

BEASTMASTER OF THE AGES

Chapter 14 - A Competition Between The Geniuses of Lightning Manor!

“Yanfeng, I’m still worried. The competition is just too intense, especially since manna is a rare resource that can increase the number of stars a lifebound beast has. We all know what that means,” Liu Qing said.

“Indeed. A lifebound beast’s stars determine a beast master’s talent and his highest attainable cultivation realm. Five-star lifebound beasts, the best of Flamehaven, will only rank bottom in the Flameyellow Scions Institute.” Li Yanfeng nodded, fiddling with his glass of alcohol. “If he can evolve his beast to a six-star lifebound beast, then he will have a higher chance of interacting with Heaven’s Sanctum. Of course, that’ll also give you more power in Lightning Manor. Since time immemorial, the birth of manna has always caused a mad rush. Even if the one found this time is just the most basic manna, it’ll still be priceless.”

“Yanfeng, we were truly lucky that it spawned in Red Twill Mountain, the outskirts of your Flamehaven. Only you can help Qianyang secure this rare resource and let him evolve his Lightning Bolt Cheetah.” Liu Qing threw Li Yanfeng a wink while refilling his glass.

“Red Twill Mountain is just too large, its landscape covered by forests and rifts. There’s far too many wildbeasts hidden there, beasts with awakened innate abilities. It’s a dangerous place, to put it mildly,” Li Yanfeng explained. “To let their younger generations compete and grow in such conditions, it is no wonder Lightning Manor has its current heights.”

“Of course. The competition will be intense, given that there are seven other qualified disciples contesting for the loot. Thankfully, Qianyang is probably stronger than most of them, and he’ll have your help too. He stands quite the chance,” Liu Qing replied.

“When will the other juniors arrive? And who’s accompanying them, experts from Lightning Manor?”

“Soon. I was permitted to come earlier because of our wedding. Those kids will be protected by experts, but they have certain restrictions in place once

they enter Red Twill Mountain, as this is supposed to be a trial for the younger generation.”

“So the two of us will bring Qianyang into Red Twill Mountain three days later?”

“Yes, every team will be entering the mountain at the same time on that day.”

Li Yanfeng nodded his head. “Manna is split into four tiers, royal, profound, terrestrial and celestial! Even the most basic royal manna can evolve a lifebound beast to seven-stars! How it works, its very existence...they remain an enigma. People can only assume it is the providence of the divine, which is why we call it manna.”

“Top tier manna is basically impossible to get hold of. The one we are looking at this time was just the most basic kind, one that can be barely considered royal manna, and yet the hunt for it is insane. Thankfully, the Lightning Manor has excellent intel and could reach here first.” When Liu Qing mentioned Lightning Manor, her pride was glaringly evident.

Li Yanfeng knew that she would always be a member of Lightning Manor and never Flamehaven, even after she married him. But that didn't matter, since he too, would become part of Lightning Manor.

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Li Tianming was surprised to see rain when he returned home, since the sky was clear earlier.

“Mother.” He was afraid that his mother would be drenched by the rain. To his relief, he found her deep in slumber in her own room.

“How relaxed.” Li Tianming didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. He was fighting for his dignity outside, while she was happily sleeping. He waited by her bedside. Night had already fallen when she finally awoke.

She smiled sheepishly at the sight of Li Tianming, who was safe and sound by her bedside, and asked, “Where's the Flameyellow Order? Should we be on our way now?”

Li Tianming sighed at how confident his mother was. "Yeah, I taught Zifeng a good lesson alright, but something happened. As a result, I didn't get the Flameyellow Order."

"And that something is?" Wei Jing asked, to which Li Tianming explained the whole incident with Liu Qianyang.

"One more month? I don't want to wait for so long, Flamehaven is too hot, I want to live somewhere in the north," she grumbled, reminding Li Tianming of a child.

"There's no guarantee I can beat him after one month though."

"That's not my problem, I am giving you half a month at most." Her smile made it obvious that she was just joking with Li Tianming.

"Alright, alright, say what you want. When I lose to him and the little chick becomes the cheetah's snack, you will know how cruel reality really is." Li Tianming smiled back.

"Bullshit! That pussy can dream on about eating me, cause I'm gonna peck its face off!" the little chick snapped.

Li Tianming snorted. "Stop tooting your horn, who was the mouse on stage earlier on?"

"Huh? You must be mistaken, because I can assure you it wasn't me. I was about to rip that cat's face off, but you just had to beg me to let it off. I generously decided to let it live for another month," the little chick said somberly.

"Hmm, I believe the little chick, it is very capable." Wei Jing looked at the little chick tenderly.

"See, my mum can appreciate me, unlike you," taunted the little chick, who leapt into Wei Jing's arms.

"Screw off, that's my mum, not yours. I'm rather sure she doesn't lay eggs." Li Tianming was speechless with how familiar the little chick was making itself.

“Yeah right. I was in your lifebound space and I was born when you were. If she’s not my mother, are you telling me it’s you? Mommy Tianming?” the little chick retaliated.

It was actually quite true when Li Tianming thought about it. Like most beast masters, Li Tianming treated his lifebound beast like a sibling and then some. They fought together and cultivated together, a relationship even siblings didn’t have. He had treasured Midas more than his own life, and while he had only been together with this little chick for a dozen odd days, their bond could only grow firmer.

“Hey, since she’s your mother too, why not let her name you? It’s too much trouble to call you little chick all the time.” Li Tianming had a sudden idea.

“My name is Aeternal Infernal Phoenix,” the little chick proclaimed proudly.

“Too long, we need a nickname. Mother, you can have the honours.” Li Tianming knew his mother had a good naming sense since she was very well educated. She was the one who named Li Tianming, which meant ‘fate’.

“Me?” Wei Jing brought the little chick to eye level and thought briefly, before saying, “For three years, Tianming had fumbled around in the dark. You, and you alone, brought light back to his life. Though you may be small and weak right now, you gave us hope, like fireflies in the black night. Therefore, your name will be Ying Huo (firefly). What do you think?”

“Me, Ying Huo?” The little chick froze up, perhaps already feeling a special connection with the name.

“But it’s not cheeky enough, and doesn’t match its image. That’s false advertising.” Li Tianming smiled.

“NO! I want this name!” That triggered the little chick, who flew into a frenzy trying to peck Li Tianming to death.

“Haha...”

It was hence decided that the Aeternal Infernal Phoenix would get a new name, Ying Huo.

Li Tianming hardly considered the day a success. He had failed to make Li Yanfeng bow before him, and he thought it would be a sorry night. But with

mother being so relaxed, and the little chick so cheerful, he still managed to lay down his burdens for the night and have a good laugh.

This was what home truly feels like! A mother that's unconditionally confident in her son, forever showering her son with love and care. A brother that he could joke around with, but would also fight together till their last breath. He was expecting more siblings to join him as well, since there were still nine eggs, with one of them already showing signs of hatching. Li Tianming couldn't wait for this new member of the family.

The only regrettable matter was that his mother looked even older under the candlelight. The knowledge that she could just leave him anytime frightened him even more than the prospect of his own death.

"We're out of clear spirit grass, the only thing that can make mother's life easier." It was already the middle of the night, but Li Tianming was still deep in thought. "I'll put aside Liu Qianyang and the Flameyellow Order for now. I'll make a trip to the Red Twill Mountain now and try to gather more clear spirit grass. Before my strength recovered, each trip to Red Twill Mountain was accompanied by life-threatening dangers, which was why mother didn't allow me to go. But I can convince her now that I'm a lot stronger."

The clear spirit grass wasn't exactly a precious herb, but the main problem was its scarcity. Most people had no use for it, making it hard to come by in the market. The only source was Red Twill Mountain.

For the next two days, Li Tianming helped to prepare everything his mother needed for a while. Although her lifebound beast was also sick, it could still help her in crucial moments.

"It's alright if you can't find any, just remember to come back as soon as possible." Even when the time arrived for him to take his leave, Wei Jing was reluctant. She knew she didn't have much time left, and all she wanted was to have Li Tianming by her side.

"Of course." Li Tianming said, before embarking on his next journey.

Next stop: Red Twill Mountain!