

Star Gate 881

Chapter 881: Massacre (III)

A tremendous explosion ripped through the air as a weapon appeared with the domineering presence of a Saint-level weapon!

“The Saint weapon has erupted with even more strength than usual!” exulted a brawny man in delighted surprise. “You well deserve your death, Li Hao!”

The speaker was one of the patriarchs of the eleven. He’d only wanted to beat back the young man. Who would’ve thought that his family’s ultimate weapon would suddenly awaken to much greater heights than it showed typically?

And why?

Under normal circumstances, these weapons were at most on par with six element Arcanus. But today, the patriarch vaguely sensed that this limitation had been broken. How would he not be ecstatic??

He’d been terrified to see the wandering cultivators spontaneously eliminated and the Lin family decimated in the blink of an eye. But now, he was very excited. Won’t I be eradicating the Skystar Commander Office once I kill all of these bastards? Then the City of Supernaturals will be mine!

Li Hao abruptly withdrew his domain of the five elements when the Saint weapon erupted, permitting an overbearing presence to drift out and sweep through the land. The space that it occupied immediately fractured.

Crunch!

A fissure appeared on the weapon; it was in the middle of excitedly flaring with energy, but began crumbling as the void cut it apart. Li Hao once more summoned the domain of the five elements to

seal off the premises. The brawny man was shocked senseless by what was happening in front of him!

A flare of sword light rushed at the Saint weapon, destroying it with a crunch. Its fragments released a shadow that murmured with incomprehension and dejection, “Why... does the void only target me?”

It didn’t understand!

The shattering of the void should’ve encompassed everyone, why was the weapon the only party affected?

There was no time for explanation as the weapon broke apart and was swallowed by Stellaris. Li Hao shifted his feet and flashed forward, appearing in front of the man. He raised Stellaris high and brought it down!

Powerhouses in the plaza were caught in a flurry of wanting to run, roar with fury, or charge their attackers.

Bam!

Wind, rain, thunder, lightning, and all sorts of supernatural abilities erupted!

Rumble!

Sky Sword and the others made their moves, laying into the crowd around them and killing regular Arcanus with one stroke.

“Kill Li Hao!” someone yelled. “He’s sealed off the premises! Kill him and break the seal!”

“Kill!” shouted one of the patriarchs. Their family weapon hadn’t awoken to new heights, but it was as domineering as it usually was. He flung himself at Li Hao and even summoned a few plant spirit replicas into the air.

The faction representatives here as observers also made their move. At least thirty Arcanus rushed Li Hao!

Two figures of light and shadow appeared.

Boom!

Fist and palm met the attackers! A faint hue of energy wreathed Jiang Yingli and Li Shengzhang. Their strength was extraordinary as they blasted a plant spirit replica to pieces with one hit!

The crowd reeled with astonishment. What level of battle strength was this?? Even Lin Hongyu’s expression flickered with shock. So strong, and they didn’t seem to be alive! She could identify the three members that were seven element Arcanus, but she’d only seen five of the six elements so far.

A dog bayed with bloodlust as she wondered and transformed into a golden color to devour the world!

BOOM!

The weaklings in the air lost their footing and flew toward Panther’s mouth. The dog snuffed the life out of them with one crunch. Not only that, but it raised waves with the thrust of a paw and slapped another Arcanus to death!

Li Hao waved a jujube tree into existence. It erupted with the strength of nearly seven elements as soon as it appeared and devoured the closest plant spirit replica!

It was now that Lin Hongyu understood who the remaining six element Arcanus were. They were your typical supernaturals! She watched with a solemn expression, each person in Li Hao's attack force seemed to rival her in terms of strength. The one with the golden armor traveled through the air, punching every single person he saw. Almost no one could withstand a single punch, whether they were Arcanus or other!

It was a massacre!

There were six element heavyweights in the crowd, some with origin weapons. However, their weapons were immediately destroyed by a sword and their wielders annihilated on the spot!

The powerhouses mobbing Li Hao were instantly obliterated. It'd been too long since the two puppets last fought, so they were uncommonly excited. Although they couldn't utilize their core origin or secret arts, they were able to smash people to death simply through throwing their sturdy bodies at targets.

The Saint weapons struck the puppets at times, but only raised a shower of sparks and didn't leave any marks.

"Hmph!" snorted Jiang Yingli. "The principal himself made this, how can the likes of you damage it?"

Although she was dead and only a puppet, these puppets had belonged to Evenround Martial back in the day. The principal himself had fashioned the four robot cats. How could these people that weren't even Apex break the bodies?

She swung her paw and smashed the Saint weapon to pieces. This was no ambush, it was a massacre!

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Lin Hongyu was so surprised that she'd long lost her composure. At the same time, she was also gratified that she'd chosen correctly. The shadow of a redwood tree appeared beside her, pulverizing a plant spirit's replica as soon as it did so and devouring the remaining core origin power. It snuck a glance at Li Hao and heaved a sigh of relief to see the young man busy killing others.

To hell with everything! There were plenty of plant spirit replicas present. It would be a shame to not eat any. It hadn't thought that the young man would be so ferocious as to kill so many in the blink of an eye.

"Li Hao!!" screamed an old man. "Are you going to kill all superhumans beneath the heavens?!"

At least forty Arcanus had died in a split second! That was unbelievable! Any sort of resistance was futile! Plant spirit replicas were obliterated, Saint weapons were shattered, and any sort of counterattack was ineffective.

This group of people was too strong.

"No, it's that you don't recognize the situation that you're in!" Li Hao answered calmly. "I gave you a chance, you didn't cherish it!"

"I surrender..."

Crunch!

The old man was promptly beheaded. What good was surrender for at this stage?

Li Hao hadn't anticipated that his opponents would be so weak. Well, it wasn't that they were weak, but that his side had grown stronger.

“Let’s go down with Li Hao!” someone roared and charged the young man.

“Mercy, Commander Li!” another person called out. “We’re from the Ministry of Administration and here to observe the proceedings. We’re not here to move against the Skystar Commander Office...”

Any protestations was useless! Only slaughter awaited them! Chen Zhongtian and Lin Hongyu struck, killing everyone they saw.

Six element Arcanus! Their targets were six or even seven elements. If the Arcanus Ranking was issued now, these people would absolutely enter the top twenty. They were formidable and overbearing!

Stellaris crushed Saint weapon after Saint weapon. Some weapons uttered a few curse words upon their deaths, others just outright broke apart without a disturbance. The massacre continued, but the number of people who resisted were fewer.

Up in the sky, plant spirit replicas broke one after another. The jujube tree, redwood tree, Panther, and Deputy Zhou focused their sights on these entities that they could absorb core origin from.

There was weak and strong among the plant spirit replicas. Some of the stronger ones were only close to Apex. They were all dead in the span of a breath and the four furiously absorbed as much as they could.

A bloody sheen crept into the curtain of light. Too many heavyweights had died!

Sky Sword and Hong Yitang combined their technique to deploy the stroke that overturned heaven and earth! No Arcanus was a match for them as even six elements fell as soon as they were hit!

It was so incredibly domineering that Lin Hongyu couldn’t believe her eyes! Their methods seemed to be neither a supernatural ability or a martial technique. What was this?

She had no time to think as an Arcanus sought to self-detonate with a loud roar. However, the two puppets easily stopped his actions.

All was quiet after ten minutes!

The difference in strength was too great. Although plenty of Arcanus were gathered on the spot, it took only one second for a second element Arcanus to die. Li Hao's group, Lin Hongyu, and the Lin third elder were the only ones left alive in the city lord manner. The third elder was as pale as a sheet and he trembled like a leaf.

Although he was a four element Arcanus, he was so terrified out of his mind that it was like he'd come face-to-face with a ghost!

Was this the great City of Supernaturals?? The invincible City of Supernaturals had possessed nearly one hundred Arcanus a few minutes ago, but now they were all dead! Was this the city that wished to conquer the world?? The twelve aristocracies... were done for!

Lin Hongyu was very calm. She glanced at the third elder, then at the bodies piled on the floor. No one knew what was going through her mind, but she suddenly smiled and looked at the young man. "Congratulations to the commander!"

Li Hao looked back at her. This woman... was vicious enough! It was a trait he admired when it came to killing enemies. Being vicious was good. Hemming and hawing and indecision was the most irritating.

Sky Sword and the others crowded over. They looked silently at Lin Hongyu as well.

"They've all been taken care of..." A merry Deputy Zhou floated down.

“Make sure they’re dead, burn the bodies!” A gout of flame erupted from the air and immolated the corpses. A ghastly scream sounded before its owner perished!

Lin Hongyu and the rest raised an eyebrow. So someone was indeed playing dead; they hadn’t noticed. Li Hao was truly merciless!

The plaza was a sea of flames as the corpses turned into dust, leaving behind storage rings and some fragments of origin weapons. Li Hao smiled easily, then turned to the two plant replicas and Panther furiously devouring all the core origin energy they could access.

“This is just an appetizer, what are you guys in a rush for?” he laughed.

The three ignored him and continued absorbing everything. This was a rare opportunity! There might be a tough battle to come, so they needed to eat their fill first!

Lin Hongyu looked at them, then at the two puppets, and finally at Li Hao. “Does the commander really wish to march against the primary bodies of the plant spirits?”

“Of course!”

Lin Hongyu asked no further. She looked out over the empty plaza, mixed emotions assailing her. The City of Supernaturals... would be surnamed Li in the future. All of their ambitions had vanished upon the wind.

Chapter 882: Continual Executions (I)

Numerous storage rings came into Li Hao’s hands. He was currently penniless, having given the last of his mysterious power stones to the two puppets for the fight. His greatest wealth was in Water of Life—more than ten thousand drops of it.

Hence, this time, it was Li Hao who made the greatest gains. Stellaris sparkled with light in his hands and emanated energy. It was full!

It was full for the first time since it'd come into the young man's hands. It'd consumed countless Saint weapons and ultimate family weapons of varying levels in the slaughter. The sword had feasted in the plaza!

Li Hao scanned his new storage rings and smiled at his findings. There were mysterious power stones to be found, and many of them. One had to know that the powerhouses among the wandering cultivators and ancient aristocracies had nearly all been in attendance. They normally kept their mysterious power stones in their storage rings. There were at least fifty million at one glance—a very small amount considering there were a dozen notable families on the scene. For such a large family to have only several million stones in reserve... that was too few.

It was the result of these fellows randomly wasting stones lately to purchase sizable quantities of Water of Life. Li Hao didn't make a detailed count, but there were at least one hundred drops in the storage rings.

That still wasn't much. This was a very cheap resource to Li Hao. These people squandering their mysterious power stones had only served to benefit the plant spirits. What he could obtain for three thousand stones per drop, they had to spend fifty or sixty thousand...

"The plant spirits might know that something's happened!" Deputy Zhou mentioned. "This place isn't as isolated as the ruins, so they might know that their replica has perished."

"So what?" Li Hao laughed. So they knew. They couldn't come out to do anything about it. Not to mention, the heavyweights of the various families had been slaughtered down to the last. Even if there were more powerhouses left in the ruins, dared they emerge?

Of course, the young man needed to prevent news from leaking. All five supernatural characters disappeared with a grasp of his hand. This was the precise moment in which the plant spirits knew that their replicas were dead.

Li Hao left the mirror fragments in place and looked at Lin Hongyu. "Do you want to come with me to kill plant spirits or do you want to stay here to straighten out the city's matters?"

“I follow the commander, of course!” Lin Hongyu intoned and turned around. “I leave this place in your hands, third elder. Coordinate with the city defenders if anyone comes to probe the plaza and eliminate them!”

Color drained from the third elder’s face. He looked at Lin Hongyu with apprehension and swallowed hard, saying with trepidation, “City lord... commander... I... I am afraid that I cannot rise to the occasion... that I will not handle the matter well...”

“City Lord Lin spared only you.” Li Hao looked at him with a smile. “You are a four element Arcanus at the end of the day. The strong are all dead. You should just return home to live out the rest of your days in peace if you cannot stabilize a situation such as this.”

The third elder turned even paler. “Don’t worry, commander, I will ensure that not a hint of anything escapes from the premises! If... there are people... who come... I will kill the weaklings... but the strong...”

He was worried that the other factions might send more representatives to investigate if Li Hao’s group left and the plaza remained sealed indefinitely.

“Don’t worry, third elder,” Lin Hongyu smiled. “There were nearly one hundred Arcanus in attendance—three to five days of fighting would be required for a victor to be determined. All the elder needs to do is occasionally exude some mysterious power ripples. Who would dare brashly investigate?”

There was nothing for it but for the third elder to nod, fear flooding his heart. He even had a fleeting impulse to run away when these people left... but quickly dismissed the notion. Li Hao was too terrifying! Where could the third elder seek shelter in this vast world?

He might be able to survive if he stayed here, but only death was in store if he fled the scene.

Li Hao smiled and summoned the domain of the five elements. “It’s time to go, senior. We need to go to your primary body!”

The redwood tree was rather resigned by the development, but quickly returned to the domain. The jujube tree swiftly landed amid horror and shock. These fellows... were too brutal! But damn if it didn't feel good to eat like this! This was its first ever full meal. It'd been constantly starving under its partnership with Sky Sword. That had truly been the worst.

“Does City Lord Lin know where the ruin of each family is?”

“Of course,” smiled Lin Hongyu. “All of them are close by—there's a reason why we chose this place for our inner city. It's close to all twelve families, or it'd be an incredible hassle if any trouble developed.

“Their bases are usually built over their ruins. Even if they weren't at first, continual movement eventually shifted their complexes over the ruins.”

“Then we'll start with them!” Li Hao nodded slightly. He flung out a treasure—the earth driller.

The young man darted within, everyone else hot on his heels.

“An earth driller!” sighed the redwood. “I haven't seen one for many years.” Its replica entered the mode of transport as well.

A map of the surface appeared in front of Li Hao. He knew where the Lin family estate was and immediately activated the earth driller. It consumed more than one hundred thousand stones to immediately disappear from sight.

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The Lin family complex.

This was a compound shaped more like a small city. People bustled to and fro; it thrived with activity since only the strongest had gone to the City of Supernaturals. That didn't mean that everyone from the family had gone. At the moment, the rest of the Lins were unaware of any changes in the meeting.

A hubbub of discussion buzzed over the small city. Everyone was discussing how the Lins would become a local overlord after the cabinet formation and seek to dominate the world. Their representatives were very strong.

Li Hao's earth driller instantly appeared in the rear mountain of the Lin complex. There was someone on guard there—an Arcanus.

Lin Hongyu darted outward without needing Li Hao to say anything. She thrust her palm out and sent the person flying, heavily injured and vomiting blood. He was shell-shocked when he saw his attacker.

"I don't want to kill you, second grandpa," Lin Hongyu said softly. "Release the defenses and I'll knock you unconscious so you can live."

The old man's expression shifted drastically.

"What, do you want to die?" The redwood tree manifested to a dumbfounded old man!

"Honored one..." White as a sheet, he released the supernatural defenses without further word, permitting the redwood tree's core origin to seep through before fainting dead away.

"He's one of the family members closer to me." Lin Hongyu looked at Li Hao. "One of my supporters in the family."

Li Hao inclined his head. This was still a poor showing. There were ten Arcanus in the Lin family apart from Lin Hongyu. Having only two supporters among them was a very low ratio.

The group quickly reached an entrance to a ruin. The redwood tree looked at Li Hao.

“Is this where you live, senior?” smiled the young man.

The redwood tree swayed.

“Then... shall we go inside?” Li Hao laughed.

“Be my guest!” Various thoughts ran through the redwood tree’s mind. Did Li Hao’s group really dare follow it inside? Its primary body was still immensely strong. It wouldn’t have been able to so quickly sever a new replica otherwise.

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Li Hao wasn’t thinking that much at all. A towering redwood tree came into view after the group entered the ruins. It seemed to be a small town inside.

The young man didn’t recognize the tree, but Li Shengzhang did. “So you’re the guardian plant spirit here! No wonder you’re so strong.”

The redwood tree’s replica returned to its primary body and instantly learned of recent happenings. A feminine figure walked out from the trunk. She laughed when she heard the identification. “Greetings to the two imperial descendants! I have demonstrated to you quite a laughable sight.

“This place is one of the nine communication stations of Silver Moon.” Li Shengzhang turned to Li Hao. “This was the crux of communication for the territory back in our time, including the one for

suits of armor used by the military. The military system used these stations at first before individually creating their own to prevent undesirable incidents.

“The nine communication stations covered all of Silver Moon. One could be in constant contact with any locale, no matter how far away.”

Li Hao nodded with understanding. The nine stations were all guarded by plant spirits. Some of them were built in isolated locales with only the plant spirit in residence. Hence, these plant spirits were very strong. The redwood tree was one of them.

There used to be more than one plant spirit holding down the fort here; only the redwood tree knew where the others were now. To still be alive and in possession of great strength, Li Hao and the others knew full well if the redwood tree had swallowed its brethren. They didn't say anything, however, since this was the affairs of the ancient civilization.

The redwood tree didn't mention any of this itself. There was a high tower in the little town behind it—the communication station.

“Would we be able to contact the main world if we repaired the nine stations?” Jiang Yingli suddenly asked. “We could, back in the day! We were even able to speak with the main world from Silver Moon territory.”

“There is no likely no hope of that.” The redwood swayed with a differing opinion. “Communication with the main world was facilitated through the communication station in the void. That one likely shattered when everything changed, and with the Star Gate closed, it's impossible to reach the main world now...”

The two puppets were very disappointed by the answer.

“Do the two imperial descendants wish to return?” the redwood tree asked smoothly. “If there are powerhouses that can rip through the bulwark between worlds...”

Li Hao shook his head before Jiang Yingli had a chance to respond. “How is that possible? The dean at Evenround Martial is only a Saint level existence. With the departure of the principal, there are only a few Saints left at Evenround Martial and Battle Heaven. They add up to fewer than ten Saints altogether in Silver Moon. Of the other main cities, only the Zhaos are willing to support us. They don’t have many Saints either...”

The young man sighed and shook his head. “We won’t possibly rip through the bulwark with fewer than twenty Saints. The only possible way to return to the main world now is to reopen the Star Gate and be on guard against enemies possibly on the other side. We can only make our moves on this side!”

Fewer than twenty Saints! They couldn’t read the redwood’s expression, but the face on the tree trunk was surprised. “So that is the case! I thought we could simply open the Star Gate and leave this place to return to the main world!”

Chapter 883: Continual Executions (II)

“It’s not that simple!” Li Hao said faintly. “Not to mention, my personal domain is too small at the moment. It can only contain some weak Immortals—I cannot support Saints. Why else would I need your help? Of course, the senior is quite strong, so you’d be the greatest in the world if Saints cannot leave the ruins. You are formidable, senior, and would benefit heavily if you kill us...”

“I would never!” the redwood rebutted with alarm.

“I’m just joking.” Li Hao was coolly composed. “Why would the revered redwood ever do so? Please move aside slightly and shrink your primary body to enter the outside world with me. I will not force you if you do not wish it! I... do not lack for Immortal-level plant spirits.”

The redwood tree was abruptly unsure of how many aces Li Hao had up his sleeves. Dismayed with shock, its primary body rapidly turned smaller.

“Please don’t misunderstand, commander,” came its mental ripples. “This minor spirit is only worried about the main world. Now that I know that there are Saints still alive, I am much more at ease.”

“We do not need to worry about those matters, that has to do with the venerated personages. What are minor characters like us getting involved for?” Li Hao laughed. “The heirs of the Li and Jiang families of Tranquil Star aren’t worried, what are you worried for?”

The redwood tree tensed with nerves, only now learning that these two puppets were the descendants of the Li and Jiang families of Tranquil Star. It snapped to solemn attention. “So you are the descendants of two exalted emperors from Tranquil Star! This minor spirit has failed to show proper respect.”

Jiang Yingli and Li Shengzhang were no fools, they were just less experienced in the ways of the world. They grasped certain connotations at this moment and Jiang Yingli suddenly cursed, “Damned cretin! You were testing me just now! You have some nerve! You wouldn’t be able to break a puppet forged by the principal even if I stood here unmoving! You will die without a burial place unless this world is able to tolerate the presence of a Saint one day!”

“This really is a misunderstanding, imperial descendant!” the redwood gabbled with trepidation. “This minor spirit meant nothing of this sort at all!”

“Hmph!” The two puppets refused to further engage with the plant spirit.

Li Hao remained smiling, but his heart rang with alarm. He needed to stay on guard against these plant spirits. This one wasn’t the little tree. The little tree was a latter day descendant without much experience in the world. It’d simply inherited some memories from its father. This redwood, however, was a slippery old fox. He had to intimidate the other when he could.

Unfortunately, it took a lot to scare an Immortal. With the strength of Li Hao’s group, it would be very difficult to eliminate the plant spirit if a fight broke out. Of course, that also meant that the other would have a difficult time of things as this fellow was stronger than the plant spirit supporting the Hus.

“Milord, this is all a misunderstanding,” interjected Lin Hongyu. “We should make haste and head to the other plant spirits as soon as possible. Now that they know that their replicas are dead, they might notify the other families to investigate the plaza. The third elder might not be able to hold them off for long!”

“That’s right...” the redwood tree hastily concurred. “That’s precisely right. Commander Li and the honorable imperial descendants, shall we head out first?”

“There’s no rush,” Li Hao smiled. “I just want to be clear on if the revered redwood wishes to enter the outside world with me. This will be a very dangerous endeavor. If I dismiss my personal domain... the revered one... will be sliced to pieces by the void! Aren’t you afraid that this is a trap for you?”

“Not at all!” the redwood hastily protested, belying the panic it felt inside. Had its probing words earned the ire of these mighty beings? If it had, it... wouldn’t dare leave the ruins. It would be relying on Li Hao’s personal domain in the outside world, and annihilation would swiftly arrive in its absence. The cutting power of the void was so much more powerful than imaginable. This was why no heavyweights had dared come out since the ancient times.

“It looks like the senior doesn’t trust us.” Li Hao smiled. “Then forget it, we’ll leave...”

“Don’t!” squeaked the redwood tree. “I mean nothing of that at all!”

It quickly shrank to the size of a human being and floated behind Lin Hongyu. Li Hao chose to dismiss his mental defenses and transmitted to Deputy Zhou, “Don’t send out your Saint-level golden body anymore, that’d be a waste. This redwood tree is such a base and dishonorable creature. If it wasn’t for the fact that it’s still of some use and I’d rather not waste some Saint talismans, I’d just kill it right here!”

“I understand,” the deputy responded in the same manner after a beat. “This is just as well since my golden body is actually my master’s from the ancient age. It might completely crumble away if I utilize it. While it can suppress Immortals and even outright kill them, the obliteration of my master’s golden body would be too much for me to bear.”

“Mmhmm!” Li Hao cut off the transmission.

The redwood shook slightly. A Saint level golden body? Truly? It no longer dared entertain wild thoughts anymore. Everything was possible, especially as everyone by Li Hao's side came with a prodigious background. Since the tree had made its choice, it would rest with ease!

It had certain plans in mind before, but all of that drifted away now. These people were not targets to provoke!

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Li Hao extended his personal domain as soon as they walked out of the ruins. It was a bit unstable and the redwood tried to contain its presence as much as possible. The domain didn't look that dependable yet. The tree would be in great trouble if it broke.

The young man could also sense the pressure from the air compressing. It was becoming very unsteady because of the redwood tree. His characters of the five elements transformed into supernatural characters to direct their auras at safeguarding the four corners. However, the air continued to shake, terrifying the redwood tree to the point where it wanted to hitch a ride on Li Hao if possible!

This was horrible! It was gambling with its primary body to join the operation!

"Commander... do you think you can continue to maintain your domain?" the redwood asked nervously as they burrowed into the ground again.

"There won't be much of a problem with that," Li Hao laughed.

What do you mean not much of a problem? This has to do with our lives! The redwood had no choice but to transmit a message to Lin Hongyu. The woman was rather resigned by her need to ask, "Commander, the earth driller also churns through everything in the air. It's so fast, will it destabilize your domain?"

Plainly, the redwood tree was immensely afraid of death and had made her ask the question.

“There’s not much of an issue with that!” Li Hao grinned.

“.....” It was that answer again.

The redwood wanted to discuss it further, but the young man said coolly, “The domain will become unstable if you keep disrupting me!”

“.....” The redwood tree instantly quieted down. It uncomfortably stayed in place on the earth driller. The vessel eventually deposited the group within range of an ancient castle according to Lin Hongyu’s directions.

There was some disarray inside the castle.

“Go to the City of Supernaturals and see what’s happened! Have the Arcanus brought out the replicas of the revered one in their sparring? Damn it!”

There were heavyweights in residence at the castle, but just like the Lins, only one Arcanus was left to hold down the fort at this time. It was clear to see that news had broken about the plant spirit replicas being destroyed, but no one knew what was going on. Perhaps the replicas had died in a tussle over cabinet minister positions. Maybe the fighting was so fierce that even plant spirit replicas were on the table.

A flurry of activity was underway at the ancient castle!

Li Hao followed these people’s movements and burrowed beneath them. A door with a haze of light around it vibrated as faint mental strength wafted through the air. There was someone here as well. The mental strength stemmed from a plant spirit and it was completely irate.

“There will be no good end in sight for you if you don’t compensate this seat with ten million mysterious power stones! Don’t think of receiving a single drop of Water of Life otherwise! Useless trash!”

“Our deepest apologies, milord!” Some old men at the door desperately pacified the tree. Shaking and trembling, they were clearly terrified.

“Ah, this is what it looks like when humans have attached themselves to plant spirits!” The jujube tree’s voice echoed in Li Hao’s ears. This was the kind of life that plant spirits should enjoy! What kind of pathetic existence did it suffer through?

That bastard Sky Sword only came when he remembered the tree. When he didn’t, ten years might go by without a visit. Look at this plant spirit! It’d lost an insignificant replica and was lecturing these humans like they were its grandsons! Now that was what the weak depending on the strong looked like!

The jujube tree was very jealous.

“Does the senior want that kind of life? I can give it to senior if you want it!” Li Hao transmitted back.

The jujube tree immediately fell silent. Forget it, I’d be terrified to receive it. These guys are here to take out the plant spirit’s primary body. Even the redwood tree’s primary body is here. The other plant spirit likely wouldn’t be making it out alive. This was its final moment of mightiness. The jujube tree didn’t want to tread down that path.

The plant spirit in question wavered with surprise for a second before its mental strength shot forward. “Who goes there?!”

The old men in the great hall beneath the ground looked at each other with confusion. BOOM. They promptly lost their lives as the scene went dark in front of them. An earth driller appeared in the hall.

“The Battle Heaven Army??” Fear colored the mental strength. This was an earth driller from the Battle Heaven Army! What was this doing here?

It didn’t have time to withdraw its mental strength before spear intent and two surges of sword intent stabbed into it! They obliterated the plant spirit’s mental spirit tendrils!

Li Hao led his people into the ruins.

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A tree golden in color rustled in the ruins. “Who are you??” it roared, then paused with consternation. “Are you... the revered redwood tree?”

The redwood tree showed itself with a face on the trunk. “How have you been?” It smiled.

“How is this possible? The space outside is unstable...” The golden tree immediately understood that these people were here to kill it! They must be! They might be the ones that killed its replica!

It rushed for the entrance without further thought. Though it was a tree, it darted forward like a human. It had to flee!

The ruins were their resting places, but since one as strong as the redwood could walk out, then there would be no trouble for the rest of them.

The group blinked with surprise, then quietly waited for the next development.

A ghastly scream rang out as the massive branches that'd just extended forward shattered the void. The golden tree's top and half of its body swiftly vanished!

Chapter 884: Continual Executions (III)

The big tree retreated incredulously from the ruin entrance. Its mental strength agitated shrilly, "Why did the void attack me?!"

The revered redwood had traveled here, so why was it affected when it tried to leave??

"What... an idiot!" A burst of aura erupted!

Bam!

Thousands of branches ran through heaven and earth, locking the injured tree in place. Cracks raced through its trunk as the tree looked around wildly in a mixture of fury and horror!

"You want to kill me..."

Li Hao grunted and struck with his sword! Sword intent wafted through the vicinity as the power of seven element Arcanus exploded! The rest also struck at full strength; even Panther transformed with a roar. Its blood converged and a shadow manifested in the air.

"The Monster Spirit Envoy!" shouted the startled redwood tree.

A clap of thunder rang out as a bolt of lightning sizzled from the shadowy golden horns, charring a large part of the golden tree when it connected.

"What are you still staring for? Kill it!!" Li Hao yelled angrily. The redwood tree's reflexes were too slow!

The redwood was shocked beyond belief. The Monster Spirit Envoy... It truly hadn't read Panther properly before or realized the dog's potential. It could feel the natural suppression of the bloodline! But the redwood was in a much better state compared to the golden tree. Taking advantage of the other's need to recover from the lightning strike, the redwood tree finally stirred with all of its strength.

Countless branches shot through the air. Being a plant spirit itself, it knew where the golden tree's weaknesses were. A massively thick branch pierced straight through its heart of life.

The golden tree had been accumulating its core origin for a forceful counterattack—it shrieked with anguish as a greater wave of core origin flooded the premises. Something seemed to explode as the tree dimmed. The energy that it was gathering completely dispersed.

"Its core origin dao is still intact!" shouted Li Hao. "What are you doing, redwood?"

"I forgot!" The redwood tree jerked with shock. "Since there's no core origin in the world now, none of our core origin daos can revitalize..."

It quickly offered a weak explanation while inwardly reeling from Li Hao's exhortation. So it would seem that these people had killed core origin powerhouses before! It didn't dare delay and summoned a wide avenue in the air. The avenue rammed the golden tree, colliding with something in the void and bringing another avenue into view with a rumble. That was the golden tree's great dao.

The golden tree's shadow appeared in the void. "Must you really be so ruthless?!"

Last time Li Hao killed the golden coconut, it'd been the little tree that deployed its imperial palace projection to suppress the tree's core origin dao. He was relying on the redwood tree this time, but its effect seemed less pronounced than the little tree's. As the two great daos clashed, the redwood actually appeared to be flinching from the engagement!

The young man frowned and snorted. Blood-red blade intent blossomed from Stellaris—the blade intent of the Exalted Blood Emperor!

Stellaris was much more awake now and agitated restlessly when it came in contact with the blade intent. “Sever!” Li Hao shouted.

Overwhelming intent exuded from the weapon, shaking the two core origin daos in the air! The redwood tree nearly lost its composure—the Blade of Blood! This was the blade intent of an exalted emperor, the one from Southern Martial! Li Hao possessed his heritage!

“Suppress its great dao!” the young man shouted again.

As stunned as the redwood tree was, it didn’t dare tarry. It roared and deployed all of its core origin, thoroughly suppressing the other’s great dao. The golden tree’s shadow struggled mightily with fear, “Don’t...”

It had a chance of reviving if its great dao remained. Once it broke, that was the end of the road for it. Stellaris and that surge of blade intent was frightfully domineering. It could tell that the blow would wreak unbearable damage to its core origin dao!

The blade swung down!

Heaven and death seemed to split apart as the tiny dao fractured, snapped, and completely broke apart.

“Redwood... you are too foolish...” the golden tree muttered with despair and impotent rage. “We are plant spirits and they are humans... You aid and abet the tyrants... New Martial is no more and it is time for our rise. Plant spirits are the greatest in number these days, you idiot...”

Humans had ever ruled over plants spirits. They’d finally declined, clearing the way for monster spirits. And yet, the redwood coordinated with the humans to kill its own kind!

What an idiot!

Rumble! A dense surge of core origin swiftly unfurled with the collapse of the great dao. The jujube tree and Panther immediately turned to devouring the newly available energy. After a careful glance at Li Hao, the redwood started absorbing energy as well.

The golden tree was dead! The redwood hadn't wanted to shatter its old comrade's great dao, but had no choice when commanded by the humans it was with. There was no hope of the golden tree returning! How ruthless!

Li Hao looked at Deputy Zhou—the deputy shook his head with a slight shake. He could not absorb any more energy. If he did, he would reach seven elements and be limited to staying by Li Hao's side. That was a loss of personal freedom that the deputy would not tolerate.

The young man found this outcome rather regretful! He frowned slightly. If this proved to be the case... then would none of the others be able to enter the next level before the second awakening?

Li Hao walked forward without another word and dug open the trunk. A dense concentration of life force wafted out. He materialized a large water jug and filled it with Water of Life. There was so much that Lin Hongyu swayed despite herself. There seemed to be endless drops!

That was an exaggeration—there were only three thousand drops. Since Li Hao already had ten thousand, this tree's reserves didn't seem much to him. It didn't even measure up to what the Hu plant spirit possessed. His frown deepened as he collected all of the Water of Life, then the tree trunk, as well as the indestructible matter.

The redwood tree shifted slightly at the last, whereupon the young man said calmly, "Senior, you and Senior Jujube can absorb core origin energy. This is what you lack, I have use for the rest! Additionally, I hope for things to be... smoother, next time. That there is no need for me to sever the great dao. When I killed Immortal-level plant spirits before, the imperial palace guard brought out a projection of the imperial palace to instantly suppress the other's great dao. Does Senior Redwood not have that ability?"

“Imperial palace guard?” The redwood froze. What imperial palace guard? Who was that?

“His Imperial Majesty had a side palace in Silver Moon back in the day, do you not know? There is a plant spirit outside it who is the guard. It can summon the projection of the imperial palace to immediately suppress a plant spirit’s great dao.

“I thought all plant spirits had a similar ability. There were times when the projection outright crushed our target. I left the imperial palace guard to hold down the fort in Tranquil Star and defend against the bramble rose. So... it turns out that Senior Redwood doesn’t know this skill!” Li Hao frowned. “In that case, I should’ve brought the guard.”

The redwood tree didn’t know what to say. Who would have this kind of ability? The young man’s words didn’t ring false, which made the tree tremble. Of course one could instantly suppress a great dao when calling upon the imperial place. Didn’t this mean that there were even more factions behind Li Hao?

The redwood tree was numb at this point.

Evenround Martial University, the imperial palace, Battle Heaven... anyone else? The powerhouses of these places had all flocked to Li Hao’s banner! It was incredible! The young man even seemed to wield the blade heritage of the Exalted Blood Emperor apart from the sword heritage of the Eternal Sword Sovereign! What kind of freakish monster was he?

The little jujube tree quickly spoke up as the silence dragged on, “If you trust me, Commander Li, you can bring my primary body here to kill the plant spirits. We’re not in a major rush and my primary body has some strength to it. It might not measure up to the revered redwood, but I will certainly participate with my full strength and not hold anything back!”

It might as well say that the redwood was pulling its punches, but it wouldn’t, so hurry and take its primary body along these operations! The jujube tree was wracked by regret in this moment. It would’ve sent its primary body if it’d known this would be the outcome!

There were limits to the amount of core origin that a replica could devour. If its primary body was here... it might've recovered most of its strength already. What a pity!

The redwood inwardly jumped with shock and cursed at the jujube tree. How dare that walking bundle of firewood seek to supplant it! It immediately transformed into human form and landed beside Li Hao with a smile. "The commander doesn't need to go to that much trouble. I was just out of practice from a prolonged lack of battle and failed to consider that point given that core origin has fallen silent. This will not happen again after the experience of this battle!"

It fully submitted to Li Hao only now.

"I was a peak Immortal back in the day, I've recovered slowly compared to the one at Skystar Town. As for this jujube tree, it should be just a minor spirit from the wilderness. I was a member of the army in my time, it's a random outsider that just entered initial Immortal. The degree to which it's recovered is too ghastly to look at. It might not even be as strong as the commander if its primary body came!"

The redwood shifted to a completely different state in this moment. It even set aside the core origin energy that the jujube tree and Panther were furiously absorbing. Li Hao could not develop a disliking of it no matter what. All hope was gone if the young man discarded it. There was a limit to the amount of energy that these two could absorb. Whatever they couldn't still belonged to the redwood tree.

"Commander, what happened earlier will not happen again. The more I recover, the more they will be suppressed..."

"I hope not!" Li Hao said after long consideration. "There are plenty who are willing to offer their strength if you are not. Perhaps you think of yourself as invincible because you are a peak Immortal. But in my eyes, I can summon at least a dozen plant spirits like you at any time!"

"Do you know why I do not choose them or the ones in Battle Heaven?"

The redwood tree was the very picture of attentiveness.

“Because of a need to keep you guys in check!” Li Hao explained calmly. “I cannot let any one party grow too strong. Whether it is you, the imperial palace guard, or Battle Heaven, I will permit all of you to recover only in part. This is because you guys need to understand that this era is no longer of New Martial, but mine—Li Hao’s!

“This is why you have this opportunity. You must cherish it and do well! Otherwise, with my strength, I can take any plant spirit with me at any time. Do I need you?

“You can return to your station if this happens again and go back to sleep!” the young man concluded coldly.

“I would not dare!” The redwood tree bowed with complete comprehension. The action shocked Lin Hongyu. This revered one had always been arrogantly aloof! Humans were incomparably weak in its eyes. Even though Lin Hongyu herself was a great genius, the tree only saw her as a subordinate that it could train. But it bowed and scraped before Li Hao...

Why was the difference between them so great?

Chapter 885: Continual Executions (IV)

“Come, we head to the next ruin!” Li Hao marshaled the troops. “Send out your mental strength when we depart this place and do not let anyone approach. Those guys can’t figure out who is who, so they won’t dare draw near after a plant spirit gives the order!”

The redwood tree nodded. When the group left, it angrily pulsed, “Get out of here! No one is allowed to come near! This seat needs to recover. All those who dare enter within one thousand meters will die!”

The ancient castle immediately quieted down before someone responded inside, “Please don’t be angry, milord. We will not dare approach! Servants, seal off the surroundings so that no one disturbs the revered one!”

Li Hao had already left with his group aboard the earth driller.

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Li Hao visited numerous ruins with the redwood on this day. All of the plant spirits they targeted lived by themselves and most were spirits from the wilderness. The redwood tree didn't dare absorb more core origin after killing three plant spirits; its battle strength had almost recovered to peak condition. Li Hao wouldn't be able to continue sheltering it if it took in more energy. It would burst through the personal domain to its doom.

Core origin was a resource that was difficult to store. Li Hao could only enclose some with his domain of the five elements, have the redwood compress it, then store it in Panther's stomach. On this day, the dog constantly shook from trepidation as there was too much energy rattling in its body. If any of it destabilized and exploded, it would be blown to pieces as well, no matter how much its stomach could contain!

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At the same time, Skystar City. The royal palace, underground.

The bramble rose abruptly took human form and looked around quizzically. The old Skystar King immediately awoke.

"Is something the matter, milord?"

"Something is wrong!" intoned the bramble rose. "The world seems to have loosened, or some other factor is at stake. There are numerous plant spirits on Skystar Island that fight over energy. But today, there seems to be more energy available. Why is that?"

It seemed that a batch of those fighting over energy had died? Surely not!

Although the bramble rose was confused, the old Skystar King's thoughts didn't veer in that direction.

"Milord," he smiled. "Can it be that more energy is emanating from the mine? That means the second awakening is at hand! That one can't control the flow of energy anymore."

Is that so? But the bramble rose felt that it was more a decline in the fighting of the outside world. But being trapped in the ruins, it couldn't sense much.

The rose was ill at ease and quickly said, "I'm going to take a look at Security. There were some ripples there last time..."

It hadn't paid a visit despite the disturbance, in case its actions caused a misunderstanding. But now, it was hard to be at peace. Had changes occurred in the outside world? If large sums of plant spirits had died... that would be a great trouble. It meant that enormous changes had taken place.

A rose on a vine quickly threaded through space and appeared before a chaotic, shadowy barrier before long. The vine probed through the darkness, only to be met by a forceful presence on the other end. It was as if the might of heaven and earth had descended!

The little tree was alarmed on the other side and promptly called upon the imperial palace's projection to crush the vine that was extended from the dark wall.

"Hmph!" A muffled grunt sounded on the other end!

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The bramble vine immediately withdrew its tendril, but it was already in pieces. Rage brewed in its heart! That bastard! So it would seem that the golden coconut had recovered well. It was very

strong and showed absolutely no mercy. The golden coconut crushed one of its vines as soon as it was visible! So it would seem that nothing had happened to it last time!

“Hmph!” came another soft snort. This would not stand. It had to go to the mine as soon as possible. As for these guys... I’ll take care of you one by one when I’m done!

It whirled around and sped through the air. Since the golden coconut still existed, there was no need to brashly head over. The bramble rose would be harmed by disordered core origin instead and might be further injured if the tree decided to attack. That course of action should be foregone.

It returned to the underground palace in a foul mood.

“Have your son contact the other places, this seat wishes to explore the mine. We can wait no longer!”

“Please be at ease, milord, I’ll have him prepare this as soon as possible,” the old Skystar King hastily said. “Then the golden coconut...”

“It’s a stubborn fool, there’s no need to pay any attention to it! It will be excluded from this operation and I’ll teach it a lesson once I’m fully recovered!” The rose temporarily set aside the power struggle in the outside world. Perhaps those guys had absorbed large sums of mysterious power stones lately and no longer fought over energy drifting through the world?

That was a possibility too.

Li Hao had forced all factions to expend large sums of mysterious power stones lately. It was good news for the plant spirits.

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The Ministry of Armed Forces, Administration, Examinations, and Foreign Relations soon received messages from the royal family expressing a desire to discuss a partnership. All parties were to meet at the mine as soon as possible. They needed to take advantage of Li Hao's absence. Perhaps they could set the second awakening into motion before he returned, or just outright take the mine for themselves.

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Near the City of Supernaturals.

Li Hao furrowed his brows after killing the fifth Immortal plant spirit and halted. He froze the expansion of his personal domain.

The jujube tree had gone into the storage ring and refused to come out. The redwood tree could not follow suit because its primary body was too powerful for a storage ring. It would accidentally break it and be lost in a spatial fissure. It was now in the form of a small tree and nervously glued to Li Hao's body. The redwood was stronger than before!

Li Hao's domain kept expanding and threatened to explode. The redwood would be in grave danger once it did.

"Why have you stopped... commander?" Countless thoughts rose in the redwood's mind. Did Li Hao want to kill it? Did he think that it'd eaten too much? But it hadn't absorbed much after killing the third plant spirit. The most it did was absorb what it expended in battle.

Li Hao shook his head and frowned slightly. "Can you sense... the change in ambient energy?"

"What?"

The young man's frown deepened. "I said the ambient energy! The energy in the air is denser in this part of the land."

“That’s normal,” the redwood quickly responded. “We normally take in energy from the air. Now that five of us are dead and the roots destroyed, they are unable to continue absorbing energy. That naturally causes a return in the energy levels of these surroundings.”

Li Hao frowned, saying after a moment, “We can’t keep killing anymore!”

The redwood blinked. Why not? It was mostly satiated as it were, but there were six more alive, including itself.

“The energy level has started rising again after only killing five...” Li Hao frowned. “This part of the world will see a rapid rise if this continues. That’s odd, does the world produce its own energy?”

“It does!” the redwood tree answered affirmatively. “The amount of energy in the world is constant. Once too many die, especially the powerful, energy seeps out if no one absorbs it. This is also when some hidden energy is stirred up.”

It, too, realized something with these words. “So... the commander means... the second awakening?” It asked slowly.

Li Hao sensed the energy in the surroundings and nodded with a frown. “I can sense a quick acceleration in the recovery rate around us. It probably has to do with us killing so many Arcanus and then five plant spirits. There might be an energy tide here soon if this continues, which will ignite the second awakening ahead of time.”

Damn it!

He’d sensed some differences in the air only just now and it was because he’d melded his five auras into the world that he sensed it. This was no longer a simple matter of whether or not the slaughter could continue. The key was, there was a large mine at Skystar City.

A lot of plant spirits had been in residence before, absorbing vast quantities of energy in the environment. Would changes develop once too many plant spirits died? The unfettered surge of unclaimed energy would cause a tidal wave in the mine. That would instantly give rise to the second awakening.

Li Hao was suddenly reminded of the first awakening. There hadn't been much energy in the world then. A mine had suddenly exploded because too much energy had accumulated within it. There were likely no plant spirits inside that mine to help digest the building energy levels.

That created the first energy tide.

Li Hao remained rooted to the spot. "So this means that if plant spirits do not awaken or absorb any energy, or all choose to be unmoving, then the second awakening might arrive very quickly. The world itself has a natural recovery process!"

"That is the logic, but which among us would forgo absorbing energy after we awaken?" responded the redwood tree after some thought. "The commander knows how weak we are."

Therefore, it was almost impossible to rely on plant spirits abstaining from the natural energy in the environment and permitting those levels to grow until a second awakening happened in due course.

Everyone would partake in what was around them! They needed it!

The little tree had rooted itself in the void to absorb from the environment around it. Everything in Silver Moon pulled on any energy they could lay hands on to recover. Someone else would take it away from them if they were a second slower!

Chapter 886: Li Hao's Scheme (I)

"Have Senior Jujube's primary body come here as quickly as possible," Li Hao declared after some thought. "It needs to come absorb energy as soon as possible. Otherwise, this overly dense concentration might create some issues."

There were six more plant spirits that existed nearby, but energy levels were rapidly rising in the territories of the five that were dead. An energy tide was inevitable if nothing depleted them. The tide might engulf the entire central region.

It was only now that Li Hao realized the issues this entailed. He hadn't paid attention to this detail before as they hadn't killed that many plant spirits. With five dead in one go today, and five gluttons at that, the issues were easily apparent.

"So... we stop killing?" Sky Sword asked in a strange tone. "And... is there a use to shifting the jujube tree over?"

That plant spirit was very weak, what was the point in transplanting it?

"And will an energy tide erupt at my Sky Sword Manor if the jujube tree is moved?"

"...no," Li Hao said after a long pause.

"Why not?"

Li Hao really didn't want to answer that question; it was Hong Yitang who coughed gently. "We can tell from the skin and bones condition of your little tree that there's insufficient energy at your mountain. It's almost starving to death, how is an energy tide possible?"

"....." An awkward expression crept over Sky Sword's face. You say that like it's my fault. Do I have any money? I've only accumulated several million mysterious power stones over these years and exchanged them for cultivation resources. And it's not like there's anyone wealthy in Silver Moon. If it wasn't for all of us latching onto Li Hao, how would any of you have the right to laugh at me for being poor?

As poor as I am, I'm still richer than you guys! You can't even bear to spend one mysterious power stone!

Frowning, Lin Hongyu understood their conversation. “So this means that we can’t kill any of the other plant spirits?”

“Not that!” Li Hao grinned. “Just that we can’t kill them today. Wait for me to transplant some starving plant spirits, that will stave off the energy tide. We’ll be able to kill the rest at any time then. There are plenty of hungry plant spirits in the world!”

Battle Heaven was one such place, there were thirty-six starving plant spirits there on the verge of death! If they could be transplanted to places of abundant energy, that would naturally prevent an eruption of energy.

How laughable! They were almost dying, how would there be additional energy to spare? Silver Moon constantly fretted over this problem. There were thirty-seven plant spirits in one major city, how many in all eight? And they were all starving to death.

None of them could outcompete their peers for energy. It was an amazing feat that the little tree had been able to claim any for itself. It’d only taken a little, of course. The little tree wouldn’t be so poor otherwise and run off with Li Hao as soon as it saw how rich the young man was.

There wasn’t a drop of energy left in the great void of Silver Moon! The province’s supernaturals wouldn’t all run for the central region otherwise. Although there were numerous plant spirits in the central region as well, they were so much fewer compared to Silver Moon. Added to that a great mine in the region, it might be possible that the plant spirits could maintain their functions. Supernaturals could also absorb some energy from the dregs in the air.

There was absolutely nothing to be found in Silver Moon.

“In that case, will any other troubles develop?” Lin Hongyu quickly asked.

“None at all. Take down all of the powerhouses in the eleven families and seal off their ruins. The plant spirits can’t get away!” Eliminating all of these people wasn’t part of Li Hao’s original plan;

that would create too great a disturbance. But now, they had to die. What else would these plant spirits get up to if they had the space to maneuver in?

He needed to blockade the remaining six families first, then fully eradicate them once the energy levels receded somewhat.

“Senior Redwood also needs to swiftly return to your ruin and take root there. Absorb the energy in the void so that City of Supernaturals does not erupt with an energy tide. That would be great trouble!” Currently, Li Hao was the last person who wished for the second awakening to begin. This was not the redwood’s desire either. It could still eat its fill for the moment. Once everyone awoke, that was when the trouble would begin.

“Ah... shall we return to Silver Moon and transplant some plant spirits then?” coughed Deputy Zhou. He looked pleadingly at Li Hao. The plant spirits of their province were in such a pathetic state. They were starving! Meanwhile, Li Hao faced an eruption of too much energy and had to give up hunting enemies for it!

None of the eleven would survive their operation if it wasn’t for this.

However, Li Hao had the little tree in mind. As the imperial palace guard, it wasn’t willing to leave the palace. But its primary body wasn’t that strong as there wasn’t much energy on the premises. If the little tree’s primary body could come, it could claim the territory of all eleven plant spirits. There would be plenty of energy available even without mysterious power stones as this part of the world was naturally producing its own.

If plant spirits could walk about freely, the ones from Silver Moon would’ve long come here and sucked the central region dry!

Another point to consider was that the redwood tree had recovered by too much. Li Hao didn’t want to give it more chances to revitalize. He was in a dangerous position—playing with fire. The two puppets and his own people gave him a fighting chance, but once the redwood tree set foot into the next level with even more energy, then Li Hao will have played with so much fire that he set himself aflame.

It would be an enormous headache once the tree became a Saint. Currently, while it'd consumed a great deal of core origin, Li Hao had kept something in reserve—the indestructible matter. Now that core origin dao had vanished from the world, one could recover their strength if personal core origin was strengthened, but not take another step forward. It was also very difficult to enhance the plant spirits.

Core origin dao could not give them any support, not even if one's cultivation reached the Saint level. The inability of the body to keep up with the advancement would result in a limited increase in strength.

Li Hao was on guard against the redwood suddenly breaking through. But at the moment, there was too much core origin floating around. Panther could store no more. It'd be a waste of killing plant spirits if they didn't collect the loot.

The young man already had five corpses of Immortal-level plant spirits on him and a great deal of indestructible matter. He was also concerned that the redwood tree would start to consider other motives and make a desperate gamble to outright kill him.

Five trunks might not help it advance, but eleven?

It couldn't conduct this action by itself, it needed Li Hao's help. Yet its greed might rise the second Li Hao collected all eleven. The young man was keeping all of this in mind.

The increased density of energy in the environment was one consideration, potential mutiny from the redwood was another. Otherwise, he could kill another two before returning to Silver Moon.

"I will consider it!" Li Hao nodded at the deputy's words.

"Those guys are getting off lightly!" the redwood remarked with regret. "Everyone who offends the commander deserves death!"

Li Hao didn't know if it truly thought that, or just wanted to benefit from Li Hao collecting too much indestructible matter. But for now, he chose to halt the slaughter.

This operation opened his eyes to the fact that the presence of plant spirits wasn't necessarily a bad thing. Their furious consumption of energy delayed the second awakening, which was wonderful. Another point was the plant spirits of Skystar Town. He could not randomly kill them if he didn't resolve the matter of the mine first!

Once they did and a vast quantity of energy wafted out, the mine would easily collapse without plant spirits being present to deplete it. Thankfully, he hadn't done anything brash last time. If he'd taken up Chen Zhongtian's offer to kill the man's plant spirit, he might have already caused enormous trouble.

Not only that, but there was the Wind and Cloud Pavilion! There was a ninety-nine percent chance that a plant spirit existed in their ruins. Although its strength was unknown, a great deal of energy would float freely once it was dead. Therefore, he needed to make full preparations to prevent an energy tide from developing.

It was best if he took a starving plant spirit with him and installed it there as soon as he killed Chen Zhongtian's plant spirit. That would cut off any problem at its root. As for starving plant spirits... there were plenty in Silver Moon!

Li Hao laughed. He finally had a use for the province's numerous, starving plant spirits. They would instantly suck an area dry whenever they were transplanted! That would permanently end the chances of a premature second awakening unless the mine exploded.

If he could move all of Silver Moon's plant spirits over, it would probably take several hundred years before the second awakening was possible. Those guys could devour as much energy as the world produced.

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The group quickly returned to the Lin family manor. Li Hao sent the redwood tree inside the ruins before departing.

Lin Hongyu couldn't help herself on their way to the City of Supernaturals, or perhaps she just didn't want to rein in her curiosity. "Is the commander... worried about the revered redwood? Is that why you stopped killing?"

"I do not want to test the plant spirits," Li Hao said calmly. "The redwood grew unstable when I put away the trunk of the fifth plant spirit. It made no difference to it whether we killed more plant spirits because it could no longer absorb core origin. Killing more was an unnecessary risk, but it was still urgent for me to kill more. You guess at what would've happened if I continued?"

"Those not of our race will certainly have different thoughts in mind!" Lin Hongyu nodded. "Unless we suppress them by strength... the commander is right. Although you are strong, it will still be difficult to manage a fully awakened Immortal. You are a rare genius favored by heaven indeed!"

"No, it is you who are the rare genius favored by heaven!" Li Hao tilted his head at her with a smile.

"You praise me too highly, commander!" Lin Hongyu smiled bashfully.

The young man cursed to himself. This woman's mind worked faster than anyone. She was as shrewd as they came! She guessed his intentions as soon as he stopped killing. Li Hao was wary of the redwood and cautious of being embroiled in the plant spirit's ambitions. Hence, she immediately said that those not of the same race will have different motivations. It was a clear indicator that she hoped Li Hao would look at her separately from the redwood tree.

Of those present, the two puppets likely didn't see through Li Hao's thoughts, and neither did Sky Sword. Perhaps the rest could, but Lin Hongyu understood the young man's concerns with a single glance. No wonder she was the city lord.

Chapter 887: Li Hao's Scheme (II)

“Then I’ll send people to immediately seal off the other eleven ruins,” Lin Hongyu said. “But it won’t be for too long. Our actions will be exposed if they’re made off limits for a prolonged period of time.”

“Mmhmm, that’s fine. It’s alright if the other factions learn of the happenings after I eliminate the Wind and Cloud Pavilion!” Li Hao laughed. “The news just needs to be kept under wraps for this period of time. As for the one million supernaturals in the city... Announce a bounty as a reward for them establishing a cabinet. Lure all of the greatest lawbreakers, troublemakers, and hard to keep under control to the ruins for cultivation. Kill them all there!”

Lin Hongyu’s heart spasmed. There was none like Li Hao when it came to viciousness. After the lawbreakers, troublemakers, and hard to keep under control were eliminated, those remaining would docilely go with the flow.

“Don’t worry, commander!” promised Lin Hongyu. “But I’m afraid my abilities will be limited if I act alone. Do you think you could spare Senior Earthturner Sword to assist me in a thing or two? We can coordinate our movements together.”

Li Hao smiled, as did Hong Yitang. This was an interesting woman. How were the abilities of a peak six elements limited? There might not be a single Arcanus left in the city by now. Word was yet to spread of the real events at the cabinet meeting and the Lin family still had two Arcanus left among its ranks. She made for Arcanus number three, which meant they had plenty of strength to bring to bear.

“Martial Uncle Hong needs to stay with me,” Li Hao responded after some consideration. “For you...”

Upon further thought, he understood that Lin Hongyu was doing this to set him at ease. So who should he deploy to help her at the City of Supernaturals? It was at a time like this that Li Hao realized he didn’t have many trusted subordinates at hand. Although he could call upon numerous powerhouses, there weren’t many he could use at a critical moment.

For instance, who should stay to act in concert with Lin Hongyu and take the City of Supernaturals for themselves? Hou Xiaochen might be able to and Deputy Zhou definitely could, but Li Hao was

going to move against the Wind and Cloud Pavilion next. If they stayed, that would raise attention as these two were well known.

Sky Sword was not a candidate for staying. He might fall to one of Lin Hongyu's plots—the woman was too cunning and shrewd by far.

“Commander, I say... why don't you make a trip back to Silver Moon!” said Deputy Zhou. “We need plant spirits for one, and let's also have Commander Yu come!”

“Commander Yu?”

“Yes!” nodded the deputy. “We need a powerful person to hold down the fort at the City of Supernaturals. City Lord Lin will be in charge of pacifying the people, which means we need someone to eliminate opposition!”

“Commander Yu is decisive, having been in residence at Silver Moon for many years. He's a quiet man, but worthy of trust. He also has many years of military experience and oversees the troops with a firm fist. His troops are orderly and follow the rules. If they're equipped with armor... Commander Yu will be able to quell even riots and suppress all dissent!”

“This is something that the martial world cannot do!” The deputy didn't mince his words. This was indeed beyond the abilities of martial masters. They might be strong, but all they knew to do in the face of unrest and turmoil was to kill the offenders.

Silencing dissension might be a good method, but it would do nothing to calm agitation. It would only rise up again

Huang Yu had led troops to put an end to many rebellions—he was the key to why the Silver Moon Army abided by the law and adhered to their duties. As a man of few words, he rarely asked for anything. He'd left as soon as they finished killing the golden coconut and chose to return to Silver Moon.

Of the province's four defenders, Kong Jie was the most impulsive, Hou Xiaochen possessed both daring and wit, but was at times more like a wandering hero. Deputy Zhou was highly deliberative and strategic, and Huang Yu seemed more like a pure soldier.

When Li Hao's thoughts strayed to the man, he nodded. One had to say, the deputy was right. The young man himself had forgotten about Commander Yu, but he was the best man for the job.

Huang Yu was Cannibal of the three commanders. His moniker wasn't the most elegant, but he had indeed cowed Silver Moon's martial world back in the day. He took action with extreme ruthlessness, but never killed when he shouldn't. He was more well known than Laughter or Sickly, but fewer were those who knew his true identity.

Almost anyone who saw him died because only the unforgivable criminals saw his face. He rarely showed mercy and didn't give any consideration to the notion of loyalty in the martial world.

That's right, how could I have forgotten him? Li Hao mentally smacked himself.

"I've long heard of Commander Yu." Lin Hongyu raised an eyebrow. "I will be certain to work well with him if he is willing to come to the City of Supernaturals. I will give Commander Li an intact, peaceful city. There is no need to worry."

"Don't misunderstand, City Lord Lin," laughed Li Hao. "Commander Yu will only put in a showing if there's any unrest. Your word is still law the rest of the time."

"That's settled then!" The young man grinned and cut Lin Hongyu off. "It looks like I have to make a trip back to Silver Moon after all. What a pity that we don't have transportation formations. Every journey is wasted time."

Thankfully, he had the earth driller now, but it consumed too many resources. It had to make almost twenty trips to return to Silver Moon, consuming almost two million mysterious power stones in the process. Li Hao wouldn't be willing to expend the resource that way, but it was very fast. One trip covered at least five hundred kilometers.

Granted, if he was traveling alone, he'd make the journey in less than a day.

The group returned to the plaza as they chatted. The Lin third elder seemed to have regained his calm. There was more color in his face when he greeted them.

"Greetings to the commander, long live the commander!" He hastily bowed.

"....." Li Hao burst out laughing. "You're too polite, third elder. You are the family elder of City Lord Lin, which makes you my elder. The Lins only have a few Arcanus left now and the vast City of Supernaturals needs your family to stabilize it.

"The third elder should aid the city lord well. Once the world is at peace again, the city lord will have accomplished a deed of great merit in pacifying the City of Supernaturals for me. The Lins will sit at the top of the list of achievements and enjoy great fortune!"

"You speak too solemnly, commander," an overjoyed third elder quickly responded. "I... this subordinate will support Hong... the city lord well!"

"Has anyone come by in our absence?" Li Hao nodded with a smile.

"No, but... some members of other families showed up. I sent them away, saying that the powerhouses of various families are sparring and need some time. I emphasized that they cannot be disturbed at this time..."

"Good, very good!" Li Hao looked at Lin Hongyu. "Then I leave the city in your hands. The city lord can wrap things up neatly. Whether you wish to have people pretend to be the powerhouses that were here or keep the meeting going, it's up to you. I would like these events to remain a secret, at least in the short run before I finish dealing with the Wind and Cloud Pavilion!"

“They will!” The woman quickly nodded.

Li Hao smiled when he saw that she had more to say. “The city lord can visit me at Skystar City when you’re done here. The supernatural characters are not a big secret.”

Lin Hongyu beamed, that was what she wanted! She’d seen the others use the characters and refrain from needing origin weapons to protect their meridians. It was very tempting knowledge that she wanted to wield as well. It was a delightful surprise that Li Hao had mentioned it first.

The young man was a very sharp person indeed. He knew what she wanted before she said a word. No wonder he’d been able to rise so quickly in such a short period of time. A powerhouse that brought one benefits, could quickly defeat enemies, and showed his subordinates hope...

She’d made the right choice, alright.

“My thanks to the commander!”

“Not at all, as I should.” Li Hao smiled. Deputy Zhou and the rest smiled as well, particularly the deputy.

Last time the young man returned to Silver Moon, he hadn’t shown any signs of being a sovereign. That was why the deputy had said a lot to him. However, it hadn’t taken long before the hints of being a king rose from Li Hao. He’d won over the hearts of many heavyweights in a short period of time and made them willing to fight with him.

Profit, sentiment, future, hope...

Li Hao displayed all of this in a very short period of time. He really had grown. The young man doled out favor and threats in equal amounts to swiftly assemble everyone on the same battlefield. The old martial masters of Silver Moon, brash martial world characters like Sky Sword, wily bureaucrats such as Hou Xiaochen, Yao Si, and Chen Zhongtian...

Even local tyrant Lin Hongyu had fallen into step beneath his banner. There was nothing to describe his rise but as meteoric and unstoppable. It might have to take a joint effort from the three great organizations, nine ministries, royal family, and seven divine mountains to stop him now.

“Time waits for no one, I can’t stay here much longer!” Li Hao needed to transplant plant spirits to the City of Supernaturals and prevent an energy tide from erupting. He also needed to pick up Huang Yu. It was time for a trip to Silver Moon to take care of these matters. As for the Sky Sword Mountain... the jujube tree could continue to stay there.

Sky Sword Mountain was more convenient for him, if it wasn’t for the fact that he was going to pay a visit to Silver Moon. Since he was, everything could be handled there.

“Please have a good trip, commander!” Lin Hongyu and the third elder respectfully sent off the young man’s group.

Li Hao activated the earth driller and departed.

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The third elder suddenly sighed when they were gone. “Hongyu... you... I know your mind, but if we hadn’t killed the senior elder and the rest... We would’ve had a place anywhere in the world, even if we joined the Skystar Commander Office! That would’ve been eleven Arcanus in our family. But now... look at how numerous the Silver Moon martial masters are. They’re all very powerful and one family.”

“You don’t understand,” Lin Hongyu answered calmly. “None of those people were good and some had feuds with Silver Moon martial masters. Commander Li wouldn’t have let them off the hook once he investigated them. In that case, I might as well take care of them myself as a demonstration of loyalty.”

“The commander won’t look into the rest of the Lins after that. Besides, those elders were just a bunch of useless trash that got in the way. All they have in their minds is world domination. It’s only a matter of time before they bring disaster down on our heads! The third elder saw it too—these guys are incredibly strong! Do you still think that our family has a right to vie for supremacy?”

“I hadn’t thought...” sighed the third elder. “I really hadn’t thought... They’re terrifying! They casually butchered one hundred Arcanus in a very short amount of time!”

He really had been horrified out of his mind.

“Screw that Arcanus Ranking, what kind of shit is that!” he laughed ruefully. “Earthturner Sword, Sky Sword, and that Zhou Chuan are so strong, but none of them are on the ranking. Some are even ranked number forty or fifty behind the patriarchs of the other families. But, I feel that any of them are just as strong as you! That ranking is a piece of crap!”

Chapter 888: Li Hao’s Scheme (III)

The City of Supernaturals wouldn’t have been so self-assured if it wasn’t for the Arcanus Ranking. When they saw that Lin Hongyu and a few other patriarchs were ranked toward the front, they felt that they were quite strong in the world.

It was why the city had so quickly agreed to forming a cabinet of government. If they weren’t weak, then they wanted to vie for supremacy! They’d been wary of the royal family, nine ministries, and three great organizations before, but after seeing the ranking... heh. What was there a need to be afraid of?

“Does the third elder really think... that the Wind and Cloud Pavilion is behind this ranking?” sighed Lin Hongyu.

“Eh?”

“It’s a fake!”

The third elder blinked. How could that be?!

“It’s most likely the commander’s work,” Lin Hongyu laughed softly. “The Wind and Cloud Pavilion was plainly targeting the Skystar Commander Office during its inauguration. We all found it odd that there were 3 seven element Arcanus on the ranking when it appeared. Now I understand, that ranking is probably fake!

“The real ranking... might’ve never been published. The commander keeps talking about wanting to eliminate the Wind and Cloud Pavilion because he doesn’t want to give them a chance to publish another ranking. He’ll eliminate them first!”

“How is that possible?” The third elder couldn’t believe it.

“Why not?” chuckled Lin Hongyu. “He just needs to control their source and prevent their ranking from being distributed. That will naturally make his ranking the real one. The Wind and Cloud Pavilion won’t be able to modify his and no one will believe their real ranking. They compromise the ranking’s integrity if they undertake too much action! Therefore, they can only bide their time no matter how angry they are and wait to distribute the next ranking before Commander Li can!”

The third elder understood now and sucked in a sharp breath. “What... incredible plotting!”

Everyone’s eyes were on the seven element Arcanus now; no one paid much attention to Li Hao. Since he didn’t do anything out in the open, he was further ignored. But under the table, the young man was quite the busy person.

“Isn’t it!” Lin Hongyu sighed with emotion. “I just thought through all of this myself. Also, Chen Zhongtian is following him as well... It would seem that the Inspectorate has quietly joined the Skystar Commander Office. Combined with the City of Supernaturals, Sky Sword Mountain, and the support of Silver Moon... It would seem that the Skystar Commander Office is the strongest of all factions at the moment!

“As for his backers, he’s the only one who can kill plant spirits. It’s only a matter of time before he revives Battle Heaven and the other major cities. You tell me, should we just wait for death instead of allying with him?”

“Chen Zhongtian?” The third elder blinked. “Who?”

“The boy toy!” Lin Hongyu laughed. “Did the third elder not recognize him?”

“.....” The old man rummaged through his memories. “No wonder I found him familiar. So it’s him! Who would’ve thought?”

“This Chen Zhongtian is an interesting fellow.” The third elder suddenly smiled. “He has very keen foresight and joins the side of whomever is strong. Although some call him a fair-weather ally, he happens to choose right every time. He chose the nine ministries last time and crafted eighty years of glory for the Inspectorate. This time, he chooses the Skystar Commander Office. Perhaps... he is right.”

“Our most pressing concern is to stabilize the City of Supernaturals,” Lin Hongyu changed the topic. “We need to slow the spread of news. You must work with me, elder. We can’t have anything going wrong before Commander Huang Yu arrives.”

“I understand!”

“There were five matches today between Arcanus heavyweights,” Lin Hongyu’s voice then sounded throughout the city. “Everyone was skilled in their own area and I have learned much from them. Five cabinet ministers have been chosen today. They are Patriarch Huang Ming of the Huang family, Patriarch Liu Yue of the Liu family...

“Thirty cabinet ministers will be chosen and five matches will be held each day. The rest in attendance may observe the fights of the Arcanus level. All cabinet ministers will be chosen after six days!”

The announcement sent the City of Supernaturals into a slight uproar. Of the five cabinet ministers chosen today, four were from the ancient aristocracies and one was a renowned wandering cultivator.

“What a pity that only the bigwigs are allowed to watch.” The city buzzed with conversation and much regret. “We’d learn a lot from watching Arcanus fight! That’s five fights a day for six days straight!”

“Senior Sky Blade is incredible, alright! He’s become a cabinet minister as a wandering cultivator! It’s a damned shame that we don’t have the right to participate...”

“It’s a good thing for us that wandering cultivators are part of the cabinet!”

“.....” As the first five ministers were analyzed, the news swiftly spread throughout the land.

The City of Supernaturals had chosen five powerhouses on its first day. The city lord manor had been sealed off, preventing transmission pendants from functioning so that images of the fights could not be leaked.

This effectively forestalled other possibilities from being considered. It was only five days before the meeting was over.

Of the ancient aristocracies, five families had their Arcanus completely eradicated while Li Hao was present at the City of Supernaturals. Lin Hongyu showed the same ruthlessness to the remaining six families. She visited them herself under the cover of night and executed all of their Arcanus. No one could measure up to her strength as a peak six elements.

Large numbers of city defenders quickly locked the rest of the family in their complexes. Everything was completed with none the wiser as the world’s attention was on the city lord manor. No one looked at the various family complexes in the inner city.

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Skystar City, the royal palace.

It was the first time in a long while that many heavyweights set foot into these grounds. The current Skystar King addressed the visitors, focusing most of his efforts on the two from the Ministry of Armed Forces and Administration.

“The revered one means to say that we need to seize some energy even before the second awakening. All of us have been expending too much in resources lately and we’re short on Water of Life, but Li Hao’s side continues to strengthen...

“His own strength grows by the day, so we need to take some risks even if it’s just for ourselves. We should bury the hatchet on past grievances. Otherwise, Li Hao will be the only one who benefits if our standoff continues.

“The City of Supernaturals is establishing a cabinet for their government as we speak. They show signs of wanting to conquer the world. They have strong families and numerous Arcanus...”

Qi Pingjiang listened quietly to the Skystar King’s persuasion and said softly after a while, “It won’t be easy to handle the one at the mine. Our strength is feeble and there’s a limit to what we can do.”

“No matter!” laughed the Skystar King. “Our mission is very simple—clear the soldier puppets guarding the mine! The vice commander will be left to the revered ones. We just need to clear out the grunts.”

The heavyweights standing in front of him chose to remain silent.

“It’s for your own good that all of you enter together.” A faint pulse of mental strength reached out to them as the bramble rose manifested a faint tree image. “Also, there are some arrangements inside the mine that permit only humans to enter. Every group will receive five hundred drops of Water of Life upon successful completion of this operation. In addition, future transactions can be made for ten thousand stones per drop!

“We will try to delay the second awakening for as long as possible, but the caveat for that is that we must grow stronger ourselves! Otherwise, delaying it will be of no benefit to us. But if it is not postponed, can you guarantee immediate ascension into the Apex level once it occurs? How about the Immortal level? You lack sufficient strength!

“It is also best if you release Jiang Chen. He is a division leader of the Skystar Army and possesses some of the commander’s bloodline. I know that you are wary of him, so my proposal is for you to accompany him. You can restrict him if you wish, but I hope that everyone works together so he can at least move around...”

That was also the key of their operation—a division leader! The old Skystar King would be very useful in crucial moments. The surviving vice commander did not have the right to demote Jiang Chen. Once the vice commander was preoccupied, Jiang Chen could even utilize certain tricks to take command of Skystar Town.

Most of the town’s executive level had died. Only the vice commander and the guardian plant spirits were still alive. The town used to possess ten division leaders—they were all dead. Only Jiang Chen occupied one of those positions now. It was only with his presence that they stood a chance of fully seizing the mine.

It was best if they didn’t have to share it with anyone else. The bramble rose wished even more to keep it all to itself. The second awakening was a course of action they’d take if they had no other choices.

A genteel looking man close to Qi Pingjiang frowned at the last suggestion. “Jiang Chen wishes to walk free?”

“Like I just said, you guys can still restrict him after you enter the ruin,” the bramble rose said faintly. “But you need to escort him to some pivotal areas when there is a need to. This is what all of you should do, in any case. Must you really create opportunities for Li Hao and those guys in Silver Moon to revive before you are happy?”

“We can agree to this, but on one condition,” the old minister of Administration said slowly. “Armed Forces and Administration want five hundred drops of Water of Life right now.”

“After the fact...”

“No, right now!” the old minister insisted. “I know you have it and can spare it! We need to fortify our other people, in case anything untoward develops when we’re gone. We’ll go if you bring it out now. You can keep waiting if you don’t!”

The bramble rose bristled with anger! This meant that it needed to produce one thousand drops right now! It wasn’t that it didn’t have that sum, but that depleting a plant spirit’s reserves was the equivalent of taking their lives. It wasn’t willing to do so.

But seeing at how resolute those in front of it were, it said coldly, “Very well, I agree!”

Next to it, the Skystar King’s eyes darted around. He could barely contain himself. One thousand drops!

What about my royal family?

He wanted to raise the same request, but could already sense a surge of anger rising around him. He sighed to himself and didn’t voice his thoughts aloud. The rose would likely fly into a rage if he did.

“Then it’s so settled, we march after three days!” Qi Pingjiang smiled.

“Why three days?” snapped the bramble rose.

“My son is four element Arcanus,” Qi Pingjiang laughed. “He needs some time to digest the Water of Life. Five elements isn’t a problem and six elements depends on luck. Some time is needed, wouldn’t you say?”

Although the bramble rose felt that long nights made for numerous dreams, it'd already waited so many years. It acquiesced after some thought, "Then three days it is."

The group left without further word.

Chapter 889: I'll Invest In You (I)

Irritated mental strength erupted after the visitors left the underground palace.

"How dare a bunch of ants haggle with this seat!"

The Skystar King didn't say a word. If they are ants, then my Jiang family is pretty much the same. He kept these words to himself and didn't voice them aloud. It would be difficult to escape the grasp of the plant spirits after the second awakening, but even more difficult to do so prior to the second awakening. Everything was too hard in this age. Plant spirits were king.

However, it felt much better to think that everyone was in the same straits.

As for Li Hao... the Skystar King didn't know how the young man had reached an accord with the plant spirits. Three thousand stones for one drop of Water of Life was an incredible rate. How had he done it?

If the old Skystar King could make use of this opportunity to gain full control over Skystar Town... then their family might not lack these resources in the future. That would be most ideal!

The Jiangs would swiftly grow stronger after this incident. Everything would be completely different after they took full control of Skystar Town. As for the plant spirits, their help was needed for the moment. Their help would still be needed even with an abundance of mysterious power stones. After all, the world belonged to humanity, did it not?

It wouldn't matter if there was an extra emperor emeritus installed.

.....

Just as all sides reached an accord in the royal palace, Li Hao swiftly dashed to Silver Moon. He busily took stock of his inventory along the way. There were only fifteen thousand drops of Water of Life after killing five plant spirits. That wasn't much. Combined with what he already had before, that made for twenty-five thousand drops. The jug was almost full to the brim.

And while the five plant spirits were of the Immortal level, they were much weaker than that cultivation strength. Any core origin energy they had left entered Panther's stomach. Though they killed so many people, the group only collected sixty million mysterious power stones. That wasn't a lot. Li Hao was rather regretful that he gained so little after killing so many City of Supernaturals heavyweights!

Granted, it was nice that Panther, the jujube tree, redwood tree, Deputy Zhou, and the little sword were full. At the moment, Li Hao only had Panther by his side. The dog yawned lazily, wanting to sleep. It was too full as it'd eaten too much!

The black dog was a weird one. It didn't need Li Hao's protection as it wasn't weak. In fact, it might be stronger than the young man, but its strength was concentrated in its blood. Only when it burned its blood could it erupt with greater strength. Otherwise, it was only a mediocre peak six elements in regular times.

That meant that the void didn't attack the dog, leaving a great deal of freedom for Panther's movements. It would have to stay in the ruins if that wasn't the case.

"Panth, who do you think I should revive this time? Should I switch to another city, like the main city of the Zhaos?" Li Hao hesitated over his next course of action. If he revitalized another entity in Battle Heaven, then that city's strength would swiftly reach infallible heights. It might grow out of his control. Although Battle Heaven had given him a lot of aid, he felt that he couldn't fully rely on that ancient city.

That would be too dangerous!

His thoughts had always been focused on helping Battle Heaven recover. But at some unknown point, Li Hao had started having his own plans in mind instead.

“Arf arf arf!”

“You also think that we can’t put all of our eggs in one basket, right?”

Panther rolled its eyes. I didn’t say nothing. Whatever, he’s just asking. He already has his next step in mind.

It was very familiar with Li Hao after keeping the young man company along this road. The dog might know Li Hao better than anyone else.

“The little tree, the main city of the Zhaos...” Li Hao murmured, thinking back to the pagoda tree and its thirty-six auxiliary generals. He’d collected five trunks of Immortal-level plant spirits, that was quite the harvest! Battle Heaven was also his most familiar city. He at least knew a thing or two about it.

“Must I resurrect a plant spirit? What about a person?”

How about Director General Wang or the Ninth Division leader? Although the commander had beaten him up twice, he was... a reliable character. Would the indestructible matter be useful to them?

Those of Battle Heaven had said last time that a decayed physical body could be recovered through sufficient indestructible matter. Surely the amount from five plant spirits and endless energy would be sufficient for one person!

It might be difficult to restore a Saint level personage, but the Ninth Division leader and others were only Immortals.

Li Hao had come to an initial decision. Perhaps... he didn't need to focus on plant spirits for his recovery efforts. There was too great a gap between humans and plant spirits. The unexpected could easily occur. Even if five Immortal-level trunks could revitalize only one human as opposed to five plant spirits, and restore one to the mediocre level of Immortal at that... the young man had made up his mind.

He would restore a person!

Jiang Yingli and the others were temporarily outside his range of consideration. Number one was that he wasn't familiar with them. Number two was that they would be hard to separate from their puppet form. Only a Saint would be able to do so, and their dean of education might not be willing to at the moment.

With these thoughts in mind, he raced back to Silver Moon. He had returned after three days! The commander and the others would surely be happy to see him.

.....

Battle Heaven.

The city was a bit more lively these days, some more noise emitted from its streets. After General Pagoda revitalized, it automatically absorbed energy from the nearby void. Although there was almost none to be found in Silver Moon, the world continued to awaken and produce a certain amount of energy on its own. That could be absorbed by the plant spirits.

In this regard, Battle Heaven was actually in a state of revitalization. The pace was just so slow that one could not imagine it. It might fully come back to life one thousand years later—if there was energy available throughout this time. One thousand years wasn't too far away for the city's residents. They could take things slowly since they weren't in a hurry.

Battle Heaven was very calm and at peace. Ever since Silver Moon understood that Li Hao had reached an agreement with the ancient city, the province's people no longer ventured inside.

Instead, they set a guard outside the cliff face entrance. Hence, the armored soldiers at the city gates no longer stood at their posts.

Some started repairing the houses inside the city. There were also many structures in the outer city that needed to be maintained. Although everything would eventually recover on its own, it would do so at an unfathomably slow pace. Since there was nothing for the soldiers to do at current, this was good enough to fill the day with.

The busy Director General Wang lifted his head and looked outside the city. He was at a loss for what he was seeing.

The old turtle manifested as well, its mood rivaling that of the dean of education at Evenround Martial. What was he doing here again? They wanted him to come more often when he wasn't here, but once he did, the ancients scorned his presence as well. Why did he visit so often? Did he have that much time on his hands?

The last time he came and stayed a week, he took endless treasures with him. Here he was again, did he want to empty out the city??

Outside the city.

General Pagoda was also confused. What was Li Hao doing here again?

The young man had just set foot into the city and boomed heartily in a loud voice, "Seniors, I have come to see you!"

Everyone inside the city, whether they were working, hibernating, or cultivating, looked outside. Some did so with resignation, others with jubilation. Zhang Liang of Military Supplies, for example, would've been grinning from ear to ear had he possessed a face.

My dearest Commander Li is here!

He'd been promoted yesterday according to wartime regulations. The plant spirit and city guardian had approved him to be the commissioner of Military Supplies. Even though his promotion was nothing more than changing his armor to a golden color and gaining a nominal title, it was enough.

He'd accomplished in death what he hadn't been able to in life, how was he not elated? If it wasn't for the fact that he needed to hold down the fort at Military Supplies, he'd want to rush out to welcome his adorable, lovable Commander Li.

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General Pagoda's figure wavered into view as he managed to pull a smile. "The Eleventh Division leader has returned."

"Greetings to General Pagoda!" A joyous Li Hao inclined his head as if he was a patrolling officer. The general didn't know what to say. "Please visit Battle Heaven in a bit, general. I have great matters to announce. We need to hold a small meeting."

"....."

You? Hold a meeting? What meeting? When did it become your turn to hold a meeting in Battle Heaven? How do you command enough dignity to?

As much as he dismissed the young man, the old tree was shrewd in its old age. It'd also inherited some of its ancestor and companion emperor's shamelessness, so it hid all of these words in its heart.

"Then... alright."

“Mmhmm, I’ll have to trouble the general to make a trip then!” Li Hao walked away, chuckling.
“I’ll head to the city first.”

The general laughed as he watched the old man saunter off. The young were full of energy, alright!
The rest of them had grown old!

.....

The city gates.

Li Hao called out to the three troop leaders. “Troop leaders, head to the city lord manor in a bit for a meeting!”

The three looked at each other. A meeting? What meeting? We’ve been dead for countless years and even get our missions through our armor. Since when did we need to hold meetings?

Li Hao ignored them and continued marching off.

Chapter 890: I’ll Invest In You (II)

Li Hao reached the Battle Heaven city lord manor after some walking. The Turtle Pagoda remained standing at the city center. It remained slightly dark inside the city, but it was brighter than before. Director General Wang stood at the manor doors, looking at Li Hao with a slightly interrogative look. What are you doing here?

“Greetings to the director general!” Li Hao clicked his heels and stomped his foot, shaking the ground.

“Greetings to the Eleventh Division leader.” There was nothing for it but to answer in the same vein.

“Please send out the notifications right now that we are going to hold an emergency wartime meeting!”

“.....”

“As a division leader and one of the highest commanders of the army, I have the right to call for such a meeting,” Li Hao reminded the director general when the man didn’t move.

One of the highest commanders of the army? Alright then, Li Hao did count as such.

Director General Wang was at a loss, but it was fine since everyone had time on their hands. The guy wanted to be beaten up, didn’t he? The Ninth Division leader would certainly teach him a lesson.

Very well, you want to hold a meeting, don’t you? I’ll let you hold it. Director General Wang couldn’t be bothered to advise otherwise. Since Li Hao had a death wish, what was the director general supposed to do about it? His golden armor glowed with a faint hue as the summons for an emergency meeting was issued!

Figures immediately shot into the air.

The Ninth Division leader, Zhang Liang, and a Red Armor rose from the barracks side. The Red Armor was from the Supervisory Office. It looked like one of their senior officers had awakened during this time. As for what title they were, Li Hao was unaware.

The three troop leaders at the city gates just barely possessed the right to participate in the meeting. They also took to the air and flew toward the city lord manor.

General Pagoda walked through the void with a hint of resignation. The young man just didn’t let up, did he?

The old turtle outright manifested in the manor. It looked at Li Hao, then somewhat threateningly at Panther next to the young man. Why didn't you try to speak some sense into him, dog? I'm not helping you later if you get beaten up.

The group swiftly arrived at the city lord manor. Even though Battle Heaven was mostly inactive, the inner city was still operating. Even though all parties involved cursed to themselves, they still presented themselves when a wartime meeting was called.

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The great hall, city lord manor.

Director General Wang remained in the head seat. He was the acting city lord and thus oversaw all matters in Battle Heaven despite his relative lack of cultivation. When General Pagoda and the old turtle arrived, they took up positions flanking the director general.

The Ninth Division leader entered moments later. He sat down next to General Pagoda with a red glint from his visor. The commander stared wordlessly at Li Hao.

Clad in new golden armor, Zhang Liang was the next to arrive. Li Hao almost didn't recognize him, it took the commissioner's mental ripples for the young man to make the identification.

"Welcome back, Eleventh Division leader!"

"...you're much too polite, Commissioner Zhang!" Li Hao laughed. The man was in a great mood after being promoted.

The Red Armor quietly took a seat further away from the head seat. Its existence felt minimal as it didn't say a word.

The three troop leaders swiftly arrived as well. They saluted and filled in the empty seats in the middle.

“You should take a seat as well, Eleventh Division leader!” Director General Wang looked at Li Hao. “You are the one who called for this meeting, I hope this was not in jest. Emergency wartime meetings are convened only for important affairs in the major cities. You will... be punished according to military regulations if you order a meeting for frivolous purpose.”

“If there is someone who treats military regulations as child’s play, I will let him know that that is furthest from the truth!” sneered the Ninth Division leader.

Li Hao beamed radiantly and remained standing. “We are all forthright people that don’t waste time, so we can skip the nonsense! The second awakening is at hand, yet the level of Battle Heaven’s revitalization is not ideal. Skystar Island has recovered to a much greater degree than us.

“Once the second awakening begins, how much can we revitalize even if we take in some of the newly available energy? There are too many plant spirits in Silver Moon. How much can they absorb and recover?” Li Hao coughed. “Based on this premise, we cannot sit and resign ourselves to our doom!

“Although Battle Heaven is quiet, our battle spirit yet blazes! Do the humans, powerhouses, and soldiers of New Martial wait for death in their cities from day to day? Does that still make them of New Martial?”

“.....” No one answered him. You’re just blowing hot air. No one wants to be like that, but what can we do about it?

“Ninth Division leader, you are the foremost among the Battle Heaven Army. Have you never considered saving yourself? You stay in the office from day to night. Can you save Battle Heaven through studying documents?

“Has New Martial only taught you to while away the days in your office and wait for death?”

“.....” The Ninth Division leader was a bit irate, but he didn’t make a sound.

“I ask you, have you considered leaving the ruins in all these years to save yourself?”

“.....” Director General Wang coughed. “Eleventh Division leader, it’s not that we don’t help ourselves, but that we can’t leave the ruins either. The void outside is too unstable.”

“I know!” Li Hao frowned. “Would I not know that? But monster spirits can sever core origin for their replicas, can humans not do the same? My memories tell me that we can too. Why do the humans in the ruins not consider this course of action? Instead of forging ahead, you cower inside the cities and shy away from engaging the monster spirits.”

“.....” A resigned Director General Wang had to explain, “There are still differences between us and monster spirits. Their primary bodies still exist, so it changes nothing for them to sever some of their core origin. It doesn’t affect their foundations. Meanwhile, there is only mental strength left of us. We’ll fly apart if we separate any of it from us. The ensuing ripples might obliterate us entirely.”

Li Hao seemed to specialize in attacking people’s weaknesses.

Did his words make sense?

They did, a little.

They were also completely useless hot air in a way. Everyone wanted to save themselves, the key laid in if it was possible. The slightest misstep would lead to annihilation.

“This reason... is barely acceptable!” Li Hao nodded. “So does this mean that you guys are willing to save yourself so long as there is a more stable, safer option available?”

The director general nodded, to which the young man nodded back. “That’s good. I thought you’d had the New Martial spirit erased from you and only knew to sleep like the one in Evenround Martial University. It looks like Battle Heaven’s spirit burns on!”

“.....” The Ninth Division leader was growing irritated. “Is this all there is to the meeting?”

“What are you in a rush for?” Li Hao rebuked, resulting in the commander nearly flipping the table.

“Eleventh Division leader, we are all very busy,” the director general quickly played peacemaker. “Please... get to the point.”

“Alright, then my point is that, according to what I know, everyone is dead now due to your physical bodies declining and lack of indestructible material. You can only live on in mental spirit form or even as the weapon souls.

“You can still recover if you procure sufficient indestructible material. But these days, it is hard for anything to produce that resource apart from plant spirits and beast spirits. The times are different and the strength cultivated is different.

“In that case, as a Battle Heaven commander, I cannot idly sit by and watch the outside world recover, but the city remain quiet!” Li Hao declared solemnly. “Therefore, I have decided... that I will kill those Immortals or even Saints to seize their primary bodies and extract indestructible matter.

“It will be used to revive a military commander such as the Ninth Division leader. Once he recovers his physical body, he can set off in the world with me and seek ways for self recovery or for the city to revitalize by itself...”

The hall was silent.

“This method...” the old turtle began silently. “The Eleventh Division leader once killed an Immortal, so you know the difficulties within. This is one major factor. The second is that it might be more economical to revive a plant spirit at present. It consumes too many resources to resurrect a human body—the price paid for one might be sufficient to revitalize three to five plant spirits...”

“We can’t view things this way!” Li Hao objected. “The more plant spirits that recover, the more ripples it will produce. It might result in action from other powerful plant spirits. General Pagoda’s awakening, for example, aroused attention from the plant spirits of the major cities and Skystar Island.

“There won’t be enough energy for the revitalized plant spirits if we keep waking them, and it might cause so much wariness from all sides that they join hands against us.

“You guys ask General Pagoda if there was a large disturbance when the general awoke. Did it raise attention from the various cities? Although you don’t speak of it, I’m well aware of the possibility that someone might have turned traitor among the eight cities! In that case, we cannot continue focusing on the plant spirits. We need to turn to the unexpected and revitalize a human instead to deal a grave blow to the enemy!

“Additionally, New Martial is the domain of humanity, after all. Whether it is the vice commander of Skystar Town or the heavyweights of the eight main cities, should we give face to humanity or the plant spirits? Reviving a human would facilitate communication on all sounds. Another plant spirit... Even General Pagoda is less effective and wields less authority than a New Martial commander, don’t you?”

The general itself nodded at these words. That was the truth.

“Have you come here just to say this?” intoned the Ninth Division leader.

“Yes!” Li Hao nodded. “Just this. It won’t do for the Ninth Division leader to not help yourself. Whether it is to open the Star Gate, return home, or march across the cosmos once more, it has to be humanity who does so!”

“Do you know how much it takes to revive a human?”

“I don’t.” Li Hao shook his head. “But we can work toward this goal. Do we give up simply because the consumption is great? Tell me, how many of those prior Immortal plant spirits will it take to help the Ninth Division leader re-craft your physical body?”

“Ten of them!” the commander said with annoyance.

Li Hao’s jaw dropped. “Um, the Ninth Division leader was just peak Immortal back in the day. How come you need so many?”