

The Ages 1021

Chapter 1021 - Violetglory Disciple Lin Feng

Tianming wanted to see what in the world this weird thing had to show him. "I'll wait for the others," he said, then motioned for Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao to enter. Their setup processes were much simpler, Feiling's especially as she didn't have lifebound beasts.

"What will you do next?" Tianming asked the voice.

"Please fall asleep. Your caelum will enter the perpetual wondersky world as your representative. On behalf of the divine wondersky race, I welcome all three of you. If you wish to leave the perpetual wondersky world, all you have to do is to wake your vita."

Sleeping to enter a different world? Was it a place of dreams? Tianming couldn't quite believe it. However, he was stunned when he looked up at his caelum. It seemed that after his information was recorded, it had been 'updated'. As he had only revealed four of his totems, there were only four bane-rings, or rather ancient characters, on his arm.

"Big Brother, do we need to sleep?" Feiling asked. Cultivators didn't usually require sleep, but it wasn't hard for them to do either.

"Let's give it a try. If anything does happen, it might just be a dream." Tianming trusted that the one he got the spirit core from would at the very least not harm him. Not to mention, if there was any danger, he could immediately wake up. Thus, he went to sleep.

"According to legend, when someone falls asleep, their caelum enters a weird, ethereal world. No matter what happens inside it, the caelum instantly returns to the body upon waking up as if nothing had happened. Even if they kill and die inside the dream world, it is, in the end, just a dream. However, do you believe it? Let's say you find a book in your dream and read through it. When the words appear before you again, you'll remember that dream. That's how the perpetual wondersky world is a place where you can fight, challenge, cultivate, and comprehend seniors' experiences!

"The representatives of the elites of the countless races of the astralscape, some of whom are separated by distances so great that they would never meet in all their lives, can compete in the perpetual wondersky world without risk of death! If it's hard to find a kindred soul on one planet, how about finding one amongst countless planets? Progressing on the path of cultivation in the dreamscape is the true nature of the perpetual wondersky world."

Those were the words the voice said as Tianming fell asleep. Then he felt himself slowly awakening in a dream until he became fully lucid. He felt as if his body was rather ethereal, but only for an instant. The feeling passed and his body felt corporeal again, with his blood, pulse, and senses all returning. However, he was standing on a white-jade platform, floating in the void.

"Big Brother?" Feiling called out.

He turned back and saw her and Lin Xiaoxiao looking like they always did. Tianming could even recognize her fragrant scent.

"Where are we?" Lin Xiaoxiao asked.

"I think the better question is where are our caeli," Tianming said. The sensation of seeing this world through his caelum was truly mystical. How in the world was this done?

"What do you mean?"

Both Lin Xiaoxiao and Feiling looked rather confused.

"Caelum? But it feels like my body. Look, my flesh is still here." Feiling pinched herself on the cheek and felt it hurt.

"Of course. Did you think you'd be an amorphous blob of gas when you dream?" Tianming said.

"I don't, but this is still weird."

"Look there!" Lin Xiaoxiao yelled. A colorful butterfly suddenly appeared in the void. "It's too beautiful."

The closer it got, the larger it appeared. When it was right in front of them, it turned out to be a gigantic world. Then the robotic voice rang out once more. "The four loci of this wondersky gate come from Violetglory Star. Disciples of Violetglory, do you want to enter?"

"We do." Naturally, Tianming had no idea where that was. All he knew was that he was having a more lucid dream than usual, where he was able to control his caelum and go to places he could never have gone in the real world. This was the wondersky realm, a world of dreams and wonders. He pinched his arm and felt pain. It was far too realistic.

"Initializing final information gathering. Locus user number one, please state your name."

"Lin Feng," Tianming said, making up a name.

"Registration complete. User: Violetglory Disciple Lin Feng. Age: twenty-three. Class: beastmaster, totem user. Race: human."

When it was Lin Xiaoxiao's turn, she registered herself as 'Lin Xiao'. After that was Feiling's turn. Tianming noticed that in terms of age, the voice's estimation was far more accurate than the age verification formation of the Divine Moon Realm. It probably evaluated the age of the caelum, rather than the body. However, he was shocked to hear Feiling's information.

"Locus user number two: Violetglory Disciple Xiao Ling. Age: infinite. Class: normal cultivator. Race: human."

Hearing that, Feiling freaked out. "You're infinite! Your whole family is infinite! I'm only twenty!"

Tianming chuckled; the voice was too ruthless. However, the smile soon faded from his face. If her age really was infinite, her caelum had essentially existed for all this time. He turned to look in her eyes, seeing the same confusion he was feeling in them. That meant the one now standing before him was still Feiling. However, her allegedly infinite age gave him chills.

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After that, the three of them entered the world in the shining butterfly.

"Welcome to Violetglory Star's wondersky realm."

The three of them were standing on an uninhabited island. There were sights of nature and a sea on the horizon.

"What a world. It looks no different from the real one." Tianming squatted down and picked a blade of grass, then chewed on it. He tasted the bitter plant juices. There were also some ants on the grass, which he picked up. Their little bodies wriggled between his fingers.

"What kind of power and time would one require to construct a world such as this?"

Tianming looked into the distance, seeing the sky, clouds, waves, and birds. None of it looked fake to him. Even though there was still an ethereal sensation from time to time, the fact that all this could be achieved was already a marvel. Feiling picked up a handful of sand, in awe as the grains slipped through the gaps of her fingers.

"Can we really obtain techniques and legacies in this world, and even fight?" Tianming willed it and was surprised to see that the Grand-Orient Sword actually appeared in his hand.

Chapter 1022 - Violetglory Sovereign

Then, Tianming began to notice something different from the real world. For instance, all that remained of the Grand-Orient Sword was its sharpness. The other things within it, like the Grand-Orient Vortex, were gone, or rather, not recorded, though that wouldn't affect his capabilities much.

He looked at the four bane-rings on his arms and manifested his four cardinal godswords. They showed up as expected. He gave them a swing and it caused the waves to cascade. "So we really can fight here!"

The fact that so much fidelity could be achieved was amazing in itself. Feiling also gave it a try. After using some of her techniques and having them recorded, she could perform them here as well.

"Oh, wait, where's my lifebound beasts?" Tianming noticed that his lifebound space was gone. That was proof that this wasn't real. When he was pondering in realization, Feiling looked closely at his face and laughed.

"Big Brother, you look really funny."

"What is it?"

"Take a look at yourself."

Tianming pointed the third eye on his arm at his face.

"There's three flowers!" Feiling said.

Or rather, there were three flowery tattoos on his face, one black, one white, and one red. Didn't they correspond to the Radiant Daffodil, Scarlet Lily, and Evernight Rose? Not only that, he also noticed other tattoos across his body that represented Xian Xian's leaves, branches, and roots.

"Is that you, Xian Xian?" he asked.

"Yes. Why am I all over you? Did I become a flat tattoo?!" Xian Xian raged.

"Calm down. This is the wondersky realm, so anything can happen. We'll be back to normal when I wake up."

"Hmph, fine! I'll tolerate being on your body."

"Someone's complaining, I see. Let's see how you feel after I reduce your food budget."

"Wait, no! All hail Li Tianming! You smell better than my flowers!" Xian Xian immediately changed her tune.

"By the way, where's the other three?" Why did only Xian Xian speak out?

Meow Meow's voice immediately rang out. "Boss, it's not that we don't want to show up... Let's just say that our locations are a little awkward."

"What?!"

"Let's put it this way. Starry dragon on the left, black tiger on the right!" Meow Meow said.

Tianming looked at his arms. "You're not here. My whole body's just Xian Xian."

"Are you sure you checked every corner of your body?"

"What in the..." He hadn't looked at his buttocks yet. If they had turned into tattoos... Tianming angled his left arm to his back and saw a black-cat tattoo and a two headed dragon tattoo on each of his ass cheeks. He was about to burst out in tears.

"Big Brother, where's the other three? Let me see," Feiling asked curiously.

"They're not here!" Tianming snapped.

"We're on his butt!" Lan Huang roared, even though it was trying to whisper. Everyone heard it, and Tianming was immediately petrified.

"Tortoise Bro, it's too awkward! Don't yell it out!" Meow Meow growled.

"Alright! I'll pay attention next time!"

Feiling clutched her belly as she bent over in laughter.

"Ah... why do lifebound beasts have to become tattoos on my body? What kind of dumb setup is this?!" Tianming felt his bile churning. His legendary reputation was ruined in an instant.

"Come to think of it... have you forgotten about Chicken Bro?" Xian Xian asked. "Even I can't see where Chicken Bro is."

"That's right. Where's Chicken Bro?" Meow Meow said, changing the topic immediately.

"Just forget I exist," said a voice with endless dread. Tianming felt like he was struck by lightning.

"Huh? The voice is coming from opposite us," Lan Huang innocently said. Opposite the buttcheeks were...

Tianming's face was crumbling apart. "Heavens... are you playing a trick on me?"

"Don't feel too bad. A birdie on your birdie. It's the only natural place to be," Ying Huo said with a sigh.

Before Feiling could even react, Lin Xiaoxiao burst out laughing.

"Shut up!" Tianming felt his back cool and scalp tingle. He felt like buying a coffin to hide in. There was only one solution: waking up from this nightmare!

As he and Ying Huo were despairing, Meow Meow shook off the awkwardness and said, "Here's the perfect line to use during your entrance: legendary genius Li Tianming, dragon on the left cheek, tiger on the right cheek. But whatever you do, it's at the center where you musn't peek."

"Say that one more time, Cat Bro! I'll self-destruct!"

Tianming turned to Feiling and saw her blushing. He felt as if icy rain was dripping on his face as he awkwardly laughed. She returned the awkward laughter in kind.

"It's all Xian Xian's fault... she took up all the other spots."

"You don't have to explain it to me."

Fortunately, a snow-white sphere came falling from the sky during that awkward moment. The sphere had a pair of wings, and even eyes, ears, and a nose. "Esteemed newcomers, I'm your guide in the wondersky realm, a wondersky fairy. I'll answer your questions and doubts and take you on a tour to witness the mysteries of the wondersky realm!"

Tianming was no longer shocked by all the weirdness. His first question was, "Why do lifebound beasts take the form of tattoos?"

"That's because they aren't principal caeli. In non-combat areas, they'll manifest on the beastmaster's body. Only in combat areas can they come out," the fairy answered as it hovered about.

"Umm... can you change where the tattoos show up?"

"Normally not, but if you strongly request it, I can help you out."

"Then please move the bottom three higher up. I want them off my... private spots," Tianming said, covering his face out of shame.

"Very well!"

Tianming finally breathed a sigh of relief. Xian Xian no longer took up so much space and they squeezed closer together. Tianming and Ying Huo could finally face others without any hint of awkwardness.

"Newcomers and disciples visiting the wondersky realm for the first time usually go to the ancient idol for training. Through challenging the ancient idol, one can gain more knowledge about the wondersky realm, as well as rewards!"

"What kind of rewards?" Tianming asked.

"Techniques and battle arts. The more idols you challenge, the more rewards are available to you. Newcomers will get bonus rewards!"

"How many ancient idols are there?"

"A hundred in total."

"Then what's the reward for challenging and defeating all of them?"

"Then you'll obtain the legacy of the ruler of the Violetglory Star, the Violetglory Sovereign! That's the dream of countless generations of Violetglory disciples!"

Tianming had no idea where the Violetglory Star was, but apparently they were now considered disciples from there. "Alright, lead the way!"

"Very well. My three new friends, please follow me closely. I'll take you to Perplexity Island!"

While it was an awkward journey, Tianming really wanted to know whether the perpetual wondersky world could really allow anyone from the boundless astralscape to obtain unbelievably powerful legacies and battle with other disciples.

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Within the xenomemory space, Ye Lingfeng lay flat on the colorful butterfly with a dagger in hand—a real one, at that. He looked at his body, having removed his clothing. At that moment, his abdomen suddenly burst open and a purple eye peeked out from the crack.

As quickly as he could, he stabbed the dagger into the eye, which vanished. He pierced his own flesh. "Ughh..."

His face was pale. Beside him, the soulfiend looked like it was panicking.

"There's no choice. A xenofiend has entered my body, the only thing I can do now is await death," Ye Lingfeng said helplessly.

"Waaaah!" The soulfiend kept hammering its chest and crying.

"It's alright. Such is life," Ye Lingfeng consoled.

Even so, the soulfiend's grief didn't stop.

"Soulfiend, let my caelum enter. I want to go to Perplexity Island. If I have to die, I want to at least leave this place. Even if it's only my caelum, it's enough."

The soulfiend nodded.

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At the city lord's mansion in Huiyue City, a few people knelt before Yuehe. Huiyue Jie gripped his fists tightly, standing beside them with a furious gaze.

"If you can't find Li Tianming, Huiyue City will have a new name, understood?" Yuehe said with a strict voice.

Everyone kept their heads low; there was nothing else they could do.

"We have no leads, Granny."

"Huiyue Hai is dead, and we don't know who killed him."

"It's impossible to locate a single person among so many. If he wants to hide, nobody can find him."

"Granny," Huiyue Jie said.

"What is it?"

"Call Shishi here, I have a few questions for her." His gaze was gloomy. Deep within his eyes was a gold and black light that nobody noticed. It was none other than the Imperial Sword Prison.

Chapter 1023 - Mystgod Pavilion, Liu Wanwan

Tianming initially thought Perplexity Island could only be reached by flight. However, the wondersky fairy merely turned into a glowing sphere and said, "You three, get aboard!"

The three of them entered the glowing sphere and the world began shifting around them. Suddenly, they were at a different place altogether. The only thing Tianming could do to reconcile that fact was accept that this wasn't the real world and only their caeli were moving. So it wasn't impossible for things to happen here that wouldn't otherwise happen in the real world. In other words, it was a lucid dream.

When they found their footing again, they heard the sound of chatter from ahead. A new world emerged before their eyes.

"This is the place where you challenge ancient idols, Perplexity Island," said the winged fairy as it appeared again.

"The name sounds a little arbitrary," Tianming said.

"Well, it's an island full of perplexing mysteries," the fairy replied.

Tianming saw an island shrouded in mist. Though it was called an island, it was so huge that it stretched past the horizon. Beneath them was a large plaza made of ancient stone tiles that were obviously marked by time. Even the moss on the tiles looked believably realistic.

There were people all across the plaza, hence the chatter. Tianming already spotted more than a thousand of them.

"Hey, make way! Don't block the path!"

"Get in line, idiot! You think you're the only one challenging the ancient idol?"

"Asshole, what sect are you from? If you aren't happy, let's settle things at the wondersky battlefield!"

"You think you're some big shot here in the wondersky realm? Fight me in the real world if you dare! I'll pluck that idiotic head of yours from your body!"

There were those that spoke in whispers and those that got into full-blown arguments. People from all walks of life could be seen there. As they were all caeli, Tianming wasn't sure what levels they were at. As there were too many people there to challenge the ancient idols, Tianming and the other two got in line to wait for their turn.

"Why do I see you alone here? Aren't there other wondersky fairies?" Tianming asked.

"Each wondersky gate is assigned one wondersky fairy. They all have their own as well, but you'll only be able to see the one assigned to you," it said. Given the virtual nature of the world, it was no longer surprising.

"What kind of place is the Violetglory Star?"

"It's one of the star worlds of the astralscape of order."

"So it has a nova source like Orderia?" Tianming said, shocked.

"Of course it does. Why else would the divine wondersky race construct the wondersky realm here?"

"What's the divine wondersky race?" Tianming noticed that he could gain lots of information about the astralscape of order here.

"A powerful race that arose in the past hundred thousand years within the astralscape of order. They're considered to be the current strongest race."

"Can I have more details?"

"Due to your limited privileges, that's all I can divulge."

"Don't listen to it bullsh*t. The strongest race in the astralscape of order are the sky plunderers," said the tattooified Archaionfiend.

While it wasn't aware that the sky plunderers had already died out, Tianming was. As it had something to do with Li Muyang, he didn't dare to inquire more into it; instead, he focused on Violetglory Star. "In other words, this place is on the same level as the sun. To think that I'd become a Violetglory Disciple in my dreams before reaching Orderia."

In essence, when the time came for him to go to Orderia to look for Qingyu, he would no longer be helpless like the time he went to the Divine Moon Realm to strengthen himself at Huiyue City. While Violetglory Star's wondersky realm wasn't the real world, Tianming did still want to understand what it was.

Will challenging the ancient idols in this dreamscape really give me rewards from across the stars? That question would be answered soon enough. "Apart from the ancient idols on Perplexity Island, is there another purpose to the wondersky realm?"

"There is. There's three thousand legacy lands, and the idols are the legacy contained in this particular land. The eighteen continents of the Violetglory Star is a land of legacy shared by more than three thousand and nine hundred sects. As long as you have talent and put in the effort, you can obtain everything you want here. With a good performance, even the top sects will try to get on your good side in the real world."

Tianming was rather shocked. He knew that the Divine moon Realm had about half the surface area of the Flameyellow Continent, while Orderia was said to be tens of thousands of times larger than the Divine Moon Realm. Given how many sects there were on the Violetglory Star, it should be on the same

scale as Orderia. It appeared that a single nova source could last for millions of years. How many impressive races and legacies would a single nova source have given birth to across the aeons?

The people around him were probably akin to the higher lifeforms on the sun. There was no way any of them would be able to guess that lifeforms from the Welkin plane could stumble their way into their world of cultivation. Though Tianming had a hard time making out the powers of their caeli, he could at least see their varied forms. There were a large number of specters, rootbeast race, and more.

He spotted a girl with her hair in a bun ahead of him. She had a pair of green eyes and looked rather cute and young. As she stared at him, she asked, "Your eyes and hair look pretty. Can we be friends? I'm Liu Wanwan of Mystgod Pavilion from the Mystone Continent."

"Of course. I'm Lin Feng. I'm not really in a sect yet. Instead, I'm being coached by my master," Tianming said.

"The fact that you were able to come here without the backing of a sect means that your master must be someone impressive."

"Well, he's just about average, I'd say," Tianming said, feigning ignorance.

"What about those two? Are they your friends?" she asked.

"Yes. They're Xiao Ling and Lin Xiao respectively." He figured getting to know more Violetglory Disciples would greatly help him, and make up for his lack of knowledge around these parts.

"I see. One is your lover and the other is your sister! It's easy to tell from your names!" Liu Wanwan said.

"Nice to meet you, Wanwan."

They all got along rather well. Liu Wanwan did have a rather bubbly personality.

"Why don't we keep in touch?" she asked.

"How do we do that? It's our first time here," Tianming said.

"Oh? How could you not even know that? As long as you agree, our wondersky fairies will make a record. So long as we're in the wondersky realm, we'll be able to locate each other through them!"

It all seemed novel to Tianming. His fairy asked him, "Are you willing to connect with Liu Wanwan?"

Tianming picked yes.

"Alright, we're friends now! Do look out for me in the future," Liu Wanwan said as she shook the three's hands.

"We're still new here, so Sister Wanwan's the one who'll be looking out for us," Tianming said.

"Nonsense. I'm not older than you, you know. I'm only thirty."

"Haha..." Tianming didn't know how else to break it to her.

"If there's a chance, I'll bring you to check out some other places. I've been here for ten years and it's a real fun place," she said.

"Thanks, Wanwan," Feiling said.

"Miss Xiao Ling, you really look impressive. I've never seen a girl that has an aura like yours," she marveled. She had only taken note of the three after seeing Feiling.

When the women started talking, they hardly ever stopped. Tianming merely listened on, reluctant to barge into their conversation. Then, a youth in front of Liu Wanwan turned around. He had a sword on his back, sporting black hair and white eyebrows. His gaze was sharp like a sword, giving him quite an aura of mystique.

Looking at Tianming and the rest, he scoffed, "Wanwan, don't go around making acquaintances with random strangers."

"It's all good, Senior Brother Jin. They're good folk," Liu Wanwan said.

"Don't compromise your cultivation. You like to play around too much! You're already thirty, yet you're only at Hexaunity Sky. The others your age are far ahead of you," he said.

"Stupid! Why'd you have to out my shortcomings like that?!"

Jin turned around and ignored her.

"He thinks he's hot sh*t," Liu Wanwan said, turning back, "Sorry for that. I'm actually a pushover like he said."

The rest were stunned. For her to consider herself a pushover despite being a sixth-level ascendant at the age of thirty was inconceivable. However, Tianming didn't feel down. He felt that being able to come to a place with amazing people like this was a huge fortune in itself.

"That's right, it's your first time challenging ancient idols, right?" she said.

"Yeah. Is there a trick to it?" Tianming asked.

"Trick? Just get ready to take a beating. I've been challenging them for close to a decade and only made it to the third one. It's too hard! Even though the first ten idols are only about as powerful as we are, they have battle arts and techniques accumulated across millions of years and have used them billions of times. It's harder to defeat them than it is to ascend."

Violetglory Star was like a filter for geniuses. It was no wonder anyone that could defeat a hundred ancient idols would be able to obtain the legacy of the Violetglory Sovereign.

Chapter 1024 - The First Ancient Idol

"I'll let you in on a secret. Senior Brother Jin is challenging the seventh idol today, and he gets beat up black and blue every time, haha. Even though it's a world of caeli, you can feel pain as long as you don't wake up," Liu Wanwan whispered.

"Ahem!" Jin cleared his throat ahead of them, causing her to shut up and wink at Tianming.

"I have another question. Aren't there only a hundred ancient idols? Why are so many people lining up for them?" Tianming asked.

"Of course there aren't only a hundred. There's only a hundred different classes of idols, but there are many in each class. Defeating any of them in a class will earn you a battle art as a reward. For instance, the first idols are classified under the first level. There are tens of thousands of level one idols alone. The higher the level, the fewer idols there are. Naturally, you can only pick one among idols of the same level and can't change them later. The legacy of the Violetglory Sovereign is the level hundred ancient idol, and there's only a single one. The fact that it still exists means nobody's succeeded in defeating it yet."

In conclusion, there were a hundred different levels, and defeating an ancient idol would earn him a battle art. Tianming could only challenge the level one idols for now.

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Soon, it was their turn to enter. They entered in batches of five, so Tianming and the other two joined Liu Wanwan and her senior brother. As Jin and Liu Wanwan were challenging the idols they were working on countless times, they no longer had to pick which one. Tianming and the other two were first timers, however, so they had to pick one level one idol to challenge from a sea of tens of thousands. Even so, they all looked identical, like a bipedal golden ape.

"To challenge an idol is the same as challenging the reward you chose. For instance, I picked the ancient idol that rewards the technique called Celestial Astral Punch. So, the idol will use that technique to fight me."

Those were probably divine-grade battle arts. As Tianming only wanted to give it a test, he picked the same idol with that technique. After he finished choosing, he stepped into a glowing circle in the hall.

Then he vanished, only to reappear somewhere else. It was a well-illuminated circular arena about ten thousand meters in diameter, sealed off on all sides. "The ancient idol will soon descend. Prepare yourself, challenger!"

"Prepare?"

The first thing on his mind was letting Ying Huo and the rest out. When he willed it, the tattoos on his body came off and turned into his lifebound beasts. He then drew the Grand-Orient Sword and manifested his four cardinal godswords. Xian Xian spread out across the battlefield, while Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Lan Huang got used to their bodies in the dreamscape.

"I'm guessing the Greenspark Tower won't work here," Ying Huo said.

"You're right."

The scanning capabilities of the wondersky realm were wondrous, but they left something to be desired. Within this world, Tianming would be slightly weaker than he usually was.

The ancient idol finally descended. It was a golden ape that stood twenty meters in height. It really did look more like an inanimate idol or statue than a living being, but it could move. Due to Tianming's choice, its fists seemed enlarged and shining. Then the idol moved like a natural-born pugilist.

Liu Wanwan said that the idol had been challenged millions of times, and used the technique many more times than that, allowing it to reach peak mastery. Before it even attacked, Tianming could tell that its punches could kill. The only good news was that it had the same amount of power that Tianming had. The more strength Tianming used, the more strength it would react with. The only way to defeat the idols was to supersede them in aspects other than power.

"No wonder they're hard to defeat." However, Tianming definitely had an advantage with his lifebound beasts and totems.

"The challenge shall commence!" the voice announced, and the ape immediately made its move. It charged straight like a beam of light and came furiously with a flurry of punches. The power of each punch seemed to be instilled with the power of the stars, causing them to cluster and burst with a great sound. They came fast and ferocious.

The idol picked Lan Huang to attack, probably due to its large size. Lan Huang could barely react in time and tried to brute force a response by using its Kilofold Rings, only for the mysterious punches to go through Lan Huang's defenses and rain down on it like a meteor shower, sending it slamming into the walls of the arena almost instantly.

"It really hurts!" Lan Huang cried. During its stupor, the ancient idol rampaged across the circular arena to hunt the rest down, punching everyone with the same technique. Even though they were in a dream, they could feel the sheer impact from the punches.

"Hold on!" If they continued getting punched, they would end up black and blue. Tianming grit his teeth and went on a full assault. Though it wasn't completely accurate, they still managed to use their abilities.

Tianming also used Empyrean Reincarnation with all four cardinal godswords with a power akin to the strike he used to kill Huiyue Hai. Ying Huo and the rest harassed and surprise attacked the ancient idol at the same time, eventually breaking it.

"The ancient idol actually had enough power to match me, my beasts, and totems combined. However, our coordination and techniques were enough to take it down."

Tianming felt like it was a trial of talent. The higher he rose through the levels, the more geniuses who didn't have enough talent would be disqualified. Before he had come in, he was informed by the fairy that ancient idols could only be challenged once every ten days regardless of success or failure. After all, there were a limited number of them.

"You have obtained the Celestial Astral Punch. This has been registered in the wondersky realm. If the technique leaks, you'll be held accountable. You may challenge the second ancient idol next time."

As for how to get the obtained technique, the wondersky fairy would recite the methods.

"Weird, how could they know if I was the one who leaked a technique if I'm not even an actual Violetglory Disciple?" He felt that there was a loophole. For instance, if he taught Xuanyuan Dao the technique, how would those from Violetglory Star know that Xuanyuan Dao was using it on the Flameyellow Continent? It must have been an accidental twist of fate that caused the wondersky gate in the spirit core to end up in Tianming's hands.

After finishing his challenge, Tianming reappeared on Perplexity Island. Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao hadn't returned yet, so he had the wondersky fairy recite the battle art to him. With his current talent and thanks to his vita and the insights he had obtained from seeing the ancient idol use the technique, it didn't feel that hard to him. No surprise, for it was among the lowest-level techniques on the island. He felt like he could still take on idols a few levels above him with his level of power.

"I wonder if I'll forget the technique mantra after awakening from the dream." If he didn't, then access to the wondersky realm would be truly precious to him.

At that moment, the other two returned at the same time. Tianming couldn't help but laugh when he saw them; they were both visibly beaten up, with bruises and swelling.

"It hurts..." Feiling said, rubbing her face.

"What kind of place is this? They don't even show mercy to pretty girls," Tianming consoled.

"That's right! I'm not coming anymore!" she said.

"So the two of you lost?"

"Yes!" They nodded at the same time.

"I just wasn't ready. I'll beat it up next time," Feiling said.

"Sure thing."

"Big Brother, did you succeed?"

"I did. Let's see if I remember the technique after waking up."

"Alright."

Waking up was a simple matter of wanting to. Sometimes, even changes in the real world could cause one to inadvertently awaken from regular sleep, let alone a seemingly lucid dream like this.

Tianming took a deep breath and opened his eyes, finding himself back in the Flameyellow Continent. It was already daytime. He stepped out of the heavenly locus formation and stretched refreshingly.

"Big Brother, do you still recall the technique you got?" Feiling asked nervously.

"Let me try." Tianming clenched his black fist tight and struck, causing the power of the stars to make waves in Xuanyuan Lake. Though the Celestial Astral Punch, being an average divine-grade battle art, couldn't compare to the Hexapath Samsara Sword, the fact that Tianming could recall and use it meant that a new avenue of cultivation had opened up to him.

"Looks like I have heaven on my side." Tianming turned and passionately looked at the moon. "It's about time I sent Huiyue Jie on to the next life, huh..."

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Meanwhile, at Huiyue City...

"Quickly go in! My brother has something to ask you!" Huiye Yin said, harshly kicking Huiye Shi.

"Sister Yin, why're you being so hard on a fellow woman?" Huiye Shi complained.

"Just get in!" she snapped.

Huiye Shi kept quiet and entered the courtyard. Then her shriek echoed through the sky.

Chapter 1025 - Prince Fengyue

It was clear that the cry came from Huiye Shi. She screamed right after entering and scrambled her way back out, bumping straight into Huiye Yin.

"Stupid lass, are you trying to get killed?!" Huiye Yin snapped as she tugged on her collar.

"Aaaaah! Aaaaaah!" Face pale, Huiye Shi was still shrieking nonstop.

"Shut up!" Seeing that some hair had grown from Huiye Shi's scalp, Huiye Yin was furious. She was still bald herself.

"Your brother... his head exploded!" Huiye Shi squeezed those words out with all her energy, before continuing to shiver in fear.

"There's no way that happened!" Huiye Yin snapped. She had just been talking with her brother moments before. Huiyue Jie's facial injuries had mostly recovered, and his totems were only temporarily disabled.

"Just go inside to see, I beg you! Stop messing with me already! I'm pitiful enough to have had my feelings exploited by that wretch!" she begged. By now, everyone in the city knew she had been used by Li Tianming after they fled.

"Your tricks won't work on me. You'll go in with me." Huiye Yin really wanted to laugh. As far as she was concerned, Huiye Shi was nothing but a joke. She dragged her into the courtyard, insults still spewing from her mouth, and turned up to look at her brother, who was sitting on a stone bench.

However, he was slumped weakly on the stone table with his arms limply hanging. The table was covered in white-red liquid that had flowed along his hand and dripped off his finger. The sight was an utter shock to Huiye Yin.

"Didn't I already say it?! His head is gone!" Huiye Shi said, her eyes closed in fear.

Huiye Yin's world fell completely silent. Just moments ago, she had lost her father, and she thought that was the end of it. But now Huiyue Jie had died under the weirdest of circumstances, with Huiyue City still sealed up.

"Aaaaaaaah!" she shrieked and slumped weakly to the ground in despair.

"Someone, anyone, call Granny Yuehe!" Huiye Shi cried.

Hearing the cacophony, quite a few people came in and saw that sight. Following the deaths of many Huiyue City elites, Huiyue Jie had become the last hope of their clan. The sovereign had even chosen to leave him here to rebuild the clan as a sign of her trust in him. But now, he was dead.

"Who did it?!"

"No idea. We didn't hear anything."

"I was just talking to him fifteen minutes ago!"

"Put your guard up! The killer might still be nearby! The white-robed man must've returned!"

Chaos broke out once more and Huiyue City collectively tensed up. The defenders prepared themselves for the reemergence of the nightmare Bodhi had inflicted upon them. Everything was as Tianming had predicted. It had been quite some time since he last fought Huiyue Jie, so nobody could ever imagine that he had killed him using the Imperial Sword Prison. There was no way he would remotely be suspected to be the culprit. Just like that, he had easily returned the favor.

This was something that was beyond negotiation. Tianming knew how hard Feiling had had it during that month. He had even guessed that the Huiyue Clan would definitely pin that murder on Bodhi. Nobody but Tianming could get away with killing someone without anybody noticing.

The remaining elders of the clan all gathered following the commotion. When Yuehe saw the sorry state of her grandson, she immediately fainted and only reawakened half a day later, only to sob. She was devastated by the loss.

"Granny, Jie wasn't weak, so only someone at Nonahonor Sky and above can kill him unnoticed."

"The killer must've entered again!"

"That's impossible! The whole city is on lockdown now. The last time he tried to barge in, it caused so much commotion it was impossible to miss."

"You can't say for sure it isn't him! We have to notify Her Majesty about signs of the killer immediately! Now he's managed to find a way to come and go unnoticed!"

"Strengthen our defenses, now!"

A single elite killer lurking among them was enough to terrify the divine moonrace. Now, all of the Eightmoon Skycities were waiting for his emergence. The Huiyue Clan were dependent on Yuehe and her two remaining sons.

Huiye Shi huddled in a corner in fear. As she was a samsaran, she wasn't considered a suspect. After all, she had only been inside the courtyard for the slightest moment before scrambling out in fear.

It doesn't look like the work of the killer. Not to mention, if it was really him, a dozen more would already be dead by now, she thought. Many others shared the same idea, but they were too terrified to follow that train of thought. Like frightened birds, the slightest sound of a bowstring being drawn made it feel like they were already shot down.

Amidst the chaos, Huiyue Jie's corpse was moved into a coffin and hauled away. Just like that, his life had come to an end, with nobody knowing that it was due to Tianming's machinations from far away.

"I'd better sneak away now!" Huiye Shi tiptoed away while nobody was paying attention, only for someone to come flying when she reached the entrance. It looked like the royals, around thirty of them. All of the Huiyue Clan members greeted them with reverence.

Yuehe stood up and welcomed them. "The Huiyue Clan welcomes Prince Fengyue and all the other esteemed lords."

Prince Fengyue was Sovereign Xi's younger brother from the same parents. After his sister took power, he dutifully served her. Currently, he was among the top ten strongest members of the divine moonrace. He was incredibly fair and handsome, with features resembling those of his regal sister. He was dressed in a long white robe adorned with blue full moons. The thirty-odd people behind him were his elite subordinates.

Huiyue Tianyu was someone who had just barely enough status to stand on equal footing with the prince, but now he was gone. Everyone that remained had to show absolute deference to the prince.

Right after arriving, Fengyue furrowed his brow. "It seems that the killer appeared again."

"We can't be sure of that as of now, but my grandson..." Yuehe forced herself to suppress the pain from losing her son as she took a glance at the crystal coffin that housed his body.

"Understood. Huiyue Clan, heed the royal decree!" Fengyue announced. The Huiyue Clan members respectfully knelt. "Following the killer's rampage, Huiyue City has suffered too many casualties and is no longer capable of self-defense. As such, the city shall temporarily fall under control of me, Prince Fengyue. All of you are under my command."

"Yes, Your Highness!"

With Huiyue Jie now dead, the Huiyue Clan was utterly terrified.

Chapter 1026 - Corporeality and Ethereality

"With no other casualties and the Veneramoon Formation showing no signs of a breach, this isn't necessarily the work of the killer. Yuehe, the death of your grandson could be the deed of someone else. You are tasked to investigate this issue. I, on the other hand, will ensure the safety of the city," Fengyue ordered.

"Understood!" Yuehe and the remaining weakened elders all heeded the orders.

"By the way, where is Li Tianming? Her Majesty has given you more than enough time to locate him," Fengyue said, squinting at them.

"We... have disappointed Her Majesty. We've lost our lead on finding him," Yuehe said.

"What a bunch of pathetic useless trash," the prince sighed. "If you couldn't even capture a child, what're you even good for?" Fengyue chuckled. "Listen up. Her Majesty values talent and is really interested in that child. Before leaving, Her Majesty insisted that this person be found. Do whatever you can to fulfill the assignment, understood?"

"Yes, Your Highness!" Yuehe and the rest were nervously sweating. Based on the tone, it sounded like Sovereign Xi was desperately craving for Tianming now. If they messed up in finding him, the Huiyue Clan would be even worse off than it was already.

"Have your subordinates look into Huiyue Jie's death. Instead, I want you to tell me what the deal with Li Tianming is. I want all the details."

"Your humble servant shall oblige." Yuehe recounted everything she knew about Tianming's time in Huiyue City. She even pointed out Huiye Shi.

"So you're Huiye Shi?" Fengyue turned to look at her, shivering in the corner.

"Yes, Your Highness! I was the fool that ended up being used by him!" she said.

"So he faked his love for you to cultivate, offended Huiyue Jie, and fled while leaving you behind?" the prince asked with a smile.

"That must be the case! He is the vilest of bastards!" she snapped.

"Don't be so quick to say that." Fengyue's words immediately shut her up. He turned to Yuehe and said, "Spread word to the entire Divine Moon Realm. It doesn't matter. I want it known that if Li Tianming doesn't return to Huiyue City within half a month, I'll quarter Huiye Shi twice! I'm sure he'll hear the news even if he's hiding in some backwater, right?"

"Huh?!" Everyone was shocked to hear that. Huiye Shi was so pale and terrified that she backed herself into a wall and then some.

"Y-y-your Highness... that heartless b-b-bastard won't even bat an eye no matter how many pieces I'm cut into," Huiye Shi stuttered, her teeth chattering.

"Lord Prince, that would be pointless. He's already gone and wouldn't care for this poor child any longer." Yuehe found some compassion in the fact that Huiye Shi had just lost her whole family and spoke out on her behalf. But more crucially, she truly believed it to be a pointless act.

Huiye Shi herself was completely stumped. All Tianming had done was ruin one of Huiyue Jie's bane-rings. With Huiyue Jie dead and the culprit still unaccounted for, why were they turning over every stone in the Divine Moon Realm to find Tianming? It was as if he had desecrated the mausoleum of the royal family. It didn't make sense at all. Insignificant as her life was, there was no sense in broadcasting it to the whole of the Divine Moon Realm, unless...

When she recalled the prince's words, she was stumped. Could it be that the sovereign she worshipped actually desired Tianming? Even so, there was no need to go that far, right? Is she some man-crazed maiden who's never seen another man or something?

Huiye Shi couldn't even find tears to shed at the absurdity. Even Tianming himself thought he was being given so much trouble because he destroyed one bane-ring of Huiyue Jie's. If they had known the true plot behind the scenes, Huiye Shi would have fled with him.

She immediately prostrated herself before the prince and sobbed. "Your Highness, I've been orphaned after my parents fell to the killer and even got manipulated and used. Even if the sky falls, that bastard won't come to my aid. My death would only be in vain!"

She looked all too pitiful. Though many of the Huiyue Clan wanted to speak out on her behalf, they were worried about offending the royals. How desperate must the sovereign be for the prince to resort to something like this?

Prince Fengyue said, "I know he most likely won't save you."

"Then why?"

"I'm going to take your life as a statement. That way, this will spread fast and he'll hear that Her Majesty is looking for him and offering a bright future ahead."

Huiye Shi slumped to the ground, powerless. "So my life is nothing but a blade of grass to Her Majesty..." The sovereign was her idol, the object of her worship. She had dreamed of seeing her in person and offering her most respectful greetings, but her dreams had just been shattered.

"What're you talking about? Even a blade of grass has a place in Her Majesty's garden. You don't." After saying that, Fengyue turned to leave. He was a master propagandist. This was all he needed to get the news to spread like wildfire.

When he left, Yuehe looked at Huiye Shi and could only sigh.

"You think you're pitiful? I lost my dad and brother too! We're all the same, so stop crying! Just accept your fate. If I were you, I'd have all the fun I can during the remaining two weeks!" Huiye Yin said, giving her head a light smack and sighing.

She no longer loathed Huiye Shi. After all, she used to be one of her little minions. It was all just bad luck. Now, nobody could save her any longer.

"Waaaahh..." She cried in the corner of the wall, hugging her legs and huddled up.

.....

It was night on the Flameyellow Continent. Tianming looked up at the silver moon above and murmured, "Feng, wait a bit more. I found a chance. The time will come soon."

With the activation of the spirit core, the four heavenly locus formations appeared once more. He, Lin Xiaoxiao, and Feiling assumed their caeli as avatars and appeared on the island from before.

"What in the world?!" Tianming grimaced when Ying Huo and the rest returned to their former positions.

"Damn, I'm impure! Li Tianming has soiled me! I'll never be able to wash myself clean!" Ying Huo cried in horror.

"Well, fuck you too!" Tianming snapped.

"Ling'er, I'm sorry. This should've been yours..." Ying Huo lamented.

Fortunately, the wondersky fairy appeared. "Esteemed Violetglory Disciples, may I be of any service?"

"Quick, change the locations of the tattoos!" Tianming urged.

"Understood."

Finally, things went back to 'normal'. Tianming cleared his throat and pretended not to see the guffawing Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao. He turned to the fairy and said, "Didn't I change the locations last time? Why'd they return?"

"That's the default setting of your avatar. The wondersky realm is designed to operate as such. After all, nobody concerns themselves with the location of the caeli of the lifebound beast."

"In other words, they'll return to their former positions every time I come in here?" Tianming felt like lightning had struck him.

"Yes."

"Dammit, I won't come here ever again!"

"You think you're in any place to complain? I am!" Ying Huo snapped.

"Sigh..."

The two of them were hurting all the same.

"Chicken Bro, I'm envious. You finally found a birdie to soar with you through the skies," Meow Meow said.

Tianming was about to vomit. "Curse you, wondersky realm! Fairy, next time I come, change their locations immediately. Otherwise, I'll never come here again."

"Understood. However, whether you come or not is not my business."

"How dare you talk back to me?"

"Talking back is permitted per the parameters set by my masters."

"Who're your masters?"

"The superior and omnipotent divine wondersky race, of course!" the fairy proudly announced.

Since Tianming's last time here, he had a lot more questions. So, he had come this time to ask the wondersky fairy to clarify his many doubts. As such, he wasn't in a rush to head to the land of legacy.

"I have a few other questions for you."

"Ask away, but I can only answer questions depending on your access privileges."

"Alright. First: where was the wondersky realm constructed? What is its true nature?"

"The wondersky realm was constructed within the xenomemory space. It was formed using the Perpetual Wondersky Formation."

"The xenomemory space?" That was where Ye Lingfeng had been exiled to!

"That's correct."

"Can you tell me more about that?"

"Basically, our universe is rooted in corporeal reality. There's an ethereal world layered atop the corporeal reality. The true nature of the world is a dual one, comprised of corporeality and ethereality. Any space you occupy is contained within both corporeality and ethereality. However, you are only able to perceive the former. The ethereal reality refers to the xenomemory space. To many, it is a dreamscape that can only be accessed by the caelum.

"Normally, the caelum monitors the vita. Only when the vita lays dormant during sleep will the caelum enter the xenomemory space and voyage in the ethereal world. As the caelum's recorded memories clash with ethereality, everything in this space will look really chaotic and unpredictable, much like dreams. Within dreams, things with no logical connection often randomly relate to one another due to lapses in memory.

"Upon waking, most people won't remember what happened in their dreams, as the memories of the vita and caelum are only partially accessible. Only a small part of the caelum's memories will flow to the vita.

"Originally, the caelum roaming the xenomemory space had no purpose, but the invention of the wondersky realms changed everything! We managed to incorporate the pointless act of dreaming as a key aspect of cultivation! That's the amazing contribution of the divine wondersky race!" The wondersky fairy proudly and eagerly gave the explanation.

Chapter 1027 - Violetglory Pagoda

"You said everything changed, but how?" Tianming asked.

"It's common knowledge that the xenomemory space has no concept of distance. A journey between any two points in that space can take an arbitrarily short or long time, and the time taken also changes with each journey. Sometimes, it only takes one step to cross a distance between stars.

"The divine wondersky race, however, used a truly marvelous method to construct wondersky realms and allow the caeli of cultivators to retain lucidity within through the use of heavenly locus formations. As such, they no longer senselessly wander in the xenomemory space, but rather go straight into the wondersky realm.

"Lastly, they brought their various legacies, techniques, and even some caeli of their race into the wondersky realm to improve the cultivation efficiency of the disciples within. In fact, battles can be simulated inside the wondersky realm even if the combatants are vast distances away in the real world. They also won't end up permanently hurt through battles within and can benefit from the experience they gained too," the wondersky fairy answered.

"There's even caeli of seniors here?"

"Of course. That's the main purpose of the wondersky realm. More than half of the caeli of the seniors of Violetglory Star are located within Violetglory Pagoda inside the realm. That's the core location for Violetglory Disciples to cultivate in."

Tianming found it too wondrous. The divine moonrace kept the caeli of their ancestors within various divine moon halls. However, more than half of the ancestor caeli of Violetglory Star went straight to the

wondersky realm. Not to mention, in caeli form, traveling vast distances was no longer an issue due to the unique nature of the space. It's said that when one's cultivation was high enough, they would even be able to travel to wondersky realms of other star worlds to compete with or learn from the people there.

Cultivation had been nearly perfectly integrated into the world of dreams. Even with the slight differences present in the dreamscape, it was still a huge bonus. After all, what were the odds of finding a nova source in the real world and interacting with people from other star worlds? Not to mention, contact usually meant conflict.

"So, this wondersky realm, or should I say, perpetual wondersky world... how is it even constructed in the xenomemory space?" Tianming pressed.

"The central focus of fundamental cosmic forces such as nova sources can tear open portals between the real world and the xenomemory space. Portals like that can allow a flesh and blood person to enter the xenomemory space along with their caelum, vita, and terra. However, it's incredibly dangerous to attempt that. Xenofiends exist within the xenomemory space to erase any 'real people' that wandered into the space.

"From that alone, it's obvious that the construction of a wondersky realm is a humongous undertaking. But once successful, one's home star world would be able to link up with the entirety of the astralscape of order. Everyone stands to mutually benefit and make progress together. Worlds with a weaker cultivation base won't suffer too badly and would be able to catch up as a result. That's why the divine wondersky race has rendered upon a great service unto the world." The wondersky fairy never failed to remind them how impressive its creators were.

"Xenofiends that wipe out real people? Doesn't that mean people who are exiled inside will face certain death?"

"Of course. The world is balanced according to implicit laws. The xenomemory space is a world for caeli, and not a place where normal people can stay. Being exiled there is akin to a death sentence. It's the way of the universe for the physical body to remain in corporeal reality while the caelum explores ethereal reality."

"Is there any way to save real people that wandered into the xenomemory space?"

"It's possible through the use of dimensional rope and a blood sample. That's also a method used in the construction of wondersky realms. However, such a course of action isn't recommended. The moment the xenofiends find out, both rescuer and the rescued would die. Essentially, they're the administrators of the xenomemory space."

The dimensional rope appeared to be possessed only by Sovereign Xi as far as Tianming was aware. It seemed that he wouldn't be able to escape her at the end of the day. Tianming had learned quite a lot about the origin and nature of the wondersky realm. Its most amazing aspect seemed to be its connectivity across vast distances. The astralscape of order was endlessly huge, and stars could be seen wherever the eye could look. However, the distances between them were terrifying, to say the least. Yet the xenomemory space, where distance as a concept was fuzzy at best, could be used to link those star worlds together.

"Violetglory Disciple Lin Feng, where do you want to cultivate today? You are currently a first-level disciple, so there are only ten lands of legacy available to you."

"How do I raise my level?"

"Through cultivation growth and challenges."

"Then take me to Perplexity Island again."

"Apologies. It has only been a day since you last challenged an ancient idol. The earliest you can go there is nine days from now."

"Then I want to visit Violetglory Pagoda where the caeli are," Tianming said.

"No problem. However, note that while Violetglory Pagoda is open to all, regardless of level, there are nine floors in total and you may only access the first. Not to mention, you'll have to pass a challenge."

"How does that work?"

"Cultivators entering the pagoda at the same time will be randomly matched to you. The two of you will fight and only the winner gets to enter. The loser may attempt another challenge for entry ten days later. For each day you cultivate there, you must accept one challenge from a disciple of the same rank that's come to cultivate as well. Each successful challenge will earn you the right to remain for another day. In other words, to stay inside for ten days, you'll have to defeat ten cultivators in a row. If the challenge is accepted and lost, however, the cultivator may make a new challenge on the eleventh day following initial entry into the pagoda."

In other words, ten days counted as one full round, and those that wished to remain there for a long stretch would be forced to fight and win against one person each day. Without a winning streak, one wouldn't be able to stay in for long.

"Why are the conditions so strict? Are those caeli really precious?" Tianming asked.

"Of course. There are few available to be shared between everyone, so access is limited to those who continually improve themselves. This is a basic custom in cultivation, especially when there's no possibility of injury from the fights here. Each and every battle will increase one's combat experience."

"I see. Alright, take me there, then!" Having spent a few days finding his bearings, he was finally ready to officially cultivate as an ascendant. While he had lost access to the Huiyue Clan's divine moon hall, he could now access the legacy caeli of the Violetglory Star, which had to be superior in many ways.

"How can I get even more privileged access to the pagoda?"

"Ascendants are only allowed access to the first two levels, with the requirement of the second level being Heptaglorious Sky. However, if one fails a challenge, one will be forced back to the first level for retraining." It was almost akin to a struggle.

"Is the criteria based on cultivation level or actual demonstrated ability?"

"It's based on demonstrated combat ability, the only metric with any real weight in the world of caeli. It's in everyone's best interest to show all of their abilities at the moment of registration. It's only a loss not to."

Tianming hadn't allowed himself to be completely registered. That means it shouldn't be a problem for me to add three more of my godswords. I'm not actually a Violetglory Disciple anyway, and nobody knows where I really am.

The fairy turned into a circle of light and the three stepped into it together. The next instant, they traversed the distance to their destination. Back when Tianming had to travel from the Shiyu Compound to the divine moon hall, it took him seven whole minutes!

Following a bright flash, he heard chatter coming from ahead. He looked up in awe at the pagoda that pierced the clouds, showered in starlight and brimming with luxury. This was the most majestic building Tianming had ever seen. It was easily a thousand times larger than the divine moon realm. This was one of the key legacy lands of Violetglory Star!

Naturally, he was only witnessing it through the eyes of his caelum. The pagoda wasn't really a building, but rather a formation of the perpetual wondersky world. Even so, the caeli he was seeing were all real ones no different from those he had seen before. Back then, he had to use his vita to attract caeli to him, but now he was using his own caelum for the same purpose. His caelum was made from the very same stuff, after all. After death, all that was left of the caelum was energy.

"Those you can see here only belong to the first level. There's many more above. The first level alone has around three thousand regions, each filled with enough caeli to rival the stars in the night sky."

This was the legacy of a world that had a nova source like Orderia. Tianming hadn't even gone there yet, but here he was. He didn't even need to queue up.

"Lin Feng, do you want to enter the pagoda and start the challenge?"

"I do!"

"Alright. Registration complete. No matter how many days you last inside, you can reenter ten days later."

Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao also wanted to give it a try. After confirmation, they, and countless other Violetglory Disciples, disappeared with a bright flash. Tianming wasn't transported to the inside of the pagoda. Instead, he appeared within a spherical formation with a diameter of a hundred thousand meters, enough for a battle to take place!

"Congratulations. You're the first to enter this battlefield and have obtained the right to set the parameters. What kind of environment do you desire?" said an emotionless voice.

"I would like to fight on the sea."

The formation began changing as water flooded in from all directions, filling the lower half of the formation. This reminded him of the Realm War with Heaven's Sanctum way back. Though both were illusory formations, this one was many times larger.

"Truly wondrous!" Even now, his awe still hadn't subsided. "So this was the race that replaced us sky plunderers as the hegemony of the astralscape of order, huh?" He almost felt convinced that they deserved that honor.

Once the sea had fully formed, the voice spoke, "Please prepare yourself. Your opponent, Long Qingyun, will enter the battlefield soon. Defeating your enemy will grant you a day on the first level of the pagoda."

Tianming focused his attention, intent on making as much progress as he could.

Chapter 1028 - Caelum Prime

Tianming didn't have to wait long for his foe to show up. The caelum first manifested as a puff of smoke, then coagulated into the figure of a youth of one and a half meters in height. He seemed only thirteen or so, by the standards of height of the Vermillion Bird Kingdom. He wore a green robe and had bright, glowing eyes. The skin that was visible through his clothing had dragonscale tattoos. He was obviously a beastmaster from Violetglory Star.

The minimum requirement to enter the wondersky realm was the Ascension stage, so the youth was at least on the same level as Tianming. For a random opponent to be that powerful must mean that the people here were of much better stock than the Divine Moon Realm.

"Lin Feng, I'm Long Qingyun from the Qinghe Dragon Clan of Myriadragon Continent. Pleased to make your acquaintance. I hope to learn much from you." The youth's status didn't seem low, as was apparent from the dignity that radiated from his caelum. However, he held not one ounce of contempt or mockery for Tianming, who obviously looked older than him. Probably only the descendants of truly elite clans would be that well mannered and dignified. After all, those who loved to lord over others to feel a sense of superiority usually never made it far up the ladder, the divine moonrace for instance.

"Likewise," Tianming said with a respectful salute.

Long Qingyun returned the salute, then manifested a dragon-shaped halberd. At the same time, his tattoos turned into three lifebound beasts with more than a thousand stars. They were huge dragons, all of them green and burning with violet flames. These violetflame godcloud dragons circled around their master, causing his robes to wildly flap. They gave off an oppressive aura.

A youth like that actually had lifebound beasts that were far more powerful than Dugu Jin's. This was the difference between cultivators from a legacy clan with tens of millions of years of history that had access to a nova source and those on a continent on the Welkin plane, and for all Tianming knew, Long Qingyun could be just average at Violetglory Star.

Without another word, Tianming allowed Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Lan Huang to come out for a fair fight, and didn't manifest his totems. They were fighting on Lan Huang's home turf anyway. Long Qingyun should be a second-level ascendant, so he definitely wasn't Tianming's match. As a result, their fight only lasted a few moments before a victor emerged. Before Tianming even had to make a move, his three beasts took down all his opponents.

"Lin Feng, you are truly among the strongest contending for a place at Violetglory Pagoda. I didn't think you'd be the first one I encountered. Looks like I have to wait another ten days," Long Qingyun said, a little crestfallen.

"It's no big deal. Do your best and come back again," Tianming said.

"May we meet again, fate willing."

"Farewell."

Right after that, the youth disappeared from the spherical formation. Following that, Tianming's vision turned white once more and a mechanical voice said, "Challenge successful. You have obtained the right to cultivate in the pagoda for one day. Please enter the first level immediately."

He was transferred to the pagoda in almost an instant.

"With the astralscape of order so vast, and there being so many people in the wondersky realm alone, I shouldn't have to worry about my Primordial Chaos Beast secrets being discovered. I should have a few more techniques scanned later to grow stronger and get more resources for myself."

Even though Tianming could already tread his own path through the Ascension stage from the Flameyellow Continent, there was no sense in not making use of the legacies of powerful races all throughout the cosmos. Not to mention, the stronger the people he encountered were, the stronger he would become.

He reappeared underneath an endless sky with countless stars, constituting nearly a hundred million caeli. This was just the first level of the pagoda.

"There's far too many..." This was what it truly felt like to have the entire sky in his arm's reach. He had a feeling he would never reach the end if he charged into it, even though it was only the first level.

"There's more than three thousand regions here alone... I'm only in one of them." All of the stars were god-level caeli of people long past, leaving behind their memories for those who came after to study. They constituted millions of ways and attitudes towards cultivation. There was bound to be one that fit each and every person.

Not to mention, it was the first time he was studying their caeli's cultivation with his own caelum. Their caeli had recorded their whole lives. When he reached out for the first senior's caelum, the most obvious difference was the scope. The caeli of the divine moonrace's ancestors only observed events that happened in the Divine Moon Realm. However, the seniors of Violetglory Star had gone far and wide to different parts of the astralscape of order instead of staying huddled up at their home.

The sheer difference in attitude and approach made the two groups' caeli really interesting to compare. Expanding one's horizons was really important to any cultivator. The divine moonrace felt inferior to the celestial orderians above them, so they mostly turned to looking down on humans in the mortal world to cover up their own inadequacies instead. In a million years, that turned into an arrogant pride in their own kind.

"Only when one has seen many things can they go far in life." Tianming stretched his hand out to touch a caelum in the form of a purple star. It belonged to a senior called Gu Yuntian who used Skycloud

Divine Will, something that was completely different to Tianming's own. Yet his viewpoints and experiences gave Tianming much to ponder about.

He began noticing something really terrifying: after scanning through all the contents of the caelum, only a breath's time had passed. It was quick to the extreme, taking no longer than a single glance. Looking down, he finally realized why: when his hands touched a caelum, the bane text on his body would flood across it. By the time the text returned to him, he already knew all that he wanted to see. This was more than a hundred times faster than when he did it before ascending. Perhaps he would be tens of times faster relative to other disciples in the pagoda.

"So, among Trisoul Prime, which I got after breaking the curse of Aeon Grandbane, Terra Prime became my decapath era godswords, Vita Prime greatly boosted my comprehension regarding techniques and battle arts by enhancing my senses, and Caelum Prime gives me this unique talent?"

The experiences of ascendants were far more complicated than that of samsarans, yet he almost instantly absorbed them all the same. It sounded like heresy, even if experiences in caeli couldn't be directly emulated but only be used for inspiration. Even so, with his level of efficiency, spending one day in the pagoda for him would be equivalent to tens of days for other people.

"Looks like the reward for breaking the curse wasn't some explosive power up, but a huge transformation in all three parts of my soul instead! While the Primordial Chaos Beasts didn't boost the talent of my soul, Lifesbane did..."

His future was endlessly bright. He didn't just belong in the category of geniuses, he was a powerful elite! Most geniuses still died out, sooner or later, while the elites were the ones that truly prevailed.

Tianming took a deep breath to humble himself before embarking on many other journeys to learn from the predecessors' insights. He knew that to change the fate of his family and friends and help his parents escape being hunted down, being the strongest on the Flameyellow Continent was far from enough.

"Should I continue along the way for Imperial Will for the Ascension stage or shift to another one?" Tianming had been considering that question for the past few days. That was one of the two choices an ascendant would have to make.

"The first choice is to continue training Imperial Will. But now that it's a divine will, it'll only grow harder and harder and make my breakthroughs even harder. Alternatively, I can apply a completely new heavenly will on my astral discs to support Imperial Will and stabilize my astralforce.

"Cultivating a new heavenly will to become divine will will be much easier, and when it succeeds, I'll have two main divine wills in my astral discs. That can help me reach the peak of the Ascension stage or even beyond, but having one will alone also has its benefits! If I follow one divine will to the very end, there's a chance some new change will happen. I'll transcend the concept of godhood and become the most powerful being in the astralscape of order! Perhaps my dad's first life was a being on that level. While having two wills can speed up growth, it won't let me cross the last boundary."

The former was slow, but had much more potential. The latter was fast, but ended at a bottleneck. Most people wanted to take the first option, but usually relented and settled for the second.

"Given my talent, I should be picking the first option and sticking with Imperial Will until I reach the level of the Primordial God-Emperor. Then again, who said that having two wills would necessarily stop me? Can't I just do the first option for both wills? Follow both the wills to the end of their roads?"

With his horizons broadened, he gained a new outlook on matters. Instead of picking one or the other, he picked both. So what if Imperial Will was hard? He wouldn't be giving up on it yet. He would improve his divine will while cultivating a new heavenly will to become his second divine will.

Chapter 1029 - Rising Against the Heavens Once More

The two choices weren't mutually exclusive, after all.

"However, it seems like most people think of this as a pointless waste of time."

Tianming wanted to challenge his limits. That way, not only would he have a second option to make his progress easier, but he wouldn't have to give up on reaching peak power either. And the source of his confidence came from his Aeonian Grandbane. While most people would think that taking both paths would make it slower than the path of focusing on a single will, Tianming believed it would make him more stable and his progress quicker.

"With what I have, I don't have to be conservative about my choices." At the very least, he had long decided on what to cultivate as his second heavenly will. He had been simmering over it for a long time. In fact, it existed within the divine will of the Grand-Orient Sword and had something to do with his Aeonian Grandbane, the Li Saint Clan, changing his fate, and the Prime Tower. Tianming called it Lifesbane Will.

Unlike the path to sovereignty of Imperial Will, Lifesbane Will didn't focus on the accumulation of good karma, nor did it rely on rulership. Instead, it was a path of defying his life's fate and changing it, never relenting in the face of heaven and earth. If the Grand-Orient Sword represented Imperial Will, the Prime Tower represented Lifesbane Will.

Thanks to his Aeonian Grandbane's Trisoul Prime, he had gained the courage to challenge all conventions. The seed of that heavenly will had been sown back in the Grand-Orient Realm when he fought with Li Wudi to earn new dignity for the Li Saint Clan. Back when he was fighting Yuwen Shendu to the death, he survived to join the Realm War and took the Grand-Orient Sword from Yueling Long. Then he went on to the Divine Capital and the Nine Divine Realms, becoming the emperor of the whole continent along the way.

Even so, this alternate path had never vanished from within him. One was the path of the emperor that ruled over all, while the other was the path of breaking his own fate and superseding his very being. With Lifesbane Will budding and vaguely manifesting in his astral discs, it was only a matter of time before destiny compelled him to develop it. But unlike most people, he didn't give up on Imperial Will in the process.

He began his completely new heavenly will cultivation at the Violetglory Pagoda.

"In actuality, cultivation is a path of conflict and overcoming obstacles. Cultivators fight to transcend the laws as much as they do strong enemies, all to change their fates of being weaklings to get dignity and a

right to speak. As such, Imperial Will rules over all heavenly wills, while Lifesbane Will can identify all the rebellious aspects across all heavenly and divine wills. I wonder how each and every ancestor whose caelum is stored in Violetglory Pagoda has defied and rebelled against their own fate?"

Domination and rebellion were opposites, but were also sides of the same coin! "Only by fusing both together can one achieve godhood!"

Based on its name alone, it wouldn't be easy to tell that those two wills were complete opposites, but Lifesbane Will would be able to adequately counteract Imperial Will. Much like how Tianming always had the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower with him, Lifesbane Will had always existed within Imperial Will, until today, when it separated into its own will.

When Tianming chose to embark on this path, a vague illusion of the Prime Tower manifested within his albi, separating from the divine will in the shape of the Grand-Orient Sword. Comparatively, the tower was much smaller, so small that it wasn't capable of properly countering it yet. In the future, however, it would grow and be able to control astralforce alongside Imperial Will and be the trigger Tianming needed for breakthroughs.

"Growing Lifesbane Will will be much faster than cultivating only Imperial Will." He was confident about this path. After all, every caelum in the Violetglory Pagoda contained the experiences of those forebears rebelling against their own fates. Tianming would be able to find the answers he needed from their tales.

"This is a most important time for me. I have to walk both paths, so let's begin!" To rebel against his fate and change it, protecting the last legacy of the sky plunderers who were eliminated, Tianming forged forward. "The divine wondersky race filled the void left by the sky plunderers, who were exterminated because my father stole the Primordial Chaos Beasts. I wonder if the pursuers have something to do with the divine wondersky race then?"

He didn't dare to think about it too much. Instead, he felt it would be better for him to slowly follow in his father's footsteps and let the truth unravel by itself. After all, there was nothing he could really do about it now. However, he had taken the first step on the path of rebellion with the aid of Caelum Prime.

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One could take around thirty thousand breaths in a day. Tianming rapidly used his Caelum Prime's bane text to scan through more than thirty thousand caeli in that span of time, looking for instances where they rebelled. Each and every one of their divine wills contained insights about those tales.

"At the end of the day, cultivation itself is an act of rebellion against the heavens and earth." With that understanding in mind, he incorporated their stories much more easily. They were more relatable than stories of rulership and domination, which made them easier to resonate with. He resonated with the caeli of all those seniors of Violetglory Star and absorbed much of their insights into his caelum, which was in turn transferred to his real body thanks to the connection through the heavenly locus formation.

If he took in thirty thousand caeli a day, he would grow from a small seedling to a magnificent tree in a matter of days. Comparatively, Huiyue City's divine moon hall only had a total of a million caeli.

Violetglory Star had a far vaster selection to choose from. Not to mention, the quality of the caeli was much better than the divine moonrace's. Every day after his cultivation, he would have to defeat one opponent. The ones who came to challenge for his place on the first level were basically weaker than seventh-level ascendants. So as long as he had decent enough luck, he would be able to defeat basically all of them.

Thus, he managed to stay in the pagoda for days. Long Qingyun included, he had defeated nine opponents so far and stayed in for nine straight days, scanning through more than two hundred and seventy thousand caeli in total. Then the tenth opponent came on the tenth day.

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Within the spherical formation was another person. Tianming was the one who entered later this time around and the opponent had already picked a locale for battle. He saw countless small hills where fauna flourished. There were countless towering trees stretching into the sky.

Chapter 1030 - Myriad Years in a Flash

The spherical formation had a diameter of more than a hundred thousand meters. It was almost as large as a real world. Tianming's opponent was currently hidden within this forest.

"Lin Feng, your opponent, Liu Wanwan, has entered the battlefield. Let the fight commence!"

Tianming started for a moment when he heard the name. Given how unique it was, chances were that it wasn't a coincidence.

"Lin Feng?" said a girl's voice in the direction of the forest. In a flash, a young green-eyed girl with bunned hair appeared in front of Tianming. It was her after all.

Tianming felt a little awkward hearing his fake name. He had just come up with it without much thought, as he was worried that he would do something in the wondersky realm that would cause him trouble in the real world. He got the name from one of Li Wudi's many ramblings in the Grand-Orient Realm. However, hearing others call him that every single day made him feel a little awkward and out of place, like he was some mighty protagonist.

"I didn't think fate would make us meet again like that."

"Did you enter nine days ago as well?" Tianming asked.

"That's right! I failed after challenging an ancient idol... hmmm, does that mean you've been in Violetglory Pagoda for nine days too?"

"That's right."

"Wow, not bad. Then let me, a disciple of the Mystgod Pavilion, put an end to your streak. Haha, die!"

As dying wasn't really possible in the wondersky realm, it was common to have cultivators talk about the most inconsequential things while going at each other like wild beasts trying to kill one another.

Liu Wanwan was a sixth-level ascendant beastmaster as well. The fact that she was on this level meant that the divine moonrace had overestimated their importance. The rootbeast race wasn't one bit inferior at all, and could even fight opponents above their level. She was a plant-type beastmaster; beast types that were really rare on the Flameyellow Continent were actually more common on Violetglory Star. All four of her beasts were greencloud arcsky vines with a full fifteen hundred stars, far more than Ying Huo and the rest. They had taken root in the forest world. Being vine-like beasts, they had thousands of tentacle-like appendages that extended their control across the entire arena, with the longest of them being kilometers in length. Despite Liu Wanwan's mischievous cuteness, she fought like a fearsome demon.

"Hey, stupid Lin Feng, I'll show you what it feels like to be whipped! Wait, huh?! Aren't you of the rootbeast race? Why do you have totems?"

Against an enemy like this, Tianming had to go all out, or at least as much as his avatar allowed. It was the first time he had encountered an opponent that posed him a challenge, and that actually made him feel bliss. After all, there was no risk of death, so they weren't afraid to experiment with all sorts of possibilities.

"Damn you, little chicken, how dare you peck me?! I'll pluck off all your feathers!"

Tianming even managed to use his newly learned Celestial Astral Punch in the fight, but he still lost in the end. Liu Wanwan was much stronger than Huiyue Hai, despite being on the same level. With four vine beasts defending her, she had full control of the battlefield and defeated Tianming thoroughly.

"Are you convinced of your loss?" she said, smiling.

"I sure am. You smashed my head in," he said. His head had been smashed through and his loss was declared immediately. However, it quickly grew back.

"It's only natural that you lost."

Naturally, that had something to do with Tianming's avatar not reflecting his full capabilities, including some of Ying Huo and the rest's abilities. With that, Tianming would have to leave Violetglory Pagoda, but it didn't matter since he could just come again the next day.

"I had fun, Lin Feng. If you're free, I'll take you to an interesting place next. Deal?"

"Sure thing."

"Alright, see you!"

"Likewise."

Then, both of them vanished from the formation.

"As expected of a Violetglory Disciple. She's only thirty, but she's already that powerful. However, I think I can break through to the second level of the Ascension stage after going back this time. I'll rescan myself after that and add three more godswords, for a total of seven totems. That should be enough for me to defeat her. At this rate, it won't take too long before I reach the peak of the Ascension stage! After all, I'm cultivating a second will that'll greatly boost my speed, at least ten times than training Imperial Will alone."

With that in mind, he left the pagoda. Once he left, he found that Feiling and Lin Xiaoxiao had left far before him. "How long did they stay inside?" he asked the fairy.

"Xiao Ling stayed for two days while Lin Xiao stayed for one," it said.

"Not bad. At least they experienced it once."

Initially, he had wanted to go back to the real world, but it had been ten days and he could go to Perplexity Island again. "Take me to challenge ancient idols."

Even though the battle arts of the ancient idols available to him were only about as strong as the Hexapath Samsara Sword, and not so useful to him, he had to fight through the idols to get to the ones with the better techniques.

"Understood." The wondersky fairy turned into a sphere of light and took him to Perplexity Island.

Like usual, it was filled with people there. After lining up for about two hours, it was finally his turn. He would be challenging his second ancient idol this time, and he picked a divine-grade battle art called Blitzbolt Arrow. I'm going to teach it to Lin Xiaoxiao. As long as she doesn't use it in the wondersky realm, it's fine. I doubt that Violetglory Star will find out.

His opponent was an idol with eight arms, each of them holding a bow that fired a barrage at Tianming. The explosive Blitzbolt Arrows covered the entire battlefield, but it wasn't that hard for Tianming to defeat. It took him only a little while to get the technique.

"Is there a way to decrease the time needed to take on the idols?" Tianming asked.

"There is—raise your privileges. You currently have first-level privileges. Once you get to the third level, you'll no longer have any time limit."

"I see."

In other words, the stronger he was, the more convenient things would be for him. He returned to Perplexity Island and committed the mantra of the battle art to his memory. While he wouldn't be using it, he remembered it quickly enough.

"Perplexity Island is interesting. However, I've been sleeping for nine days, so it's about time I woke up."

He closed his eyes and prepared to wake up, but before his eyelids shut completely, he saw a figure pass ahead of him amidst a crowd. Even though it was just a glance, his heart shook. "How could there be someone who looks so similar?!"

His eyes snapped open. "Feng?!"

Taking deep breaths, he tried to calm down. "I must be freaking out. I'm so worried about him that I'm seeing things now. How could he be in the wondersky realm?"

He shook his head helplessly and prepared to leave, only to find that he just couldn't forget that at all.

"No, it looked too similar. I have to make sure, even if it could be a hallucination!" He immediately charged toward the direction he saw the figure.

"Hey, what's up with you? You bumped into me, you know! Want to fight in the real world?!"

"Do you have any class? Are you rushing to reincarnate yourself?"

"Get in line, man!"

Though Tianming had bumped into many people, he was scanning the crowd with his third eye, but to no avail. It appeared that it had just been an illusion. However, he was desperate enough to not give up. It was only now that he realized how panicked, rushed, and frustrated he felt about Ye Lingfeng's circumstances.

"Ye Lingfeng!" he cried.

"What's wrong with you? Did you go mad?"

"Shut up!"

He ignored the crowd and looked around to see if anyone responded. "Ye Lingfeng, it's me, Tianming! Ye Ling—"

Before he could finish saying his name again, a black-clad youth turned around in the crowd and met his gaze. It was as if the whole world had faded away, with the voice of the crowd being drowned out. The only one that remained was the person he was looking at. He looked at Tianming up and down to triple check, unsure if he was seeing things.

"Brother Tianming..." Ye Lingfeng couldn't believe his eyes at all. All he knew was that he had been stumbling around in the xenomemory space and came to a mysterious world of caeli. However, why would Tianming be here? Wasn't he at the Nine Divine Realms?

"Brother!" No matter how impossible it seemed, Tianming believed his vision. At the very least, his Plundering Eye saw through all falsehoods. He quickened his steps and hugged Ye Lingfeng deeply, feeling the simulated warmth of their bodies from the caeli. It was Ye Lingfeng, after all.

After a long hug, the two parted and locked gazes.

"Ahem, gentlemen... Are you going to strip and wrestle next?" Ying Huo asked.

"Come here," Tianming said, pulling Ye Lingfeng into a corner.

"Why are you here?" the two of them said at the same time.

"Let me go first," they said at the same time again.

"Alright, you go first." They seemed to be mirroring each other perfectly.

Tianming was going mad and snapped, "You shut up first. Tell me if you're alive or dead, and why you're here!"

A little stumped, Ye Lingfeng nodded. "I'm alive."

Tianming breathed a huge sigh of relief. That was all he wanted to hear.