

The Ages 1191

Chapter 1191 - Whitedragon Empress

The Azuresoul Palace was ranked thirty-eighth on the myriad sect ranking. That meant the status of most here was actually lower than Jiang Qingliu's. People were strange; they all wanted to rise, but when they saw someone around their level actually accomplish it, their first thought was to curse them or be jealous.

Thus, many people wanted to see Jiang Qingliu suffer.

Jiang Qingliu felt like he was getting a headache. Slightly confused, he turned and looked.

The many people taking pleasure in his misfortune all stepped aside when they saw the newcomer. However, they all exchanged strange looks.

"It's someone from the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect."

"What do they want?"

The group this time wasn't small. There were a dozen-odd people with a third eye between their eyebrows approaching Jiang Qingliu. Most were middle-aged, and their cultivation was nearly the peak they would reach in their life. This age group was the main pillar of Orderia.

"It's her!"

"I didn't expect the Whitedragon Empress of the Seven Dragon Imperials would personally come."

All of the onlookers' attention was directed at the beautiful woman at the head of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's group. To join the Seven Dragon Imperials, this woman mustn't have just had beauty, but extraordinary power, enough to stand at the top of Orderia's food chain!

Her hair was as black as night and neatly coiled up into buns at the back of her head. A jade hairpin with beaded ornaments dangling down from its tips kept the coil firmly in place. The woman's complexion was fair, and neither her lips nor brows required makeup to portray her beauty. A bright yellow dress wrapped around her figure, and an emerald ribbon around her waist revealed her sophisticated contours.

Amorous feelings grew in the spectators when they saw her. She was slightly older than Sovereign Xi, but she was also very different. Sovereign Xi dressed beautifully, but this woman didn't hide her age. Thus, she seemed even more graceful and elegant. The third eye on her forehead was kept closed, keeping her forehead smooth.

She was the one who had just called out to Jiang Qingliu to stop.

Lan Sha of the Blueblood Starocean had heard her words as well and froze. In that brief moment before he turned around, the woman had already arrived in front of him.

Lan Sha frowned, then coolly said, "Long Wanying, what's the meaning of this?"

"Lan Sha, how dare you be disrespectful to the Whitedragon Empress? You even dare to address her by name!"

“What right do you have to call a Seven Dragon Imperial by name?”

The elders from the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect all rebuked him. However, their tones also carried an undertone of mockery. Whitedragon Empress Long Wanying was in the same age group as Lan Sha, but her status was so much higher.

“Haha.” Lan Sha let go. He couldn’t be rash in front of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, because they were the second-ranked sect on the Myriad Sect Ranking. He watched as the Whitedragon Empress approached Jiang Qingliu.

She didn’t pay much attention to Lan Sha; however, she was very polite to Jiang Qingliu. “Jiang Qingliu, congratulations. Your disciples have gotten incredible accomplishments in the Voidsky Realm, and their fame can be said to have shaken the world.”

“I don’t deserve this praise. Those kids were just lucky, but the competition hasn’t ended yet. Many true geniuses haven’t shown their skills thus far.” Jiang Qingliu didn’t look Long Wanying in the eye. They had once been competitors on the same battlefield, but now their statuses had grown so far apart.

Long Wanying smiled. “You’re too humble. It’s chaotic and crowded here, and I was wondering if you were willing to have a private discussion with the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect? I feel a sense of familiarity with this Li Tianming. It’d be great if I could get to know him more. Perhaps our Xuanyuan Dragon Sect could even work together with the Azuresoul Palace to create an even brighter future for these kids.”

Long Wanying’s words were direct and to the point. Futhermore, she wasn’t asking to snatch away those disciples, but to mutually foster them with the Azuresoul Palace. That meant that after the Voidsky Skirmish was over, Tianming and the rest would go to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect for training. However, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect would provide compensation to Azuresoul Palace, as well as protection.

This was Azuresoul Palace’s best chance to join the umbrella of a peak power.

For Jiang Qingliu, the thing was that he didn’t even know Li Tianming’s trio! If Tianming and the rest really got in the top ten at the end, the Azuresoul Palace would shoot up the rankings. This was an effortless benefit. They could even send these hot potatoes away afterward, and still gain the Xuanyuan Dragon’s Sect’s protection. That was just too important now that the Blueblood Starocean was starting to make trouble for them. Jiang Qingliu could only be thankful Tianming’s group had shone so brilliantly that even the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect was shocked.

He understood the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. They had always been the model for Orderia’s beastmasters. Even if there were some ups and downs, they were always still firmly within the top three sects.

Even now that an even stronger Dreamless Celestial Nation had popped up, the Blueblood Starocean still couldn’t compare to them. The Seven Dragon Imperials were the greatest authority of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, and even though Long Wanying, the Whitedragon Empress, was ranked last, she could still represent her entire sect.

Long Wanying’s words set the area abuzz with conversation.

“These disciples even impressed the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect?”

“The Whitedragon Empress wants to take them in.”

“The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has always honored their words. If this deal works out, the Azuresoul Palace will definitely be uplifted and become something no one dares to agitate.”

“Yes! The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect rarely supports other sects. The Azuresoul Palace has struck the jackpot!”

All of those who had been reveling in Jiang Qingliu’s misfortune felt like their hearts were being stabbed.

“Those disciples just got into the top ten through dumb luck, though.”

“Their own disciples can’t be weak either.”

“Well, by the end of the battle, we’ll know who are geniuses and who are clowns.”

“Hopefully, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect won’t make a fool of themselves.”

“The Whitedragon Empress may look gentle, but she’s famous for being a risk taker. This must be her idea.”

“I’ve seen those disciples’ data. Their strength is just average, and their combat power doesn’t rank toward the top.”

Chapter 1192 - Long Wanying's Truth

The main reason behind their gibberish was still jealousy that the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect wasn’t interested in their disciples.

“They have four hundred and thirty thousand points on the imperial star ranking, a full hundred and fifty thousand points above the second place. Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has a good reason to extend their offer.”

“As a big sect, they don’t lose anything if these few don’t make the cut. But if they don’t do anything, they risk losing some top geniuses.”

That was true and left many speechless. If Long Wanying hadn’t stepped out and instead allowed Jiang Qingliu to be taken away by Lan Sha, who knew what would have happened?

Amidst the discussion, Long Wanying waited for Jiang Qingliu's reply with a smile on her face.

“Our Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has a rich heritage and a reputation tracing back millions of years, what’s there to be hesitant about? If you truly don’t wish to let the children go, then why not join us too?” Long Wanying asked.

“My body, heart, and soul all belong to the Azuresoul Palace, and nothing can sway me,” answered Jiang Qingliu.

“But the Azuresoul Palace alone can’t protect the children. Without our shelter, they’ll eventually die from some accidents, or they’ll never amount to anything in life,” Long Wanying said.

The lack of protection from the Azuresoul Palace was precisely the reason why Jiang Qingliu himself was never able to achieve much in life.

"I have no problem with giving you the three younger ones. As for Yu Ziqian, I hope you don't mind if I keep him? He's been with me for a long time, so it's hard for me to just give him away. And considering that I'm offering you three disciples, can I count on you to help Yu Ziqian out as well?" Jiang Qingliu asked, seemingly troubled by the offer.

But deep inside, he was thinking otherwise. Well, thanks for helping me get rid of these hot potatoes!

"Yu Ziqian? You can keep him, alright, he hasn't proven himself inside there yet." Long Wanying smiled.

"Alright, but it depends on the kids' own choices as well. Oh, and one more thing, their results inside shall be counted under our name," Jiang Qingliu bargained.

"That's not an issue, we don't need to climb the ranking anyway." After all, the battle between the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect and Dreamless Celestial Nation wasn't something that could be affected by mere disciples.

Trying his best to hide his excitement, Jiang Qingliu put up a straight face and said, "Then I'll leave the rest to you. As for the Blueblood Starocean, I hope the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect can provide us with a little assistance."

"You needn't worry about that." As she spoke, Long Wanying turned to Lan Sha, her gaze much colder all of a sudden. "Any thoughts on that?"

"Nothing much, I'm just impressed with how you decided the fate of the entire Azurecloud Continent and its countless lives with a few simple words," Lan Sha said without a hint of emotion. "It's fine if those kids have something in them, but wouldn't it be funny if you came all the way to the continent just for a few dimwits?"

"We'll see about that," Long Wanying replied.

"Jiang Qingliu." Lan Sha turned around. "Watch out for that woman if you don't wish to lose everything you have left."

"Thanks for the advice, but one's personality can be reflected by their looks, and I'm not blind to the point where I can't tell the two of you apart," Jiang Qingliu responded.

"Ha, just as naive as you used to be. Tell me, which lady will possibly let you observe her true nature? Do you really think she could climb to where she is today without a few tricks?" Lan Sha shrugged.

"Lan Sha, if you were any wiser, you'd pick your words more carefully. That pettiness of yours is the exact reason why you can only work for your brother and nowhere else." Long Wanying was surprisingly calm even when being insulted.

"Yeah, considering that bosom of yours, anything must seem petty." Lan Sha let out one more menacing smirk before turning to take his leave.

"Shameless!"

His words immediately drew scorn from the onlooking crowd, especially angering those from the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect.

"If that's how he behaves at over seven hundred years old, it's all we need to know about his personality. There's no need to be bothered by him," Long Wanying calmly said.

"It's natural that people focus more on what draws their attention the most, and that's when they tend to say things they usually dare not to speak," Jiang Qingliu commented.

"What do you mean by that?" Long Wanying cast an odd glance at him.

"Nuh, nothing, don't mind me." Jiang Qingliu caught a peek at her chest and shook his head awkwardly.

"Is there something you dare not speak as well?" Long Wanying asked.

"Nope."

"That better be the case."

"Got it."

They were long past their youth, and naturally love affairs weren't something of much interest to them anymore, considering all their life experiences.

"Have you been all alone ever since he left this world?" Jiang Qingliu couldn't resist asking.

"Do you really have to ask that? If I were to remarry, the whole world would've known," Long Wanying replied.

"Indeed...." Not knowing how to react to that, Jiang Qingliu could only give her a thumbs up. She was quite a bigshot now, after all.

"You really are a boring person." Long Wanying rolled her eyes.

"Haha, so it seems..." Jiang Qingliu bit his lips, "so, do you want to take revenge?"

"Are you kidding me? How am I supposed to take revenge? Do you even know who did it?" Long Wanying gritted her teeth.

"Sorry to bring it up." Jiang Qingliu lowered his head.

"Are you a moron or something?" Seeing him abashed only added to her frustration.

"I'm really sorry."

Even the conversation she'd had with Lan Sha wasn't as uncomfortable as this one. Some memories are best left unmentioned, and their pain forgotten. It took a while before she finally calmed down, her eyes hovering over the first name in the imperial star ranking.

"Do you know why I want this boy?" she asked.

"Because he's at the top of the ranking with unimaginable potential?"

"Wrong answer." Long Wanying shook her head.

"Then?"

"Do you want the truth or the lie?"

"Of course I want the truth, why wouldn't I?" Jiang Qingliu was slightly taken aback.

"Because you might not believe it, since even I myself don't completely believe it." Long Wanying's gaze was somewhat mocking.

"Tell me."

"My son was there during that fight, and both of them died together," Long Wanying said.

"I... heard about it." Jiang Qingliu nodded. What did this woman have to go through, to survive the pain of losing both her husband and son at the same time. Even so, she had lived to this day and even taken over his place as the Whitedragon Empress.

"Li Tianming looks very much like my son, especially with that bright, confident smile. His left eye is golden, just like my son's, and I want to take him with me." Long Wanying couldn't help but gently smile when she looked at the name on the ranking.

Jiang Qingliu was dumbstruck. Of all the reasons she could give him, this was the truth?

"Jiang Qingliu, don't you believe me?" She looked like she had fully anticipated his reaction.

Chapter 1193 - The Dragonblood Desecration

"The question is how you'll make the case to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. The political situation of the Azurecloud Continent is rather complicated, especially considering the appearance of that thing. It's hard to not question your sect's motivations, especially with you approaching us," Jiang Qingliu said.

"Make the case? Why would I need to?" Long Wanying rolled her eyes. "Our clan sacrificed so much for the sake of the sect. So what if I want to take a few peeks at my son?" Her eyes were turning slightly red.

"Don't get it wrong. He isn't your son."

"If I say he is, he is."

"Don't delude yourself. Those who've passed from this world will never return."

"I don't need you to tell me that."

"Fine, I'll shut up about it. Thanks for telling me the truth. At the very least, you can be assured nobody will hear about this from me. In exchange, I'll tell you a truth of my own as well," he earnestly said.

"Out with it." She raised her brow and looked at him with a slightly seductive gaze that contained a flurry of emotions.

"You wouldn't have to bother explaining your decision to the sect in the first place. Li Tianming's performance will be reason enough."

Long Wanying chuckled.

"What's so funny?" Jiang Qingliu asked.

"Now it almost sounds like you're trying to sell your product to me."

Jiang Qingliu really wanted to tell her that he had casually picked up that 'product' on the way here.

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Tianming shattered tens of imperial star formations along the pathways. It was no easy feat, for the disciples here were ascendants. He didn't know that he was already in first place with four hundred and thirty thousand points; he was just wiping out enemies as they came.

"This maze seems endless. Why do old folks like these always like to parade around mysteriously? Can't they just put the treasures on display?" Tianming bemoaned.

"If they're just out there, we wouldn't stand a chance. It'd be a competition that depends on nothing but raw power," Lingfeng said.

"You have a point." Tianming had felt rather troubled by the pain of being in a cultivation bottleneck. "Sigh, I haven't made a breakthrough for a month now...."

"What did you say?!" Yu Ziqian said with a start.

"It's been a month!" His Lifesbane Will's growth had 'slowed' now that he was at the ninth level. As for his Imperial Will, its growth had completely stopped.

"Friend, are you messing with me? I'm an absolute genius and a fourth-level constellier, but I haven't complained even though I haven't broken through in the past year," Yu Ziqian said.

"Aren't you impotent again? What level can you fight at right now? Seventh-level ascendant?"

"Hey! I'm just taking a break. You can't just call a man impotent!"

"You were only able to perk up for three short days before you returned to normal. This Ultimate Pill Body of yours is pretty pathetic," Tianming mocked.

"Well, I think so too! Sigh...."

"You two whiners are driving me crazy!" said the Ultimate Pill God from Yu Ziqian's chest.

"Looks like this old fool doesn't know his place. Friend, why don't you dig him out and let us mess with him?" Tianming asked with a smile.

"I was thinking the same thing," Yu Ziqian said.

"Stop! Don't mess around... I have a way to speed up your recovery from the pill recession phase," said the portable grandpa. Tianming and Yu Ziqian looked at each other and smiled. "But this method will cause your masculine traits to recede, and eventually, you'll become a woman."

"Forget it, then," Yu Ziqian said, his skin tingling from the thought.

"So far, we've only seen the Silverdragon Palace. I wonder if the others have seen similar places," Tianming said.

"This place is far too wide. There were nine entrances and tens of millions of people probably got in. Even if there were nine such palaces, I'm sure they've already been wiped clean by now," Lingfeng said.

"If that's the case, the treasures must be on the same level as the Lifesteal Silverdragon, right?" Yu Ziqian said. The thought of others obtaining something as impressive as the chain was exhilarating.

"I wonder if I'll drop out of the top ten," Tianming said. He had no information about the outside at all.

"There's another formation here. It's your turn, great formation guru!" Yu Ziqian said. These days, few things surprised him. Tianming had already shown him how he could just go through the many formations they'd come across. Even so, past those formations were just more diverging paths.

Sometimes, they would run into some universal manna or some artifacts around grade three or four. Pills wouldn't be able to last that long, even if they had been sealed up. Naturally, Tianming planned to keep those artifacts and bring them back to the Flameyellow Continent. He also managed to obtain spatial rings from the people he eliminated and fed the caeli within them to Xiaoxiao, allowing her to approach another breakthrough.

"I'm still considerably weaker than the peak geniuses of the top ten sects, and Yu Ziqian is hardly reliable. I still have to count on myself." Tianming greatly desired to grow more powerful, yet he had been faced with an obstacle: this path. Thinking that, he tore open the formation with his arm, gradually opening up a hole for the others to pass through.

"It smells like blood!" They immediately noted the smell once they passed through. "The smell's coming from ahead."

The four of them charged along the pathway and saw another building ahead that looked rather bloody. Before they approached, they saw two glowing words: Blooddragon Palace. There was a sea of blood along the way leading toward the palace, which was where the smell came from.

"It's real blood! Tens of millions of people and beasts must've died for there to be so much of it!" Yu Ziqian said. The stench assailed them from all directions; it was truly a ghastly sight.

Looking around using his Insightful Eye technique, Tianming said, "Don't panic. It isn't real blood. This sea of blood is just a formation, probably one on the same level as the Millionblade Formation. It just presents differently. One thing's for sure, though—once we're through the sea of blood, we might be able to obtain the treasure behind it."

"A formation? Oh, I think I got it. It could be the Seablood Formation, a grade-four divine formation. Even though its main purpose is to manifest illusions, the sea of blood has rather powerful attacks. It's much harder to deal with than the Millionblade Formation." Yu Ziqian immediately turned nervous again. "I really won't be able to do anything now. Think thrice before you act. I won't be able to deal with the likes of Lan Feilin for you."

"You're right, but this time around, nobody's here with us." Tianming swept his eye across the area. Based on his instincts as a 'plunderer', they were probably the first ones to arrive. "The question is, what's inside? Let's go closer to take a look."

They flew and quietly entered the Blooddragon Palace, floating above the sea of blood.

"I hear a dragon's roar coming from beneath. It might be a grade-seven divine artifact," Tianming said.

"It could be."

"I'll go down to check. You guys stay up here to keep watch. Call out to me if anything happens."

"It shouldn't be hard for you, given the easy time you have bypassing formations. But it sounds too easy. It feels like there's a catch somewhere," Yu Ziqian said.

"I have to try either way. Our chances are even lower if others come," Tianming said.

"Alright. But let me think for a bit.... Blooddragon Palace and Seablood Formation... what kind of weapon could be in here? Did the Ninedragon Emperor ever have a divine artifact like that?"

"I'll know when I see it." Tianming didn't waste any more words and dove down. Right as his body entered the sea of blood, the palace immediately reacted and the entire Ninedragon Imperial Tomb seemed to rumble. Looking up, he saw many pathways leading to Blooddragon Palace closing up. There were initially thousands of them, but they vanished in a matter of moments.

"Only one path is left." Xiaoxiao pointed above at the huge words they had seen; there was still an opening there. Waves of blood seemed to seep out of the walls of the opening toward Lingfeng and the rest.

"Hmph, I'm not scared," Yu Ziqian said.

"Then why are you hugging my arm?" Lingfeng asked. "Was I? You must've imagined it, friend."

The commotion grew even more. Eerie cries could be heard coming from the opening. Then suddenly, the sea of blood exploded, sending the liquid bursting up high. It was as if it had suddenly boiled and bubbles of blood went surging upward towards Yu Ziqian and the rest. There was nowhere to hide. Yu Ziqian slammed into a wall, greatly injured by the impact. "God damn that hurts!"

He looked down in a hurry and saw something poke out of the depths of the palace. Widening his eyes, he couldn't help but exclaim, "Dragonblood Desecration!"

The sound of war drums began pulsing. With every beat, their hearts thumped.

Chapter 1194 - Bloodgorge Dragonmark

The sea of blood looked tumultuous and vast. Though it had the same purpose as the Millionblade Formation, it took the initiative to attack rather than just passively defend. The moment Tianming stepped into it, he didn't need to deactivate anything and could head straight to the sea's depths. However, the bloody water formed into tens of thousands of beasts that charged at him to surround him.

There were also some hundreds of thousands of bloody spikes that shot toward him. They were fine to the utmost, like silky strands of hair. Though they were small, they were easily able to cut through any hard object. When they touched Lifesteal Silverdragon, they even produced sparks.

Tianming charged forward and had Ying Huo and the rest help out above. He heard a rumbling coming from the single remaining pathway above them, a sign that more enemies could be coming at any moment. "Yu Ziqian's nothing but a burden right now. I have to end this fast."

Tianming used his sword and chain to open up a path. He used Imperial Descent and unleashed a curved sword ki blast, cleaving open a path through the countless beasts, then charged straight in. Behind him, Xian Xian's black roots hurriedly clasped tightly onto the Blooddragon Palace to stabilize itself. Lan

Huang swam through the sea of blood. As everyone else was tensing up, it was switching up swimming styles and letting out a booming laughter the whole time.

"What a dumbass!" the Archaionfiend snapped. Its fleshy black wings were coated with bloody lightning. Being at the twelfth level and about to enter the Constellation stage, it was on a higher level than Tianming and Lingfeng. Above its head were Xiaoxiao and the fearful Yu Ziqian.

"Yu Ziqian, what's that Dragonblood Desecration you mentioned just now?" Xiaoxiao asked as she looked toward the pathway.

"It's a grade-seven divine artifact on the same level as the Lifesteal Silverdragon, but it didn't belong to the Ninedragon Emperor. Instead, it used to belong to an elite of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect of the same era. The weapon probably ended up in the Ninedragon Emperor's possession somehow, and he then left it behind inside this tomb," Yu Ziqian said.

"Then why'd you make such a big deal of that?"

"Are you even listening? Both the Lifesteal Dragon and Dragonblood Desecration are the best among grade-seven divine artifacts. They're something seniors who're centuries, or even millennia-old would dream of owning. The process of forging these artifacts is so complicated that few, if any, can achieve it! If their true potential was tapped into, even people of our age can emerge as heroes. It's likely that there's a drop of exalted blood near this weapon as well." Yu Ziqian figured that Tianming and the rest didn't react too much to weapons of this caliber because their sects were far too powerful. Little did he know that it was just because they were 'country bumpkins' from a different world who had no idea what was good or bad.

"The quality of divine artifacts at the same grade can greatly vary. For instance, grade-six or seven artifacts without artifact souls are far inferior to those that have them. In fact, grade-seven divine artifacts themselves can be subdivided into five categories. The Lifesteal Silverdragon and Dragonblood Desecration are both grade-seven level-five divine artifacts, which are worth more than ten times a level-four weapon of the same grade! For someone under the age of thirty to obtain something like that means that they'll never have to switch to another weapon for the rest of their life! They'll always have the better weapon, no matter their age or cultivation!"

Thanks to their ignorance, they didn't even know that twelfth-level constellers usually only had grade-four or five divine artifacts. Most didn't even have a grade-six one.

"If I'm not mistaken, the Dragonblood Desecration seems to have ten artifact souls..." Lingfeng said. The rumbling was getting louder and louder and their eardrums felt like bursting. They were ready for the confrontation.

"There should be one main soul and nine subsouls. Combined, they're considered a single artifact soul," Yu Ziqian said.

"So the main soul's like a bow and the subsouls are arrows?" Lingfeng had an easier time understanding this thanks to his sensitivity to souls. It only took a simple glimpse for him to see through it. There was a blood dragon about ten thousand meters long deep within the sea, covered in spikes. Curled up, it looked like a bow. Beside it were nine smaller dragons, each one having a single sharp, hooked horn that pointed forward.

"That's right. It even has two forms, the first being a bow. If you fuse the bow and arrows together, they can be used as a spear," Yu Ziqian said.

Xiaoxiao immediately turned her attention over.

"Isn't this tailor-made for you?" the Archaionfiend asked.

Xiaoxiao often used bows and spears. Back then, she had fought with a halberd and other such polearms. But recently, she had switched to using bow and arrows with her new cultivation path. With the Archaionfiend taking care of most close combat, she wouldn't use a spear unless she had no other choice.

"He's almost there," Xiaoxiao said, looking down. Tianming was already really close to the weapon.

"The fact that we came here and ran into this weapon must be a sign. The artifact soul of this weapon must've been awaiting your arrival," Lingfeng said.

"Is that so?" Xiaoxiao had never felt that something so lucky would ever happen to her.

Yu Ziqian was still going on about the weapon. "The Dragonblood Desecration's made of a divine ore called dracosanguinite that carries the grade-seven bloodgorge dragonmark divine pattern. As its name suggests, any strike dealt by the weapon will draw terrifying amounts of blood from the enemy. While it isn't as sharp as voidslicerite, it can deal far more damage once it pierces the enemy.

"Not to mention, when it was forged, it was infused with three grade-seven divine hazards of great destructive potential, namely, cosmic blitz, sanguine frost, and eternal boltserpent. The two lightning and one frost hazard can inflict explosive and corrosive damage on an enemy. I only know so much about it because it's a famous weapon in Orderian chronicles. Everywhere the weapon passes, trails of corpses are left behind."

The Lifesteal Silverdragon and Dragonblood Desecration were considered the best grade-seven divine artifacts, as every aspect of their materials, from ore to hazards, was grade seven. They also had multiple hazards for additional effects. Most other grade-seven divine artifacts only needed a single grade-seven divine pattern, whether from ore or hazard, to be classified as such.

"The Dragonblood Desecration has never shown up again since disappearing hundreds of millennia ago. Its only known user was the Blooddragon Emperor of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, and there's many versions of his tales...."

Though Yu Ziqian had planned to go on, the commotion was getting too loud for him to continue. Tianming had finally shattered the formation and was charging toward the treasure. The ten dragon souls fiercely roared at him, their spikes looking incredibly threatening.

"There's the exalted blood!" That meant that youths like them could bind the weapons for their own use. Even then, the artifact souls didn't seem to be allowing him to approach. Almost instantly, an arrow appeared on the dragon bow and prepared to shoot toward Tianming, though he was faster. The moment he saw the blood, he lashed out with his left hand using the Lifesteal Silverdragon. The chain stretched to a thousand meters and immediately bound the bow, wrapping around it. The bow could only spin without being able to fire, leaving Tianming completely unscathed.

The artifact souls raged at being bound, though there was nothing much it could do to unravel itself in the form of a bow. Then the bow fused with its arrows and turned into a ghastly spear, allowing it to escape the chain and pierce toward Tianming. He deflected the strike with the sword in his right hand. Then he used his chain again, but didn't aim it at the spear this time. Instead, he aimed it at the Archaionfiend, binding Xiaoxiao and pulling her into the sea.

"What're you doing?!" she said, surprised. She knew how precious the treasure was. Even if Tianming didn't use it, it was something he could sell for a high price.

"Drink the exalted blood, quick. I'll hold the artifact souls back," Tianming pressed.

"I—" It was one thing for him to give her caeli. Those weren't that rare, and he didn't need them. However, this artifact was something people would kill for.

"Quick! Don't be too touched. I expect you to pay me back," he snapped.

"Fine." Though she was shocked, she no longer hesitated.

Tianming used the chain to stop the spear, tightly wrapping it once more. The artifact soul roared and struggled like a gigantic beast. If it weren't for the toughness of the Lifesteal Silverdragon and Tianming's strength, he wouldn't be able to hold the spear back.

"Hurry up!"

Chapter 1195 - Dragon Golem Army

Xiaoxiao swam towards the exalted blood, quickly assimilating it into her body without any trouble. Instantly, a thick scent of blood came wafting from her as draconic patterns appeared in her eyes. It was as if she had turned into a raging tyrant with a death toll of millions. Her gaze swept through the sea of blood and settled on Tianming. She wore a complex expression, a remnant of will that remained in that drop of blood. More accurately, she was looking at the weapon Tianming had bound.

"You can let go now," she said.

Tianming unraveled the chain and the spear shot toward Xiaoxiao and turned back into its bow and arrow form. She held the bow, and the blood dragon arrows circled around her. When she reached out, one of the arrows landed in her hand. She nocked it on the bow, putting the two dragons together. Then she pointed it at Tianming.

"What in the?!"

"That was a reaction from the bow's will." Xiaoxiao hurriedly pulled it back.

"Oh... looks like the weapon belonged to an enemy of the Ninedragon Emperor." Tianming waved at her.

Now that she had claimed the Dragonblood Desecration, the Seablood Formation quickly dissipated and peace returned to Blooddragon palace. However, the commotion above was about to finally reach them. Tianming had settled this so quickly that the threat from above hadn't arrived yet.

"How does it feel?" he asked.

"Even if I can only unleash a small part of its potential, it's still really powerful and hard to control," she said, looking at the weapon in her hand.

"No worries. Get used to it over time. I'm sure you'll be able to use it for a long time to come."

"Such an expensive divine artifact—"

Before she could finish, Tianming said, "Didn't you ask me to work you to the bone? How would you be of any use to me if you didn't even have a weapon? This is your occupational tool. Take care of it."

"Alright." What a fortunate employee she was.

"Back then, I thought I'd have to fight this plunderer to continue to grow... But why does it feel like my potential is endless now that I'm following him?" The Archaionfiend was confused. "If I knew that from the beginning, I would've given him my eye long ago!" It was finally willing to let bygones be bygones.

While Xiaoxiao was inspecting her weapon, Tianming joined up with Lingfeng. Though they had the weapon now, the Blooddragon Palace was still sealed from the other sides and they were still in trouble.

"Sigh... friend, do you like Xiaoxiao or something?" Yu Ziqian asked.

"Nope," Tianming said.

"Then why'd you give her a grade-seven divine artifact like that?"

"How's that your business?"

"Give me one too next time, won't you?" He blinked seductively.

"Fine. I'll take one kidney in return."

Though they were only joking around, Tianming wouldn't forget that he had only been able to get the Lifesteal Silverdragon in part thanks to Yu Ziqian's efforts.

"Damn, you're ruthless." Yu Ziqian took a step back in fright, though he recalled something. "Hey, once the Voidsky Skirmish ends, you should be careful. If possible, you should announce your backing. Otherwise, there'll be people coming to rob you two young folks of these treasures, the Dragonblood Desecration especially. The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's other branch has been searching for it for hundreds of millennia."

"Other branch?"

"That's right. Their clan and sect has broken apart before. The other branch now serves the sun emperor. They're his killers."

"Got it."

It wasn't uncommon for there to be splits and betrayals over histories that stretched across millions of years. Since some on the celestial orderian side were looking for the Dragonblood Desecration, they would have to be careful.

Right then, a wave of blood mist came swirling toward them, behind which was countless gigantic beasts. "Careful!" Tianming beckoned.

The four of them huddled together to face the threat. If it weren't for Tianming's quick actions, they would have been facing threats from above and below. Fortunately, they had dealt with the artifact souls, so their backs were safe. Amidst the sound of war drums, one beast after another emerged from the pathway.

"Dragons?" Tianming saw tens of thousands of them charging out of the pathway, some thousands of meters long and others only around a meter or two in length. Even so, that didn't mean the smaller ones were weak, much like Ying Huo and Meow Meow's sizes didn't indicate their lack of strength.

"Are these lifebound beasts or wildbeasts?" The latter didn't sound possible. This tomb belonged to the Ninedragon Emperor and had been sealed for hundreds of thousands of years. There shouldn't be any wildbeasts here. Yet Tianming ruled out lifebound beasts as well, as there were no beastmasters to be seen. Lingfeng also added that they didn't have any souls.

There was too much mist, making it hard for them to see anything. But when the beasts finally descended to attack, Tianming could finally see what was going on. These dragons were not of flesh, but of divine ores! There were metal-based and mineral-based ores, and even some in liquid form! They were covered in dense celestial patterns, which were usually found on formations or tomes. These celestial patterns endlessly moved about the bodies of the dragons; they were obviously a product of a formation.

"These are formation effigies, a really unique technique. By fusing divine ores with a special formation, such golems can be made. They can be maintained for long periods of time as long as there's enough nova source for them to keep operating. They're essentially autonomous formations!" Yu Ziqian said.

"Something like that exists?!" Tianming was quite stunned. A nova source was truly something that could boost formation arts to a whole new level. He had looked down on it before, but when he saw Lan Huang sent flying, injured, after colliding with those dragons, he finally knew how powerful they could be.

"Don't look down on these dragon golems! They could be something the Ninedragon Emperor left behind. If the formation and ores used to make them are high enough level, they have terrifying potential. I heard that not even my master would be able to defeat the most powerful formation golems in Orderia. They could eradicate everything!" As he spoke, Yu Ziqian hid away.

"Careful!" Tianming finally realized how serious things were. "Is this one of the tests in the Voidsky Realm? I wonder if I can get points for defeating the golems. Then again, did obtaining the Lifesteal Silverdragon and Dragonblood Desecration increase our score as well?"

Those were his motivations. He had joined this event to boost his backing and achievements. The higher he ranked, the better backing he would get. It was obvious that the dragon golems could potentially kill them. Tianming and the rest could be completely wiped out thanks to their low numbers. These soulless enemies were akin to thousands of formation explosions at once.

"Hold on! Our only hope is for their nova source to run out!" Yu Ziqian cried.

"How long will that take?"

"No idea!"

Tianming raised both weapons as Xian Xian took root below him. Lingfeng also activated the formation in his weapon and engaged the golems. Both the Grand-Orient Sword and Lifesteal Silverdragon were tough and sharp enough. Tianming's chain was able to crush a two-kilometer-long dragon far away, but ten others instantly took its place. Some breathed fire and some breathed frost, while others engaged in a melee with their sharp talons.

Hundreds of golems wrapped around Xian Xian's tree body and began gnawing away at its branches. Both Trisoul Fiendsong and Evernight Curse were useless against these piles of rock and metal. There were some tens of golems on Lan Huang as well, overwhelming it with sheer numbers. All Meow Meow could do was blast away at the golems with its lightning, but it did little to damage the core formations that kept them running. Only Ying Huo had luck cutting apart the smaller golems with its Cosmic Blade.

"Dammit!" The ruthless waves of enemies almost instantly crushed them all. Even the Archaionfiend was crying out in pain. Xiaoxiao familiarized herself with the bow and kept firing. The blood dragon arrows were capable of piercing the dragon golems, but their bloodsucker ability didn't have any effect. Though they pierced the golems, they didn't destroy the formations thus weren't able to defeat them at all. Lingfeng fared even worse. His third regal soul was completely useless here, so he could only bash away with his staff. But his physical capabilities weren't strong enough. The counterattacks he took left him bloodied all over.

"Hold on, all of you!" Yu Ziqian almost had his head bitten off when he popped it out and he quickly hid away.

Lifesteal Silverdragon streaked past, wrapping around tens of dragons. Then Tianming gave it a full-force tug, causing shattered metal and stone to rain down. Still, there were far too many enemies. They wouldn't just lose, they might die if this went on.

"What do we do?" It was Xiaoxiao's first time using her weapon, yet she had run into these dragon golems. Had the Archaionfiend not been protecting her, she would have long been torn to shreds.

"Formations!" Tianming was feeling a headache welling up.

Chapter 1196 - The Sound Of The War Drum

There was no sense of achievement in defeating opponents like these. After finally making it to the top ten of the imperial star ranking, it would be a pity if he was driven out of the tournament by these dragon golems. Perhaps this was the price of obtaining the Dragonblood Desecration. Even if someone else had encountered the dragon golems, Tianming was certain they would suffer heavy casualties.

"I'll try something else."

In this desperate situation, Tianming wrapped the Lifesteal Silverdragon around his left arm and sprang forth like a beast, clinging to one of the largest dragon golems. The colorful dragon was several thousand meters long and was at least a grade-four formation. This dragon golem alone was as difficult to deal with as the Seablood Formation.

"Isn't breaking formations all the same?" At the thought of this, he stretched out his black arm, sinking his sharp claws into the dense celestial patterns on the dragon. Just as he had done with the Millionblade Formation, Tianming grasped its vitals and the dragon golem roared, struggling violently.

“Die!” It was as if he had grabbed it by the balls, breaking the foundation of this formation. With one final roar, the dragon golem turned dim and a complete metal dragon fell to the ground.

The sky plunderer race.... At times like this, Tianming felt a strong sense of pride. Awesome! he couldn't help exclaiming inside. What kind of bizarre race were the sky plunderers? How could they possess such a heaven-defying ability? This approach was no faster than using the Lifesteal Silverdragon, because he would still have to destroy the dragons one by one. However, he was no longer passively taking a beating, but attacking. Thus, his tiny figure flew from one dragon golem to another. Some formations were of a lower grade and could be dealt with in the blink of an eye, while the more complex ones took longer. Even so, every moment was a race against time.

“Hold on!”

Tens of thousands of dragons swooped down to inflict a devastating blow. Tianming charged into their midst, leading many of them away. Even when he broke the formations, the other dragon golems could still cause damage to him. All he could do was rely on the Greenspark Tower to heal him and keep going. The others huddled together, defending one another under Lingfeng's Evil Suppression Formation.

“Kill!” They fought shoulder to shoulder in this intense struggle between life and death. As long as they looked up and saw Tianming flying across one dragon after another, metal and rock continuously crashing down, they would still have hope.

“You guys are amazing. You've certainly won me over!” Despite the fear, Yu Ziqian was influenced by their bravery.

They bit the bullet and held on. Time trickled by, and soon two hours had passed. By this point, they were exhausted and covered in blood. Toward the end, Tianming's lifebound beasts protected the others within the circle; this was their last stand.

Tianming was still going. Even though his black arm could break the formations, he could only handle one at a time while still being attacked by the dragons. The formations' power was everywhere. His body was numb and close to falling apart. Even a fourth-level constellier would perish here.

"Bloody hell! Did they expect thousands of disciples to gather here and face the dragon golems together? Perhaps we arrived early and were given a test meant for tens of thousands of people?"

Tianming believed that was likely the case. Who could survive such a difficult challenge? After two hours, there were still more than three thousand dragon golems remaining. Xian Xian was close to being completely bald from all the attacks; fortunately, Feiling's flower was well-protected.

The other lifebound beasts were using their bodies to protect the others and they were at their limit. Like Tianming, they were dizzy with exhaustion. The power of the dragon golems was one contributing factor, and the fact that Lingfeng, Xian Xian, and the Dragonblood Desecration had no effect on the dragons was another. Otherwise, Xian Xian wouldn't be troubled by such a fight.

Keep going, you can't lose.... Tianming grit his teeth, dragging his weary body into battle after battle. Just as they were about to collapse in despair, the remaining dragon golems began losing power and crashed to the ground as the light within them dimmed. When he looked down, the floor was covered in dragon golems, metal, and rock.

"What happened?" Tianming asked in amazement.

"They've used up their nova source!" Yu Ziqian cried with joy.

"We made it!"

In that instant, they all collapsed to the ground, including Tianming. Yet another deadly battle was finally over. Persevere, and if they won, there would be gains. At the very least, these metal and lightning divine ores would be Fifth's food. As soon as the battle ended, Tianming let it out. Tens of thousands of little silver eggs spread out through the Blooddragon Palace and began nibbling away at the metal.

"What the hell?" Yu Ziqian was bewildered. The eggs were devouring divine ores?

"Why are you asking so much? Do you want to be silenced?" Tianming smiled.

"The weather is great." Yu Ziqian quickly changed the subject.

Xian Xian lay on Tianming's shoulder, crying. "Why is Fifth eating, but I can't? I'm about to starve to death!" The Radix World Tree was almost completely depleted. This was the first time Xian Xian had been so heavily injured, and more injuries meant more hunger. Tianming could tell it was about to collapse.

"Just a few more days and I promise you'll be full!" Tianming said.

"I'm so hungry...." Xian Xian seemed quite uncomfortable as it sobbed on Tianming's shoulder.

"If you're really hungry, you can take a few bites from me. I have tons of flesh!" Stretching out its claw, Lan Huang patted Xian Xian's head.

"Thank you, Tortoise Bro, but your flesh tastes bad. I don't want any." Xian Xian was amused.

"Tastes bad...." Lan Huang looked dejected.

After comforting Xian Xian for a while, Tianming allowed her to fall into a deep sleep. Fifth was still feasting and the metallic luster on each egg grew more and more intense. Tianming picked up several eggs and found that their shells were as hard as a brick.

"Metal-type divine ores can only increase Fifth's hardness. It'll need a metal-type nova source to reach our current level." Ores and energy were completely different. However, devouring these dragon golems would be enough to give Fifth a tough physique once it was born.

"That's right!" Yu Ziqian was puzzled.

"What's the matter?"

"In the beginning, what we heard was the sound of war drums. What about them? Are there only dragon golems?"

Tianming recalled it as well. When he had first heard the sound, he thought someone was beating the drums, but it was dragon golems that appeared. Just as they were voicing their doubts, the celestial patterns detached from the dragon golems and gathered together, forming a colorful enchantment shaped like a war drum. The drum shrank down to the size of an apple. Rushing over at once, Tianming

reached out, grabbed the war drum and tapped it with his fingers. The thunderous sound sent his hair flying.

"What's this?" With curiosity, the others surrounded Tianming.

"I wonder what the formation does." The echo of a war drum sounded above his head. He tapped the drum again and another echo sounded from the distance.

"It's showing us the way." Tianming said, staring at the passage above.

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The Myriad Solar Sects were boiling with excitement once more. Another terrifying change in the imperial star ranking had occurred. Today, the rankings were as follows: First place: Li Tianming (Azuresoul Palace) with 530,000 points; Second place: Lin Xiaoxiao (Azuresoul Palace) with 330,000 points; Third place: Weisheng Moran (Dreamless Celestial Nation) with 310,000 points.... Sixth place: Ye Lingfeng (Azuresoul Palace) with 150,000 points...Seventeenth place: Yu Ziqian (Azuresoul Palace) with 70,000 points. The Azuresoul Palace must be ecstatic. Tianming's 530,000 points basically guaranteed him top ten in the final ranking.

The Dragonblood Desecration was worth two hundred thousand points. Xiaoxiao had fused with the exalted blood which determined their points. She originally had about a hundred thousand points and had overtaken Weisheng Moran with the addition of two hundred thousand more. The other thirty thousand was probably awarded for her fight against the dragon golems. Having destroyed thousands of dragon golems, Tianming rose by a hundred thousand points while Lingfeng rose by more than forty thousand.

"Who can surpass Li Tianming now?"

"What did he do in the tomb? What has he obtained?"

There was no end to the audience's discussion. A second-level constellier who had never shown his face was somehow leading by a wide margin. This was simply an unsolvable mystery.

"And what about Lin Xiaoxiao? An increase of two hundred thousand points in one go? That's exactly what happened to Li Tianming last time."

"It means they obtained some sort of treasure."

"What could it be?"

"God knows! Everything turned strange the moment the tomb emerged."

"There'll be a good show to watch if the current ranking is maintained until the end. I heard the Whitedragon Empress of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect directly asked for these three disciples."

"What magical powers do those children have? How did Jiang Qingliu cultivate them?"

Everyone was puzzled.

"If Yu Ziqian makes it to the top ten of the imperial star ranking, the Azuresoul Palace would occupy four places. That would be unprecedented."

"It would cause a sensation on the sun. That's awesome!"

"Forget about that. What I want to know is, what was the treasure worth two hundred thousand points? Is it useful to us?"

While they were discussing, an old man approached. Chuckling, he said, "Don't you know?"

"What?"

"There are disciples who have already been eliminated from the tomb. Many people have learned that the two-hundred-thousand-point treasure was the Ninedragon Emperor's Lifesteal Silverdragon."

"Lifesteal Silverdragon!"

In that instant, they were all riled up.

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In the tomb, an army of dragon golems quietly opened their eyes. The army had yet to move; the war drum had sounded first. At the same time, seven dragon palaces were surfacing.

Chapter 1197 - Gujian Qingshuang

Azurecloud Sword Mountain in the Azurecloud Continent was tall and steep, like an enormous azure sword rising from the ground all the way to the clouds. From the ground, the mountain appeared to be tens of thousands of meters tall. Only by standing far enough away would one see the entire mountain. The Azurecloud Sword Mountain was covered in lush greenery, and there was also an azure metal mine on the mountain. Azure metal was used to forge swords and could be used to produce dozens of grade-two divine artifacts. Therefore, the Azuresoul Palace was actually Orderia's great school of the sword dao.

Although it couldn't compare to the superior sects, the Azuresoul Palace was far ahead of other second, third, and even fourth-rate forces. Despite cultivating the sword, their disciples were modest and kept to themselves. Because they rarely traveled to other continents, they weren't as well-known in the Myriad Solar Sects.

The events in the Voidsky Realm and every change in the imperial star ranking had shaken the entire Azurecloud Continent. Since its establishment, the Azuresoul Palace had never been this glorious. Despite being in retreat and paying no attention to the disciples' battle, many elders began to appear.

As the topic of public opinion, the Azurecloud Continent was certainly lively. Many powerhouses from other sects visited to curry favor. Some of these elites even belonged to sects that were loyal to the Supracloud Sanctuary. The entire continent could sense the surging undercurrents; there were even more powerful forces who had come to make arrangements ahead of time.

Despite the turbulence outside, there was calm in the Azuresoul Palace on the highest peak of the Azurecloud Sword Mountain. The palace was vast and magnificent, the walls and tiles gleaming with sword light. This was where head instructor Gujian Qingshuang cultivated. It was also the site closest to Orderia's fiery clouds.

The sea of fiery clouds submerged the Azuresoul Sword Palace in flames. This was a day when the sweltering heat burned from the clouds, so the entire palace was enveloped in flames. A woman walked through the flames and entered the palace. Racing all the way to the depths of the palace, she finally knelt in front of a thousand-meter-high hall. She was Qing Zi; after sending the disciples to the Voidsky Realm with Jiang Qingliu, she had hurried back without stopping.

"Master." Various emotions flashed across her eyes—confusion, doubt, disbelief, and shock.

"Have there been new developments?" an imposing voice sounded from within the palace. The speaker sounded extremely solemn and conservative.

"Yes, the imperial star ranking drastically changed today!" Qing Zi's voice trembled a little, her expression pale.

"Tell me."

Taking a breath, Qing Zi recounted the changes in the most steady voice she could muster. The sound originating from the hall suggested that someone abruptly stood up.

"Top of the ranking by a wide margin, we've occupied the second and sixth places as well, and even Yu Ziqian's rank has risen," a hoarse voice sounded from the hall.

"Yes, Master! It's incredible! What is Jiang Qingliu doing? Where did those disciples come from? Is this a blessing or a curse?" Qing Zi looked a little confused as she continued, "I can't help but feel that it isn't a good thing. All of this attention on the Azuresoul Palace has touched the interests of too many people."

"Yes." The head instructor nodded. He was Gujian Qingshuang, a well-known master in the Azurecloud Continent.

Qing Zi was about to ask him what to do when several transmission stones flew out of the hall. The doors opened and an old man with gray hair and heroic eyebrows walked out.

"Master...." Qing Zi hesitated to speak.

"Don't worry, I'll start up the Azuresky Myriadsword Formation, call all the disciples back, activate all of Azuresoul Myriad Cities' defensive formations, and prepare for war. There's no way the Supracloud Sanctuary will sit still," said Gujian Qingshuang.

"Has it already come to this?"

The defensive formations would be activated, proving that this was a major event that hadn't happened in hundreds of thousands of years. Although the Azuresoul Palace had competed and fought, they'd never reached a point of needing to activate the Azuresky Myriadsword Formation.

"It's all Jiang Qingliu's fault. What is he doing?" Qing Zi was speechless. If Yu Ziqian was the only one who made the top ten, the Azuresoul Palace would be thrilled. But being too brilliant would cause misfortune.

Beneath the gates of the Azuresoul Palace, the entire sect beamed with happiness. Many people were unaware that being so outstanding without protection would only provoke jealousy.

"I'm curious, when did he accept these three disciples?" Gujian Qingshuang frowned. As the head instructor, Jiang Qingliu could hide a few ordinary disciples. However, cultivating the first and second place disciples required a lot of resources, like universal manna. There was no way he could have kept this concealed if he used the sect's resources.

Gujian Qingshuang was about to activate the defensive formations when a transmission stone flew into his hand. "Jiang Qingliu?" He was taken aback. The sentence he saw eased the frown on his face.

"Master, what's the matter?" Qing Zi couldn't help but complain about Jiang Qingliu in her heart. But upon seeing her master sigh in relief, she was puzzled.

"The White Dragon Empress of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect took a fancy to those three disciples. They will take them away after the tournament. At the same time, they will compensate us by protecting us. If the three of them can maintain their ranks, the Azuresoul Palace will be the one to benefit." Gujian Qingshuang looked up at the sky, his gaze shaky. He couldn't figure out why such fortune would land on the Azuresoul Palace.

The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect!" Qing Zi did a double take. "I've seen their true abilities. Li Tianming is about as strong as a second-level constellier. He wouldn't even make the top hundred among the youths. Why would the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect be interested in them?" She couldn't quite comprehend it.

"You don't understand. After all, the imperial star ranking isn't the same as the power ranking. Before the age of thirty, some people are ahead of the pack while others are late bloomers. That's completely normal. Once they reach a hundred years old, the real gap becomes obvious. Although the imperial star ranking doesn't match the current strength ranking, you'll find that the imperial star ranking corresponds to their strength when they become a centenarian," Gujian Qingshuang explained. "Take Jiang Qingliu, for example. Back then, they said he would make the top ten, but he was eliminated at the beginning and didn't even make the imperial star ranking. Today, he trails behind those who were on it."

The imperial star ranking was extraordinary. It didn't necessarily represent the present, but it could depict the future!

"Master, we don't have to worry if we have the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's protection. Doesn't this mean we've gotten a great deal?" Qing Zi said.

"For the time being, that seems to be the case. However, it's still uncertain whether or not they can stay in the top ten and be useful. If they're useless, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect will definitely toss them back," said Gujian Qingshuang. After receiving the transmission stone, even the tone of his voice had changed.

"Jiang Qingliu, you've done a great job this time...." Squeezing the transmission stone in his hand, he narrowed his eyes.

Chapter 1198 - Yuance And The Flamedragon Palace

This time, Tianming and the others had all sustained injuries in the battle with the dragon golems. When acquiring the caeli of seniors, Tianming had obtained quite a number of divine pills. Divine pills were rare items that were grade-three at most. However, they had a better healing effect on the astral physique. Albi were the foundation of the astral physique, and injuries inevitably led to damaging them.

Ordinary spirit herbs could hardly treat that kind of injury. Divine herbs were much stronger, but less targeted. Thus, alchemy gurus refined the herbs into pills so the healing effects were enhanced.

Using the divine pills, Lingfeng, Xiaoxiao, and Yu Ziqian recovered rather quickly. With the help of the Greenspark Tower, Tianming and his lifebound beasts healed even faster. After acquiring an astral physique, Tianming's body had undergone changes, slightly diminishing the effect of the Greenspark Tower. However, it was still an incredible divine artifact.

Tianming exited the passage with the war drum, healing as he walked. After a few kilometers, a divergence appeared in the path up ahead. That meant the test of the dragon golem army was over and they were safe.

"Over here." When Tianming sounded the war drum, another sound would echo in the distance, followed by strong vibrations. At the intersection, he chose the way forward judging from the beat of the drum. Because everyone was injured, they traveled slowly.

The echoes grew louder and louder.

"Where's the war drum taking us? Another palace? Is it leading us to more treasures?" Yu Ziqian's eyes brightly shone.

Tianming tapped the drum with his fingers. When the top of the drum shook, the figure of an angry dragon flickered as if it were about to shoot out from within.

"Not necessarily," he said. They continued walking, moving quietly.

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There was yet another commotion. Every time the imperial star ranking changed, it aroused astonishment. After all, there were no skyward eyes inside the tomb so they could only observe the situation through the changes in the ranking.

"Another one with two hundred thousand points!"

"Second place has been taken by someone else!"

Billions of eyes were focused on the name in second place: Zhan Yuance (Wargodean), 340,000 points.

"He was originally eighth, but his points increased by two hundred thousand. It seems that he's obtained a treasure equal to the one Li Tianming and Lin Xiaoxiao got."

"His points are still going up, so he's probably still in battle, and the increase is rather large. It doesn't look like he's defeated other disciples, but perhaps something else?"

"Li Tianming and Lin Xiaoxiao previously had a similar increase in points."

Two hundred thousand points at once—it was obvious what had happened.

"This wargodean is pretty good."

"I heard that he's one of the top three most powerful disciples of this generation and a madman when it comes to fighting. If they really went to battle, Weisheng Moran might not be able to defeat him."

"This young man was thrown into the sea of wildbeasts since he was a child and grew up amidst all that fighting. He isn't even thirty, but has experienced at least hundreds of thousands of battles and killed millions. He's a ruthless one."

"Of course, that's the standard for training young wargodeans, but he's the best."

"What I'm curious about is, what did he obtain? A treasure equal to the Lifesteal Silverdragon?"

"We don't even know what Lin Xiaoxiao received."

Compared to the strength of these young people, what the elders coveted were treasures on the same level as the Lifesteal Silverdragon.

"It's getting exciting. This is good, at least the Azuresoul Palace isn't going to enjoy all the benefits."

"The Azuresoul Palace? The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has already stepped in. Just think of those three Azuresoul Palace disciples as Xuanyuan Dragon Sect Disciples. Does it make sense now?"

"You're right. After all, the sect is second on the Sky Ranking."

"Hey, I heard something interesting."

Everyone turned their gazes to the person speaking, a middle-aged man dressed in brocade.

"Qian Wanguan, what is it?" They asked.

"Apparently, those three disciples were secretly cultivated by Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect and Azuresoul Palace put on a play and placed the three in the Azuresoul Palace so they could enter the top ten on the imperial star ranking and raise their position on the myriad sect ranking. You know, if that thing emerges, the Azuresoul Palace occupies the advantage. The condition was for Xuanyuan Dragon Sect to help them move up the ranking. When the time comes, they'll reap the benefits," the middle-aged man sneered as if he was absolutely certain of his words.

"How ingenious."

"It's most likely true."

"What a brilliant plan!"

"I knew it! How could the Azuresoul Palace pull this off?"

Everyone looked as if they were enlightened; this was how conspiracy theories arose.

"The question is, how was the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect sure that three disciples whose strength isn't among the top hundred would make it into the top ten of the imperial star ranking? Can they manipulate the Sky Palace?" someone asked.

For a moment, everyone was stunned. After all, most of them had witnessed Tianming's battles.

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There was a fiery red underground palace within the Imperial Ninedragon Tomb with two gigantic words carved at the top.

“Flamedragon Palace.”

The Flamedragon Palace was covered in the remains of dragon golems. From the marks and blood on the remains, it was clear that a fierce battle had just taken place here. It was impossible to tell how many disciples had left after their imperial star formations were destroyed.

There were tens of thousands of disciples in the passages that surrounded the underground palace. All of them were staring at those within the palace in silence. Most were covered in bloodstains and scars, which proved that they had just experienced a battle. Perhaps they had participated in the battle against the dragon golems, but now that the battle was over, they were afraid to approach. Having been defeated, they had failed to acquire the treasure they wanted. However, their presence meant that they weren't ready to give up.

Their eyes were focused on a group of people surrounded by fallen dragon golems. These people were extremely stunning, with gold hair and eyes. These two-and-a-half-meter tall men sported buzz cuts and were built like beasts, their powerful muscles clearly defined. Their steely flesh glittered like gold. Even the women were more than two meters tall, with perfect proportions and long, slender legs. Every woman possessed a wild and bloodthirsty air, their eyes filled with ferociousness—they would obviously be hard to tame.

Both the men and women were born with golden divine patterns on their bodies that made them look like golden statues, born to fight. It was this group of people who'd had the absolute advantage in this mixed battle. Not only had they defeated the dragon golems, but they had also obtained the treasure at the end.

At this moment, they had yet to leave because of the burly, hill-like man sitting in the middle of the group, cultivating. The man's gold hair resembled needles and his body was covered in golden muscle. He was almost three meters tall when standing, a bonafide humanoid monster.

Chapter 1199 - Kunpeng of Moonfang Sea

The intensity of his gaze was powerful, to say the least. However, his appearance wasn't wild. Instead, he looked really bright with fine, chiseled features. His row of white teeth made his face glow even more, but the most unique thing about his looks were his ears. There were four on each side, eight in total, yet it didn't make him look ugly. Instead, it gave him an air of wisdom.

The hundreds of people had more ears than the average person. Many of them had four, or even six ears. They were the wargodeans, a faction that ranked fourth among the rest. Having eight ears was a sign of ultimate talent among their race. The wargodeans were the top race among the Myriad Solar Sects and the only faction to organize themselves based on race and clan rather than sect.

Though they didn't number many, their combined fighting force was something to be reckoned with. It was plain to see from the fact that they had only sent around the same number of people as Azuresoul Palace, roughly ten thousand, unlike Blueblood Ocean that sent near a hundred thousand disciples to participate. All of the disciples they had sent to the Skyward Skirmish were the cream of the crop. This group of hundreds was composed of the elites among them.

Tens of thousands of others were gathered around them, watching them without daring to talk too loudly.

"That Zhan Yuance is fierce and daring. He managed to get that grade-seven divine pill and immediately swallowed it, then started cultivating. He sure seems confident in the comrades around him."

"Of course! He's the Nine-five Prince of the wargodeans! Though he's the ninety-fifth prince of their patriarch, the numbers nine and five are sacred. And given his talent, he'll no doubt become one of the top figures in Orderia. He might even succeed the current wargodean patriarch!"

"Their race is brave and loves to battle. Anyone that dares to disturb their prince's cultivation would no doubt be eradicated by the bodyguards there."

"Come to think of it, what was that divine pill?"

"Those from the Arcanapill Sect identified it as a yinyang skyscorch pill. Its effects are really intense and only the wargodeans, with their special bloodline, would dare to start using it to cultivate with no seniors around. They said that even absorbing a small amount of the pill's effects would allow one to break through within a short time. The rest of the effects will remain and help throughout the rest of the Constellation stage."

"He's at the fourth-level now and among the top five most powerful people here, maybe even top three. If he becomes a fifth-level constellier, wouldn't he be the most powerful?"

"You don't say. He's also a quint-beastmaster. With five lifebound beasts and his race's combat training, nobody can match up to him."

Most of the others here respected, rather than envied him. What they had seen had fully convinced them of his abilities. Now, they were only remaining there to see what else this amazing fellow could do.

"Divine pills are made from divine hazards and divine herbs. Both of them have divine patterns, which remain after the pill-refining process. If the elemental compatibility is there, the divine patterns inside the pills can be consumed to temporarily strengthen one's divine will."

"I guess that means it isn't a treasure like Lifesteal Silverdragon that'll stay with you for life. Even so, it'll help Zhan Yuance rapidly pull ahead of his peers. Breaking through right now will give him a huge advantage."

"That's right. I feel like divine pills are better than divine artifacts in that regard."

"Zhan Yuance will shoot for the top then."

"Shoot for what top? He's already in the top three."

As they were talking, a loud roar suddenly erupted from the center of the Flamedragon Palace. The sound waves were so powerful that the hundreds of wargodeans were sent flying. Then, powerful nova source came sweeping from all directions toward Zhan Yuance's body.

"He managed to break through after all."

"He's invincible now."

"Holy crap!"

Everyone took a careful step back. After all, their imperial star formations were points ready for the taking. As they watched, the three-meter-tall blonde youth opened his golden eyes amidst a ring of metal and fire. The beams that shot out of them scared many disciples away.

"Nine-five Prince!"

The other wargodeans watched him intensely. Then he took out a wardrum formation from his spatial ring. Before he even did anything, the drum began to beat.

Boom! The sound reverberated throughout, causing a distant drum to beat in reaction as well. Zhan Yuance squinted and his ears twitched as he looked at that pathway. "Let's go." With that single word, the group followed.

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There was a sea; such pure and clean seas were really hard to come by on the dry, boiling Orderia. It was located among the mountains in a rural place. From high up above, this sea looked like a crescent moon, serene and peaceful. The white clouds above were of a rather rare pleasant temperature. This was one of the rare oases on the sun. People called this place the Divine Moon Valley, and the body of water was the Moonfang Sea. The gentlest nova source was gathered all around the sea.

At that moment, around a hundred beautiful women were at the beach. They were all young, looking no older than thirty. They stood there unmoving, all clad in some kind of uniform, weathering the sea breeze. All of them looked young and charming. They would occasionally turn their gazes to Moonfang Sea, as if they were waiting for something.

Then, waves began forming in the sea as a gigantic white creature came bursting out of the water. Upon closer inspection, it looked like a gigantic fish with white scales that gave off the purest light. Each of its scales looked like precious white jade. The fish's eyes looked like gigantic pearls, within which were more than five thousand stars that formed a moving picture of a galaxy.

"Whoa...." Quite a few women at the beach couldn't help but gasp at the sight.

"It's the most beautiful lifebound beast I've seen."

"That's no surprise. Celestial orderians like us don't see many lifebound beasts."

"Look! It's changing again!"

Their hushed voices couldn't hide the excitement they felt. They watched the white fish's scales turn into feathers. Its mouth turned into a beak and its fins morphed into wings. Now it was a gigantic peng that flew high in the sky.

"It's even prettier now...."

"The goddess's lifebound beast is just as beautiful as she is."

The white peng rose higher and higher. They soon turned to the figure standing on the head of the peng who let her moon-white hair flow.

"Oh no!"

"We were too late! The goddess is returning to the Ninemoon Palace!"

"Sigh... these days, she keeps ending her cultivation early to go back and watch the Voidsky Skirmish...."

"Sisters, we have to catch up and properly serve the goddess."

Having admired the beauty of the kungpeng, they immediately alighted and followed it, leaving the Moonfang Sea.

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The Ninemoon Palace was built not far away from the Divine Sun Palace with divine ores of the best quality. It was entirely colored the pale, off-white of the moon. A grand formation enveloped the building, keeping the flames from the Divine Sun Palace out and giving it a tranquil atmosphere.

A white kungpeng flew into the palace. The cold girl that rode the kungpeng let the wind brush her hair. She wore a green dress over a white outfit that revealed her beautiful neckline and collarbones. Her white hair that glistened with a pearlescent gloss was held together with hair bands, and the few pearl accessories she wore made her hair shine even more. Even so, quite a few strands of hair were unbound by the hair bands and allowed to flutter freely. They brushed past her face, contrasting against its natural flush, giving her a piercing yet natural countenance that stood out from her cold demeanor. She looked at the palace expectantly.

"Shuo Yue, go faster," she said.

"I'm going the fastest I can, Qingyu."

The white peng landed near one of the palace compounds where there was a projection of the Voidsky Realm. She looked at the gigantic Skyward Stele and said, "My brother is ranked first...."

She landed and approached the stele, not wearing any shoes. Seeing the name there, her shoulders began shaking as tears flowed uncontrollably.

"Feng is in sixth place too. He's alive and well," Shuo Yue said.

"Good... good...." She nodded, not taking her eyes off those two names the whole time. "Shuo Yue, they'll take me away from here one day, right?" An intense glow was radiating from her eyes.

"They're doing their best."

"I miss them...."

"Me too."

"Nah, you only miss that chicken." She burst out laughing at the thought. There was no other chicken like that one who could bring so much joy to others.

Chapter 1200 - Another Divine Pill

Tianming's wardrum formation let out a loud beat. Though he hadn't struck it, it still let out a sound that spread far and wide.

"Why did it beat by itself?" Yu Ziqian asked. He was quite curious about that formation.

"I don't know. It feels like it's resonating with something, just like how another drum resonated when I struck it the first time," Tianming said.

They were now within a deep and dark pathway with nothing but fog ahead of them. Tianming struck the formation again, and soon heard a resonance like before. The sound had traveled a wide distance. People along the way were sure to hear it.

"So the resonating beats will cause people to gather and fight again," Tianming reasoned.

"If that's the case, should we head toward the resonance?" Xiaoxiao said, her eyes a faint red from nervousness. "Apart from the drum resonance, we seem to be hearing more sounds around here."

"Yeah. I hear some fighting, and beasts as well. It's getting much livelier." The situation inside the tomb was growing messier. Tianming clutched the wardrum formation under his arm and looked ahead. "Keep going. In places like these, the more people around, the more conflict there'll be. If we really want to win this, we have to go where the people are."

This was a competition, at the end of the day. They hastened toward the sound of the beating war drum. The closer they got, the stronger the beating resonance became. Tianming noticed that other disciples near them could also hear the drumbeats; quite a few were approaching the sources of the sounds.

"If I knew that this would cause such a commotion for others, I would've beat the drum many more times." Tianming saw quite a few other figures in the distance, and could even hear them.

"The drum sound came from there!"

"No, it's from that way. Someone already went there."

"Quick!"

Apart from other disciples, Tianming also noticed a lot of defeated dragon golems along the way. "Did these golems appear all throughout the tomb?"

His guess was soon verified. Tens of dragon golems were attacking the disciples of other sects. There were only around fifty or so disciples, all from different sects. Even while working together, they weren't able to resist the golems well. They were soon overwhelmed and their imperial star formations were shattered, causing them to be flung out of the tomb. Then the golems came Tianming's way before being swiftly dealt with.

"There's quite a number of them." They had encountered similar situations many times. Sometimes, the disciples would defeat the golems. "I bet there's millions of these dragon golems all over the tomb where we can't see, hunting down disciples."

"That wouldn't surprise me. I also have a feeling that defeating them will give us points, too, more than defeating another disciple at any rate," Yu Ziqian said. He was quite anxious, as the pace was picking up once more. He felt that others were raising their points fast while his hadn't changed much. But he knew that given his current situation, it was already amazing that he hadn't been eliminated yet. Though, he had Tianming's protection to count on.

Further ahead, there were countless dragon golems chasing disciples down. They didn't care who their targets were, so long as they were living flesh. As Tianming and the rest fought through the mess, he struck the drum again and again. After an hour, they had defeated hundreds of dragon golems. In the meantime, the resonant drumming was also growing louder. The sounds of a crowd could be heard ahead of them.

"Even though we have the drum, it seems we arrived late," Tianming said, perplexed. The tests inside the tomb didn't always make sense. Tianming had defeated thousands of golems only to get a war drum that led him in a certain direction, yet the other drum's resonance drew other nearby disciples to the destination before he arrived.

"The Sky Palace must be trying to fairly distribute the stuff in the tomb to different factions. It's already pretty decent that they led us here after we got the treasure from the Blooddragon Palace."

It had been quite difficult to defeat all those golems. Tianming also had a feeling that he had traveled through pretty much the entire span of the tomb to reach the destination. Without the drum, it would have taken him much longer.

"I wonder if someone else got a war drum too?" Holding that thought, he continued along the maze. "Since the commotion hasn't died down yet, it must mean that we still stand a chance of getting something!"

The four of them looked at the large crowd ahead of them. There was another labyrinth ahead of the crowd, covered in a black mist. Tianming realized that the people ahead remained there unmoving. Though they seemed like they couldn't wait to give it a try, none of them took a simple step ahead.

"Is this another dragon palace? We just took down the Blooddragon Palace, only for the war drum to lead us to another one?"

Though they were slightly late, they were still in time for the event to start.

"Make way!" Yu Ziqian cried, making a path for Tianming.

Tianming looked at the wide dragon palace ahead, which was as large as the other ones had been. It was completely pitch-black, including the words on the ceiling. Each stroke of the words looked like gigantic black snakes hanging off the walls.

"Blackdragon Palace!" This was the third dragon palace they had encountered. They were already really lucky, as most people hadn't even seen one of them yet. All they did was find treasures in the pathways and fight dragon golems.

"How dare you, kid?"

"Don't shove people! Do you want to die?"

"The wargodeans have announced that any beastmaster that dares enter will have all their lifebound beasts killed. Totem users will have their bane-rings crushed!"

Quite a lot of people yelled at Tianming as he charged in, venting their frustrations at him for unreasonably being forbidden to enter themselves.

"It's them! Li Tianming and Yu Ziqian!"

"Let them pass. I heard that Li Tianming obtained the Lifesteal Silverdragon, and Yu Ziqian managed to defeat Lan Feilin. They're strong enough to be on the same level as Zhan Yuance."

"We'll let them lead the charge and cause enough trouble for us to enter!"

They were no fools, they just didn't have anyone to lead them, so they were afraid they would become targets of the wargodeans. Thus, they quickly moved aside for Tianming. Some of them even greedily looked at him, knowing the treasure he carried on him.

"Chief Disciple!" There happened to be a disciple from Azuresoul Palace there. He held Yu Ziqian's arm and said, "Don't go in! I heard that Zhan Yuance got a yinyang skyscorch pill from the Flamedragon Palace and used it to break through to the fifth level! He's invincible! Don't let the others here use you!"

"Fifth-level constellier? Pill?" Yu Ziqian immediately blanked out. "I didn't think the tomb would have divine pills as well as artifacts! This is troubling... Zhan Yuance is a battle maniac, and now he has the highest level among all the disciples. Even with my full power, I won't be able to take even one of his punches."

"Divine pills helped him make a breakthrough right away?" Tianming said.

"Friend! It's a grade-seven divine pill! Compared to artifacts, pills of the same level are far more valuable. At grade seven, pills can have immediate benefits while artifacts like these can take hundreds of years before we see their full potential. Getting pills here is a surefire way to overtake everyone else."

In other words, Zhan Yuance had already been incredibly powerful, but he managed to break through with the help of a pill and was even harder to catch up to now. They spoke as they moved to the front of the crowd. Soon, they could finally look into the palace.

Tianming saw hundreds of young men and women with blonde hair and golden irises. Their lifebound beasts were fiercely fighting as well. One of the young men had eight ears and was three meters tall. Like a huge beast, he had a body covered in muscles and golden divine patterns. There was a golden staff in his hands with complex patterns that made bestial roars when it was waved around. It looked like a grade-seven divine artifact as well, but it wasn't one from the tomb. His seniors had probably let him use it, which meant he was highly valued.

They were fighting a ten-thousand-meter-long black metallic dragon. It had nine coiled heads and was covered entirely in black blades—a pure machine of destruction. It wasn't a lifebound beast, but rather a peak-grade dragon golem. The hundreds of wargodeans weren't able to do much to it and were desperately fighting.

"What's that thing near its heart?" Tianming said, pointing at the dragon.

Yu Ziqian blanked out when he looked. "That's a grade-seven divine pill. If Zhan Yuance gets it, it's game over for us."