization, then boarded a ship and traveled to the Martial Arts Civilization's border. The next step was to enter.

Considering that the Martial Arts Civilization could restrict their units, Han Wu summoned all his powerful units before entering so they could accompany him inside.

Unfortunately, he had underestimated the situation. Non-human life forms couldn't enter the Martial Arts Civilization at all![1]

With no other option, Han Wu left his units waiting outside and led the four of them into the civilization.

The instant Han Wu set foot inside, he felt his body change. The Martial Arts Civilization's Will imposed the most severe seal he had ever experienced, locking away his Talents, abilities, Divine Aspects, Divine Authorities, Divine Jurisdictions, Skills, energy, Microcosms, Divine Rings, Divine Weapons, and everything else.

Han Wu's entire group went from being Gods to ordinary people with slightly above-average physiques. The change was almost unbearable.

Now he understood why the True Martial God King had gone to such lengths to get him there. The Will's seal was ridiculously powerful. Even if Han Wu were a dragon, he would be reduced to a worm in this place.

Qin Shuang and the others felt the seal's effects just as much. Without any of their powers, everything around them felt dangerous, as if a lethal attack could come from anywhere at any moment.

"Han Wu, maybe we should go back. It's too dangerous here!" Qin Shuang said with difficulty. Though she was worried about her family, she was even more worried about Han Wu.

Han Wu shook his head. "We're already here. I won't be able to rest until your family is safe."

Qin Shuang felt her eyes grow warm with emotion.

Then Jia Gui suddenly spoke up. "Does anyone else feel something off about their body?"

He Xu replied, "Isn't it just that all our powers got sealed?"

Han Wu and Qin Shuang turned to look at Jia Gui as well, unsure what he meant.

Jia Gui pointed at his feet. “My feet feel incredibly light. So light that I think I could fly.”

He broke into a run. Surprisingly, he actually left the ground. He only managed to rise around eight meters into the air before crashing back down. Nonetheless, anyone could see that this wasn’t an ordinary human ability.

Following Jia Gui’s lead, the other three focused on searching for anything unusual about themselves.

Qin Shuang was the first to discover something. When she brought her hands close together, dense arcs of lightning erupted between her palms. She could discharge electricity, though it only lasted about five seconds and wasn’t particularly strong. At most, it could shock someone half to death like a taser.

After careful examination, He Xu found his own special ability. He could harden his hair into steel-like needles.

All three had found something unusual about themselves, yet Han Wu had spent a long time searching and found nothing.

Did he really have nothing special at all?

Just as Han Wu was feeling frustrated, Qin Shuang suddenly pointed at his shadow. “Han Wu, your special trait may be your shadow.”

Han Wu immediately looked down. He was standing perfectly still, yet his shadow was waving its arms and throwing punches. He also noticed that it had a long tail. It suddenly struck him that the shadow’s shape resembled the Demon Lord Xun, whom the Demon King Transformation had once absorbed.

“Are you Xun?” Han Wu asked.

His shadow nodded vigorously, confirming that it could communicate with him.

Han Wu continued, “What can you do right now?”

The next second, Xun’s tail rose out of the shadow and became solid. The materialized portion was short, only about half a meter, with a tip as sharp as an arrowhead. It would make a decent weapon for self-defense.

“Is that all?” Han Wu was somewhat dissatisfied. If all it could do was form a solid tail, a knife in his hand would be more useful.

Xun thought for three seconds, then made his move. The shadow stretched toward Han Wu’s feet. Before Han Wu could react, he was sinking into his own shadow as if standing

in a swamp. Half of his body was swallowed, and no matter how hard he struggled, he couldn't pull himself free.

Now Han Wu was satisfied. The ability to trap someone like that could definitely come in handy.

At the very least, the four of them now had some means of self-defense. The next task was finding Qin Shuang's family. According to the ransom letter, they needed to travel to Jiang City.

For people without a map, this was an absurd challenge. They couldn't even determine where they were, let alone locate Jiang City. Staying put wasn't an option either. As such, Han Wu's group chose a direction and started walking, hoping to find someone who could point them toward the city.

After wandering aimlessly for two hours, they still hadn't found any roads, but they had discovered more about their anomalies. The more they used their unusual traits, the faster those traits developed.

Han Wu's anomaly revealed the most information because Xun was intelligent. Using his tail to write characters, Xun first gave Han Wu's anomaly a name: Shadow Xun, meaning Xun's shadow. However, Xun didn't explain that the name came from himself, fearing that Han Wu would destroy him once they left.

Shadow Xun had two properties. The first was Materialization, which allowed parts of the shadow to become solid and attack the surrounding area. The second was Shadow Space, which could form its own pocket dimension for hiding or trapping and killing enemies.

Xun also suggested keeping both properties in constant use. The tail could serve as a weapon to clear a path, while the Shadow Space could store wild fruits and vegetables they found along the way. This would help them build a reserve of food and avoid starvation. As long as they kept using it, Shadow Xun would grow even faster.

1. Wait, Han Wu and the rest aren't humans, they are Gods.....wtf ☜

: Chapter 873

Chapter 873 - The Axe Gang

After traveling roughly fifteen kilometers, Han Wu's group finally found signs of civilization. It was a somewhat rundown town. Outside the gates, people were pushing

wooden carts and carrying shoulder poles as they entered. They looked like farmers bringing produce to sell.

The group was about to approach when He Xu stopped them. He pointed out that their clothing was completely different from what the Martial Arts Civilization's natives wore. If they walked in dressed like that, they would stand out as four oddballs in bizarre outfits, which was practically inviting trouble.

Jia Gui glanced around. "Wait here. I'll go find us some clothes."

He disappeared around the corner of the town wall. Han Wu could just barely make out what looked like a hole in the wall over there.

Half an hour later, Jia Gui returned with four sets of clothes and a small pouch of silver coins, the civilization's local currency.

"Where did you get these clothes?" Han Wu asked while changing.

Jia Gui waved dismissively. "Never mind where they came from. I got them, and that's all that matters."

Qin Shuang looked at Han Wu with a hint of understanding in her eyes. She suspected Jia Gui had stolen them, but she had no proof.

Han Wu didn't care. In the Divine Civilization, laws and rules kept him in check. Here, the only thing restraining him was whatever morality and ethics remained in his heart.

After changing, Qin Shuang found some dirt and smeared it across her face to mask her beauty. He Xu and Jia Gui both gave her a thumbs-up and praised her for taking the initiative to reduce risk.

Once they disguised themselves, the group approached the town. They paid four silver coins as an entry fee at the gate and entered without any issues.

The town was surprisingly busy. One street was lined with peddlers selling vegetables and meat, alongside shops offering daily goods.

The group found a simple restaurant and sat down for a meal while trying to gather information about Jiang City. The waiter was a useful source of information. After tipping him two silver coins, he answered every question without hesitation. It made Han Wu appreciate the power of money all over again.

Suddenly, a group of burly men barged into the establishment. The leader was fat, with a face ugly enough to make a small child stop crying. Every other patron immediately lowered their head and focused on their food. They didn't want to attract trouble.

Han Wu noticed that Jia Gui panicked the moment he saw the thugs. He was even trembling slightly.

“Why are you shaking?” Han Wu whispered.

Jia Gui tried to look calm. “Me? Shaking?”

He picked up his teacup for a sip, but his trembling hand spilled half the tea.

Something was definitely wrong.

When Jia Gui realized he couldn’t fool anyone, he came clean. “The clothes we’re wearing? I stole them from those guys. The money too.”

Han Wu was speechless. Out of all the people to steal from, they had just bumped into the original owners. If they got beaten over this, Han Wu wouldn’t feel the least bit wronged.

The thugs started checking the tables one by one. They were closing in fast. Their men had already blocked the exits, making escape nearly impossible. Han Wu decided to just wait for the trouble to arrive.

When the goons reached his table, their eyes lit up at once.

“Boss, they’re the ones who stole my clothes!” one of them shouted, then swung at He Xu, the closest target.

Before the thug’s palm touched He Xu, the latter had already activated the trait he’d awakened after entering the civilization. He called it Spine Carapace. His hair turned hard as steel needles and pierced the thug’s hand.

The thug cried out in pain.

The boss flew into a rage. “You dare injure one of my Axe Gang? Brothers, chop them to pieces!”

Every thug there charged forward, pulling axes from behind their backs. Armed with weapons, they were far more dangerous than they had been with bare fists.

Han Wu’s group didn’t wait around. They jumped to their feet and fought back. Although the Martial Arts Civilization’s Will had sealed most of their strength, their combat instincts were sharp, their physical abilities well above average, and their traits gave them a significant advantage. Dealing with a bunch of armed thugs wasn’t hard.

Of course, only three of them actually fought. Jia Gui had already hidden under a table the moment the brawl started.

Dozens of thugs ended up sprawled across the floor. The boss realized these people weren't to be messed with and identified the three as special fighters. Still, with his men watching, he couldn't just run.

"So you three are practitioners with special powers. No wonder you took down my boys so easily. But do you even know whose turf this is? Hurt my Axe Gang, and I'll make sure you regret it!" The boss pulled a large flare from his sleeve, lit it and launched it through the doorway. "One signal flare, and 1,000 men come running. You're finished. Just you wait."

He Xu didn't want more trouble and suggested they leave immediately.

"They seem to have stronger fighters. We might not be able to handle them as we are," he said.

Han Wu agreed and was about to leave when two axes came flying through the doorway. One was golden, while the other was silver. Both were aimed straight at Han Wu's and Qin Shuang's faces. Han Wu reacted quickly and grabbed a nearby stool just in time to block them.

The two men who had hurled them were now standing in the doorway. One wore a golden robe, while the other a silver one. Both carried themselves with a powerful presence.

The boss rushed over to them. "Gold Axe! Silver Axe! That's the punk who beat up our brothers!"

The Gold and Silver Axe brothers looked at their fallen men, and their expressions turned icy. The medical bills alone would cost a fortune. Their gazes turned even colder as they stared at Han Wu's group, as if they were looking at corpses.

"You hurt our Axe Gang brothers. You think we're just going to let that slide?" Gold Axe channeled his internal energy, and the golden axe embedded in the stool flew back into his hand. "Your move!"

Silver Axe did the same, recalling his silver axe. The two brothers charged at Han Wu's group with their weapons raised.

Han Wu and He Xu exchanged a glance, and each picked an opponent. Without proper weapons, they could only rely on their physical abilities, combat experience, and traits to trade blows.

After several exchanges, Han Wu realized something was wrong. Gold Axe's strikes didn't look particularly fast or powerful, yet the force behind them exceeded his expectations. On top of that, Gold Axe's techniques were so refined that even Han Wu, with all his combat experience, couldn't find an opening.

Forced onto the defensive, Han Wu retreated while dodging one lethal strike after another. At the same time, he couldn't help but remark, "The Martial Arts Civilization is quite interesting!"

Backed into a corner as Gold Axe brought his weapon crashing down, Han Wu called on Shadow Xun. In an instant, Xun's tail shot up from the ground like a blade and struck Gold Axe's butt from below. After days of training, the tail could now extend roughly 1.3 meters, giving it the reach of a short spear.

The sudden attack caught Gold Axe completely off guard. The strike hurt him so badly that he couldn't maintain his technique, and he collapsed to the ground.

Han Wu seized the opening and attacked Gold Axe's head with Shadow Xun's materialized tail.

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: Chapter 874

Chapter 874 - Martial Ranks

With a sickening thud, Gold Axe's head was pierced clean through. Blood and brain matter splattered across the floor.

The bystanders fled in terror, afraid that Han Wu would attack them next. The Axe Gang was the largest gang in town, and Gold Axe was one of its leaders. Rumors even linked him to the town magistrate. Yet the man who could command the entire small town had died without warning.

Silver Axe saw Gold Axe's corpse and cried with fury and grief, "No! Brother!"

He Xu seized the opening and whipped his head forward to fling steel strands of hair at Silver Axe's face.

Two struck Silver Axe in the eyes. The attack was so sudden that it severely damaged his vision. His defense fell apart, and He Xu finished him off within a few exchanges.

With both leaders dead, the gang members panicked. Those sprawled across the floor scrambled to their feet and bolted for the door. Their injuries were superficial. They were painful but not fatal. If they failed to escape now, however, their next injuries would be far worse.

As the gang members tried to escape through the door, Qin Shuang was already waiting there. She grabbed one of them and unleashed a shock that cooked him to medium-rare on the spot.

After witnessing that, no one else dared move.

Once the gang was subdued, Jia Gui crawled out from under his table, looking extremely pleased with himself. He walked around the gang members and slapped them.

“Where’s all that tough talk now? It should be an honor for me to take your clothes. You know what this is called? This is called biting the hand that feeds you!”

The gang members could only listen in silence. Their fate rested in Han Wu’s hands now.

Han Wu had no interest in them. He dragged their boss in front of him. The man had broken down. He dropped to his knees and begged for mercy, swearing that he would never appear before Han Wu again.

Han Wu cut him off. “Enough. I’m going to ask you some questions, and you’re going to answer them. Understood? You said we have special powers. Tell me, are users like us common here?”

The man answered tremblingly, “I’ve heard that special users are about one in a hundred. But people with special abilities as powerful as yours are absolutely one in ten thousand.”

“Stop flattering us!” He Xu snapped. “How many fighters in your gang are as strong as those two leaders?”

The man answered quickly, “The Axe Gang only had those two, and they were Third-rate fighters. Nobody else in the gang or even in all of Pigpen Town is stronger.”

“Third-rate? That level of skill is only Third-rate?” Han Wu pressed. He needed to understand where he stood in this civilization’s power hierarchy.

The thug explained, “Gold Axe and Silver Axe were on the weaker end of Third-rate. Pigpen Town doesn’t have anyone stronger, so those two of them got to rule. Now that you’ve beaten them, you’re the Axe Gang’s new bosses.”

Han Wu wasn’t interested in it, and he continued questioning the man for more details. After an extensive interrogation, the group gained a much clearer picture of the civilization.

Martial artists were divided into six ranks: Unranked, Third-rate, Second-rate, First-rate, Top-tier, and Martial Grandmaster.

Unranked fighters were basically ordinary people with little talent and no serious training. Most had only three to five years of casual practice and could take on two or three regular people at once.

Third-rate fighters had some talent and had spent several years training diligently. They could defeat over a hundred ordinary people on their own, and some even developed special abilities as their strength increased. When a special ability complemented a practitioner's technique, its effectiveness could increase dramatically.

Second-rate fighters were several times stronger than Third-rate ones. They could casually handle eight or ten Third-rate opponents at once. People at this level usually found a reasonably powerful sect and served as a guest of honor.

First-rate fighters were stronger still. Many possessed techniques or styles that synergized perfectly with their special abilities. In the larger cities, they could establish their own minor sects and pass down their knowledge.

Top-tier fighters had mastered their techniques to perfection, refined their forms to the highest standard, and fully developed their special abilities. They typically served as senior leaders within major sects or ruled large cities. Some simply chose to wander the martial world.

Martial Grandmasters existed only in legend. They were said to possess the power to burn mountains and boil oceans and could nurture an entire domain to shelter their descendants for generations.

After hearing all this, Han Wu and He Xu formed a rough estimate. Martial Grandmasters most likely corresponded to the World rank. That meant the strongest life forms in the Martial Arts Civilization amounted to World rank at best, placing them one step below the Divine Civilization.

Of course, Han Wu's group was stuck at Third-rate. They were in no position to look down on Martial Grandmasters.

After extracting all the intel they could, Han Wu's group stripped the Axe Gang of their wealth, solving their funding problem for the journey ahead.

Among the loot, Han Wu found two manuals. One was called Heavenly Axe Triple Strike, while the other was Earthly Axe Triple Strike. Both were Third-rate techniques, but when practiced together with the golden and silver axes, their combined power could approach Second-rate.

With little else to occupy him during the journey, Han Wu decided to put his Shadow Xun to work. He had Xun train in both axe techniques. As expected, under Han Wu's guidance, Xun practiced day and night and mastered both manuals within three days, giving Han Wu

a small boost in strength. At the very least, he now had the option of throwing flying axes at distant enemies.

Thanks to their newfound wealth, the group followed the directions they had obtained from the locals and quickly reached the next city: Maple City. Maple trees lined its streets, and the locals claimed that the falling leaves in autumn created a breathtaking sight.

They planned to resupply in Maple City before continuing their journey.

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Chapter 875 - Fierce Local Culture

Having learned from their experience in Pigpen Town, the four entered Maple City without incident.

Maple City was far more prosperous than Pigpen Town, and its martial culture was much stronger. The moment they walked through the gates, they witnessed something unique to the city: old men ramming trees.

Giant maple trees lined both sides of the street. Nearly every tree had one or two old men beside it, gathering their strength before repeatedly slamming their shoulders or heads into the trunks.

The sight left them stunned. If only one old man had been doing it, they could have dismissed it as an eccentric habit. When more than a hundred old men were doing it together, however, it had practically become an art form. Meanwhile, this was only the tip of the iceberg.

Han Wu went to purchase supplies, picking up beef jerky, steamed buns, and similar provisions. Just as he was about to pay, two robbers burst in with knives drawn.

“This is a robbery! Hand over everything valuable!”

Han Wu looked outside. It was broad daylight, and people were strolling up and down the street, yet nobody paid the slightest attention. It seemed like this was just another ordinary day in Maple City.

Han Wu’s group was about to intervene when the shopkeeper pulled a long spear from behind the counter. With a single leap, he vaulted over the counter and beat the two robbers senseless. He only stopped when both robbers were covered in blood. He then stripped them of their valuables and tossed them out the front door.

The passersby didn't even spare the robbers a glance. The message was clear: one couldn't run a shop in Maple City without some skill.

When it was their turn to pay, the shopkeeper examined their purchases, identified them as outsiders, and helpfully multiplied the price by ten.

Han Wu was stunned. *Is this another expression of Maple City's fierce local culture?*

He refused to pay the markup prices, and the shopkeeper grabbed his spear again. "Kid, aren't you curious why someone with my skill runs a shop instead of robbing people for a living?"

"Why?" Jia Gui asked, playing along perfectly.

"Because running a shop makes more money than robbing people!" The shopkeeper vaulted over the counter and blocked the doorway. "Today, you're buying whether you want to or not."

"This is a scam shop!" Jia Gui protested.

The shopkeeper chuckled. "Scam shop, so what? Leave your money, and I'll let you live!"

Han Wu laughed. "How nice. The first shop we walk into turns out to be a scam. Truly wonderful. You may not know who we are, but I can tell you this. What we do best is rob robbers."

The shopkeeper narrowed his eyes and swung his spear, unleashing a barrage of thrusts that sealed off every escape route. His Willow Spear Technique was impressive. Had he been in Pigpen Town, he could easily have become the Axe Gang's leader.

Han Wu showed no mercy. Xun's tail shot up from the floor and pierced straight through the shopkeeper's torso. The man suffered a heavy injury from a single strike.

"Take everything valuable," Han Wu ordered.

Jia Gui hurried off and stuffed anything worth a significant amount into Shadow Xun's space. He even walked over to the fallen shopkeeper and pried the spear from his hands. "Nice spear, old man. Clearly well-maintained. It's mine now."

Han Wu asked, "Do you even know how to use a spear? You need a proper spear manual to bring out its full power."

Jia Gui slapped his forehead. "You're right."

He crouched down, grabbed the shopkeeper by the collar, and threatened, "Hand over the spear manual, or I'll skin you alive."

The shopkeeper was already half-dead from the chest wound. Jia Gui's shaking drained what little strength he had left. With a trembling hand, he pointed toward a painting on the wall.

Jia Gui took the painting down and found a hidden compartment behind it. He pulled it open and shouted, "Han Wu, we hit the jackpot!"

Inside were a spear manual, ten large gold ingots, and a set of internal cultivation techniques. It was the shopkeeper's last secret stash. He had no choice. To survive, he had to give up everything and hope they would spare his life.

Jia Gui cleaned out the compartment, then strutted back to the shopkeeper with a smug grin. "Not bad, not bad. Since you're so cooperative, I'll spare your life. Keep running this scam shop, though. Stock up on more treasure. Next time we're back to Maple City, we're robbing you again!"

The shopkeeper looked like he wanted to cry but had no tears left.

The group didn't linger and left. Less than half a day later, they spotted a squad of uniformed officials posting wanted posters.

Han Wu took a closer look and cursed under his breath. All four of them had been declared wanted in Maple City. The charges were robbery and assault. The bounty was a hundred silver coins.

Han Wu shook his head in disbelief. One hundred silver coins for the four of them? He tipped waiters two silver coins just for bringing his food! Were Maple City's officials out of their minds?

Three hours later, Han Wu realized he had been utterly wrong.

One hundred silver coins was pocket change to him, but to the natives, it was a fortune. As the wanted posters spread, the streets filled with armed people scanning every face they passed in hopes of finding Han Wu's group and claiming the reward.

The four of them were hiding in an inn, staring out the window at the scene below with growing alarm. If it were just eight or ten people, they could handle it. An entire city looking for them was a different matter.

There was no guarantee the inn was safe, either. The innkeeper could've already tipped off the authorities.

"What do we do now?" He Xu was at a loss for once. He had traveled through countless civilizations and completed countless missions, but he had never felt this helpless.

Han Wu took a deep breath. “We wait until dark, then figure out how to get out of the city.”

Qin Shuang nodded in agreement as she watched the armed people on the street below with unease. Maple City’s fierce culture had truly opened her eyes.

Jia Gui volunteered, “I’ll go have a chat with the innkeeper. If he’s been talking to the authorities, I’ll gut him.”

They waited until nightfall. No officials came to the inn, and the streets had grown fairly quiet. Han Wu decided it was time to leave.

Chapter 876 - Can I Still Surrender?

The instant Han Wu stepped out of the inn, he sensed eyes on them from the shadows. There were at least a dozen watchers. Their movements had been exposed long ago. Mobilizing so many people to capture four fugitives with a combined bounty of only a hundred silver coins was absurd. The reward wouldn’t even cover the hiring cost.

Han Wu spoke into the darkness. “Alright, come out. You haven’t made a move yet, so I’m guessing you’re not here just to apprehend us.”

A dozen figures in matching black garments emerged from every direction. “You’re as sharp as they say. Our master would like a word,” the leader said.

Han Wu spread his hands. “As if I have a choice. Lead the way.”

The men escorted them to an estate. Judging by the decor, the owner was clearly wealthy. After winding through a maze of corridors, they were brought into a large hall.

Inside, dancers in thin dresses performed before a middle-aged man seated at the head of the room in expensive robes. Guest fighters lined both sides of the hall, and every one of them was at least a Third-rate practitioner.

Once Han Wu’s group entered, the man dismissed the dancers and introduced himself. “My name is Han Feng. What the four of you did today was truly impressive. I apologize for using such crude methods to invite you here tonight.”

Han Wu nodded and said they didn’t mind. What he really wanted to know was what Han Feng wanted. Qin Shuang was equally confused. They had only beaten up a shopkeeper today. Why would this man go to such lengths to bring them here?

Han Feng seemed to read her thoughts. “You may not know this, but the man you injured today is the city lord’s brother-in-law. That’s why the city lord is hell-bent on catching you.

“As for me, I have a grudge against the city lord. The harder he tries to capture you, the more determined I am to keep you out of his hands.”

Han Wu understood. “Then just let us go. Why bring us here?”

“I heard you are all skilled fighters. I’d like to befriend you,” Han Feng replied.

Han Wu scoffed inwardly. *Making friends or recruiting subordinates?*

With Han Feng’s men surrounding them, however, Han Wu chose not to blurt out the truth.

“Being friends is fine, but we have business elsewhere and can’t stay in Maple City for long,” Han Wu said courteously.

Han Feng’s expression stiffened. He had risked the city lord’s anger precisely because he wanted to recruit them. Letting them leave was never part of the plan.

Naturally, he didn’t say that aloud. Instead, one of his guest fighters, a bald old man, abruptly rose to his feet. “Arrogant brats. Just because you’ve got a bit of skill, you think you’re something special? I am Iron Head and can’t stand people like you! Kid, how about a round with this old man? Let me see what you’ve got.”

Without waiting for a response, he leapt into the center of the hall and assumed a fighting stance.

Neither the other guest fighters nor Han Feng made any move to stop him. This was clearly premeditated.

Han Wu’s group exchanged glances.

Jia Gui was the first to bow out. “He said brats. I’m no brat. I’m a grown man.”

Han Wu was speechless. *Was that really the important bit?*

He Xu stepped forward. “Han Wu, let me handle this one.”

Han Wu shook his head. “The guy calls himself Iron Head. Your special ability isn’t a good match for him. I’ll take him.”

He Xu nodded and reminded him to be careful.

The hall cleared for the duel. Iron Head slapped his skull, producing a metallic ring. Han Wu seriously wondered whether the man's head was actually filled with iron.

Without a word, Iron Head charged and used his head as a battering ram. His momentum was tremendous, forcing Han Wu to retreat again and again. With that Iron Skull Technique alone, Iron Head was at least one of the top-ranking Third-rate fighters.

The guest fighters lining the hall shook their heads. They had expected more from Han Wu, but he couldn't even beat Iron Head.

Han Feng wasn't convinced. His scouts had reported that the city lord's brother-in-law had suffered a piercing wound, not a blunt injury. Why was Han Wu only using his fists?

After dodging several more attacks, Han Wu grew bored. He'd been holding back long enough. Surely he could surrender now without raising suspicion.

He stepped back and raised his hands. "Master Iron Head, your skill is beyond me. I admit defeat."

Han Wu had assumed that surrendering would end this pointless sparring match and let them leave, but Iron Head had other plans.

"Kid, I'm not finished yet! I'll wash my head with your blood today!" Iron Head roared and charged again.

Nobody in the hall moved to stop him.

Fine. So that's how it's going to be, Han Wu thought.

As Iron Head closed in, Han Wu launched Shadow Xun's attack. The golden and silver axes shot forward and slammed into Iron Head's skull. Their sharp edges carved two gashes across his scalp, and blood streamed down his face until his entire head was stained red.

No one in the hall could tell where the axes had come from. Shadow Xun drew the weapons back into the shadow.

Han Wu chuckled. "Master Iron Head, can I surrender now?"

Iron Head was enraged. He was already wounded like this, and Han Wu still wanted to surrender? To him, it was a blatant insult!

"I'll kill you!" With blood covering his head, Iron Head charged once more.

Han Wu sighed and shook his head. The man wouldn't listen. He had offered him a way out, and Iron Head had refused to take it. It was too late now.

Han Wu activated Shadow Xun again. The tail shot from his shadow like a spear and pierced straight through Iron Head's prized head. The arrowhead tip punched through bone and churned his brain. Iron Head died with his eyes wide open.

"Did it really have to come to this? I tried to surrender," Han Wu said with feigned regret, then turned toward the other guest fighters. "Anyone else want to challenge me? Step right up. I'm very weak."

Even after witnessing the killing blow, none of them could figure out how to defend against it. They waved their hands and declined. None of them wanted to die.

Chapter 877 - The Art of Managing People

Han Feng waved for his servants to remove Iron Head's body. That fight had given him a clear understanding of Han Wu's strength.

Han Wu would be hard-pressed to find a match at the Third-rate level. Only a Second-rate fighter could contend with him. Moreover, Han Feng wasn't even sure if that was Han Wu's full power. There was always the possibility of hidden techniques.

The thought alone excited Han Feng. If he could bring Han Wu under his banner, controlling all of Maple City would be within reach. The only problem was that Han Wu's group didn't seem interested in staying.

After a moment's thought, Han Feng asked, "May I ask what business brings you four here? Perhaps I can be of help."

Han Wu perked up at that. The four of them were clueless in the Martial Arts Civilization, with no connections or influence. Even if they reached Jiang City, they had no leads on finding the people who kidnapped Qin Shuang's family.

Han Feng, on the other hand, was at least powerful enough in Maple City to go toe-to-toe with the city lord. His resources were far beyond anything Han Wu's group had.

"Do you know Jiang City?" Han Wu asked.

Han Feng nodded. "I have several business interests in Jiang City, though not as many as here in Maple City."

Seeing an opportunity, Han Wu bluffed, "We're headed to Jiang City. My... wife's family was kidnapped by criminals, and we need to find them."

Qin Shuang felt shy when Han Wu called her his wife, but kept her composure.

“I see,” Han Feng said, a trace of delight in his voice.

Learning what Han Wu needed was the most important part. As long as he could fulfill that, he could win Han Wu over slowly and make him loyal. This was Han Feng’s philosophy of managing people.

“Maple City and Jiang City are quite far apart. It’s at least half a month by horseback. I have several merchant ships departing for Jiang City in five days. Following the lake downstream, the trip only takes five days. You’re welcome to stay and take the boat when it’s ready,” Han Feng proposed.

The group was delighted. A fifteen-day journey cut down to ten, with five of those being rest days.

Han Wu understood the principle of repaying a debt and seriously considered whether to help Han Feng during those five days. Taking the ride wouldn’t feel right otherwise.

Han Feng arranged rooms for them that night. The next morning, he came by to check on them, cleverly inquiring about their special abilities and preferred weapons. That afternoon, he returned with several training manuals, each selected to complement their special abilities and fighting styles. The effort was obvious, and Han Wu took note of it all.

After instructing the others to take the manuals suited to them and begin training, he claimed two manuals for himself.

The first was Mountain Splitter, an axe technique manual. The second was an internal cultivation method called the Dark Moon Sutra. This technique absorbed moonlight to increase one’s internal energy, and paired reasonably well with Shadow Xun.

Han Wu tossed both manuals to Xun, demanding results within three days. Xun desperately wanted to curse at him, but didn’t dare to.

After all, Xun had witnessed Han Wu slaughter countless enemies from inside the Demon King Transformation. His fear of Han Wu was etched into his very being. Even with Han Wu’s weakened strength in the Martial Arts Civilization, Xun still couldn’t fathom rebelling. The consequences were simply more than he could bear.

Left with no other choice, Xun could only resign himself to the hard work of training techniques and cultivating internal energy around the clock inside Han Wu’s shadow.

While Xun was lamenting this, Han Wu pulled out the two manuals previously looted from the shop and examined them closely.

One was the Willow Spear Technique, characterized by fast, precise, and ruthless thrusts. When mastered fully, it could reach the power of a Second-rate fighter. The other was an internal method called the Tyrant Spear Formula, which generated a special energy that greatly enhanced spear techniques and their lethality.

After a moment of thought, Han Wu threw these at Xun as well, telling him to study hard and not disappoint.

Such misfortune. That was Xun's only thought.

Two days passed in a flash. Han Wu ate, slept, and occasionally worked through techniques with Xun, using his experience to deepen Xun's understanding.

Qin Shuang, He Xu, and Jia Gui—lacking Han Wu's advantage of having a self-studying, self-training special ability—had to do everything themselves, so their progress was slower.

The morning of the next day, Han Wu woke up and was about to go eat when the old butler rushed in. "Master Han Wu, this is bad! Someone tipped off the city lord's office. They've sent men to search the estate. The four of you need to hide!"

Han Wu was briefly caught off guard. He'd almost forgotten that they were still on the city lord's wanted list. Their priority was catching Han Feng's ship to Jiang City. They couldn't risk being delayed.

After mulling it over, Han Wu had an idea. The city lord had issued the bounty. Han Wu couldn't remove the bounty, but he could try getting rid of the person who had issued it. The bounty would likely become irrelevant once the city lord was dead.

He grabbed the butler before the old man could leave and asked for the location of the city lord's estate. The old man gave him directions, but urged him to stay hidden. Despite nodding obediently, Han Wu's mind was already thinking about yanking the problem out at its roots.

After gathering Qin Shuang, Jia Gui, and He Xu, he explained the situation and his plan.

"You want to assassinate the city lord? I heard he's a Second-rate fighter with an incredibly powerful palm technique. Don't do anything rash!" Jia Gui objected immediately.

Han Wu was the least of Jia Gui's concerns. His biggest worry was being dragged down by association. This life of training techniques, sipping wine, and having beautiful attendants at his beck and call was much better than what he had back in the Divine Civilization. It was so pleasant that he had even considered never leaving Han Feng's estate.

Unfortunately, Han Wu needed Jia Gui. More precisely, he needed Jia Gui's speed. Jia Gui was not only the fastest of them but had also trained a speed-boosting footwork technique and an internal technique that lightened his body. This made him the perfect mount for Han Wu.

Chapter 878 - Your Last Words Are Too Long!

Jia Gui raced across rooftops with Han Wu on his back, cutting across the city lord's estate like a ghost.

The estate was bigger than Han Feng's, and Jia Gui stumbled around blindly until Han Wu could catch a servant and interrogate them on the city lord's location.

They found the city lord practicing in a courtyard. Ten large water urns were arranged around him. With each palm strike, an invisible force drew water out of the urns and gathered it into a massive sphere above his hands. The sphere morphed with every movement. Han Wu could make out a dragon-shaped current weaving across its surface.

Jia Gui was so nervous he barely dared breathe, but the city lord's sharp senses quickly detected something amiss.

"Who's there? Show yourself!" the city lord called out.

Han Wu knew there was no point hiding any longer, so he dropped from the rooftop into the courtyard. The city lord's shout drew a wave of guards in, spears leveled.

Keeping his composure, Han Wu activated Shadow Xun. Xun's form rose from his shadow behind him. After cultivating the Dark Moon Sutra, Xun had absorbed enough energy from the moonlight to temporarily separate from Han Wu's shadow and fight independently.

The guards froze at the eerie sight. The city lord, however, recognized Han Wu.

"I know you. You injured my brother-in-law!" he accused.

Han Wu didn't deny it. "I'll kill you too while I'm at it."

The city lord laughed. His brother-in-law was a weakling. Beating him didn't mean anything.

"You're confident. Fine, I'll give you a chance," the city lord graciously conceded.

In truth, he was just in the middle of a training session and wanted to test his skills in real combat. The water sphere hovering above his palms rapidly reshaped into a water dragon.

“Survive one strike of my Water Dragon Palm, and I’ll let you go.”

Han Wu scoffed. A water dragon was nothing to worry about.

They both moved at the same time. The city lord sent his water dragon spiraling toward Han Wu, but right before impact, Han Wu plunged into Shadow Xun’s Shadow Space and vanished. Meanwhile, Xun drew the spear stolen from the shop owner and engaged the water dragon directly.

Sharp cracks echoed with every thrust against the water dragon as Xun used the Tyrant Spear Formula in tandem with the Willow Spear Technique. Water splashed everywhere, and the dragon’s momentum dropped with each hit.

The city lord gritted his teeth and pushed harder, attempting to leverage control of his water dragon against Xun’s spear. At that moment, Han Wu burst out of the shadow, a golden and a silver axe flying from each hand.

The twin axes gleamed as they slammed into the city lord. His soft armor absorbed most of the damage, leaving only minor cuts, but the humiliation of the blow was scarring.

Forgetting his earlier promise, the city lord roared at his guards, “Are you blind? Seize him! Execute him on the spot!”

The guards snapped to attention and circled Han Wu, spears in formation. Han Wu pulled the axes back and hurled them out again on a curve. They carved through the guards effortlessly. After several repeats of this attack, every guard was dead. They hadn’t even gotten anywhere close to Han Wu.

At the same time, Xun destroyed the water dragon with a final barrage of spear strikes before turning his attention to the city lord. A foreboding chill ran down the city lord’s spine when he realized that Han Wu and Xun had cornered him.

“Guards! Protect me!” he screamed desperately.

Han Wu and Xun quickly closed the distance to the city lord’s side. The spear and twin axes pressed against his neck simultaneously.

The city lord couldn’t help but regret issuing those wanted notices. No, going further back, he never should’ve let his brother-in-law run that scam shop—or perhaps he shouldn’t have married his wife in the first place.

Pressing the cold edges of the axe blades against the city lord's neck, Han Wu offered a courtesy, "You gave me a chance to fight you, so I'll give you a chance to say your last words."

"Spare me!" the city lord begged. "I'll never come after you again! If you let me go, I'll cancel the bounty and pay you any amount of gold you want. I swear!"

Han Wu flashed a small smile, then took the city lord's head clean off with a slash of the twin axes. "Your last words are too long to remember."

Both servants and guards arrived just in time to see their lord's head roll. The sight of the bodies littering the courtyard had them frozen in shock.

"What? You want to die too?" Han Wu asked coldly.

The servants and guards immediately backed out of the courtyard and fled, all pretending not to have seen a thing.

Satisfied, Han Wu whistled for Jia Gui. No one appeared.

"Where the hell did he go? Did the guards get him?" Han Wu muttered to himself.

He dismissed the idea almost immediately. Jia Gui was terrible in a fight, but he was fast. He'd have to run face-first into a spear to actually be killed.

Just then, Jia Gui's head popped out of a window behind Han Wu. "Han Wu! Get over here! I found something good!"

Han Wu understood at once. The man had gone looting. Deciding to combine righteous anger with a thorough inspection, he followed Jia Gui into the room and saw an enormous jade bed. Even from a distance, Han Wu could feel the pure energy it radiated. Training internal techniques on that bed would massively boost cultivation speed.

Jia Gui eagerly stared at Han Wu, clearly waiting to be praised. Han Wu could only compliment him with a sigh.

Pleased, Jia Gui started ransacking the rest of the room. Whether by talent or dumb luck, he bumped a vase that turned out to be a hidden switch. A bookshelf slid open to reveal a passage leading underground.

Han Wu and Jia Gui exchanged excited looks. They could practically smell the treasure awaiting them down there.

: Chapter 879

Chapter 879 - Kunpeng Divine Art

Han Wu stored the jade bed in his Shadow Space before heading down the hidden passage with Xun in the lead and Jia Gui at the back.

They descended a long flight of stairs and emerged in a chamber roughly the size of a basketball court. The space was packed with rows of shelves, each loaded with valuables. There were jade carvings, paintings, vases, weapons, and manuals in the form of books, bamboo scrolls, and rolled parchments.

“We’re rich!” Jia Gui exclaimed in joy. Every item in this chamber was clearly worth a fortune. Some would qualify as treasures even outside the Martial Arts Civilization.

Unfortunately, the Shadow Space wasn’t big enough. In fact, the jade bed had already taken up most of it. Jia Gui almost cried when he heard this. There was nothing more heartbreaking than being confronted with a mountain of treasure but having no way to take it home.

Even so, the jade bed was essential for training, so it stayed. The remaining space simply had to be used wisely. Han Wu prioritized the manuals, as they would accelerate the group’s growth. After the manuals came the weapons, as a strong weapon could amplify any technique. It was too bad that he only had the space to pick a few.

Jia Gui claimed a small but razor-sharp dagger for himself and tucked it into his belt. He then grabbed as many of the most valuable-looking jade carvings as he could carry.

While this was going on, Han Wu noticed writing carved into the wooden shelf boards closest to him. Upon examining the other shelves, he discovered that every board had them.

He and Xun quickly pulled the boards down and arranged them in order. Together, the etchings made up a manual called the Kunpeng Divine Art, though it seemed only the upper half, the Kun chapter, was recorded. The lower half, the Peng chapter, was missing.

Han Wu skimmed the chapter and learned that the art couldn’t generate internal energy, qi, sword energy, or any other conventional energy. In fact, practicing it would erase all previously cultivated techniques. Its sole function was to absorb the internal energy and qi of others and make it the user’s own.

The Kunpeng Divine Art didn’t produce energy, but moved energy around.

For others, this cost would've been devastating. Giving up all prior cultivation was an enormous sacrifice. Han Wu, however, hadn't personally cultivated any techniques since entering the Martial Arts Civilization.

Xun was the one who had been training. When Han Wu needed energy, he simply drew it from Xun. He had no cultivation of his own to erase.

Even more exciting was the art's hidden advantage. It was a natural counter against any opponent with internal energy or qi. Han Wu could simply drain them dry and turn their energy against them. If the opponent had no such energy, it would simply be a fair fight.

Still, most high-level fighters inevitably cultivated some form of energy. Those who relied purely on physical strength and technique alone were an extreme minority.

It didn't take much consideration for Han Wu to commit to learning the Kunpeng Divine Art. After memorizing every detail, he smashed the wooden boards into splinters and set them on fire. That would greatly reduce the chances of anyone else learning the same art.

Loaded with treasures, Jia Gui piggybacked Han Wu back across rooftops to Han Feng's estate.

The estate was in chaos. The city lord's soldiers had come to search the property, but Han Feng's fighters were holding them off. The initial shoving had since escalated into a full brawl. Although the soldiers had numbers on their side, Han Feng's fighters had individual strength, so the outcome remained up in the air.

Han Wu walked straight out and stood in front of the soldiers.

The lead officer's eyes lit up. "Han Feng! You said you weren't sheltering the fugitives!"

Han Feng groaned. He'd told the butler to make sure Han Wu stayed hidden. Why hadn't he listened?

Before Han Feng could scramble for an excuse, Han Wu asked innocently, "What do you mean, fugitives?"

The officer scoffed and pulled out Han Wu's wanted poster. "Take a good look. Is this you or not?"

Han Wu studied the drawing for a moment before nodding thoughtfully. "That's me. I was thinner back then."

"So you admit it. Men, seize him!" the officer barked.

Several guards rushed forward, but Han Wu held up a hand. "Hold on. I have something to say."

“You’re about to die. What could you possibly have to say?” The officer sneered.

“Actually, my bounty’s been cancelled. I went and talked to the city lord about it personally.”

“Nonsense. We’re here on the city lord’s orders!”

“Guess I’ll have to show you proof.” Han Wu gestured with his hand.

Jia Gui appeared, holding the city lord’s severed head by the hair.

“Feel free to ask your city lord about the state of my bounty,” Han Wu said with a cold smile. “If you can’t hear him clearly, I can send you to ask in person.”

These words hit the soldiers like a chill from beyond the grave. Every man froze.

One of the officers leaned in and whispered, “Sir, do we still arrest them?”

The lead officer shoved the guy to the ground before kicking him twice for good measure. “Who told you to speak? Unauthorized deployment and illegal entry into a private residence are serious crimes! Who gave you the authority?”

The guy was completely lost. Hadn’t the city lord ordered this? How had it turned into his unauthorized action? The blame had landed squarely on his shoulders before he even realized what was happening.

“Master Han, today was a misunderstanding. My subordinate acted without permission. Please accept my apologies. I’ll take him back and discipline him thoroughly.” The lead officer kicked the officer one more time before he ordered all his men to pull out.

Han Wu shouted, “Take your city lord with you!”

Jia Gui tossed the head into the lead officer’s arms. The officer silently clutched the head and retreated in a hurry.

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 880 - True Special Ability

Regaining his composure after the soldiers left, Han Feng turned to Han Wu and asked, “Was that really the city lord’s head?”

“You know the city lord’s face.” Han Wu smiled. “You tell me.”

Han Feng was speechless. The city lord’s estate was heavily fortified, with guards posted on every corner. The city lord himself was a Second-rate fighter whose Water Dragon Palm could hold off even a First-rate opponent for several bouts.

Yet, Han Wu had managed to kill him, and in such a short time at that. This was equivalent to plucking a general’s head from the midst of a thousand soldiers.

The feat only deepened Han Feng’s belief that Han Wu was far more dangerous than he appeared. He quietly swore to himself that he would never, under any circumstances, cross Han Wu. The city lord was the perfect cautionary tale.

After a brief talk with Han Feng, Han Wu returned to his room to sort through the collected manuals. The city lord’s collection was far superior to what Han Feng had provided.

Qin Shuang, He Xu, and Jia Gui each selected several manuals suited to their styles and began training. The rest went to Xun. Han Wu informed the shadow that this was his workload for the next ten days.

Xun stared at the small mountain of manuals piled in front of him with despair. *Such misfortune!*

With the manuals distributed, Han Wu started his own training. The Kun chapter of the Kunpeng Divine Art required practice to increase the rate at which one could absorb another’s energy. Fortunately, with Han Wu’s excellent comprehension, his cultivation speed was remarkable.

Soon, the day of departure arrived. Han Feng arranged for Han Wu’s group to board the ship bound for Jiang City. The man himself was on the ship as well.

Since the debacle with the city lord’s death, he had thanked Han Wu repeatedly. No one in Maple City could challenge Han Feng anymore. Even the new city lord had personally visited Han Feng the day before to ask for his protection. Han Feng had become Maple City’s shadow leader.

Han Feng was truly grateful to Han Wu for this. It didn’t even matter whether this merchant ship turned a profit on this trip. Keeping Han Wu happy took precedence above all.

Han Wu continued to train on the voyage. In just four days, he could already activate the Kunpeng Divine Art at close range. This was merely the entry level. If he fully mastered it, he could drain a person’s cultivation from a hundred meters away. He was still far from that.

One day, while everyone was training, the ship suddenly lurched.

A guard rushed to Han Feng and reported, “Sir! River bandits!”

“River bandits? Where?” Han Wu asked, poking his head out.

He was itching to test the Kunpeng Divine Art. A horn sounded, and several long, narrow boats appeared. Each carried over a dozen shirtless men armed with assorted weapons.

“There’s nothing I hate more than merchants! Hand over your money, or my blade goes in white and comes out red!” shouted a bandit.

The rest burst out laughing.[1]

Meanwhile, Han Wu could barely contain his excitement. This was a gift from the heavens! He wasn’t about to let willing prey escape. Leaping from the ship, he landed on the nearest boat.

“This kid’s got a death wish! Get him!” Several bandits drew their weapons and rushed him.

Han Wu sent Xun to deal with them while he grabbed the nearest bandit and activated the Kunpeng Divine Art. Internal energy and qi pulled toward Han Wu’s palm. The bandit felt as though his body had been hollowed out. Half a year’s worth of cultivated internal energy was drained to the last drop.

Han Wu tossed the emptied bandit overboard with a dissatisfied click of his tongue. “Is that all you’ve got? You call yourself a bandit with that little cultivation? Is the bar really that low?”

He moved on to the next bandit. Then the next. He cleared the first boat of over a dozen men in no time and obtained barely thirteen years’ worth of combined internal energy. It was nowhere near enough!

The Kunpeng Divine Art’s absorbed power was gone once exhausted. Thirteen years of internal energy wasn’t going to last Han Wu long.

He jumped to the second boat, then the third. It didn’t take long for the situation to dawn on the bandits. They tried to flee in panic, but Han Wu chased them down and drained every last one of them.

By the time he was done, a hundred years of accumulated internal energy sat inside him. This gathered energy allowed Han Wu to sense something new. This power could be used to activate the Demon King Transformation.

That was when it clicked. His special ability wasn't Xun at all! It was the Demon King Transformation itself! His power had simply been too low for anything aside from Xun to appear. Xun was simply a small part of the Demon King Transformation.

This discovery only increased Han Wu's determination. The Demon King Transformation was immensely powerful. A hundred years of internal energy only gave him enough to use the first form once. The second and third forms would require exponentially more energy.

Han Wu would have to push his Kunpeng Divine Art training harder than before if he wanted to unlock greater power.

1. Laughs in Li Huowang ☜

Chapter 881 - Increasing Internal Energy

After the encounter with the river bandits, the rest of the journey passed without incident. Han Wu was actually a bit disappointed that no other opportunities arose to absorb internal energy.

When they reached Jiang City, Han Wu's group moved into Han Feng's residence. Before abducting Qin Shuang's family, the kidnappers had left her with an address.

Rather than acting rashly, Han Wu's group had Han Feng send people to investigate the location first. The results came back empty. The place had already been abandoned.

Qin Shuang nearly broke down on the spot. The kidnappers had gone back on their word, switching locations without informing her. The Martial Arts Civilization was vast. Where was she supposed to start looking for her family?

Han Wu offered a few words of comfort, though he didn't fully trust the investigation's findings. After all, there were matters involving the Divine Civilization that the Martial Arts Civilization's locals couldn't detect. Before making any plans, he decided to inspect the location himself.

When Qin Shuang heard that, she insisted on accompanying him. Her family's safety was at stake, and she had to be there in person to feel at ease. Once they reached an agreement, Han Wu and Qin Shuang set out. He Xu dragged Jia Gui along too.

After arriving at the address, Han Wu knocked on the door. Once they confirmed nobody was inside, they broke in. The four searched together but found no trace of its former occupants.

The unexpected discovery came from Jia Gui. He found a formation constructed from runes. Drawing on what she had learned in class, Qin Shuang used her lightning-infused internal energy to break it.

A slip of paper fell from the formation. It had Qin Shuang's name written on it, instructing her to deliver the ransom to the White Lotus Sect's Lotus Heart Sage within three days, or her family would die. The three-day countdown started the moment the formation was broken.

With this information, Han Wu's group returned to Han Feng's residence. The latter dispatched people to investigate the sect and the Lotus Heart Sage.

Half a day later, the scouts returned with their report. The White Lotus Sect was a major faction that spanned dozens of towns and cities. They had established a branch in Jiang City, and the Lotus Heart Sage oversaw that branch. He was a First-rate fighter.

When Qin Shuang heard the news, her heart sank. *The Lotus Heart Sage is a First-rate fighter. We may not be a match for him. On top of that, there is no guarantee that he'll actually release my family even after receiving the ransom.*

The three-day deadline severely limited how much Han Wu's group could improve. It felt like a calculated move. If Qin Shuang refused to appear, her family would likely be killed. If she showed up and paid the ransom, her family could still remain locked up.

If Han Wu accompanied her, that outcome would align perfectly with the True Martial God King's plans. At their current level, a First-rate fighter could kill them all in fewer than ten moves. No matter how they looked at it, they were trapped.

Qin Shuang was on the verge of despair. Seeing her like that, Han Wu said firmly, "Relax. I still have a way. Your strength can't reach First-rate level in such a short time, but mine may!"

While listening to the scouts' earlier report, Han Wu had noticed something. Jiang City was a chaotic place teeming with factions. Where there were factions, there were numerous martial artists. If he could accumulate enough internal energy, even a First-rate fighter wouldn't necessarily beat him. The problem was the three-day window. Half a day had already passed, and he had to make every remaining hour count.

Although Qin Shuang was uncertain whether the plan would succeed, it was the only option available. With intelligence provided by Han Feng's scouts, Han Wu targeted his first target: the Azure Fish Gang.

This gang made its living from the fishing trade, though its members never fished themselves. Instead, they extorted fishermen for protection fees and charged them for the right to cast their lines. Whenever fishermen made a catch, they took a cut. Those who refused to pay got beaten.

The worst rumor claimed that they had once kicked a fisherman into the water and left him there for three days and three nights until he starved to death. The locals despised the Azure Fish Gang but didn't dare provoke them. After all, their leader was a Third-rate fighter who commanded a dozen unranked thugs.

Han Wu could earn internal energy while helping the people at the same time. Following the scouts' directions, he arrived at one of the gang's claimed territories.

He kicked the door open and found several young men gutting fish to make salted dried fish. When they saw him barge in, they jumped to their feet.

"Who are you? How dare you break into the Azure Fish Gang's turf?"

"I'm here for the Azure Fish Gang," Han Wu shot back immediately. "Get your boss out here."

"Just you alone, and you want to see our boss? You must be tired of living." One of the young men sneered and threw a punch.

The young man was unranked, but as the saying went, "Youth comes with strength." Purely through physical power, he could hold his own against many members of the nearby gangs.

Han Wu caught the incoming fist effortlessly, activated the Kunpeng Divine Art, and drained all of the young man's internal energy in one breath.

The young man went limp as every ounce of strength was gone and stammered, "W-what did you do to me?"

"Get lost." Han Wu flung him aside.

The young man hit the ground hard. The others saw what happened and backed away, too afraid to step forward. Han Wu didn't want to waste time, so he struck first. Within moments, he had drained them all dry.

The problem was that their cultivation was pathetic. Six of them combined didn't even give him a full year's worth of internal energy. Han Wu was annoyed. The gang's standards were abysmal and dragged down Jiang City's average.

Soon, the commotion attracted someone from inside. A middle-aged man with a dragon tattoo stepped out. When he saw his men sprawled across the ground, his expression darkened.

"Who are you, and why are you causing trouble at the Azure Fish Gang?" the man demanded.

Han Wu couldn’t be bothered with courtesy.

“I’m your daddy!” he snapped and lunged at him.

The middle-aged man was slippery, moving like an eel. Han Wu had no choice but to call out Xun. The latter landed two clean axe strikes and left the man badly wounded. Only then could Han Wu drain his internal energy.

The man was reasonably strong and provided Han Wu with fifteen years’ worth of internal energy. Judging by his internal energy, he was almost certainly the gang leader.

Wiping out the entire gang earned Han Wu sixteen years of internal energy and cost him an hour of time. At that rate, even if he continued nonstop for the remaining sixty-five hours without eating or sleeping, he would only gain 1,040 years. It would still not be enough.

After leaving the Azure Fish Gang, Han Wu told the scout leading the way, “Next time, take me to bigger gangs. Ideally, ones with a Second-rate fighter in charge and about a dozen Third-rate fighters under them.”

The scout swallowed hard. “You won’t find that kind of lineup among the small gangs around here. You’d need to target the mid-sized ones, the ones with more than a hundred members. Can the four of you handle that?”

“Won’t know until we try,” Han Wu replied.

Chapter 882 - Four Terrors of Jiang City

“Brother Zhang, have you heard? Four troublemakers showed up in Jiang City recently!” a guard named Little Liu said outside the Black Mountain Hall.

“Tell me about it,” the other guard replied with a sigh. “My cousin’’s group, the Red Sand Hall, got hit by those four. They beat the brothers to a pulp.”

“How bad was it?” Little Liu asked curiously.

“Put it this way. Not a single person in the entire hall could stand up afterward!”

“That’’s brutal. Did they break everyone’’s legs?”

“Worse than that. They crippled everyone’’s martial arts.”

“Monsters! Brother Zhang, you always know things. Do you know what the four of them look like? I want to be ready in case I run into them, so I can get the hell out.”

Old Zhang eagerly shared the information he had gathered. “You’’re asking the right person. The four of them are all different: tall, short, fat, and thin. The first one is apparently old, incredibly ugly, and creepy-looking. His footwork is unreal, though. He moves like a rat. Even Second-rate fighters can’’t lay a finger on him.

“The second one is nine feet tall with broad shoulders and a thick waist. His whole body is like a pincushion of steel spikes. He carries hidden weapons everywhere. With a flick of his wrist, he can skewer several people at once.

“The third one is supposedly the strongest of the four. He’’s young and good-looking. He keeps a little black demon hidden in his shadow most of the time. When things get serious, the demon jumps out and chops people to pieces with an axe. Rumor has it that he’’s also the one who used some vicious technique to drain everyone’’s internal energy.

“As for the fourth, she’’s a young girl. Red lips, white teeth, pale skin, gorgeous. A real beauty. The problem is that she’’s ruthless. Everyone she hits ends up charred black, as if they were struck by lightning.”

Old Zhang was getting carried away with his story when Little Liu suddenly started trembling and tugging at Old Zhang’’s sleeve.

“What?” Old Zhang asked irritably. He hated being interrupted when he was on a roll.

Little Liu’’s legs had gone weak. “Brother Zhang, am I seeing things? Look, are those the Four Terrors?”

Old Zhang followed his gaze and nearly stumbled. “How did they end up here? What are you waiting for? Get inside and report it!”

Before he could move, Jia Gui’’s voice drifted into his ear in its signature creepy tone. “Report what? Why don’’t you tell me about it?”

Old Zhang’’s heart slammed against his chest so hard he thought it would burst. He let out a yelp and fainted on the spot.

Little Liu was pinned by Jia Gui’’s hand on his shoulder and didn’’t dare move a muscle. Han Wu walked over and placed his hand on Old Zhang’’s body. A pulling force radiated from his palm and targeted the man’’s internal energy.

Old Zhang twitched once, then went still. Without his internal energy, he fell into a deep sleep. Little Liu was terrified.

Then Han Wu’’s voice sounded beside his ear. “Relax. This’’ll be over quickly.”

The next moment, Little Liu felt a suction force surge through him, pulling out every last scrap of internal energy he had. Without it, he went limp and collapsed to the ground.

“Let’'s go. Inside.” Han Wu pushed the gate open.

Inside, a number of disciples were training. They spotted Han Wu’'s group of four and froze, instantly thinking of the infamous Four Terrors of Jiang City.

Before any of them could react, Han Wu gave the order. “Begin.”

Qin Shuang burst into the crowd like a bolt of lightning, paralyzing everyone she touched with her electricity. He Xu swung his fists, and with each punch, steel needles formed from his hair and shot out like hidden weapons, striking every enemy in their path.

Jia Gui darted through the melee with a dagger, looking for openings. The moment someone let their guard down, he slipped behind them and drove the blade in before retreating. He lived for the thrill.

As for Xun, he naturally sought out the strongest opponents. With his abilities, ordinary Second-rate fighters were no match for him. His favorite pastime was dragging Second-rate fighters over to Han Wu like dead dogs so that the latter could drain their internal energy.

By the end of the beatdown, every Black Mountain Hall member lay sprawled on the ground. Han Wu went through them one by one and used the Kunpeng Divine Art.

Through repeated practice, he had mastered the technique of draining internal energy from a distance. He could now extract someone’'s internal energy without physical contact from as far as thirty centimeters away. This progress sped things up considerably.

After draining every member, Han Wu felt his stored internal energy finally reach the threshold required to activate the second stage of the Demon King Transformation, the True Black Dragon King Transformation.

This was a massive breakthrough. Han Wu was confident that even a single use of the True Black Dragon King Transformation would be enough to defeat a First-rate fighter like the Lotus Heart Sage.

The time had come.

Han Wu immediately led the other three to the White Lotus Sect’'s Jiang City branch. It was only a branch, but its layout was elegant. Stone lotus carvings flanked the entrance, so lifelike that they seemed real. Inside the courtyard was a large lotus pond with a subtle current of flowing water beneath the surface.

The four of them had barely stepped through the gate when two young women in white veils approached.

“What brings the four of you here?”

Qin Shuang glanced at Han Wu, then stepped forward. “I’'m here to see the Lotus Heart Sage and pay the ransom.”

The two veiled women didn’'t understand what she meant by ransom, but they led the group to the Lotus Heart Sage’'s quarters.

The path was paved with white pebbles that gave it a refined appearance. Qin Shuang paid no attention to the scenery. Her eyes were fixed on the door ahead.

It opened, and the Lotus Heart Sage stepped out in white ceremonial robes. He was a middle-aged man with a five-petaled white lotus etched between his brows. He walked with a peculiar swaying gait that gave him an almost effeminate air.

“You’'re Qin Shuang?” the Lotus Heart Sage asked. When he looked at her, a flash of lust crossed his eyes.

“Where is my family?” Qin Shuang demanded.

“If you want to see your family, hand over the ransom first,” the Lotus Heart Sage replied.

Han Wu stepped forward with a cold laugh. “No ransom. I came instead. Do I look like a ransom to you?”

The Lotus Heart Sage got a clear look at Han Wu’'s face and burst out laughing. “Holy Mother’'s mercy, there really are fools who walk willingly to their own deaths. You’'re Han Wu, aren’'t you? My orders say that your death is worth more than any ransom. So tell me, how would you like to die?”

“I’'d like to watch you die.” Han Wu’'s voice was glacial.

: Chapter 883

Chapter 883 - Invoking the Gods

There was nothing left to say after that declaration. Both sides moved at once.

He Xu punched the air, and a barrage of hair-thin steel needles flew out. Each one carried an edge of qi sharp enough to pierce a centimeter of solid steel. The Lotus Heart Sage formed hand seals, channeled his internal energy, and conjured a shield marked with a white lotus. The remarkably tough shield deflected He Xu's needles with ease.

Seeing this, Jia Gui quietly slipped to the back of the group, beady eyes darting around. Although he outwardly looked like he was scanning for ambushes, in reality, he was actually scouting escape routes.

Han Wu ignored Jia Gui, choosing to prioritize getting answers from the Lotus Heart Sage. He and Qin Shuang attacked together from opposite sides.

Summoning his gold and silver twin axes, Han Wu swung them in a cross pattern. Two streams of qi, one gold and one silver, slammed into the white lotus shield, but caused no damage.

Qin Shuang gathered her lightning technique, formed a Thunder Palm, and smashed it against the shield. The impact sent cracks across the shield, but it reformed almost instantly.

The Lotus Heart Sage released a blast of qi, which sent Han Wu and Qin Shuang flying. That brief exchange had given the Lotus Heart Sage a clear read on their abilities. The gap between them and a First-rate fighter like himself was significant. He could crush all four of them on his own.

"Mere fireflies dare to try and outshine the brilliance of the moon. Today I'll show you the White Lotus Sect's ultimate technique, the Thousand Lotus Bloom. You'll die as you were meant to!" Qi surged around the Lotus Heart Sage, forming lotus after lotus of pure white energy. They were beautiful, but deadly.

As the Thousand Lotus Bloom took shape, a figure rose slowly from the Lotus Heart Sage's shadow. Xun had slipped into the Lotus Heart Sage's shadow during the earlier exchange on Han Wu's orders, biding his time for the perfect moment to strike.

Xun extended his tail. Dozens of techniques layered their hidden boosts on top of it. The strike drove straight into the Lotus Heart Sage's butt with unstoppable force!

The Lotus Heart Sage had been building up his ultimate attack when the ambush hit. The precision of the strike only made it worse. The pain launched him three meters into the air, and he nearly flew past the courtyard wall.

When he landed, his face was deathly pale, and the wound on his butt was still bleeding freely. The backlash from having the Thousand Lotus Bloom interrupted had also severely injured him. The Lotus Heart Sage looked nothing like the imposing First-rate fighter he was supposed to be.

“Cowards! Resorting to such a despicable ambush!” the Lotus Heart Sage roared.

Han Wu snapped back instantly, “Right, right, you’re the honorable one. You kidnap people’s families but act like you hold the moral high ground.”

The Lotus Heart Sage had no comeback for that. In truth, his character wasn’t much better than Han Wu’s.

Setting aside the squabble, the Lotus Heart Sage gritted his teeth and tried to steady himself. His ultimate technique was out of commission, and his injuries made it impossible to fight with any real power.

That left him one option. The White Lotus Sect’s other closely guarded secret: the Divine Invocation. This technique called upon a god to fight on one’s behalf, also known as divine possession. The god’s power would massively boost his combat power and temporarily heal his wounds. It was more than enough to deal with four Second-rate fighters.

Forming another set of hand seals, he chanted an incantation under his breath. An invisible pressure descended upon him.

When Han Wu’s group felt it, their eyes went wide. They recognized this pressure. It was a Divine Authority! The Lotus Heart Sage was somehow channeling a Divine Authority into himself!

The Lotus Heart Sage felt the power in him and cried out, “I call upon True Martial God King to descend!”

In that instant, the Lotus Heart Sage changed. While his outward appearance and body were the same, his presence became that of a completely different person. There was something familiar in that presence.

“Han Wu, long time no see!” the Lotus Heart Sage said, voice nothing like before.

“True Martial God King!” Han Wu blurted out.

Qin Shuang, He Xu, and even Jia Gui, who had been ready to bolt at any second, were all shaken.

“Han Wu, are you joking? How could he possibly be the True Martial God King?” Jia Gui asked incredulously. Despite his skeptical question, his voice trembled. Deep down, he knew Han Wu was right.

He Xu’s face darkened. They could barely handle a First-rate fighter, let alone the True Martial God King.

Qin Shuang was drowning in guilt. Despite suspecting this was a trap from the start, she had still allowed Han Wu and the others to take on this dangerous rescue mission anyway.

The reality was even worse than she had imagined.

“Han Wu, by saying my name, you’ve just sealed the fate of everyone here,” the True Martial God King said through the Lotus Heart Sage’s body.

Han Wu scoffed. “As if you’d have let us go if I hadn’t.”

“Ha! Fair point. Your fates were sealed the moment you stepped into this courtyard. You should be grateful I didn’t crush you when I found out you stole my Origin of Mutation. I would’ve too if you hadn’t somehow stumbled into Imperial College’s protection—lucky you. But there’s nobody around to save you here in the Martial Arts Civilization! Just accept your death! Once you’re dead, I’ll trace your corpse back to your divine realm and reclaim what’s mine.”

Han Wu was internally panicking, but there was no running now. He had to fight.

“Get behind me. Find a chance to escape. I’ll hold him off as long as I can,” he whispered to the other three.

They were in a hopeless situation. If even one person could survive, that would be a win.

“I’m not leaving. I’m staying with you,” Qin Shuang refused, determined to see it through with Han Wu.

He Xu, confronted with the prospect of certain death, actually relaxed a little. “Han Wu, I’ll be honest, I’ve resented you at times, but my mentor instructed me to protect you, and I’ll see it through even if it kills me.”

“You can’t be serious about fighting!” Jia Gui exclaimed, on the verge of losing control of his bladder. “You’re all insane! What’s the point of trying to fight a futile battle? Running is the only smart move.”

“Run? You think you can?” mocked the possessed Lotus Heart Sage.

That broke Jia Gui. He peeled away from the group and threw himself at the Lotus Heart Sage’s feet. “I barely know them. I have nothing to do with whatever grudge this is. You can kill them, but please spare me! I’ll repay you when I get back to the Divine Civilization. I’m a World rank fighter, believe it or not. Let me live, and I’ll serve you however you want.”

“Han Wu, your teammate seems to need some help.” The possessed Lotus Heart Sage laughed.

Then, turning to Jia Gui, he sneered. “I’ve never seen a World rank fighter so afraid to die before. Fine, since you want to switch sides, I’ll accept. Stand behind me and cheer me on.”

“You got it!” Jia Gui scrambled behind the Lotus Heart Sage, looking as though the heavens themselves had granted him mercy.

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: Chapter 884

Chapter 884 - It Was All an Act!

The possessed Lotus Heart Sage surveyed the field with cold authority as he gathered his Divine Authority for a devastating finishing blow against Han Wu.

Han Wu held nothing back, channeling every drop of gathered internal energy he had into his special ability. “Demon King Transformation!”

The arms of the Swordwind race, dragon claws, dragon wings, dragon scales, and powerful limbs manifested on Han Wu’s body. In the blink of an eye, his presence became infinitely close to that of a First-rate fighter.

Despite this, he was still weaker than the possessed Lotus Heart Sage. Han Wu pushed further to Demon King Transformation Stage Two, True Black Dragon King Transformation.

Powerful muscles swelled across his body. Oppressive Dragon Fear and a dense wave of darkness radiated from Han Wu, colliding head-on with the Lotus Heart Sage’s Divine Authority. For a moment, the two forces held each other in check.

The possessed Lotus Heart Sage’s attention was locked entirely on Han Wu. Han Wu’s power had stirred something in him. The True Martial Jurisdiction and the Duel Jurisdiction shared something in common. They both demanded constant battle for growth.

At that exact moment, the cowering Jia Gui suddenly came alive. His eyes lit up as he shot toward the Lotus Heart Sage’s back. He drove the blade he had found back in the city lord’s estate straight at the Lotus Heart Sage’s butt.

There were two reasons for this target. First, it was the spot with the weakest defenses, making it easier to penetrate. Second, the Lotus Heart Sage had already been stabbed

there once. Divine Invocation had kept the wound from worsening, but a second blow to the same injury would surely deal catastrophic damage.

The twenty-centimeter-long blade stabbed easily into the butt. Jia Gui even twisted the handle inside. Blood poured freely from the already devastated wound. The Lotus Heart Sage's momentum scattered in an instant as he turned to stare at Jia Gui in shock.

Jia Gui immediately put on a terrified face, released the blade, and scrambled back a good ten meters. He was genuinely afraid, but his strike was nothing short of betrayal.

"Don't blame me. Han Wu made me do it. If you want to blame someone, blame him!" Jia Gui whimpered.

Han Wu wordlessly raised his fist. Terrifying Dark Energy and Dragon Fear converged on it. Without a shred of hesitation, he threw the punch. The force took the shape of a Black Dragon and crashed into the possessed Lotus Heart Sage, corroding every last trace of Divine Authority and forcing the True Martial God King to withdraw.

In the final second before leaving, he issued one last warning. "Han Wu, you haven't won yet. The road is long. We'll see each other again..."

With that, his presence faded from the Lotus Heart Sage's body. Without the True Martial God King's power sustaining him, the Lotus Heart Sage collapsed. A pool of blood stained the floor beneath him. The severe blood loss had left him with no strength left to resist. He knew he was done for, but the bitterness of this humiliating defeat was hard to swallow.

Qin Shuang seized the Lotus Heart Sage by the collar. "Tell me where my family is!"

The Lotus Heart Sage smirked. He was already a dead man. Why give his enemies anything?

"Talk! Tell me!" Qin Shuang shook him violently, but couldn't get a single word out of him.

Han Wu released the True Black Dragon King Transformation and walked over. "Stop. It's no use. He knows he's done. He won't say a thing."

Qin Shuang panicked. If the Lotus Heart Sage died, the trail to her family would go cold.

"Han Wu, you have a way, right?" she asked desperately. "Tell me. I have to save my family."

Han Wu raised an eyebrow. "How about this? Go wait outside. I'll get the information you need."

Qin Shuang hesitated but ultimately chose to trust him.

“Senior He Xu, you should step out too,” Han Wu added.

He Xu could guess what Han Wu was about to do and had no interest in watching.

Jia Gui tried to follow behind He Xu and leave as well, but Han Wu stopped him. “Jia Gui, you stay.”

“What do you need me for?” Jia Gui asked, confused.

“To keep watch,” Han Wu said plainly.

With that, he called out Xun to start “working” on the Lotus Heart Sage. The tiger bench and chili water were just appetizers. Then came the slicing, careful cuts in sensitive places, and even more creative options after.

Jia Gui watched, drenched in cold sweat and shaking. He nearly lost control of his bladder. These tortures were only a fraction of Han Wu’s arsenal. He had plenty more ways to break a man’s body and spirit while keeping him alive.

Two hours later, the Lotus Heart Sage finally cracked. Han Wu cross-checked the information, and only after confirming it was genuine did he show some mercy.

He drained the Lotus Heart Sage’s internal energy with the Kunpeng Divine Art, then finished him with a single strike. By the time the Lotus Heart Sage died, he was no longer in one piece but thirty.

Jia Gui felt chilled to the bone. If he ever had to endure that kind of treatment, he would give up everything in the first five seconds.

At that moment, Han Wu turned to look at him.

Jia Gui flinched. “Why are you staring at me? You’re scaring me.”

“Relax, Master Jia Gui. I was just demonstrating how to handle enemies and traitors. Don’t take it to heart.” Han Wu smiled warmly.

Jia Gui’s body went rigid at the word “traitors,” and he stumbled over himself to explain. “I didn’t betray anyone! It was all an act! I swear, I never meant to truly switch sides!”

“I believe you, Master Jia Gui.” Han Wu patted Jia Gui’s shoulder. “You did great this time.”

Han Wu’s hand was warm from the Lotus Heart Sage’s blood, but Jia Gui felt it like a red-hot branding iron against his heart. As Jia Gui stared in terror at Han Wu, he couldn’t help

but feel that he had gained a new understanding of the word “evil.” If evil had a face, it would be Han Wu.

“Go change your clothes. You stink.” Han Wu wrinkled his nose.

Only then did Jia Gui realize he had unknowingly wet himself at some point during their short conversation.

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Chapter 885 - Divine Invocation Ritual

The Lotus Heart Sage told Han Wu that Qin Shuang’s family had been transferred to the White Lotus Sect’s headquarters, located in one of the Martial Arts Civilization’s largest cities, Huai City.

Han Wu searched the Jiang City branch and found letters exchanged with the headquarters. The letters revealed that the White Lotus Sect had many more powerful fighters, and that several members had mastered the Divine Invocation technique through their alliance with the True Martial God King.

Ordinary high-level fighters from the Martial Arts Civilization didn’t worry Han Wu. Even Top-tier fighters were manageable with his True Black Dragon King Transformation. The problem was Top-tier fighters who also knew Divine Invocation. That combination was as dangerous as fighting a God King, and Han Wu wasn’t confident he could handle it.

As he was mulling over their next step, Qin Shuang brought good news. She had found a manual detailing the Divine Invocation technique during her search.

The key to Divine Invocation was establishing a connection with a god. For most, this was the hardest step, as gods didn’t just lend their power to strangers for no reason. For Han Wu, though, this was actually the easiest part. He knew plenty of gods.

Following the manual’s instructions, he set up the altar, slaughtered a rooster, burned yellow paper, lit some incense, and silently called the name of the god he wanted to connect with.

He started with the easiest option, mentally calling out to Wisdom God King Xu Hai. The ritual began, and the incense burned three times faster than normal. Han Wu’s consciousness drifted back to the Divine Civilization, where he caught a hazy glimpse of Xu Hai working at his desk.

Sensing something, Xu Hai set down his pen. “Han Wu, is that you?”

“It’s me, sir. I’m short on time, so I’ll keep it brief. I need to borrow some of your power,” Han Wu requested.

Xu Hai immediately agreed.

Han Wu woke up at the altar with a pen in hand. It was the medium linking him to Xu Hai. Channeling his internal energy through it would allow him to open a channel and draw on Xu Hai’s strength.

It was essentially remote power-sharing, accomplished through the Martial Arts Civilization’s own system. Though remarkable, the amount of borrowed power did have limits and was dependent on how much the lending god was willing to give, as well as how much the recipient’s body could withstand.

Xu Hai would go all out for Han Wu, releasing as much divine power as he could. Han Wu’s job was to raise his own body’s capacity to receive that power. This meant he urgently needed a body-strengthening manual.

The Divine Invocation contract was a model that could be replicated. Under Han Wu’s guidance, Qin Shuang and the others began their own rituals to connect with the gods they knew in the Divine Civilization.

He Xu’s first choice was naturally also his mentor, Wisdom God King Xu Ha. The connection was established quickly.

Jia Gui went straight to his good friend, the Commerce God King. The Commerce God King agreed readily enough, but his own strength wasn’t exceptional, so the boost to Jia Gui was modest.

Qin Shuang pondered over this carefully, but couldn’t think of a suitable god to borrow from. During the ritual, her mind unwittingly landed on Han Wu, and her consciousness was carried to Han Wu’s avatar in the Divine Civilization.

Han Wu was surprised. *That actually worked?*

Naturally, he agreed to lend her his power. When Qin Shuang woke, she was holding a Soul Crystal, a product unique to Han Wu’s divine realm.

This gave Han Wu a bold idea. What if he borrowed power from himself? He performed the ritual again, calling his own name with deep focus. The incense burned at ten times its normal speed, carrying his consciousness to his own avatar.

The avatar had already prepared a token for him, the Peerless White Blade. Han Wu awoke with the weapon in hand. The gleam of its razor-sharp edge nearly blinded the other three.

He Xu swallowed hard. *That actually worked? Borrowing from yourself?*

If he could do the same, He Xu could bring his true power into the Martial Arts Civilization. While this wouldn't be enough for him to reach Martial Grandmaster, he'd still be Top-tier at least—more than enough for their situation.

He Xu tried performing the ritual and calling his own name, but nothing happened. He couldn't find himself before the incense burned out. In the end, he had to accept that his attempt had failed.

After thinking it through, Qin Shuang had a theory. Han Wu's avatar was recognized as an independent entity, essentially a god existing in another realm. He Xu, on the other hand, had no equivalent of an avatar on the outside.

He Xu negotiated with Han Wu instead by establishing a Divine Invocation link with him. Through the ritual, a powerful 9-Star God blade was sent as He Xu's weapon. Jia Gui did the same and received a pair of 9-Star God boots. The boots would let him run faster and unleash powerful kicks.

The Divine Invocation rituals had allowed the group's strength to grow enormously, enough to give them confidence for the trip to Huai City.

Han Feng couldn't accompany them, but he did everything he could to assist, even arranging a fast passenger ship to get them to Huai City more quickly. As gratitude, Han Wu taught him the Divine Invocation technique, established a link with him, and promised to help him through three crises.

Han Feng was moved to tears. Their time together had shown him that Han Wu's group was essentially gods walking among mortals. Three assists from Han Wu were equivalent to having three extra lives. A debt like that was beyond repayment.

With their bags packed, Han Wu's group boarded the ship and set off for Huai City.

Chapter 886 - The Sun Family of Huai City

The voyage to Huai City was a long one. Qin Shuang, He Xu, and Jia Gui spent the journey training hard to develop their abilities. Only Han Wu kicked back and enjoyed himself, as he had Xun to handle his training for him.

With nothing better to do, Han Wu often stood on the deck admiring the scenery along the riverbanks. He also made a habit of bringing out the Peerless White Blade and putting it on display.

This wasn't actually a matter of showing off, but building strength. Peerless was a remarkable weapon. Even those lacking knowledge of martial arts could tell it was a treasure at a glance. Experienced fighters could sense the faint aura of power it radiated.

Naturally, more than a few people set their eyes on it. Some were professional bandits, while others were simply greedy passersby. None considered that the most dangerous hunters often disguised themselves as prey.

Han Wu drained every one of them dry before tossing them into the water. Rumors of the river being unsafe soon spread.

One day, as Han Wu was flaunting Peerless as usual, another passenger ship passed by. On its deck stood a pair of siblings, a brother and a sister.

The brother looked mature and composed, holding a fan with an air of elegance. The sister was about fourteen or fifteen, bright-eyed and innocent, with a warm smile on her face. They had probably come out to the deck because they were bored sitting inside.

The sister naturally gravitated toward beautiful things and thus noticed Han Wu and his weapon right away. "Brother, look! That man on the other ship has the prettiest sword I've ever seen!"

The brother disinterestedly turned, but when his gaze locked onto the blade, he felt as though he were seeing a peerless beauty for the first time. It was captivating and impossible to look away from.

Han Wu had long since noticed them. Their clothing exposed them as children of a prominent family from the Martial Arts Civilization. Wealthy family heirs tended to have strong internal energy, so he was hoping they'd try to take his weapon.

As expected, the brother ordered the boatman to bring their ship closer.

"Friend, I'm Sun Fuqiang of the Sun family in Huai City. Fate has brought us together. Would you care to join me for a drink on board?" Sun Fuqiang called out, eyes drifting to the weapon in Han Wu's hand.

Here comes a customer. Han Wu thought. Nodding, he hopped across to the other ship in a single leap.

"Impressive lightfoot technique!" Sun Fuqiang praised.

"It's nothing special," Han Wu replied.

The sister didn't bother with pleasantries. "Your sword is so pretty! Will you sell it to me?"

Sun Fuqiang shot her a look before hastily apologizing. "Please forgive her. This is my sister, Sun Fubao. She's young and doesn't know better."

"No worries." Han Wu assured him. Secretly, he was hoping the siblings would just take the weapon by force. That way, he could drain their internal energy guilt-free.

"You still haven't told me. Can I buy it?" Sun Fubao stared with wide eyes, her pale fingers reaching for the blade.

Han Wu stepped back, keeping the blade out of reach. "Family heirloom. Not for sale."

Sun Fubao's face fell. She genuinely loved the blade. Sun Fuqiang was equally disappointed. He wanted it too. Unfortunately, the fine weapon already had an owner. Pressing the matter would be dishonorable.

Since buying wasn't an option, Sun Fuqiang asked if he could at least look it over. Han Wu agreed. He was like a fisherman waiting for the fish to bite.

The two siblings handled the Peerless White Blade with care as they examined every pattern on its surface. When Sun Fuqiang touched the edge, he realized just how impossibly sharp it was.

A thought flickered through his mind. If he used this blade to cut Han Wu down, the weapon would be his. The idea vanished almost as fast as it had appeared. What was he thinking? Years of his family's moral teachings thrown away over a blade?

After admiring it, the siblings returned Peerless to Han Wu with deep respect. Han Wu was baffled. He had never met a cat that could resist temptation and leave the fish alone! The blade had been right there in their hands, yet they hadn't even considered keeping it.

"Friend, this weapon is a masterpiece," Sun Fuqiang praised. "If you ever decide to sell, please contact the Sun family in Huai City first."

This told Han Wu everything he needed to know. Sun Fuqiang admired the blade but would never steal it. Honorable people like him were rare.

Han Wu sighed, inwardly mourning the twenty years of internal energy he couldn't touch. After drinking a few cups of wine on their ship, he returned to his own.

That night, the sound of battle woke him. River bandits had surrounded them with their fast attack boats. Some passenger ships had already been boarded and had their cargo stolen.

Bandits had also climbed onto Han Wu's ship. These experienced killers moved soundlessly through the ship, killing countless passengers in their sleep.

Han Wu wasn't about to let good prey go to waste. Spreading his hand, he activated the Kunpeng Divine Art and sucked out the internal energy from a bandit that was two meters away! The bandit went limp and toppled into the water.

The others met similar fates. Soon, Han Wu wasn't satisfied with just the boats around him. He used the smaller vessels as stepping stones to leap across the water. Every bandit he encountered got hit with the Kunpeng Divine Art.

He didn't turn his nose up at small amounts like three or five years. Eight or ten years, however, was much better. Thirty or fifty years? He would gladly accept! His stockpile rapidly approached the thousand-year mark.

"Help! Someone, please help my brother!" a familiar voice suddenly cried out.

It sounded like Sun Fubao. Han Wu headed over and leaped onto their ship. Panicking at the realization that someone had boarded, Sun Fubao drew a small knife. She was ready to fight!

Han Wu sighed. If she didn't want anyone on the ship, she shouldn't have yelled for help.

"I'm the one who came for a drink earlier," he said, showing Peerless as proof.

Sun Fubao instantly latched onto him as if he were a long-lost family member, begging him to save her brother. Han Wu stepped into the cabin to find a badly wounded Sun Fuqiang. A knife was lodged deep in his chest and had punctured his organs. In the Martial Arts Civilization, this kind of injury was considered beyond saving.

"Please, you have to save him. He got stabbed protecting me. The Sun family will pay as much as you want. Just save my brother!" Sun Fubao sobbed.

Sun Fuqiang knew his wound was fatal and could only use his last words to save his sister. "Please, just protect my sister. The Sun family will repay you."

Their devotion to each other stirred something in Han Wu. He instinctively activated Divine Invocation and called himself. The power of Life Aspect flowed through him as he healed Sun Fuqiang's wounds.

"Protect your sister yourself," Han Wu muttered before unceremoniously leaving.

At first, Sun Fuqiang was furious. Was that all Han Wu had to say in response to his dying words? The frustration made him tense, and the realization that his wounds didn't hurt anymore had him sitting up in shock.

Sun Fuqiang gingerly touched his chest. There wasn't even a scar.

"Am I dreaming?" he whispered.

Chapter 887 - River Bandits at Night

By dawn, the river was littered with corpses, most of whom were bandits. The Sun siblings threw up at the sight. The carnage was staggering. There were enough bodies to blanket the entire river.

Wails of grief rose from every passenger ship. Plenty of travelers had died in the night raid. After recovering from the shock, the siblings searched for Han Wu's ship and found him eating breakfast on deck. The floating bodies around him did not seem to affect his appetite at all.

"Thank you for saving my life." Sun Fuqiang bowed deeply.

Sun Fubao copied her brother's bow, eyes wide with curiosity about Han Wu. She wondered what kind of fighter could slaughter bandits by the hundreds and heal a mortal wound.

"You've said your thanks. If there's nothing else, move along," Han Wu said, shooing them away. The siblings were interfering with his "fishing."

Sun Fuqiang refused to leave. "You saved my life. That makes you our family's benefactor. I'd like to invite you to be a guest at our home."

Sun Fuqiang had brought up his family more than once. The Sun family of Huai City was likely quite powerful. Moreover, their destination was Huai City too, the same as Han Wu's.

"Do you know anything about the White Lotus Sect?" Han Wu asked.

"The White Lotus Sect traffics people and kidnaps children." Sun Fuqiang sneered in disgust. "They deserve no mercy. Are you involved with them?"

Han Wu didn't expect him to actually know them, let alone have a grudge against them.

"I've got a score to settle with them," Han Wu said, "Keep your distance from me, or you'll get dragged in."

Sun Fuqiang perked up. “My family has a blood feud with the White Lotus Sect. My father always said the enemy of my enemy is my friend. You’re clearly powerful. Why not join forces with the Sun family to take them on together?”

Han Wu glanced at him. For someone of Sun Fuqiang’s abilities to propose a partnership was frankly laughable. His family, on the other hand, could have something to offer. It would lighten Han Wu’s burden considerably if someone could draw fire during the assault on the White Lotus Sect and provide intelligence support.

“Fine. We’ll partner with the Sun family,” Han Wu agreed.

Sun Fuqiang looked confused. “We?”

Han Wu didn’t bother explaining, instead waving him off so he could go back to his “fishing.”

Meanwhile, in a river village, the bandit chief Lang Lidao’s expression was grim. He had led the raid on the passenger ships last night, but they had barely taken any loot and lost a significant number of men. His crew was on the verge of mutiny, with many demanding they split up.

“Brothers, I know you’re upset about last night, but there was nothing we could do. We ran into a hard target.” Lang Lidao had seen it himself, a figure holding a white blade leaping across the water. Everywhere that figure went, his men dropped like flies.

A spy planted among the passengers confirmed there was a man who stood on the deck every day, flaunting a white blade. Lang Lidao was certain this man had killed his men.

“I know who did it. He’s strong, but our brothers didn’t die for nothing. Tonight we strike again, to kill that bastard and avenge the dead!” Lang Lidao declared.

That night, Lang Lidao picked six of his best men and paddled a small boat toward the ship that their spy had marked. They found it quickly, climbed aboard silently, and killed the boatman before finally sneaking into the cabins.

The cabin was pitch black, but the six had accustomed their eyes to the dark and could make out blurry figures inside.

Three figures sat cross-legged in the darkness, but the man with the white blade was nowhere to be seen. Lang Lidao didn’t care. Anyone on this ship was fair game. He moved to strike.

The three figures moved before the attack could land. Jia Gui vanished from his spot like a gust of wind, while Qin Shuang gathered lightning in both hands.

Grunts of pain sounded as the lightning pierced through the darkness, and two of Lang Lidao's men collapsed, their flesh charred black.

Realizing their target was tougher than expected, Lang Lidao grabbed his remaining men to flee. He Xu intercepted them. With a flick of his wrist, dozens of hair-needles shot out with brutal force and struck Lang Lidao's two companions.

At the same time, Han Wu entered the cabin with Peerless in hand. "Don't be in such a rush. I went through a lot of trouble saving my boatman."

Lang Lidao was surrounded with no way out. He drew his curved blade and poured all his internal energy into it. A faint sound of crashing waves resonated from the steel.

"Emerald Wave Slash!" Unleashing his strongest technique, he charged straight at Han Wu. The strike carried a thunderous wave and brought upon the power of a torrent.

Han Wu drew Peerless and met the attack head-on. Lang Lidao's curved blade was a fine weapon in its own right, but Peerless was a true masterpiece. One clash shattered Lang Lidao's blade. The residual sword qi cut deep into his body.

Lang Lidao couldn't believe it. His near First-rate power hadn't been enough to survive a single exchange.

As Han Wu activated the Kunpeng Divine Art to drain him, Lang Lidao shouted, "Don't kill me! I'm an outer gate steward of the White Lotus Sect. Kill me, and they won't let you go!"

Han Wu paused.

Taking this as a sign of fear, Lang Lidao started to list his contributions to the White Lotus Sect. "I've delivered 780 women, 320 laborers, and over 400 children to the White Lotus Sect. I'm a major contributor. Hurt me, and they'll come for you. I know you're strong, but you've got family, don't you? You can't protect them every second of every day."

This threat had struck Qin Shuang's nerve, and lightning whipped across the cabin.

: Chapter 888

Chapter 888 - The Rescue

The smell of burning flesh filled the air as the lightning dispersed. Han Wu glanced over to see that Lang Lidao had been charred beyond recognition. He was far past well-done. Not a single hint of uncooked flesh remained.

Well, I guess I'm not getting information from Lang Lidao after all,Han Wu thought to himself.

"I'm sorry," Qin Shuang hastily apologized as realization set in. "I lost control."

Han Wu couldn't bring himself to scold her and instead waved her apology off. "Forget it. He was a small fry anyway."

The five surviving bandits were still processing the fact that a single bolt of lightning had turned their boss into a briquette. Their targets were more powerful and scarier than they had realized.

Han Wu glanced at the five of them. "Does anyone here know anything about the White Lotus Sect? Share something useful, and I'll let you live."

The five of them gulped. They wanted to live.

"I know!"

"I'll talk!"

The five of them fought to speak first, terrified that someone else would say what they knew.

With their eager divulging of information, Han Wu quickly pieced together the movements of White Lotus Sect's human trafficking operations, including the locations of two warehouses where captives were held.

Qin Shuang described her family members' appearances and asked if any of the five recognized them. Unfortunately, none of them did.

"Your family's situation was different," Han Wu said, trying to reassure her. "They might've been held somewhere else."

Qin Shuang could only hope so. True to his word, Han Wu didn't kill the five, though he still drained every drop of their internal energy. He then loaded them and Lang Lidao's corpse onto the small boat they'd arrived in and set them out onto the water to survive on their own.

The five of them had lost their powers, but at least they had survived. They were even secretly grateful for Han Wu's mercy.

As they were drifting away from Han Wu's ship, Han Wu suddenly shouted, "Bandits! Someone help! They're getting away!"

Torches lit up across the surrounding ships. The passengers, still furious from last night's raid, were out for blood. The five powerless bandits were found within minutes and beaten to death on the spot.

"I gave them a chance to live." Han Wu sighed as he watched from the deck. "It's not my fault they couldn't run fast enough."

Had the five bandits heard that, they would've cursed Han Wu as being more despicable than a stray hound that chases passersby.

This bandit raid was a minor episode, but the information they provided had given Han Wu's group a real lead. They decided to head for the two warehouses and scope them out for more clues.

The rest of the voyage was smooth, and they arrived at Huai City without a hitch. At the Sun siblings' insistence, they headed for the Sun family home first.

The Sun family had received Sun Fuqiang's letter in advance and thus knew that Han Wu was not only incredibly powerful but also capable of healing people from the brink of death—as he had when he saved Sun Fuqiang's life.

Naturally, they pulled out all the stops, welcoming Han Wu with the most lavish ceremony they could arrange. Han Wu's group had expected a simple family dinner. Instead, it turned into a banquet for over a thousand people. The event gave them a clear picture of the Sun family's immense influence.

After the banquet, Han Wu met with Sun Fuqiang's father, the patriarch of the Sun family, to discuss the White Lotus Sect. Han Wu shared his knowledge, and the family patriarch immediately rallied his people, servants, retainers, and his guest fighters to launch an assault on the warehouses.

His efficiency surprised Han Wu. They had docked that morning, ate at noon, and by evening, over a thousand people had the White Lotus Sect's warehouse surrounded.

Han Wu's group went in first to scout. The four of them entered the site, but found nothing unusual on the surface. When they stilled their minds and focused, however, they detected faint sounds coming from underground. It was the sound of muffled sobbing.

"The captives seem to be underground," He Xu said.

Jia Gui was already searching for an entrance. Guided by He Xu's hearing, they soon found it. The wailing grew a thousand times louder as they descended.

Row upon row of iron cages filled the space. Each held people—men and women, all stripped bare. When they noticed the newcomers, none of them called for help. They just moaned or stared blankly.

“Those animals!” Qin Shuang was furious. Every person in those cages was someone’s family. The thought of her own family being treated this way only strengthened her resolve to free them all.

Their intrusion alerted the White Lotus Sect guards.

One came running with a short whip, shouting, “Who are you? This is the White Lotus Sect’s territory. You must have a death wish!”

Qin Shuang raised her palm and fired a lightning orb that hit the guard square in the chest, scorching him to a crisp. He was badly hurt but alive. Qin Shuang had restrained herself.

He Xu and Jia Gui quickly wielded their Divine Weapons, allowing them to fight toe-to-toe against First-rate fighters temporarily.

Han Wu focused on cutting the iron cages open with Peerless. The White Lotus Sect had conditioned some of the captives, and even with the cage doors open, they didn’t dare step out. They just sat there, staring.

Han Wu couldn’t be bothered with them. His priority was Qin Shuang’s family. He went through all the cages, but they were nowhere to be found.

The commotion drew out the senior White Lotus Sect member in charge of overseeing the warehouse. These captives were their merchandise. His superiors would surely punish him for allowing Han Wu to release them all. At this point, his only recourse was to capture Han Wu’s group and hand them over.

The overseer was a First-rate fighter. Han Wu, on the other hand, was technically only Second-rate in his Demon King Transformation form. Fortunately, the Peerless White Blade’s overwhelming might pushed his offensive capability to a level even First-rate fighters couldn’t withstand.

A few exchanges left the overseer wounded. With no other choice, he resorted to Divine Invocation. A familiar Divine Authority descended.

“My Lord, how’s your butt feeling?” Han Wu greeted with false concern.

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Chapter 889 - Letter of Challenge

The True Martial God King's face twitched with barely concealed fury. He, the great True Martial God King, had been struck in the most humiliating spot imaginable.

Even though it was the host's body that had suffered and not his own, the shame remained seared into his memory.

This disgrace can never be known to the Divine Civilization! With that thought, the True Martial God King unleashed everything he had.

"Celestial Martial God Body!"

That was the Divine Ability available to him through the host. It multiplied all physical attributes by a factor of ten. The White Lotus Sect overseer was already a First-rate fighter, but with the Celestial Martial God Body enhancement, he ascended to a Top-tier fighter.

The True Martial God King closed the distance in a flash. His speed rivaled even lightning. Han Wu didn't even have time to dodge before a blow sent him flying with devastating injuries.

Powerful. Overwhelming. Impossible to counter. Those were Han Wu's only thoughts. A casual strike from the True Martial God King had nearly killed him.

The True Martial God King grinned cruelly. He had wanted Han Wu dead for a long time, and it seemed this would finally be the day that his wish was granted.

"Die!" the True Martial God King roared as he threw a punch.

This was his Martial God Strike. Even in a borrowed body, its power was enough to destroy a mountain.

All of Han Wu's powers had been sealed since setting foot into the Martial Arts Civilization. He was certain that there wouldn't be anything left of him if he took this hit unprotected.

Left with no other choice, he used his trump card: Divine Invocation. Unlike the overseer of the White Lotus Sect, he invoked himself. It had a 100% compatibility and effectively unsealed a portion of his true power.

This allowed him to temporarily use one Divine Jurisdiction, one Divine Authority, one Divine Aspect, and one ability. He chose the Duel Jurisdiction, Divine Authority 1, Destruction Aspect, and Undying.

Power surged through his body, pushing him to be a peak First-rate fighter. There was still some distance until he became a Top-tier fighter, but that gap was negligible.

“Die!” Han Wu roared.

Duel Jurisdiction granted him the Duel God Physique. Although weaker than the Celestial Martial God Body’s raw amplification, it had one critical advantage: it grew stronger through combat.

Divine Authority 1 materialized as a greatsword, which Han Wu gripped in his left hand and used to block the True Martial God King’s blow.

The Destruction Aspect wrapped both Peerless and the greatsword in destructive energy, granting them a flat 25% chance of instant kill.

Finally, Undying kept him alive long enough to push the Duel God Physique to its fullest potential.

“Skyshell!”

All of Han Wu’s stored internal energy erupted at once, taking the form of a Black Tortoise that shielded him from the True Martial God King’s killing blow. Han Wu dual-wielded the greatsword and Peerless as he assailed the True Martial God King with relentless blows.

Every strike carried a 25% chance of instant death, regardless of whether he was up against an equal or a weaker opponent. While the True Martial God King’s Divine Jurisdiction could neutralize this effect, it came at a cost. Every nullified kill was converted into a critical hit that inflicted ten times the damage.

The True Martial God King could’ve endured this in his real body, but the host’s body wasn’t that durable. He estimated that he could tank five critical hits at most. The fight became a war of attrition. With Undying in play, nobody could outlast Han Wu.

Five seconds. That was all it took for the host body to become so badly injured that the True Martial God King was forced out of the Divine Invocation.

“Han Wu, the next time we meet will be your last day alive,” the True Martial God King cried out before he left. “In the meantime, try not to die at that madwoman’s hands!”

Then he was gone.

Han Wu cut off the overseer’s head with Peerless. His Duel Jurisdiction absorbed the combat experience and fed it back into his body, improving his physical condition by roughly 10%.

Even though that didn’t sound like much, it was enough to let him channel one additional ability the next time he used Divine Invocation. With that, Han Wu dismissed the Divine Invocation state while pondering over the True Martial God King’s parting words.

Die at what madwoman's hands? Clueless as to what those words could mean, he simply shrugged it off as a bluff.

The overseer's death marked their victory over the warehouse. The Sun family members flooded in and freed the captives. Of the over 10,000 people imprisoned, most were women and children, though there was a smaller number of laborers as well.

Han Wu's group then returned to the Sun family estate. Not one to stay put for long, Han Wu and the Sun family immediately discussed their strategy to strike the second warehouse.

The next day, the second warehouse was raided, and another 10,000 captives were freed. The Sun family spent the following days resettling over 20,000 people.

The rescue operations sent the Sun family's reputation soaring across Huai City. People on every street and alley were praising their deeds.

The White Lotus Sect, meanwhile, had its crimes of human trafficking exposed to the public and became hated overnight. However, the sect members showed no remorse, nor did they reflect on the evil they had done. They only felt suspicious that they were being targeted on purpose.

Investigations into the Sun family naturally brought them to Han Wu's group. The True Martial God King then descended into a senior White Lotus Sect member to brief them on Han Wu and give them the necessary blackmail to subdue him.

That same day, a messenger disguised as a servant delivered a letter to the Sun family estate, insisting that Han Wu's group personally open the message.

Han Wu opened it. Inside was a letter of challenge. The White Lotus Sect's leaders wanted a final showdown with Han Wu's group—only the four of them. Every extra person they brought would result in the death of one of Qin Shuang's family members.

Although keenly aware that this was a trap, Han Wu had no choice but to accept for the sake of Qin Shuang's family.

Chapter 890 - Plum, Orchid, Bamboo, and Chrysanthemum

After reading the letter of challenge, Han Wu requested that the Sun family bring every captured White Lotus Sect member to the courtyard where he was staying. The Sun family witnessed the terrifying power of the Kunpeng Divine Art that night.

The following morning, Han Wu's group of four set out for the location marked on the letter: White Lotus Peak. At Han Wu's firm insistence, the Sun family sent no one with them.

Sun Fuqiang and Sun Fubao were worried for them and tried to follow in secret, but their father caught and grounded them.

After half a day of travel, the four arrived at White Lotus Peak, named for its resemblance to a blooming white lotus. None of its beauty mattered to Han Wu and the others, however. Their priority was rescuing Qin Shuang's family.

Four people were waiting for them at the peak: the White Lotus Sect's founding pillars, the Plum, Orchid, Bamboo, and Chrysanthemum elders. These four had built the sect from the ground up and had fought to establish branch after branch.

Only after the White Lotus Sect had been established as a major sect did the four retire to headquarters. None of them had anticipated that there would one day be a situation that required all four of them at once.

Neither side bothered with pleasantries.

"Where are the hostages?" Han Wu demanded.

Qin Shuang desperately scanned the surrounding area for any sign of her family. He Xu and Jia Gui, on the other hand, kept an eye out for ambushes.

The eldest of the four, Elder Plum, clapped his hands, and a group of White Lotus Sect members led out a line of people in white prisoner garb. The hoods on their heads were removed. Qin Shuang's family was all present.

"Mom, Dad!" Qin Shuang cried out.

Her family tried to respond, but the guards behind them struck with clubs and silenced them. Furious electricity crackled across Qin Shuang's body. How dare they hit her family in front of her!

Han Wu grabbed her arm and signaled her to hold back. Whether they could save her family depended on the White Lotus Sect's demands.

"Name your terms," Han Wu demanded.

“Our Holy Mother wishes to test you,” Elder Plum said. “If you can entertain her, releasing these people is a trivial matter.”

“Holy Mother?” Han Wu had never heard of this person. From the Sun family’s intelligence, he knew the four elders were the sect’s strongest. Nobody had mentioned a Holy Mother.

At that moment, he recalled the True Martial God King’s words, “Try not to die at that madwoman’s hands.”

The madwoman in question was likely the Holy Mother.

“Fine. Bring her out. We’ll settle this face-to-face,” Han Wu said.

Elder Bamboo, the most hot-tempered of the four, snapped at him, “Who do you think you are? You don’t deserve a personal audience with the Holy Mother.”

Han Wu’s eyes grew cold. “If she won’t come to me, how are we supposed to fight?”

“You go to her,” said Elder Orchid, gesturing toward the courtyard at the summit of the mountain.

Han Wu scoffed. A fight was a fight. Did it really need this many annoying rules? He stepped forward, but the four elders blocked his path.

“What now?” Han Wu glared.

Elder Chrysanthemum broke his silence. “You need to go through us first if you want to see the Holy Mother. If you can’t even get past us, don’t bother.”

“Fine. Let’s go then,” Han Wu snapped. “I don’t have all day.”

Elder Plum signaled for the sect members to take Qin Shuang’s family up to the courtyard. The four elders then spread out and surrounded Han Wu from four sides.

“Why bother? All four of you together aren’t enough to defeat me,” Han Wu taunted, feigning arrogance while secretly studying which elder had the biggest opening.

The four elders exchanged glances, then activated their power simultaneously. Their internal energy took the form of plum blossoms, orchids, bamboo, and chrysanthemums that encircled Han Wu’s group.

Han Wu immediately recognized it as a variation of the Lotus Heart Sage’s Thousand Lotus Bloom, materializing internal energy to create devastating explosions. Of course, the combined power of four Top-tier fighters meant this version would be incomparably stronger.

Without hesitation, Han Wu unleashed Skyshell using Peerless. He burned through massive amounts of internal energy to form a Black Tortoise dome, shielding all four of them just as the Thousand Lotus Bloom detonated.

The explosion was colossal. It cracked the mountainside and blasted a crater five meters deep into the ground. Han Wu's Skyshell took heavy damage, but he poured internal energy into it and held it together through the final wave.

The four elders, by contrast, hardly even looked tired.

So this is the power of Top-tier fighters? Four Top-tier fighters working together with perfect coordination could probably decimate the White Lotus Peak on their own, Han Wu thought to himself.

"Impressive. As expected of the one who caught the attention of the Holy Mother. Surviving our combined Thousand Lotus Bloom without a scratch is a rare feat, especially for outsiders like you," Elder Plum praised.

Han Wu had no interest in chatting. He needed to rescue Qin Shuang's family, and only the Holy Mother could grant that wish. If he wanted to reach the Holy Mother, he would have to get past these four elders—and fast.

"Each of us takes one. Whatever you do, don't let them combine their internal energy again!" Han Wu called out.

The four elders' internal energy appeared linked, and combining their powers produced a force many times stronger than any of them could muster alone. Han Wu's side likely would not survive another combined attack.

Knowing this, the best way to deal with them naturally became to separate the four elders. This would make it easier to defeat them.

Chapter 891 - Slaying The Four Elders

The four elders of Plum, Orchid, Bamboo, and Chrysanthemum were seasoned fighters in the murim. They had long since seen through Han Wu's intentions. The four coordinated seamlessly, and no matter how He Xu, Jia Gui, and Qin Shuang tried to lure them apart, they refused to break formation.

A second Thousand Lotus Bloom was on the verge of being unleashed. Han Wu could unleash another Skyshell, but that wasn't a sustainable solution.

With that in mind, Han Wu quickly devised a plan and shouted, “Everyone, focus on Elder Chrysanthemum together!”

The four elders smirked. The old tactic of focusing on a single target was something they had stopped falling for decades ago. Did they think the other three elders were invisible?

Qin Shuang and the other two nodded and followed Han Wu’s order, charging straight at Elder Chrysanthemum. The other three elders moved to support him and split the pressure while continuing to channel the Thousand Lotus Bloom.

Han Wu abruptly changed direction. While the four elders focused on Qin Shuang’s group, he sprinted toward the courtyard at the summit.

The four elders realized what had happened. Han Wu had used the other three as a distraction to slip through their blockade.

“Boy, if you dare go up there, these three are dead!” Elder Plum roared.

Han Wu ignored him and kept running.

At the same moment, Qin Shuang and the others erupted with their strongest forms through Divine Invocation. They called upon the gods to fight through them!

In an instant, the consciousness of the Wisdom God King, the Commerce God King, and Han Wu descended into them. The sudden surge of power held the four elders in check. There was no way they could kill the trio in a short amount of time.

The four elders realized that they had been played. They couldn’t allow Han Wu to bypass them and face the Holy Mother directly. If he reached her without passing their trial, the Holy Mother would be displeased. If she blamed them for the failure, they couldn’t afford the consequences.

As such, the elders immediately abandoned Qin Shuang’s group and went after Han Wu.

Qin Shuang and the others threw everything they had into holding back Elder Chrysanthemum, who lagged behind the others.

“You three, stop that brat! I’ll catch up soon!” Elder Chrysanthemum shouted.

His companions trusted his strength and raced after Han Wu together. Once a sufficient distance separated Elder Chrysanthemum from his companions, Han Wu suddenly turned around and charged straight back at them.

Without the formation, the three elders had no choice but to face him individually. Forget a one-against-three battle. Even in a one-on-one fight, Han Wu couldn’t beat any of the four elders.

However, Divine Invocation changed everything. Once Han Wu activated it, his Duel Jurisdiction's Duel God Physique awakened. He unleashed Divine Authority 1 with the greatsword in hand, along with Peerless to dual-wield.

He layered the Destruction Aspect onto both Peerless and the greatsword, granting both weapons the insta-kill effect. In addition, his recent fight with one of the White Lotus Sect's overseers had increased his power. Aside from Undying, he could now carry one additional ability. He chose Replicate.

He transformed in an instant. He grew larger, and ninety-eight additional arms sprouted from his frame. This was Steely's Hecatoncheiras form. Black blades extended from each of the new arms, giving Han Wu a total of one hundred weapons. He launched a storm of slashes at the three approaching elders.

The hundred blades spun, with each rotation releasing a hundred wind slashes. Every strike carried tremendous force, and two of them carried a twenty-five-percent chance to kill instantly.

Sensing the danger, the three elders drew upon their own Divine Invocation power. This time, however, Han Wu didn't detect the True Martial God King's aura. Instead, he sensed an unfamiliar source of energy.

Temporarily empowered by divine strength, the three elders' power surged to a level approaching the Martial Grandmaster tier. With a single combined strike, their explosive internal energy shattered the Obsidrum blades in Han Wu's hands.

Even so, Han Wu had been saving his trump card: Dragon Slayer combined with Steelcutter! After enduring their combined blow, he retaliated. A thousand-meter wind blade descended with overwhelming draconic might.

Elder Plum couldn't dodge in time and was cleaved in two. The kill triggered Han Wu's Duel God Physique advancement, increasing his overall power by ten percent.

Witnessing how effortlessly Han Wu had slain Elder Plum, Elder Orchid and Elder Bamboo turned to flee. With that level of strength, Han Wu had earned the right to meet the Holy Mother. Blocking him further was pointless. More importantly, while their faith was genuine, their survival instincts were just as real. Running when outmatched was basic biology. There was nothing shameful about it.

Unfortunately, Han Wu had no intention of letting two walking experience packs escape. Drawing upon the Warmaster Gene copied from Steely, he reassembled the shattered weapons into the strongest technique the gene offered.

"Obsidrum Judgment!"

The weapons merged with Peerless into a massive battle axe that shot toward the fleeing Elder Orchid. This attack carried a guaranteed-hit effect, so Han Wu had no doubt it would land.

Three seconds later, the axe came crashing down on Elder Orchid's head. The scene was gruesome. Brain matter splattered everywhere. Han Wu's Duel God Physique received another boost, though the increase was smaller this time, roughly eight percent.

Han Wu paid little attention to it. His gaze shifted to Elder Bamboo.

At that moment, Elder Chrysanthemum broke free from Qin Shuang's group and rushed over to regroup with the others, only to find that two of his longtime companions were already dead.

His arrival simply provided Han Wu with another opportunity to strengthen his Duel God Physique.

Under the combined assault of Han Wu's group, Elder Bamboo and Elder Chrysanthemum were both cut down. Qin Shuang and the others, however, were utterly drained. They couldn't even maintain their Divine Invocation states.

"Han Wu, from here on, you're on your own," He Xu said plainly. The aftereffects of Divine Invocation had exhausted him. He had no strength to face the Holy Mother the four elders had mentioned.

Jia Gui was in the same condition. Not only was he too weak, but deep down, he also had no desire to go. Fighting powerful opponents meant the slightest mistake could cost him his life. Jia Gui considered himself far too young to take that risk, still a baby of around 800 months.

Qin Shuang's situation was different. She desperately wanted to go up and rescue her family. Sadly, her current condition wouldn't allow her to survive a fight of that intensity. Forcing her way forward would only get her killed.

Han Wu certainly wouldn't let Qin Shuang follow. To prevent her from sneaking after him like last time, he deliberately used the Kunpeng Divine Art to drain more than ninety percent of her internal energy. Without it and physically exhausted, she had no chance of making it up.

"He Xu, please look after her for me," Han Wu said. He looked toward the courtyard at the summit of White Lotus Peak and steeled himself. "I'll be right back."

Chapter 892 - The Tiny Holy Mother

Han Wu pushed open the courtyard gates and surveyed the interior. A crowd of White Lotus Sect members stood guard around the kidnapped Qin family.

The moment Han Wu stepped through, the sect members rose to their feet, ready for battle.

Then a woman's voice came from inside the house. "All of you, stand down."

The sect members withdrew and prepared to leave the courtyard.

The woman spoke again. "Take the captives with you. Set them free."

Confusion spread among the sect members. They had gone through enormous trouble to kidnap the Qin family, and releasing them so easily felt absurd. Still, they didn't dare question the Holy Mother's orders; they could only obey.

As the sect members untied the Qin family, Qin Shuang's father, Qin Hai, rushed over to Han Wu. "Where's Shuang'er? Is she okay?"

"Don't worry, Uncle. She's just down below. You can go to her," Han Wu replied.

Qin Hai let out a sigh of relief, but he was still worried about Han Wu's safety. The sect had held their family long enough for them to grasp just how powerful its members were. The four elders alone were figures they could only look up to. If even those four bowed before the Holy Mother, how powerful could she be?

Qin Hai didn't know, but he doubted she would be easy to deal with. He was about to say more when the Holy Mother's voice came from inside again. "If you don't want to leave, you're welcome to stay."

Han Wu immediately ushered the Qin family out. Whatever needed to be said could wait until later.

The family had no choice but to comply; their respect for Han Wu had already reached its peak.

After watching the sect members and the Qin family depart, Han Wu turned his attention to the house. Who exactly was the Holy Mother? He was eager to find out.

The door opened, and a figure stepped outside. Her hair was tied in a bun, and her youthful, collagen-rich face gave her an adorable appearance. What caught Han Wu's attention most, however, was her height. She couldn't be more than 1.5 meters tall. She was tiny!

“You’re the Holy Mother?” Han Wu could hardly believe it. He wasn’t the type to judge by appearances, but this little potato didn’t look like a powerful fighter by any measure.

The Holy Mother sensed the doubt in his voice and huffed. “There are only the two of us here. If I’m not the Holy Mother, are you?”

Han Wu had no comeback. She was small in stature, but she definitely had a big temper.

“So, are we going to fight now?” he asked.

At the mention of a fight, the Holy Mother’s eyes lit up. She clenched her tiny fists, each no bigger than a steamed bun. “Not just fight. I’m going to kill you! Someone from the Divine Civilization called the True Martial God King made a deal with me. He provided me with techniques to grow stronger and even led you here. All I have to do is kill you.”

Han Wu snorted. *So the True Martial God King set the trap.*

Han Wu tried to bargain. “Can’t you let me go? Whatever the True Martial God King offered, I’ll double it!”

Han Wu knew True Martial was powerful, but among God Kings, he was famously poor. His current wealth rivaled that of the entire True Martial Faction. Whatever True Martial could offer, Han Wu could provide something better.

The Holy Mother considered the offer, but after a moment, she shook her head with a hint of regret. “I made a pact with him. Keeping my word is my bottom line. I’ve already learned the techniques he gave me. I have to kill you to fulfill our agreement.”

Han Wu understood immediately. The Holy Mother was a person of principle. He couldn’t buy her off. The only option left was to fight.

With that settled, neither wasted another word. Han Wu unleashed his strongest state. Using Divine Invocation, he summoned himself in his body and effectively unsealed his full power: Duel Jurisdiction, Divine Authority 1, Destruction Aspect, Undying, Replicate, and Demon King Transformation!

The pressure Han Wu radiated now far exceeded that of any Top-tier fighter in the Martial Arts Civilization, though there was still a gap between him and a true Martial Grandmaster.

The Holy Mother’s expression turned intrigued. “You’re impressive. Really impressive. I hope you can take more than a few punches.”

With that, she made her move. Her internal energy surged. Behind her, a brilliant white Divine Ring etched with countless lotus flowers appeared. As the Divine Ring

materialized, she rapidly matured and grew to 1.8 meters tall, while her aura skyrocketed. A nine-petaled white lotus bloomed on her forehead. This was her full power.

Han Wu gritted his teeth. If he were also at full power, he wouldn't necessarily fear her. At present, however, he couldn't even access fifty percent of his strength.

Faced with her overwhelming pressure, Han Wu had no choice but to activate his Demon King Transformation to bolster his aura. His frame underwent a massive change. Fueled by enormous reserves of internal energy, he shifted into the transformation's strongest form: the Fetterbane Dragonforge.

He grew to 10,000 meters in height, towering like a mountain. Every muscle looked as though it had been forged from metal, radiating with both raw power and mechanical beauty. Sadly, this wasn't the Fetterbane Dragonforge's complete form. His reserves simply couldn't sustain a full release.

Still, Han Wu's strength had barely reached World rank, enough to challenge the Holy Mother in earnest.

She grew even more excited and shouted, "Here I come!"

A massive white lotus formed around her that crushed the entire courtyard into rubble. Han Wu seized the opportunity and brought Peerless and his Divine Authority greatsword crashing down.

Even with both powerful weapons, he couldn't break through the Holy Mother's white lotus. The entire lotus served as her shield.

Under her control, the lotus rapidly shrank until it was no larger than her palm, resembling a freshly steamed bun. Despite its size, the power contained within couldn't be underestimated.

In the next instant, the Holy Mother appeared before Han Wu's massive frame as if she had teleported. She pressed the tiny lotus forward with her palm. The terrifying pressure cracked space itself. Spatial rifts tore across the Fetterbane Dragonforge's body, inflicting heavy damage.

Then the little lotus exploded, and its blast tore a gaping hole through Han Wu's metallic frame.

"You're awfully big. Don't tell me you can't even take one punch." She stood in midair as her tiny frame generated another surge of enormous energy. A second white lotus formed!

: Chapter 893

Chapter 893 - Cooperation

The Fetterbane Dragonforge had powerful regeneration on its own, let alone when combined with Undying. Han Wu's wounds were healing rapidly, but the Holy Mother didn't give him a break, and the second white lotus was ready just as he was on the verge of full recovery.

Another blast, and half of Han Wu's body was gone.

"What the hell?!" Han Wu cursed.

The Holy Mother was ruthless. She wouldn't even let him heal.

The Holy Mother, on the other hand, felt like she'd discovered something wonderful. This body of his kept healing! That meant she could keep going!

Her face was flushed with mania and excitement. Even she had to admit that she was getting carried away, but seeing him explode was just so satisfying! It was a sensation those single-punch weaklings could never give her.

Curiosity burned within her. She wanted to know how many lotus blasts Han Wu could survive.

Han Wu was about to finish regenerating when another explosion struck. His left side had just healed when his right side was blown off. The structural imbalance nearly snapped him in half. Thankfully, his metallic muscles held, and the regeneration continued.

Still, getting bombed indefinitely wasn't sustainable. His reserves were running thin. On top of that, the slashes he launched with the Divine Authority greatsword and Peerless couldn't even scratch the Holy Mother. The white lotus also shielded her from the Destruction Aspect's instant kill effect.

At the critical moment, Han Wu used Divine Invocation to swap out his abilities. Divine Authority 1 was switched to Divine Authority 2, trading the offensive greatsword for the defensive Mirror Shield. The Destruction Aspect was also exchanged for the Life Aspect, boosting his regeneration.

Han Wu's offense dropped sharply, but his endurance and recovery skyrocketed. With this new setup, he could fully regenerate his body before the Holy Mother finished condensing her next lotus.

However, there was still the matter of his depleting energy supplies. The internal energy he'd absorbed earlier through the Kunpeng Divine Art had been spent tanking those lotus

blasts. He'd be worn down to nothing if he ran out completely. The problem was that there were no other martial artists around to drain except for the borderline crazy Holy Mother.

A bold idea popped into his head. There was nothing in the Martial Arts Civilization that said you couldn't drain a Martial Grandmaster.

So, as the Holy Mother compressed her next lotus, Han Wu extended his hand and activated the Kunpeng Divine Art. The art's absorption range extended dramatically thanks to the amplification from his enormous body.

The Holy Mother suddenly felt her internal energy draining at an alarming rate. When she focused on the flow, she realized it wasn't just disappearing. It was being siphoned straight toward Han Wu.

"What technique is this? How can it absorb my power?" she cried out in alarm.

Han Wu cranked it up even higher. The Holy Mother's reserves plummeted. Even her white lotus barrier couldn't block the Kunpeng Divine Art.

Furious, she stopped wasting energy on the powerful but costly lotus blasts and switched to hammering Han Wu with her bare fists. Those steamed-bun-sized fists were weaker than the lotus explosions, but were both quicker and more energy efficient.

If Han Wu had kept his earlier form, those punches would've pummeled him to death, but the Mirror Shield blocked eighty percent of the force. Life Aspect and Undying together pushed his regeneration through the roof. On top of that, he was steadily siphoning her energy. This made him nearly impossible to kill.

Although the Holy Mother wasn't taking damage, her reserves were dropping by the second. A prolonged stalemate would leave her unable to even maintain her enlarged form.

As her frenzy faded and reason returned, one thought dominated her mind. I need to run.

She couldn't win this fight. The only way to avoid being drained dry was to flee.

Halting her assault, she bolted, but Han Wu wasn't about to let her escape. His ten-thousand-meter frame gave him a massive speed advantage, and his long arms let him continue pulling on her energy mid-chase.

The Holy Mother could no longer sustain her enlarged form with the constant drainage, and she shrank back into her tiny body. Her short little legs only slowed her further.

Han Wu seized the moment, snatched her up, and held her tight in his fist.

“Kunpeng Divine Art, full power!”

Han Wu’s reserves swelled, easily reaching the ten-thousand-year mark. Meanwhile, the Holy Mother’s strength plummeted from Martial Grandmaster to Top-tier, then past that to First-rate. Her comprehension of martial arts mattered little without the reserves to back it up, leaving her barely stronger than a First-rate fighter.

When Han Wu opened his hand, the Holy Mother looked nothing like before. Severely depleted, her skin was wrinkled, and her already short frame had shrunk further. She looked like a little old lady who had tried to keep up with her failing beauty. If she had been a grape before, she had since devolved into a raisin.

Han Wu could’ve killed her effortlessly with a flick of his finger, but he chose not to. He wanted to use her position as the Holy Mother to set a trap for the True Martial God King.

This required the Holy Mother’s cooperation. Han Wu told her his plan, but to his surprise, she refused. She and the True Martial God King had made a pact, one she had to kill Han Wu to fulfill. Until the pact was completed, they were allies, and she wouldn’t betray him.

Han Wu thought it over and came up with a solution. If this were just a matter of fulfilling a pact, he could easily just let the Holy Mother kill him once.

Activating Divine Invocation once more, he used Avatar Creation to split an avatar from his 567 Martial Caste, and offered it up for the Holy Mother to kill.

She killed the avatar and discovered the pact with the True Martial God King was indeed fulfilled! That meant the Holy Mother no longer felt bound to her principles and was free to ally with Han Wu.

“I don’t mind working with you, but I have one condition,” she said. “I want the technique you used to drain my power!”

Han Wu’s only goal was to lure the True Martial God King in, so he readily agreed. However, when the Holy Mother learned the full details of the Kunpeng Divine Art, she hesitated.

The technique was a double-edged sword. Learning it would wipe every other technique she’d ever trained in, nor would she ever be able to learn new ones, all while having to train it completely from scratch. At the same time, not learning it meant waiting eight to ten years to recover her former strength.

The Holy Mother fell into deep thought.

Chapter 894 - If the Heavens Won’t Act, Han Wu Will

Three days later, the Holy Mother announced the dissolution of the White Lotus Sect. All members were to retreat to White Lotus Peak for group training.

Outsiders assumed the White Lotus Sect was lying low and biding its time. Only Han Wu knew the truth. The Holy Mother was pulling every member into her Microcosm to use as training fodder, setting them to train on her behalf.

Han Wu was no stranger to ruthless tactics, but even he had to tip his hat. When it came to shamelessness, the Holy Mother had him beat.

The sect members would be trapped inside her Microcosm and forced to train nonstop. That existence wasn’t much different from being a slave in a mine. Still, Han Wu felt no pity for them. Most were involved in human trafficking. They deserved what they got.

After sorting out her training fodder, the Holy Mother followed through on her deal with Han Wu. She sent a fake message to the True Martial God King telling him to come to the Martial Arts Civilization and collect Han Wu’s corpse.

The ever-suspicious True Martial God King first descended into the body of a White Lotus Sect officer to inspect the scene and confirm that Han Wu’s corpse was real. The avatar was so convincing that even the Butcher hadn’t been able to tell the difference during the divine war, much less the True Martial God King.

So, he excitedly made plans to travel to the Martial Arts Civilization in person. Once he had Han Wu’s corpse, he could trace it back to Han Wu’s divine realm and seize the Origin of Mutation. The True Martial God King’s future from there would be incomparably bright.

Of course, even if his plot had succeeded, Han Wu and the Origin of Mutation shared a life link. If Han Wu died, the Origin of Mutation would die with him—not that the True Martial God King knew this.

With the True Martial God King’s arrival confirmed, Han Wu spent his time training intensely. He even followed the Holy Mother’s example and adopted the same approach.

His own units didn’t include any species suited to learning martial techniques, so Han Wu snatched some people from the Martial Arts Civilization and locked them in his Life Microcosm alongside the rats.

Unfortunately, he couldn't just grab anyone. Taking too many civilians would attract attention from the major clans, and they might band together to wipe him out, so he stuck to capturing criminals. River bandits, regular bandits, and cultists were all fair game.

They had committed terrible crimes and deserved punishment. If the heavens wouldn't punish them, Han Wu would. He acted as their judge, jury, and executioner.

Over the course of a month, the public safety in Han Wu's area improved noticeably. He even became known as the Crime Slaying Hero.

The name was not the most elegant, but it reflected the respect of the residents in the region. Han Wu would've liked to keep hunting, but time was running out.

During that month, the True Martial God King had cleared his schedule and journeyed to the Martial Arts Civilization. When Han Wu received the Holy Mother's signal, he slipped into White Lotus Peak to set up his ambush.

The True Martial God King arrived on time. After greeting the Holy Mother, he demanded Han Wu's corpse. She haggled with him, requesting rare treasures in exchange. This wasn't greed on her part, but Han Wu's idea for her to squeeze out some extra loot and strip the True Martial God King of defensive items.

The Will of the Martial Arts Civilization was extremely strict. Even exploiting loopholes, the True Martial God King couldn't bring many items with him.

As expected, the True Martial God King soon caved to the Holy Mother and begrudgingly handed over his personal 9-Star God soft armor.

The armor hung like a dress on the Holy Mother's tiny frame, but the coverage was undeniably excellent. It protected both her upper and lower body, making it quite the bargain.

After receiving the armor, the Holy Mother finally showed him Han Wu's corpse. The True Martial God King was overjoyed. All his planning and spending had been worth it.

That was when Han Wu revealed himself as if he were the star of a surprise party, appearing right in front of a stunned True Martial God King.

The True Martial God King's eyes darted between the corpse in the coffin and the Han Wu before him, looking as though he had seen a ghost.

Quickly catching on, he glared at both of them. "You two cheated me!"

Han Wu smirked.

“I never lied to you,” the Holy Mother explained earnestly. “You just failed to ask the right questions. Why would I volunteer information?”

Han Wu nodded in approval at this airtight logic. The True Martial God King was furious, but there was nothing he could do. He’d come in person! Under the Martial Arts Civilization’s rules, at least 50% of his power was sealed.

The only option was to fight. He charged in with his powerful Celestial Martial God Body, tanking the combined attacks of Han Wu and the Holy Mother. In the end, he lasted less than half an hour before going down.

However, the Martial Arts Civilization was the civilization best aligned with the True Martial God King’s Divine Jurisdiction. Exploiting a loophole in the civilization’s laws, he used a forbidden technique called Disintegration to detonate his body and convert the energy into an escape path for his soul.

Neither Han Wu nor the Holy Mother had ever seen anything like it. They watched helplessly as the True Martial God King fled. Nevertheless, the outcome was still favorable, as this would undoubtedly leave the True Martial God King severely weakened.

Han Wu relayed the news to Wisdom God King Xu Hai through his Divine Invocation.

Upon learning what his student had endured in the Martial Arts Civilization, Xu Hai immediately filed an application with the Will of the Divine Civilization, declaring a divine war against the True Martial Faction!

It had to be done. Without a war, the True Martial Faction would think the Holy Son of the Wisdom Faction was an easy target.

After the declaration went through, Sun Qingnian used his resources to embellish Han Wu’s story and broadcast it across the Divine Civilization.

Overnight, Han Wu became a hero willing to brave a foreign civilization for the woman he loved. Wisdom God King Xu Hai’s willingness to wage a life-or-death war for his student also solidified his reputation as the ideal mentor.

The True Martial God King, on the other hand, was exposed for scheming against a student, and his reputation was left in tatters. Members of his faction started defecting after learning the full story. The war hadn’t even started, but the True Martial Faction had already lost half the battle.

Chapter 895 - The War Faction’s Ambition

By the time Han Wu returned from the Martial Arts Civilization, the divine war had been underway for five days.

The True Martial Faction was undeniably weak. Not only were they poor to begin with, but members had also left over the scandal, and the True Martial God King himself was still in soul form, unable to restore his physical body.

Even without Han Wu, the Wisdom Faction could easily crush them without any support from the Wealth Faction. It was total annihilation.

The collapse only accelerated after Han Wu's return. It took only two more days for Han Wu to lead the main force to the True Martial Faction's command center. The True Martial God King, in his soul form, was slain in a one-on-one duel against Han Wu.

The war ended on the seventh day. The True Martial Faction wasn't the most powerful, but it wasn't weak either. For the Wisdom Faction to win in just seven days was genuinely shocking. Divine wars typically dragged on for three to four months at a minimum.

This put two consecutive divine war wins under the Wisdom Faction's belt. The first took less than a month, setting a record for the shortest war in the Divine Civilization. The second shattered that record with just seven days.

As the victors, the Wisdom Faction claimed all of the True Martial Faction's assets. The True Martial Faction was poor, but even a sinking ship had parts worth salvaging. It was a significant haul for a newly established faction like the Wisdom Faction.

Xu Hai distributed the spoils according to merit, strengthening the faction's members. The True Martial God King's Divine Jurisdiction was given directly to Han Wu.

The faction's gains from the war itself were already more than enough profit for Xu Hai. Not to mention, Han Wu had been the one to both weaken the True Martial God King and land the killing blow. In Xu Hai's mind, the Divine Jurisdiction belonged to Han Wu.

Han Wu was stunned to receive such a valuable major Divine Jurisdiction. This put him at four in total.

The Duel Jurisdiction was already maxed out, and further development required ascending to Duel God King, which Han Wu had no intention of pursuing.

His other two jurisdictions were the Conversion Jurisdiction and the Slaughter Jurisdiction. The Conversion Jurisdiction was also nearing its cap. Although the Slaughter Jurisdiction was progressing quickly, it was still in its early stages.

As for the new True Martial Jurisdiction, it was closely related to his Duel Jurisdiction. Han Wu wanted to combine them for more powerful results.

Before absorbing the True Martial Jurisdiction, however, Han Wu needed to finish maxing out the Conversion Jurisdiction to make room.

After ten days of training in seclusion, Han Wu brute-forced the last bit of progress on the Conversion Jurisdiction using Divine Essence.

The Conversion Jurisdiction was finally completed. It produced an effect called Energy Conservation, which allowed Han Wu to convert any type of elemental energy with zero loss. It was simple and devastatingly effective. With this, Han Wu no longer had to worry about any energy-based attack.

With the Conversion Jurisdiction complete, he could finally integrate the True Martial Jurisdiction. As a major jurisdiction, it needed a powerful ability as its vessel. After careful consideration, Han Wu chose Merge.

Merge and the True Martial Jurisdiction underwent changes with this loading. The True Martial Jurisdiction's core function was to accelerate the comprehension of any technique and speed up the mastery of martial skills. When paired with Merge, the effect shifted to automatically fuse any technique into a stronger, more personalized version tailored to Han Wu.

The Kunpeng Divine Art, originally an incomplete technique from the Martial Arts Civilization, was fully refined under the True Martial Jurisdiction's influence. It was no longer incompatible with other techniques.

If Han Wu wished, he could feed any technique into the Kunpeng Divine Art and strengthen it further. The same applied to skills. He could combine multiple skills and optimize them with the True Martial Jurisdiction.

Han Wu spent a massive amount of Divine Essence purchasing martial techniques and skills in bulk. He then used Avatar Creation to study them at a thousand times the normal rate. At the same time, Xun used its trained cultivation abilities to devour techniques at a furious pace.

Through their combined efforts, the True Martial Jurisdiction's progress steadily climbed. Han Wu's techniques and martial skills grew increasingly refined. His strength continued to grow.

Meanwhile, War God King Zhong Heng received news of the True Martial God King's defeat with a fearful anger. His saving grace was that his role in the scheme had been limited to behind-the-scenes guidance. If he'd been directly involved, the War Faction would've likely been targeted next.

However, that didn't change the fact that the Wisdom Faction and Han Wu were growing stronger by the day. That unsettled him. A clash between the War Faction and the Wisdom Faction seemed inevitable.

The War Faction still held the sixth spot on the Divine Civilization's faction rankings, but the loss of the Butcher and Evilspawn meant their true strength had declined significantly. Only Pious was left holding things together.

The road ahead would be bumpy for the War Faction. Zhong Heng needed to find a way forward.

A knock came at the door. It was Pious. Zhong Heng let him in and asked what brought him. Pious handed over a letter.

Zhong Heng opened it. The exhaustion vanished from his face as he read the contents.

"This is a gift from the heavens! A gift for the War Faction!" He burst into delighted laughter.

Pious stepped forward. "Father, what does it say?"

Zhong Heng showed him the letter.

"Father, is this real?" Pious asked.

Zhong Heng nodded. "It contains code that only the Butcher and I share. It's absolutely real."

Pious drew a sharp breath. "Ten billion Huang Shengjun soldiers. With an army like that, we could dominate the entire Divine Civilization!"

: Chapter 896

Chapter 896 - The Hunt

It was an ordinary day. Han Wu skipped classes as usual. At his level, the classes served no purpose. Doing self-study in his divine realm was far more efficient. As he was deep in study, a call request from Saliya interrupted him.

He knew that Saliya only reached out when it was important, so he accepted the call immediately.

"Han Wu, there's an event coming up that I think is perfect for you, so I'm calling to see if you are interested. The Wealth Faction's third-in-command, the Gift God King Shaura, is hosting this event, and it carries a great deal of credibility.

“It’s highly beneficial for those like you, with a core race that multiplies quickly. If you want more details, come to my office. Sensitive information about rare events or resources like this is better conveyed in person.”

Han Wu listened carefully. Saliya wouldn’t waste his time with something trivial, so he agreed to head over immediately. He split off an avatar to head for Saliya’s office. Once the avatar arrived, Saliya sealed the room with a barrier, then pulled a detailed brochure from her bookshelf.

The brochure described the Gift God King Shaura’s hunting event, held in a foreign civilization called the Sprite Civilization. The dominant species there was a creature called Digital Sprites, but by all accounts, the civilization itself seemed unremarkable.

After skimming the brochure, however, one detail caught Han Wu’s eye. The first-place prize was an Evolution Blueprint from the Will of the Sprite Civilization itself. When a race obtained an Evolution Blueprint, that race would develop along the blueprint’s designated evolutionary path, enabling mass production of high-quality life forms. The same applied to core races.

“You want me to win the Evolution Blueprint,” Han Wu said to Saliya.

She nodded firmly. “Your core race has always been a weak point. Even with Random Evolution boosting individual strength, you had the problem of inconsistent subspecies. If you get the Evolution Blueprint and merge Random Evolution into it, it would solve most of your current issues.”

“You’re right, Ms. Saliya,” Han Wu bowed deeply. “Thank you for finding this opportunity. I’ll do everything I can to win it.”

Saliya allowed herself a small smile. The most important thing to her was that Han Wu understood her good intentions.

“Can other students participate?” Han Wu asked.

Saliya shook her head. “I know you’re thinking of bringing your classmates to boost their strength, but this event is special. I had to use my family connections just to get one entry spot.”

Han Wu felt even more grateful. Saliya could have sold or traded that spot for great profit, but she’d saved it for him instead.

“Don’t get too excited,” she cautioned. “This event isn’t just for students. It’s open to the elites of the Divine Civilization. Your competitors will be tougher than you expect. Prepare yourself.”

“Don’t worry. I won’t let you down,” Han Wu promised.

After leaving Saliya's office, Han Wu teleported to the Wisdom Faction's library to research the Sprite Civilization. With his clearance level, the intelligence was easy to obtain. He wanted to learn as much as possible to avoid being eliminated over basic ignorance.

All Digital Sprites in the Sprite Civilization fell into five evolutionary tiers: juvenile, adolescent, mature, perfect, and ultimate. Each tier brought greater strength.

Digital Sprites also often underwent changes similar to Random Evolution when advancing tiers. For example, a mature-tier sea lion beast could evolve into a perfect-tier turtle beast. This evolution between two completely different species was completely logical within the Sprite Civilization.

It essentially sat in the middle ground between ordered and Random Evolution, like a pseudo fixed-Random Evolution. This approach could give Han Wu the diversity of subspecies while keeping the evolution paths of his locusts fixed to an extent, avoiding an uncontrollable explosion of random variants.

This was exactly what Han Wu needed. He read deep into the night before finally returning to his dorm. When the day of the event arrived, Han Wu tore the entry ticket Saliya had given him and was instantly teleported to the Sprite Civilization's event grounds.

Countless recording devices floated in the sky, capturing everything for a live broadcast. Of course, access was restricted to the wealthy and powerful. The average person didn't have the clearance or authority to view the stream. Han Wu didn't care about the audience. He only cared about placing first and winning the Evolution Blueprint.

Once all participants arrived, the Gift God King Shaura's voice echoed across the civilization.

"Welcome to Shaura's stream! Welcome to all participants! Here are the rules.

"First, all abilities, Divine Talents, Divine Authorities, Divine Aspects, and Divine Jurisdictions will be sealed upon the event's start. Everyone will receive a standard protective barrier. Do not resist the sealing process, or you'll be ejected.

"Second, this stream has a gifting function. Viewers can gift participants special abilities or items through donations.

"Third, I hold the final right to interpret the rules, terms, and conditions. Now, let's begin! Show me what you've got. Uraaaa, go!"

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

: Chapter 897

Chapter 897 - Evolution Icons

After Shaura's brief introduction of the rules, a notification pinged in Han Wu's mind.

[Hunting Event system loading...]

[Loading complete.]

This was the system Shaura had created to help participants after sealing all their powers. Han Wu opened the panel.

[Name: Han Wu]

[Barrier Durability: 100 (reduced to zero means elimination)]

[Energy Points: 0 (obtainable by killing Digital Sprites, absorbing energy crystals, etc.)]

[Evolution Points: 0 (obtainable by killing Digital Sprites)]

[Materials: None]

[Gifts Received: 0]

Below the panel were two options. The first was the Evolution Tree, which contained Han Wu's locust evolution paths. Clicking it, he saw a spherical web of paths branching from the Common locust into billions of evolution routes. The sheer scope of Random Evolution was staggering.

However, Han Wu didn't need pure diversity. While a certain amount of variety was important, he also needed to give his units a sense of shared identity. This was vital to form racial advantages and species-based armies for combat. That was the unit development he envisioned[1]. Most of these tangled paths would eventually have to be pruned, leaving only a select few optimal routes for his locusts.

The second option was the shop, but it would be grayed out until he received gifts.

As Han Wu was thinking this, a notification rang.

[Contestant Han Wu, you have received a gift from viewer "Saliya": 1,000 Divine Essence]

Han Wu was both stunned and grateful. Saliya had spent a lot of money to support him! A typical Major God without any special backing or windfall would need two or three months to accumulate 1,000 Divine Essence. Saliya's generosity was a testament to her family's deep pockets.

The donation meant his shop icon had now lit up. Inside were various goods. He could spend Divine Essence to recharge his barrier, as well as purchase energy points, evolution points, and even materials.

It was a clear shortcut. After assessing his situation, Han Wu spent 400 Divine Essence on 4,000 energy points, then another 400 on 400 evolution points. The remaining 200 he kept in reserve.

Evolution points could unlock icons on the Evolution Tree. At present, Han Wu only had the regular Common locust, a juvenile-tier creature. While he could spend energy points to summon juvenile locusts at a rate of ten units per point, summoning these weak basic units was a waste.

If he wanted to summon stronger variants, he needed to unlock their evolution. The first one that came to mind was the Bomber Locusts that had carried him early on. Opening the tree, he found the icon.

Bomber Locusts were adolescent-tier. Unlocking the icon cost ten evolution points and one Fire Crystal. Once unlocked, he could summon two units with one energy point.

Fire Crystals cost ten Divine Essence in the Shop, meaning it would cost him twenty Divine Essence in total to unlock. It was affordable, and the summoning cost was reasonable too.

Han Wu kept scrolling. Multiple evolution paths branched from the Bomber Locusts. The most familiar was the Magma Locust, a mature-tier unit in the Sprite Civilization. It was a direct upgrade that enhanced the self-detonation ability.

There were also other evolution paths, such as the Air Burst Locust, Firemight Locust, and Spitter Locusts. These locusts had previously evolved from Random Evolution and were incorporated into the Evolution Tree for him to choose.

Han Wu weighed his options. His Bomber Locusts were born to sacrifice themselves in a suicidal explosion against their enemies. This only worked because he could breed many of them in a short amount of time in his divine realm.

However, in the Sprite Civilization, summoning locusts cost energy points. Spending them purely on self-detonating units felt wasteful in the short term, but could still be a worthwhile investment for his overall evolution strategy in the long run.

The self-detonation line was his signature offensive style. He felt compelled to preserve it.

In the end, he decided to commit to it. For the mature-tier slot, Han Wu chose the Magma Locust. It cost a hundred evolution points and a Flame Crystal worth fifty Divine Essence. Once unlocked, each Magma Locust cost five energy points to summon. It was ten times pricier than a Bomber Locust, but worth the power.

The perfect-tier option on the fire elemental self-detonation line was the Magmabomb Locust. Upon detonation, this species released a flood of magma and showered the area with thousands of superheated shrapnel, dealing devastating damage within a hundred meters and also over time. Unfortunately, the cost of unlocking it was far too high for the time being, so Han Wu shelved it.

While he had been working on the evolution paths, danger had crept close. This was the Sprite Civilization. Despite Shaura's conquest, those from the Divine Civilization were still viewed as intruders, and Digital Sprites' first instinct was to eliminate them.

Han Wu's first opponent was a tough one. His system scan identified it as a mature-tier Digital Sprite called Devilsprite.

It had tattered wings, a pitch-black body, solid muscles, and stood at three meters tall. Every part of it radiated power.

Despite only being a mature-tier life form, Han Wu judged that it was equivalent to at least a Lord life form. Unfortunately, his Magma Locusts were Heroic at best.

The Devilsprite didn't care for Han Wu's plight, unleashing its signature move, Death Claw.

Han Wu's sealed abilities left him defenseless, but the barrier absorbed the hit. Ten points of durability vanished in one strike.

Han Wu winced. Ten durability equaled ten Divine Essence. The Devilsprite's life wasn't even worth that much!

"You think I won't fight back?" he muttered, spending a hundred energy points to summon twenty mature-tier Magma Locusts. "Magma Locusts, go!"

1. Is this eugenics with extra steps, or GMO? ☜

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 898 - The Joy of Spending

Twenty Magma Locusts detonated on the Devilsprite, inflicting severe fire damage. The magma that splashed onto the ground continued to burn it, but the Devilsprite quickly beat its wings and escaped the affected area.

With this sustained burn damage negated, the overall damage from the Magma Locusts fell significantly. Han Wu had no choice but to keep spending. In the end, he summoned ten more waves of Magma Locusts—two hundred in total—before the Devilsprite finally went down.

Its corpse dissolved into data. Parts of this flowed into Han Wu, while the rest formed materials on the ground. Han Wu checked his loot.

Killing one mature-tier Devilsprite had netted him a hundred energy points, thirty evolution points, and a material called the Demon Claw. The total value in Divine Essence was around sixty, but summoning those Magma Locusts alone had cost 1,000 energy points, equivalent to a hundred Divine Essence and a loss of ten points from his barrier damage.

He had spent 110 Divine Essence, but had gained sixty. It was a net loss! This forced Han Wu to rethink his approach. How could he last until the end and claim first place to obtain the Evolution Blueprint?

The other participants faced similar struggles, but most had family-funded gifts to carry them through the initial phase. The real challenge was figuring out what came next. Spending only worked for so long. After all, nobody's family had infinite Divine Essence.

Moreover, anything purchased through gifts would vanish when the event ended. Only a madman would dump massive amounts of money into this[1]. Most viewers also thought the same.

As Han Wu was thinking this, a notification scrolled across every broadcast screen.

[Viewer "Wisdom Faction Welcomes All Members" has gifted contestant Han Wu: 1 million Divine Essence]

The notification scrolled three times over ten seconds. The shockwave it sent through the audience lasted far longer. A million Divine Essence was enough to buy an entire minor civilization outright! Who would throw it away like pocket change?

Had two consecutive divine war wins allowed the Wisdom Faction to become this wealthy? Was this the same Han Wu responsible for killing both the Butcher and the True Martial God King?

The astronomical gift triggered a frenzy. One viewer bet 10,000 Divine Essence on Han Wu winning first place. He refused to believe anyone backed by a million Divine Essence could lose.

Some shared the same thought, but others still disagreed and even sent messages through the gifting system.

[Contestant Han Wu, you have received a gift from viewer “I Bet On You To Win, Don’t Make Me Beg”: 100 Divine Essence.]

[Contestant Han Wu, you have received a gift from viewer “Pay-to-Win Losers Deserve Death”: 1 Divine Essence.]

[Contestant Han Wu, you have received a gift from viewer “Your Whale Money Can’t Buy My Brother’s Farts”: 1 Divine Essence.]

[Contestant Han Wu, you have received a gift from viewer “I’m Your Father-in-Law Who Hasn’t Met You Yet”: 1 Divine Essence.]

Han Wu was speechless. What were these people thinking? They were spending one Divine Essence just to insult him! If that was the rate, Han Wu was ready to set up a booth and get paid to be roasted after the event.

One Divine Essence per insult was a zero-cost business that generated pure profit! Even the Commerce God King would question his entire career. Han Wu closed the continuous barrage of spam, Divine Essence problem having been resolved.

In truth, the one million wasn’t from Xu Hai, but from Han Wu himself. Specifically, from the avatar he’d left in his divine realm.

This was a personal investment. He was confident that winning the Evolution Blueprint would return far more than a million Divine Essence, so he’d gone all-in to maximize his odds, using overwhelming spending power to discourage competitors with similar ideas.

After all, who else could match a million Divine Essence? That wasn’t a small number, even for God King families and factions. Feeling more confident in his odds, Han Wu began lighting up his Evolution Tree.

The self-detonation evolution line was completed in full.

[Locust (juvenile, Common life form) > Bomber Locust (adolescent, Elite life form) > Magma Locust (mature, Unique life form) > Magmabomb Locust (perfect, Lord life form) > Nuclear Locust (ultimate, Sage life form)]

Unlocking the Magmabomb Locust cost 2,300 Divine Essence, while the Nuclear Locust cost 54,600 Divine Essence. This was only the first step.

Self-detonation was powerful, but it couldn’t be his only strategy. He needed other evolution lines. Specifically, he needed a strong personal guard.

After skimming through his options, his eyes eventually fell on the Locustman icon. Locustmen were humanoid locust variants he'd previously cultivated using Sacred Objects. They had better stats than regular locusts of the same tier and could wield weapons, making them ideal for prolonged combat.

The Locustman line was expensive and equally as diverse, but it was essential for the long term. Han Wu traced the Evolution Tree to find the evolution line he wanted before finally confirming it.

[Locust (juvenile, Common life form) > Half Locustman (adolescent, Unique life form) > Locustman (mature, Heroic life form) > Soldier King Locustman (perfect, High Lord life form) > War Saint Locustman (ultimate, Earthsunder life form)]

The Half Locustman was only partially humanoid and had lower intelligence, though with overall improved parameters. The Locustman was more humanoid than the previous and had an intermediate intelligence, again with further improved parameters.

The Soldier King Locustman was mostly humanoid, had high intelligence, and was naturally equipped with a weapon that it could use decently well. Most of its parameters were significantly improved.

As for the War Saint Locustman, it was almost completely humanoid, also had high intelligence, and could wield its natural weapon with perfection. All of its parameters were drastically improved.

Han Wu wiped the sweat off his forehead as he finished upgrading the line. The full evolution line cost him 578,000 Divine Essence—more than half his total injection! He then converted another 100,000 Divine Essence to energy points so he could summon a single War Saint Locustman as his personal guard.

A figure clad in golden-green armor appeared before him, a sharp spike bound tightly to its arm.

"Divine one, your servant offers the most loyal of greetings," the War Saint Locustman said, high intelligence clear in its speech.

1. I should probably rename Shaura as the God King of Gacha Games... ☜

: Chapter 899

Chapter 899 - God's Eye View

Han Wu examined the War Saint Locustman's stats.

[War Saint Locustman (ultimate). Skills: Death Pierce, Stinger Holy Sword. Description: A powerful humanoid Digital Sprite with balanced attributes and perfect mastery over its weapon.]

"Show me your skills," Han Wu ordered.

The War Saint Locustman raised its spike-bound arm at a nearby boulder and said in a low voice, "Stinger Holy Sword."

The spike turned brilliant gold, emanating the pressure of a 9-Star Divine Weapon. The Locustman then appeared in front of the boulder, thrusting the spike outward, and the boulder silently disintegrated into particles too fine to see.

Han Wu recognized that the technique was far more powerful than it appeared. Even at his Microcosm strength, he wouldn't escape unscathed from that strike. The fact that an Earthsunder-rank creature could deal damage to a Microcosm rank target spoke volumes.

"Amazing!" Han Wu praised.

With a guard in place, Han Wu no longer had to hide. It was time to go on the offensive. He even already had a plan for navigating.

Back in his divine realm, his army of avatars was monitoring more than 100,000 live feeds and mapping the optimal route.

In the east lay a forest that was home to an ultimate-tier Puppet Beast at the World rank, making it too dangerous for now.

West held a village with a church, where over a thousand mature-tier Ghoulsprites hid. These were ghost-type sprites with high physical resistance, but with a potential vulnerability to fire.

In the south was a deep pond with an unknown number of aquatic Digital Sprites and a temple at its center.

Finally, the north held the mountains where a Centaursprite tribe lived—another suitable target.

Han Wu still had 250,000 Divine Essence, enough to either unlock a regular evolution line or summon more guards. After mulling over the intel, he decided to first check the easy targets to get a return on his investment.

First up, Han Wu went west to the Ghoulsprite village, riding on the War Saint Locustman's shoulder to get there. His avatars had already mapped and monitored every inch of the village, giving him a god's-eye view of the layout.

Han Wu knew where every single Ghoulsprite was hiding the moment he entered the village. He even knew which bushes had dog droppings.

A disguised Ghoulsprite approached him enthusiastically and promoted the village's magnificent church. Han Wu knew that over a thousand Ghoulsprites were lurking inside, ready to drain any visitor dry.

Han Wu played along, putting on a show of fascination. Meanwhile, he'd secretly already spent 100,000 energy points to summon an ultimate-tier Nuclear Locust and sent it toward the church.

The disguised Ghoulsprite led the way, and the church soon came into distant view. The Ghoulsprite, pretending to be a devotee, praised it incessantly, "See? I'm not lying. Our church is very grand!"

Han Wu nodded and secretly commanded the Nuclear Locust to attack. The disguised Ghoulsprite could only watch as a mushroom cloud bloomed over the church. A powerful explosion destroyed everything within a single kilometer.

The shockwave nearly knocked Han Wu off his feet, but the War Saint Locustman caught him. The disguised Ghoulsprite's words froze in its throat. The grand church was gone.

"Seems like your faith wasn't very devout," Han Wu remarked to the stunned Ghoulsprite.

The Ghoulsprite couldn't hold its disguise any longer. An outsider like Han Wu deserved to die for mocking their faith!

The Ghoulsprite tore off its disguise, but the War Saint Locustman struck with Death Pierce before it could do anything. All the War Saint Locustman's power was concentrated into a single point. Even with 99% physical resistance, the Ghoulsprite couldn't survive the remaining 1% of Death Pierce's force, and it shattered into data.

Han Wu absorbed the energy points and evolution points. The thousand-plus Ghoulsprites yielded 150,000 energy points and 30,000 evolution points. It was a solid profit.

Several materials survived the blast as well. There were over 200 Ghost Crystals, a Nether Scripture, and a Devout Crucifix. The Ghost Crystals were regular items and didn't cost much Divine Essence.

The Nether Scripture and the Devout Crucifix, on the other hand, were quite valuable. The two weren't dropped from the Ghoulsprite but instead actual materials! The fact that they had survived the nuclear blast was a testament to their high quality.

He touched the two items to check their descriptions.

[Nether Scripture: A holy scripture containing a huge amount of Nether Energy. Spirit-type Digital Sprites may use it to unlock powerful skills. Can also be used as a material to unlock ultimate-tier evolution, with a chance to produce a Digital Sprite wielding Nether Energy.]

[Devout Crucifix: An item used by Ghoulsprites to mask their presence. Contains rich Holy Energy. Can be used as a weapon, or used as a material to unlock a perfect-tier evolution with a chance to produce Digital Sprites wielding Holy Energy.]

Han Wu knew he'd struck gold. These materials were premium items for custom evolution paths. One was for ultimate-tier Digital Sprites and the other for perfect-tier.

Pleased with these results, Han Wu pondered over his next move.

Should I use my avatars to find more materials with the same attribute so I can unlock several powerful evolution lines that complement these treasures?

Use arrow keys (or A / D) to PREV/NEXT chapter

Chapter 900 - Centaursprite Tribe

While Han Wu was lost in thought, a special notification sounded in his mind.

[Contestant Han Wu, you have received a gift from the event host Shaura, totaling 5,000 Divine Essence.]

[Attached message: Little guy, I'm rooting for you. Keep it up, Ura!]

Han Wu was pleasantly surprised. He had actually received a gift from Gifting God King. Just clearing out one Devilsprite village had been enough to catch Shaura's eye. What would happen if he wiped out a Centaursprite tribe next?

The Temple at the center of the pond seems like a decent option too. As Han Wu considered his options, an urgent piece of intelligence suddenly flashed through his mind, warning him to leave the area immediately.

Apparently, after the Devilsprite village's destruction, a powerful ultimate-tier Digital Sprite known as the Phantomsprite King had mobilized a ghost army and was heading straight for him.

Han Wu had an ultimate-tier guard of his own, but he knew this wasn't the time to take unnecessary risks. The War Saint Locustman was strong enough to handle a mature-tier Devilsprite, but facing an ultimate-tier Phantomsprite King, whose abilities would negate nearly all of its physical attacks, was an entirely different matter. There was no way that fight would end well.

Still, Han Wu wasn't about to let the Phantomsprite King off so easily. He spent another 100,000 energy points and summoned a Nuclear Locust. Following the intel his avatars had gathered, he ordered it to intercept the ghost army under the Phantomsprite King's command. Then he climbed onto the War Saint Locustman and continued searching for targets elsewhere.

Ten minutes into the flight, the numbers on Han Wu's panel suddenly surged by 250,000 energy points and 70,000 evolution points. He knew right away that the newly summoned Nuclear Locust had completed its mission.

The Phantomsprite King had suffered losses for nothing, and Han Wu wondered whether it was releasing steam from its nostrils right now. Of course, that assumed the Phantomsprite King even had nostrils to vent its anger through.

After the massive haul from the Devilsprite village, Han Wu decided to push north. A Centaursprite tribe lived in the mountains there. The War Saint Locustman could unleash its full power against ordinary Digital Sprites, and even against a powerful ultimate-tier opponent, it could trade a few blows.

Han Wu flew north and surveyed the mountain range below until he finally spotted the tribe. The Centaursprites had lived as hunters for generations and were natural-born predators. Their physiques were athletic and muscular, and their entire bodies radiated a feral beauty.

The moment Han Wu descended into their territory, the Centaursprites sensed the aura unique to those from the Divine Civilization. Before he could say a word, countless Centaursprites grabbed their weapons. Some wielded spears, others drew bows, and all of them attacked Han Wu at once.

His protective barrier lost twenty-two points of durability, leaving only seventy-eight. That gave Han Wu a fright. He quickly poured in 10, 000 Divine Essence, raising the barrier's durability to 10,068 before he finally felt some relief.

As for the Centaursprites attacking him without so much as a warning, Han Wu was furious. He spent 100,000 energy points, summoned another Nuclear Locust, and sent it toward the tribe.

With the Nuclear Locust's Self-Detonation, even if it couldn't engulf the entire tribe, it could still wipe out three-quarters of them.

What Han Wu never expected was that the Nuclear Locust had finally met its match. The Centaursprites intercepted the Nuclear Locust 300 meters away, forcing it to detonate before it could reach its intended position.

The terrifying nuclear blast erupted once more. As the mushroom cloud rose into the sky, Han Wu gained 40,000 energy points and 3,000 evolution points. That was nowhere near enough to cover the cost of one Nuclear Locust. It was a net loss. To make matters worse, the premature detonation had only wounded a number of Centaursprites, which enraged their leader.

The Thunder Halberd Centaursprite King, a powerful ultimate-tier Digital Sprite, charged out to avenge its fallen kin. Under its command, the entire herd stampeded forward, causing the mountains to tremble beneath them.

Han Wu realized that he had kicked an iron plate. He quickly mounted the War Saint Locustman and fled. Even in the air, he couldn't match the Centaursprite King's speed. The distance between them continued to shrink, and the crackling thunder halberd was moments away from striking him.

He had no choice but to place his hopes on the Evolution Tree once more. He desperately needed a guard with powerful defense to protect him so that the War Saint Locustman could focus entirely on combat.

Among Han Wu's locusts, the Abyss Bug line specialized in defense. He immediately followed that path and unlocked the full Abyss Bug line.

[Locust (juvenile, Common life form) > Abyss Bug (adolescent, Unique life form) > Armored Abyss Bug (mature, Lord life form) > Heavy Armored Abyss Bug (perfect, King life form) > Iron Abyss Bug (ultimate, Earthsunder life form)]

Unlocking the entire Abyss Bug evolution line cost Han Wu 210,000 evolution points. Thankfully, he had ambushed the Phantomsprite King's army on his way out of the Devilsprite village and earned a substantial number of evolution points. Otherwise, the Divine Essence he had received from gifts would have been nearly drained.

He then spent 200,000 energy points to summon an Iron Abyss Bug. It was enormous, roughly the size of a basketball court, and its entire body was covered by a carapace harder than steel. Standing atop it, Han Wu felt safe.

Now, the War Saint Locustman could fight without restraint. It raised the long spike strapped to its arm and activated its Stinger Holy Sword. Golden energy enveloped the weapon, greatly enhancing its power.

Sensing the pressure radiating from the War Saint Locustman, the Thunder Halberd Centaursprite King grew serious. It let out a series of roars, and the Centaursprite herd behind it echoed in unison.

In an instant, 10,000 voices merged into a surge of raw power that poured into the Centaursprite King's body. Empowered by that energy, the Centaursprite King swung its thunder halberd and condensed the force into a pure white sphere of lightning before hurling it at the War Saint Locustman.

The clash began.

In the next second, Han Wu watched the War Saint Locustman use Death Pierce. It shot forward like a steel needle, piercing straight through the lightning sphere and slamming into the Centaursprite King. The concentrated attack caused the Centaur King's blood to boil, and its massive frame dissolved into a cloud of red mist.

The powerful ultimate-tier Thunder Halberd Centaursprite King was dead. The War Saint Locustman had suffered considerable damage in the exchange as well.

The Centaursprites who had followed their king witnessed its gruesome death and went berserk. They charged the War Saint Locustman in a suicidal frenzy, hoping to overwhelm it through sheer numbers.

Han Wu had no intention of letting that happen. He converted all of his remaining Divine Essence into energy points. Combined with the rewards from killing the Centaursprite King, he used everything to summon a second ultimate-tier War Saint Locustman guard.

Another powerful ultimate-tier Digital Sprite appeared before Han Wu. It had a similar build to the first War Saint Locustman but carried a different weapon. By coincidence, this one also wielded a halberd.

Under Han Wu's command, the new War Saint Locustman charged into the Centaursprite herd. Its halberd danced with ferocious speed, and no enemy could get close.

Energy and evolution points flowed steadily into Han Wu's panel.

Before long, the new War Saint Locustman had fought its way to the spot where the Centaursprite King had fallen. Its thunder halberd was still embedded in the ground.

Spotting the powerful weapon, the War Saint Locustman pulled it free and swapped it with its innate halberd. Lightning exploded across the battlefield in an instant.

Armed with the thunder halberd, the War Saint Locustman unleashed devastating power and tore through everything in its path!