

## The Ages 1331

### Chapter 1331 - Real Older Brother

All Shi Yan needed to know that Jiang Qingliu had been dealt with was a transmission stone from the decapitator brothers. As for a scapegoat for Jiang Qingliu's death, the Azuresoul Palace and Empyrean Sword Sect had decided on someone beforehand: the Supracloud Sanctuary, their natural enemy, and their helpers, the wargodeans and Blueblood Starocean. It was only natural for them to eliminate Jiang Qingliu so that they would have fewer obstacles in claiming the divine herb, after all. It was a watertight plan, yet Shi Yan and Gujian Qingshuang still hadn't received the transmission stone after quite some time.

"Why isn't it here yet? It shouldn't take that long for them to kill Jiang Qingliu, right?" Shi Yan asked doubtfully.

"Not even I can defeat him when he uses the Azuresoul Tower. The two of them, however, should be more than enough. Don't worry. Even if they fail, they should still be able to notify us about it. I'm sure they're still searching for him and it's just taking a little longer than expected," Ye Buzhiqiu said. As the youngest Swordbearer, he was much younger than Jiang Qingliu at around five centuries old, so his future potential was still high.

"Alright, that must be it, then." Shi Yan didn't mind it too much. What was more important now was dealing with the Supracloud Sanctuary and their helpers.

"With the celestial orderians in the mix, this battle will be framed as a conflict between the Myriad Solar Sects and celestial orderians. That's only beneficial to us. After all, it's our territory, and the other factions won't be able to sit quietly if we lose." Shi Yan was trying to get their confidence up.

"We won't budge an inch this time," Gujian Qingshuang said, almost heroically.

Before the enemy had even arrived, the roars of their lifebound beasts could already be heard from a distance. It was so resounding that it shook the leaves and branches of the divine tree, causing quite a number of them to scatter. Many ripe low-grade fruits also fell because of the tremors. That marked the eve of battle. The booming of the war drums made the atmosphere quite tense.

"Be ready!" Gujian Qingshuang roared. All of the swordpupils drew their swords and strands of powerful sword ki shot through the skies, permeating the battlefield like a dense ocean. The enemy was still far enough away to be out of sight, but the sound of a familiar beast from behind Gujian Qingshuang gave him quite a fright.

Before he turned back, he heard Long Wanying say, "Huh? Why are you all here?"

"I heard the son of the sun emperor is here, so I wanted to see how impressive he is." Gujian Qingshuang could tell it was Tianming's voice. It sounded plain without any hate or grief, something he clearly didn't expect.

"I bet you'll be disappointed. Li Haochen really isn't anything special," Yan Nuxia said with a look of disdain.

Gujian Qingshuang looked at Shi Yan and Ye Dongliu and noticed that they were just as puzzled as he was. Then they turned back at the same time only to see a few people descend from an azuresky qilin— five of them. Four of them were juniors, but the last one was Jiang Qingliu, completely renewed and refreshed. He was happily talking to Long Wanying and the rest as if nothing had happened.

"Apologies, Chief Instructor. I finally made it," Jiang Qingliu said apologetically.

"I see. Have you succeeded in breaking through?" Gujian Qingshuang asked calmly.

"Sorry for disappointing you. I thought I was going to, but it appeared to be a false alarm. I failed."

"It's fine. Keep trying. You're not at the age when you'll start receding yet, so there's still a chance."

"I appreciate the kind words, Chief Instructor." Jiang Qingliu turned back for a moment and said, "I wasn't able to stop those two Sky Palace disciples from coming to join the fuss. I'm worried that someone will accidentally hurt them in battle, so will you permit me to focus on their defense?"

"Alright, get to it." Gujian Qingshuang waved him away.

Jiang Qingliu returned to Tianming and the rest, winking mischievously with his back facing Gujian Qingshuang and the others. He didn't plan on showing off the heads of the decapitator brothers just yet. For now, he'll pretend that nothing happened and leave them in the cold. Keeping his hand hidden would be an advantage since they had clearly resolved to go against him.

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Tianming had informed Long Wanying about what happened through Yin Chen. She was the one who suggested that Jiang Qingliu keep it a secret and pretend that nothing had ever happened, causing quite a lot of confusion among the perpetrators.

"What's going on?" Ye Buzhiqiu said in almost stuttering fashion, as if he'd swallowed a fly moments before. The joy he'd felt from before had left him.

"Did the decapitator brothers really not find him? Impossible, the azuresky qilin's such a huge target. There's no way Jiang Qingliu could've intentionally taken a detour!" Ye Dongliu said, shaking his head.

"Let me ask them. Don't panic, as long as Jiang Qingliu is here, there's still a chance," Shi Yan said, sending another transmission stone. But there was no reply. "Impossible! Let me ask the Northdipper Swordsage if those two are messing with me."

How could their rare opportunity be gone just like that? For now, they merely thought that the decapitator brothers had messed up and didn't kill their target according to their agreement. With the enemy's army so close to them, they had to focus their attention on defending the divine herb instead. Even so, their confused and doubtful expressions were entertaining to watch.

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Fifteen minutes later, the defending side was fully prepared. Tianming and the rest stood at the front, watching the hundreds and thousands of enemies charging toward them. Anywhere they passed, leaves, fruits, and branches were torn apart. As the Supracloud Sanctuary had wanted to cut down the divine tree themselves tens of thousands of years back, they'd never really cared for it that much. The

Azuresoul Palace was the one that stopped them from doing so, but they wouldn't even care about the tree at all if it weren't for the divine herbs it produced.

The noises of beasts, war drums, and bells grew louder as they approached. They only stopped when the army was right before the defensive formations the Azuresoul Palace had put up. Now, both sides were facing one another. Tianming had expected the battle wouldn't start right away. It was only a fight for the divine herb, after all, not one to the death. The wargodeans and Blueblood Starocean were only there for the profits, not to contribute. Fighting always meant casualties, after all, so their armies were only there as a threat.

Had they had another method to determine the victor, the 'helpers', apart from the Emyrean Sword Sect who said they would fight to curb the Supracloud Sanctuary's influence, would definitely choose that option. For now, both sides were still testing each other out rather than fighting out of a bloody grudge. However, once the battle began for real, there would be no turning back.

Given how large the span of the divine tree was, they couldn't exactly fight defensively like in a siege. Any clash meant unavoidable casualties for both sides. Even so, they all had their weapons drawn.

Tianming stood atop a branch and looked at the center of the enemy army, where the most important figures gathered. It was clear that the Tumulus Pill God of the wargodeans and the murderous Lan Sha from the Blueblood Starocean were standing beside the sect master of the Supracloud Sanctuary, Yun Tianque. Despite Yun Tianque merely being the leader of a second-rate sect, his eyes looked even deeper and more calculative than Gujian Qingshuang's. They almost looked like the same kind of person.

However, even the famous Tumulus Pill God wasn't standing at the center of the large army. Instead, it was a young junior with a slender build, dressed in a white robe embroidered with the eye-catching pattern of a sun. His sleeves were laced with gold thread and there was a large sun-like bane-ring between his brows that inspired a sense of worship in those that saw it.

Those bane-rings were the most terrifying ones Tianming had ever seen. Not even the seven finger swords of Han Xingluan, a disciple of the Violetcloud Imperium, possessed that much power. It was clear that it wasn't just a single bane-ring, but rather eight bane-rings overlaid atop one another. This was the first octabane totemancer Tianming had encountered on the sun or the Violetglory Star.

Is Qingyu's real brother him or me? That thought made Tianming feel natural hostility toward him. He had to admit that Li Haochen was indeed the son of the sun emperor, and was in the same league of people as Princess Shen Yu. Both of them were born at the top of the hierarchy of a nova source world, seemingly having been chosen by the heavens themselves. The only difference was that Li Haochen was the undisputed number one among those his age across the entire sun, while Princess Shen Yu only ranked third. Tianming could tell from seeing Li Haochen alone that there was a huge gap in power between the Myriad Solar Sects and the celestial orderians.

Additionally, there were two top beauties of rather high level themselves next to him. One of them was a totemancer, while the other was a beastmaster of the Veildragon Palace. "Who are those two?" Tianming asked Yu Ziqian.

## **Chapter 1332 - Vow to Protect the Azuresoul Palace**

"Li Ruoshi, from the soul tribulators, and Long Youyou, from the Veildragon Palace, are both seventh-level constellers, second only to Li Haochen. They're the two most beautiful women among the juniors. Seeing is truly believing! They're gorgeous. I'm so envious of Li Haochen having a beauty in each arm!" Yu Ziqian said, his voice laced with envy and gaze filled with admiration. "It's unbelievable. They're almost as stunning as Weisheng Moran," he added.

If he hadn't mentioned Weisheng Moran, Tianming would have forgotten the little fish in his eye. To this day, it was still swimming in the white of his eye.

"It's okay, you can sleep under the same quilt with your brothers. In terms of quantity, you've already won." Tianming patted his shoulder.

"Is that considered a spiritual victory?" Yu Ziqian wondered.

The names Li Haochen, Li Ruoshi, and Long Youyou were quite well known. They made frequent appearances and had fought many battles. Although Qingyu was the Ninemoon Goddess, her time in Orderia was short and she almost never showed up. Most people had never even laid eyes on her, so naturally she wasn't on the ranking.

For disciples of the Sky Palace, they wouldn't be worth mentioning, but Li Haochen garnered the flattery and respect of the Tumulus Pill God and others due to his identity as the youngest son of the sun emperor. There was still a certain gap between their statuses. Even if Tianming was first on the imperial star ranking, the celestial orderians didn't seem to care. In their eyes, their clan was the center of everything.

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The fiery atmosphere gradually subsided. Furrowing his brows, Gujian Qingshuang stood in front of the crowd and coldly said, "Supracloud Sanctuary, your actions today have seriously violated the rules of the Sky Palace. I've reported you. If you don't wake up in time, the Sky Palace will punish you. This is our territory and these grade-eight divine herbs were assigned to us by the Sky Palace. You have no right to take them. This is a violation of the rules!"

The grade-eight divine herb had reached the last stage before maturity. That was one of the reasons the two sides had yet to fight.

"What a whole lot of nonsense. Why don't you wait and see if the Sky Palace cares? The Supracloud Sanctuary is a force within the Azurecloud Continent and everything from the Azurecloud Divine Tree can be taken if one has the ability. Don't use the Sky Palace to threaten others if you're incompetent." Yun Tianque smiled sarcastically.

The Supracloud Sanctuary's army burst out in laughter. Their sense of superiority stemmed from the fact that they had many helping hands.

"Gujian Qingshuang, take your people and leave. The Azuresoul Palace will pay if you continue disturbing me. If you stubbornly persist, you'll be the next Xuanyuan Dragon Sect." Although Li Haochen was a junior, his words carried weight. "I have limited patience. You don't have much time," he added.

"Big Brother Haochen, there's quite a few annoying flies around," said Long Youyou.

"They were attracted by the smell. It happens." Li Haochen pursed his lips.

"Is it alright for us to pressure them here?" Li Ruoshi asked cautiously.

"Not before, but now the situation has changed. Visit the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect and you'll understand," Li Haochen replied.

"Li Ruoshi, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has been crushed by the Veildragon Palace," Long Youyou laughed. Born in the Veildragon Palace, she was naturally proud of it.

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As they privately chatted, the Azuresoul Palace was being threatened and its people were furious. Gujian Qingshuang glanced back. In fact, he had no way out; their opponents had crossed the line. Now, no matter how many people died, they had to resist.

"General Shi, we're counting on you," said Gujian Qingshuang.

"Don't worry. Let's fight!" Shi Yan shouted.

With her words, Gujian Qingshuang felt relieved. It seemed that the Emyrean Sword Sect actually had the intention of participating in this battle and suppressing their opponents.

Taking a deep breath, Gujian Qingshuang spoke with determination. "Hear me, Supracloud Sanctuary. The Azurecloud Continent belongs to the Myriad Solar Sects! This is our territory. Our ancestors fought a life-and-death war, but we're all people of the Azurecloud Continent, not the celestial orderians' lackeys! Today, the Supracloud Sanctuary has decided to nod their heads and wag their tails at the enemy in their own home. You've chosen to deliver the fruits of the Azurecloud Divine Tree into the enemy's hands! Such despicable behavior tramples on the dignity of your ancestors and taints the blood of your ancestors. You've failed your children and grandchildren, who'll be born to serve as dogs in the future. The Azuresoul Palace disdains your lack of morals. We are different from you. Even if we have to pay the price of our own lives, we will not retreat! When the sword of the Azuresoul Palace is unsheathed, it'll be linked to the life and death of our land and the Azurecloud Divine Tree. All who trample on our dignity must be eradicated, including those who've betrayed their ancestors for glory in the Myriad Solar Sects' territory. Even if you're the son of the sun emperor, the Azuresoul Palace won't spare you if you continue to insult us and challenge our boundaries!"

That was the Azuresoul Palace's decision after the armies tested each other.

Regardless of what kind of man Gujian Qingshuang was, Tianming had to admit he possessed the strength of character and integrity of a head instructor. Even if his passionate, unyielding speech failed to plant a seed of doubt and affect the morale of the Supracloud Sanctuary's army, it fueled the people of the Azuresoul Palace and got their blood pumping.

In that instant, all hundred thousand swordpupils roared, drawing their swords as they surged with sword ki. Like an ocean, their boundless sword energy soared into the sky, their fearless cries sweeping across with unstoppable momentum.

"Amazing!"

Tianming was rather surprised and felt like he had underestimated the Azuresoul Palace. Although the six Swordbearers didn't appear to be gentlemen at all, the determination and will the Azuresoul swordpupils had inherited from ancient times was indeed admirable. It wasn't so different from Tianming's sword will or Li MUYANG's inheritance.

"We vow to protect the Azuresoul Palace!"

It was unfortunate that the grade-eight divine herb wasn't growing in a disputed area, but in the hinterland of the Azuresoul Palace. Thus, the Supracloud Sanctuary cultivators had been emboldened. If these grade-eighth divine herbs matured in the Supracloud Sanctuary's territory instead and the Azuresoul Palace's army came marching in, they would be just as outraged.

"Kill them!" Every swordpupil, even a grade one, was stronger than Li Haochen. Despite having thousands of people behind him, he wasn't imposing. The three juniors were paralyzed with shock and so frightened they took a step back, their faces pale. Even a small sect had its boundaries and breaking point, not to mention a sect like the Azuresoul Palace that lived by the sword dao. Human beings were complex. Gujian Qingshuang dared to kill Jiang Qingliu, but he also dared to call for Li Haochen's demise.

"Tumulus Pill God?" Li Haochen turned to look at him. The Tumulus Pill God, Lan Sha, and Yun Tianque stood together.

"He's stubborn. I don't think we'll be able to scare them away," said Yun Tianque.

"Then let's fight. Kill them all!" Li Haochen retorted.

"Although we have an advantage—"

Before Yun Tianque could finish speaking, Li Haochen turned to look at the Tumulus Pill God and asked, "Are you going to fight?"

The Tumulus Pill God, Lan Sha, and Yun Tianque looked at each other. In fact, they knew in their hearts that even if they defeated the Azuresoul Palace in this battle, they would suffer heavy casualties. At present, the strength of the two sides was about six to four, unless the wargodeans and Blueblood Starocean sent reinforcements. They had never expected such resolve from their opponents.

"What's there to think about? Once you defeat them, you can enjoy the benefits of the Azurecloud Divine Tree alone. Let them cower in the Azuresoul Sword Mountain. What powerful bragging from an insignificant sect!" Li Haochen fumed.

### **Chapter 1333 - Victory Or Defeat, Life Or Death**

"I'm afraid it's not that simple." Yun Tianque was rather familiar with the Azuresoul Palace.

"You guys are hilarious. You made a deal with me first, and now you want to hide?" Li Haochen sneered. He didn't care about their casualties. When the battle began, the celestial orderians wouldn't be the ones to die. However, he had been embarrassed before Li Ruoshi and Long Youyou.

Upon contemplation, the Tumulus Pill God said to the other two, "We'll fight! They're bluffing. When we defeat them, we'll take the grade-eight divine herb."

"The little prince is right. This battle might pay off after all. We can crush their morale and pave the way for future battles."

"Alright." With him taking the lead, the other two could only nod their heads.

"Yun Tianque, you do the talking," said Li Haochen.

"Yes!" Yun Tianque stood in front of the army and was about to speak when a cold voice interrupted him.

"Why fight?"

Turning around, Yun Tianque noticed a cold, indifferent woman beside Li Haochen. "A head-on conflict is most stupid. There's many ways to take control of the Azurecloud Divine Tree. Fighting when our opponent is being aggressive? Are you trying to lose as many lives as possible?" The speaker was Li Wushuang.

"Aunt."

Li Haochen calmed down when she appeared.

In fact, the Tumulus Pill God and others thought so as well. But they had no choice, Li Haochen was pushing hard. If they wanted to compete for control of the Azurecloud Divine Tree, organizing small group attacks so the Azuresoul Palace wouldn't dare leave was the best approach.

"Is it a grade-eight divine herb?" Li Wushuang asked.

"Yes." Li Haochen nodded.

"Yun Tianque, have them send an expert from their side to duel one of ours. The divine herb and divine tree will belong to the victor, otherwise we'll cut off the branch the grade-eight divine herb grows on and destroy it," she said.

Although the Azuresoul Palace guarded the grade-eight divine herb that was growing on the divine tree, they had no way of holding on to an entire branch that was tens of thousands of meters long. Once cut off from the source, this treasure that had yet to fully mature would basically be useless.

"Yes!" Yun Tianque's eyes lit up.

That approach was obviously wiser than a deadly battle with the Azuresoul Palace. Yun Tianque went to discuss it with Gujian Qingshuang, but was refused. They had the second-best wargodean expert, the Tumulus Pill God, and the sun emperor's younger sister, Li Wushuang. Who could possibly be their opponent?

"Two wins out of three. We'll each send three experts, or no one gets the divine herb," said Li Wushuang.

Yun Tianque went to negotiate once more.

"Who will you send?" Gujian Qingshuang asked in front of everyone.

The suggestion was acceptable. Compared to the destruction of the grade-eight divine herb and a large number of casualties, a confrontation between their experts would allow the Azuresoul Palace to maintain their dignity, and at the same time have an opportunity to win the treasure. Unfortunately, they were at a disadvantage when it came to the strength of their experts. So if the odds of winning were slim, Gujian Qingshuang wouldn't agree.

After speaking to the others, Yun Tianque said, "Gujian Qingshuang, you're the head of the Azuresoul Palace and I'm the leader of the Supracloud Sanctuary. Let's heat things up with a duel!"

Gujian Qingshuang remained silent. Yun Tianque's suggestion had pricked his heart. He had once lost to him. Their opponent had issued a challenge; as head of the sect, a show of cowardice would deal quite a blow to their morale.

"What about the second duel?" he asked.

"We'll let our guests face off. The Tumulus Pill God is very interested in fighting the Emyrean Sword Sect's Shi Yan. She isn't afraid, is she?" Yun Tianque smiled coldly.

"How scheming of you! The Tumulus Pill God is the second-best expert among the wargodeans. The Warlord is his disciple. I'm not even in the top five in the Emyrean Sword Sect, and you want me to fight him?!" Shi Yan laughed.

"What about the third duel?" Gujian Qingshuang asked.

Yun Tianque turned around to confirm something. Then, he said, "Miss Li Wushuang from the celestial orderian clan would like to fight the Whitedragon Empress to resolve the grievances of the past. She's agreed to a life and death battle. If she's killed, you won't bear the blame. The celestial orderians won't seek revenge, either. Those present will bear witness!"

His words were shocking. A life and death battle to resolve the grievances of the past!

A woman dressed in blue appeared next to Yun Tianque. Her indifferent gaze landed on Long Wanying. Ever since Li Wushuang had appeared, Tianming had noticed something was off with Long Wanying's emotions. When he turned around, Tianming saw her red eyes and her fists clenched under her long sleeves. She breathed heavily, a strong killing intent emanating from her.

Tianming knew a little about her husband and son's death. It was rumored that her husband, Long Junxuan, had intended to violate Li Wushuang. The sun emperor was furious and beheaded him in public outside the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. With his dying breath, her son desperately fought the sun emperor and was slapped to death in one move. She was in the sect at the time and had left upon hearing the news, only to be greeted by two cold corpses.

In fact, during that time, Li Wushuang was said to have quite a few differences with the sun emperor due to her independent and unconventional character. She spent her time in the Myriad Solar Sects and was friends with Long Wanying and her husband. Judging from Long Wanying's reaction when she heard those words, what she had endured was not only the pain of her husband and son's death, but also vicious slander. With their happy marriage and his character, the so-called 'assault' was an extremely contemptuous and lazy attempt at a frame-up. Everyone knew exactly what was going on. Only the celestial orderians felt that not even his death could wipe out his crime.



"Don't go!" As the person who knew Long Wanying best, Yan Nuxia immediately grabbed her.

"She wants to kill you. It's a trap!" Long Wanying's friends immediately surrounded her, preventing her from being reckless.

"Aunt Ying." Tianming shook his head.

"Don't stop me. I won't have a better opportunity. Please, don't stop me...." Long Wanying's voice was hoarse and her every word seemed to bleed from her lips.

Li Wushuang was the emperor's younger sister. This would be Long Wanying's only opportunity. Li Wushuang wanted to seize the divine herb and knew she wouldn't be able to resist. Using Long Wanying's pain, Li Wushuang wanted to force her into a duel and take her life. As long as the White Dragon Empress was still alive, people would point their fingers at Li Wushuang.

"Aunt Ying, being blinded by hatred and allowing your enemy to lead you by the nose is stupid. You'd only be letting down your dearly departed loved ones. Don't wait for her to give you an opportunity, find one yourself. That's the real opportunity. You've waited hundreds of years, why ruin everything now?" Tianming stood in front of her, staring deep into her eyes.

"The kid's right. You're still so young. Have you lost your teeth? Your breasts are still perky. What's the hurry?!" Yan Nuxia stretched out her hand, squeezing hard. This was the first time Long Wanying had seen such a method of obstruction. She was so angry she could vomit blood.

In fact, anyone with a discerning eye could tell that they were laying a trap for the Azure Soul Palace and its allies by threatening to destroy the divine herb. Their experts would most likely be defeated in the three duels. The enemy could easily achieve two wins out of three duels.

Long Wanying had calmed down and Shi Yan was clearly opposed to the fight. Gujian Qingshuang now had a way out of this unequal situation. "The Tumulus Pill God used to be unparalleled. He's now the second most powerful wargod. General Shi is merely a junior of your juniors. She can't rival you. The White Dragon Empress is a late bloomer. How can she compare to Lady Wushuang, whose talents are second only to the sun emperor? This so-called duel is just an excuse for you to take the divine herb by force. If you really want to destroy it, then go ahead!"

He was speaking the truth. The top experts in their alliance couldn't compare to their opponents. That was a fact that everyone understood. His refusal wouldn't affect their morale.

Li Wushuang had never imagined Long Wanying would be able to restrain herself. Narrowing her eyes, she smiled contemptuously. "You're such a failure. You don't even dare fight me when given the chance."

"Shut up, you vile bitch! Yingying is young and beautiful. She'll live longer than you, so why fight? We'll light joss sticks for you the day you're buried. That'll be our revenge, won't it?" Yan Nuxia said with a smile.

"You're courting death!" Li Haochen couldn't hold back upon hearing someone insult his most respected aunt.

"Am I wrong? Your aunt is so old she's probably moldy, yet she claims Junxuan violated her? Who likes old fogies like her?!" Yan Nuxia laughed.

Eyes cold, Li Wushuang stretched out a finger while Yan Nuxia was still speaking. In that instant, an ice-blue peak came crashing down. Yan Nuxia, Gu Tao'er, and Li Muli blocked the attack together and came through unscathed. They were rather strong as well.

"Destroy them!" Li Wushuang said to the others. She didn't care to waste her time; however, she would punish them for their provocation today. There were many ways to kill them.

"Aunt, that's a grade-eight divine herb!" Li Haochen shook his head. It was extremely important to him. He stared at Long Wanying and the others with disgust in his eyes. At that moment, he suddenly noticed a white-haired young man with a golden pupil in his left eye and a black pupil in his right. Having watched the final battle of the Voidsky Skirmish, he had been left with a deep impression of Tianming.

"Sky Palace disciples Li Tianming and Yu Ziqian, as well as that specter Feng and the woman with the Dragonblood Desecration are all here? Is this a gathering of the imperial star ranking?" Li Haochen asked.

"Yes, it's them," said Yun Tianque.

"I have an idea. Don't destroy the divine herb yet," said Li Haochen.

"What are you thinking?" Li Wushuang asked.

"I wonder if they'd be interested in a new best-of-three match."

### **Chapter 1334 - Ferocious Beasts Or Weak Chickens**

"What do you mean?" Li Wushuang asked.

"A duel between the celestial orderian and Myriad Solar Sects' juniors." Li Haochen said, his gaze fiery.

The confrontation between the two sides was a microcosm of the conflict between the celestial orderians and Myriad Solar Sects. As the two biggest factions on the sun, even a showdown between their junior talents had many points of interest. It would be explosive.

For a long time, the celestial orderian and Myriad Solar Sect disciples had competed against each other, both junior disciples and youthgrand disciples. The Myriad Solar Sects had the imperial star ranking, while the celestial orderians had theirs. However, the two sides never actually fought.

The Myriad Solar Sects were self-aware. As beastmasters, a fight with the celestial orderians in the early stages would put them at a disadvantage and they would be likely to suffer losses. Hence, a duel in such a sensitive situation would be interesting.

Upon hearing Li Haochen's proposal, the expressions of Li Wushuang, the Tumulus Pill God, and the others remained the same. The Tumulus Pill God said, "Although it's a good idea, it isn't feasible. If they can refuse a duel between experts, what more a duel between juniors that they can't be sure about? The youths on the imperial star ranking and the young geniuses of the celestial orderians aren't on the same level. I believe they're aware of that fact. Even if Li Tianming and Yu Ziqian don't possess such self-

awareness, Gujian Qingshuang, Shi Yan, and the others would never put their hopes on the juniors." The Tumulus Pill God was certain.

"Not necessarily. I saw their performance in the Voidsky Realm, and all signs indicate that they're young, arrogant, and think highly of themselves, especially after Li Tianming and Yu Ziqian became disciples of the Sky Palace. I can sense his hostility toward me. He seems eager to try me out. I might be able to take advantage of that. They gained a lot from the Imperial Ninedragon Tomb and they're on par with us. As Sky Palace disciples, if they take the bait, Long Wanying and those from the Group of Celestial Maiden Halls should support them. Gujian Qingshuang doesn't want to lose the grade-eight divine herb, either. A confrontation between juniors is harmless. He may compromise if he's under pressure from the Sky Palace disciples." Li Haochen was trying to convince Li Wushuang.

"Aunt, why don't we try it! If we don't ask, how do you know they won't take the bait?" Li Haochen added.

He didn't want to lose the grade-eight divine herb just like that.

"Go." Li Wushuang turned to Yun Tianque, signifying her agreement. It was obvious that none of them thought that this method was feasible. The Azuresoul Palace would rather die in glory than live in dishonor.

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Appearing in front of the Azuresoul Palace army once more, Yun Tianque brought up Li Haochen's suggestion.

Li Haochen, Long Youyou, and Li Ruoshi stood up high, facing a hundred thousand Azuresoul Palace swordpupils without a hint of fear, only arrogance. It was a reflection of their self-confidence.

"I heard that the first and second on the imperial star ranking have become Sky Palace disciples, so their status is almost equal to ours. I wonder if they've got the courage to fight us?" Long Youyou rolled her eyes, her words laced with sarcasm and ridicule. It was hard to restrain themselves from slapping her when they heard the arrogance in her voice.

"It'll be a pity if the grade-eight divine herb is destroyed just like that. We'll give you one last chance, but you should cherish it. According to what I've heard, the number one disciple on the imperial star ranking can't even make it into the celestial orderian's top ten. I wonder if that's true. It seems the Myriad Solar Sects have pretty low standards." Li Ruoshi wasn't far behind. In order to achieve Li Haochen's wish, she spared no effort in provoking them.

They raised the conflict within the Azurecloud Continent to the heights of the one between the celestial orderians and the Myriad Solar Sects. It didn't matter to them, but the Supracloud Sanctuary was rather embarrassed. Most of them were obviously still not used to their new identity as the celestial orderian's lackeys.

"That's enough. Let them decide for themselves. Being inferior isn't shameful. How can these so-called Sky Palace disciples have the right to speak?" Li Haochen smiled.

The army behind them burst out in laughter. Most of them were wargodeans and people of the Blueblood Starocean. This was a form of mockery. They had refused the first best-of-three duel; would they refuse a second time? In that instant, all eyes fell on Li Tianming and Yu Ziqian.

Tianming had never imagined he would be involved in this matter.

"You mustn't agree!" Gu Tao'er said.

"Tianming?" Long Wanying didn't even know how far he had progressed.

"Aunt Ying, I dare say we have a sixty percent chance of winning two out of three duels. Do you believe me?" Tianming said upon contemplation.

"What? I'm not even ten percent sure of anything! I can't even beat a first-level constellier!" Yu Ziqian said nervously.

"It's fine. You don't have to do anything, just keep up your act," Tianming replied.

With wide-eyed shock, Long Wanying stared at Tianming incredulously and asked, "Are you sure you're familiar with the information on your three opponents?"

"I'm sure. Sixty percent is a modest estimate. I'm certain we'll win at least one of the three rounds. Xiaoxiao and I will fight in the other two rounds. If they're willing to let me go against Long Youyou, our odds are a hundred percent."

Their opponents had underestimated them. Little did they know that Tianming, Lingfeng, and Xiaoxiao had slaughtered their way through the Violetcloud Battlefield on Violetglory Star, making it to the top ten. Xiaoxiao had even managed to defeat a seventh-level constellier. Her familiarity with the Dragonblood Desecration was increasing day by day. Among the three rounds, Tianming was certain of Lingfeng's victory over any totemancer. There was no way he would lose if he was up against Li Ruoshi. So if they were willing to match Tianming with Long Youyou, he was certain of two victories. Li Haochen wouldn't have the chance to fight.

"I understand what you mean. This is a trick in horse racing. We use good horses to beat mediocre ones, and mediocre horses to beat weak ones. Even if our weak horse loses to their good horse, we only need two wins. But it's obvious that our opponent will organize the duels to prevent us from using this approach. In the end, it'll come down to one thing: are you and Xiaoxiao confident enough to defeat Long Youyou and Li Haochen?" Long Wanying asked solemnly.

"Yes, that's why I said I'm sixty percent sure."

If it weren't for the grade-eight divine herb, Tianming believed he would have challenged Princess Shen Yu, who was on par with Li Haochen.

"Aunt Ying, they aren't going to budge. It's going to be a battle with countless casualties or the destruction of the grade-eight divine herb. Forget about the odds. We can delay them. If the divine herb matures in time, we won't have to worry they'll remove the entire branch," Tianming explained.

Defeating the sun emperor's son before the Myriad Solar Sects would definitely cause a sensation. It would allow Tianming to earn the respect of all the sects. It had historical significance and was connected to his Imperial Will. The Myriad Solar Sects were currently divided and dispirited. Being able

to defeat the celestial orderians at the junior level would have a great impact on their morale and raise their spirits.

"I support you. Let's see what the others think." Shi Yan and Gujian Qingshuang joined the conversation.

"Tianming, you're eager to give it a go, aren't you?" Shi Yan asked.

"What? You want me to join the Emyrean Sword Sect, but you don't think I can do it?" Tianming looked up at her.

"That's not what I mean. I just want to say that those who achieve greatness won't be swayed by questions about whether or not they are up to the task. The ferocious beasts on the other side have laid a trap and they're just waiting for you to walk into it," said Shi Yan.

"Ferocious beasts? In my opinion, they might turn out to be weak chickens." Tianming smiled.

Shi Yan was a little stunned. As far as she knew, Tianming wasn't such an arrogant person. On the contrary, she felt that the young man was mellow and always clear-headed. Such overwhelming confidence surprised her.

"Are you serious?" Shi Yan asked.

"Yes, I'll make a bet with you. If I lose today, I'll join the Emyrean Sword Sect," said Tianming.

"Alright, go on then!" Shi Yan agreed immediately. She couldn't believe it; was he really this crazy?

Now that Long Wanying and Shi Yan had agreed, Gujian Qingshuang was the only one left.

"Head Instructor, will you give me the divine herb if we win?" Tianming didn't care to conceal his thoughts.

"And what if you lose?" Ye Dongliu asked.

"Did I ask you?" Tianming stared at him. In the face of the thousand-year-old cultivator, his gaze remained steady, unwilling to give an inch.

"You!" Ye Dongliu had never been scolded by a junior like this before. He was about to explode with anger, but Tianming was a Sky Palace disciple. What could he do?

"Ye Dongliu, don't intervene in the head instructor's decision. Outsiders might think you're the head instructor," said Tianming.

"Li Tianming!" Both father and son were furious.

"Alright, stop arguing. Gujian Qingshuang, let him go! Li Wushuang is here. If we lose or refuse to fight, we won't be able to get the divine herb. And the key isn't the treasure, but their invasion. They're challenging our bottom line and trampling on our dignity. Defeating them is more important than anything else, but even if we lose, it's normal for juniors of the Myriad Solar Sects to lose to them, isn't it?" Shi Yan argued. What she said was right.

In the case of a humiliating loss in the match between experts, their opponents would've crossed the line. They wouldn't be able to fight back and morale would hit rock bottom. But the rivalry between the

younger generations had little to do with the Azuresoul Palace, because Tianming and the others represented the Myriad Solar Sects as a whole. Their opponent wasn't the Supracloud Sanctuary, but the celestial orderians and the sun emperor's son. There would be little consequence, even if they suffered a defeat, and the Azuresoul Palace could still fight to the death. The two scenarios might appear the same, but there was a big difference: Shi Yan was right—losing to the sun emperor's children was to be expected.

For the Azuresoul Palace, the grade-eight divine herb wasn't just significant due to its value, but also because it was a treasure in the territory of the Azuresoul Palace. Even if they succeeded today, the divine herb might be seized by the Empyrean Sword Sect tomorrow.

"Alright, if you win, it's yours."

In the face of such a major situation, Gujian Qingshuang did indeed possess a certain courage.

### **Chapter 1335 - Lin Xiaoxiao's Cards**

"General Shi wants you to lose, but I hope you'll win, Li Tianming," said Gujian Qingshuang.

Shi Yan didn't agree with his words. "It's better if you win, of course. It'll prove you're invaluable. Youths of the Myriad Solar Sects haven't defeated the celestial orderians for millions of years, because they have hundreds caeli imperius guiding them. Even Long Youyou, a descendant of the Veildragon Palace who isn't a Saintdragon Talent, was able to become a sixth-level constellier. You can see how useful caeli imperius are. If you defeat the sun emperor's son today, you'll be creating history. A million years from now, people will still know your name. All of the Myriad Solar Sects will be proud of you!" By this point, Shi Yan was impassioned.

"Really? Then I'll fight to the death." Tianming never imagined this duel would be so important. That was what he desired, for the people of this world to gradually develop a belief in him and their faith to integrate with his Imperial Will. He desperately needed a mind-blowing situation like this.

More importantly, Tianming wasn't the one that had provoked the enemy. Instead, their opponents thought them weak and wanted to oppress them. They were forced to resist and fight. In the eyes of the world, it was the celestial orderians who invaded their territory to oppress them, while Tianming resisted on behalf of the Myriad Solar Sects. The resentment the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect had been repressing finally had an outlet.

Long Wanying, Yan Nuxia, Shi Yan, and Gujian Qingshuang were all moved by Tianming's strong conviction. It wasn't an easy task convincing them to believe in him, especially Gujian Qingshuang. The passion in Tianming's eyes could move others.

"You never suffered defeat in the Voidsky Realm. I hope you'll keep up your performance." Jiang Qingliu silently watched them.

"You've all inspired me. I hope to fight to my heart's content," said Tianming.

He wasn't supposed to be the protagonist today. It was Li Haochen who pushed him into the spotlight.

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The moment Gujian Qingshuang announced their decision, the audience boiled with excitement.

"What's the head instructor thinking?"

"Isn't it obvious they're giving the enemy the divine herbs?"

"In the past thousand millennia, no one has defeated the celestial orderians before the age of thirty."

"Maybe the Ninedragon Emperor succeeded. There's too many versions of history."

A wave of pessimism swept over the people of the Azuresoul Palace. However, there was no point in being pessimistic once the words had been spoken. They had to accept the fact. Even if they were defeated, it wouldn't be as humiliating as losing a duel between experts. After all, only a small part of Tianming's team represented the Azuresoul Palace. A disciple of the Sky Palace—that was his main identity. Even if he was purely representing the Azuresoul Palace, wasn't it an honor for the disciple of a second-rate sect to fight a leviathan like the celestial orderians?

"We have one condition. We'll each send out three disciples, but our disciples will choose their opponent." Gujian Qingshuang added.

As Long Wanying had expected, Yun Tianque shook his head. "That's impossible. The strong will compete with the strong. His Solar Majesty's son, Li Haochen, has decided to fight Li Tianming, the number one disciple on the imperial star ranking. The others aren't qualified to fight him."

"Then we get to decide the other two matches." Gujian Qingshuang replied.

"No problem." Long Youyou and Li Ruoshi were the other two.

"Send out your three disciples who'll be competing," said Yun Tianque.

Thus, Tianming, Lingfeng, and Xiaoxiao appeared before them. Long Youyou noticed Lin Xiaoxiao at once. "Big Brother Haochen, that's the woman who's holding our ancestor's Dragonblood Desecration. The Veildragon Palace has been too busy trying to suppress the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect to take back what's ours. If I defeat her today, can I take the Dragonblood Desecration?"

"You can try, but she might be too afraid to fight you," said Li Haochen.

"She'll choose Youyou." Li Ruoshi chimed in.

"Why?"

"The soul of that disciple named Feng is supposedly at the third regal soul level. He's extremely lethal to totems. He'll definitely challenge me," said Li Ruoshi.

"It'll be like throwing straws against the wind."

Judging from their strength in the imperial star ranking battle, Long Youyou regarded them with contempt.

"Yes, Yu Ziqian is such a loser. He's second on the imperial star ranking, but he's too afraid to fight. I really don't know how a person like him could become a Sky Palace disciple." Li Ruoshi frowned. She had assumed that Yu Ziqian would be a formidable opponent.

"I'm ranked second in the celestial orderian clan, but I'm supposed to deal with a nobody who ranks seventh on the imperial star ranking. That's like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut," Long Youyou pouted.

Squeezing her cheeks, Li Haochen said, "You'll be fine, but Shishi will have to be a little more careful. If your totems don't feel right, it's alright to concede defeat."

"Big Brother Haochen, don't worry. I won't embarrass the soul tribulators and celestial orderians. Even if we're inhibited, we can't lose to these insignificant Myriad Solar Sect juniors." Li Ruoshi said softly. Although her voice was gentle, her thoughts were bold.

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During the conversation, they had already agreed on the order of the matches. In the first duel, Long Youyou of the Veildragon Palace would face Lin Xiaoxiao, who ranked seventh on the imperial star ranking. Despite the similarity in their names, one appeared vivacious while the other was aloof. Coupled with Xiaoxiao's possession of the Dragonblood Desecration, it almost seemed as if the two were natural enemies. Although the two were young women, their duel would be interesting.

In the second round, Li Ruoshi of the soul tribulators would duel Feng, who was fourth on the imperial star ranking. It would be a confrontation between a totemancer and specter. Many thought that was the only match that the Azuresoul Palace had a small chance of winning. As for the third duel, Li Haochen, the sun emperor's son, was up against Tianming, who was first on the imperial star ranking. It was a duel between Lis, a showdown between the celestial orderians and Myriad Solar Sects.

"Xiaoxiao, if you perform well, I won't even need to fight." Tianming laughed.

"Alright, then we won't inconvenience you today," said Xiaoxiao.

"So confident?" Tianming said in amazement. Why was everyone so certain today!? They were probably inspired by Jiang Qingliu.

"Well, she's quite similar to the one I challenged on the Violetglory ranking. They both have five lifebound beasts. However, her contempt for me is much stronger. It'll be an opportunity for me," said Xiaoxiao. She was obviously extremely clear-headed.

In her final imperial star ranking battle, Xiaoxiao had been utterly defeated by Weisheng Moran. Throughout the Voidsky Skirmish, she hadn't clocked any notable achievements. Aside from being lucky enough to obtain the Dragonblood Desecration, she was simply a nobody to the audience. Her brilliance was less than a thousandth of Tianming's.

Her opponent, Long Youyou, was the Veildragon Palace's number one disciple under thirty and the daughter of the Veildragon Palace's first dragon imperial. She cultivated under the guidance of caeli imperius since she was a child. In terms of cultivation, she was two levels ahead of Long Longlong, the Saintdragon Talent. As a beastmaster, she had suppressed countless celestial orderian geniuses. Long Youyou and Li Ruoshi were evenly matched; she was second only to Li Haochen.

There was a vast difference between the two. To put it bluntly, Xiaoxiao had nothing but the Dragonblood Desecration. In their eyes, she was inferior in terms of identity, status, strength, and talent. How could she compare? It was clear that Long Youyou was filled with impatience and dissatisfaction



toward her opponent. Born with a golden spoon in her mouth, she had grown up surrounded by older brothers and sisters. Even Li Ruoshi's duel with Feng seemed somewhat challenging. At least her opponent had defeated Kong. On the other hand, Long Youyou's opponent seemed humble in comparison.

"Never mind. I'll win so Big Brother Haochen praises me."

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Xiaoxiao and Long Youyou stood face to face on the Azurecloud Divine Tree. The battlefield was large enough for them to fight to their heart's content. Although her opponent had a few cards, there were hundreds of thousands of seniors watching. Long Youyou felt a hint of nervousness for the match.

"The sword is blind. Don't blame me if I accidentally kill you." Long Youyou condescendingly said with her chin raised.

Xiaoxiao found that Long Youyou was somewhat similar to Huiye Shi. When Huiye Shi had first descended upon the Flameyellow Continent, her contempt was no different. However, Long Youyou was even more detestable than her.

The ferocious Archaionfiend sprang from behind Xiaoxiao, surging with red lightning. Its bone spurs, armor, thick claws, blade-like wings, vicious face, and fangs made a strong visual impact. Being stared at by it at close range startled Long Youyou.

But when she only saw four thousand stars in the Archaionfiend's eyes, she couldn't help but laugh, "You only have a four-star divine beast? I've not encountered such an easy opponent in almost eight years. If it weren't for the Dragonblood Desecration and today's situation, you wouldn't be qualified to be my opponent even if you cultivated hard for a thousand years." Long Youyou pursed her lips.

"Yes, you're really amazing. I don't understand at all. A girl like you should have had a proper education, but it doesn't seem like you have," Xiaoxiao mocked.

Long Youyou frowned. She couldn't believe it. Was this a provocation? A nobody like Xiaoxiao, who only managed to stand here due to chance, was speaking to her about proper education? In front of her elders and those at the same level, Long Youyou was modest, polite, conscientious, dedicated, and well-liked. But why did she have to be polite towards an insignificant opponent?

"You don't want your tongue anymore, do you?" The absence of her lifebound beasts demonstrated her contempt for Xiaoxiao. She didn't even bother pulling out her weapon, but struck with her hand, aiming to slap Xiaoxiao.

### **Chapter 1336 - Courting Humiliation**

As expected of a seventh-level constellier, Long Youyou was swift and fierce, turning into a black shadow in the blink of an eye. However, Xiaoxiao had defeated an opponent of her level who, at the very least, had been forced to use all of their cards.

The Dragonblood Desecration suddenly appeared in Xiaoxiao's hands, nine blood dragon arrows circling her as red lightning flickered.

"Fool." The Archaionfiend hung on the Azurecloud Divine Tree with a cold smile.

“Beat her to death!”

Since her opponent had given her an opportunity, she would be letting Tianming down if she didn't seize it. The Archaionfiend unleashed Bloodblitz Blast, spewing out blood-red lightning. Hundreds of millions of red electric snakes converged into a lightning sphere and burst forth.

The Archaionfiend and Xiaoxiao were both fierce fighters. Thousands of times bigger than Long Youyou, the red lightning sphere almost instantly appeared in front of her. This ability was extremely powerful and relentless.

Meanwhile, Long Youyou was still going easy with her attacks. She wanted to slap Xiaoxiao and send her flying, ending the battle at once. How could she have known that what she assumed was a rabbit would really be a blood-red lion? Amidst the chaos, all five of her lifebound beasts rushed out of her lifebound space and used their bodies to block the explosion. The dragons howled miserably as the red lightning struck, splitting the divine tree. All of the seniors present were stunned. Xiaoxiao released three blood arrows that seemed to disappear in the Bloodblitz Blast. It was impossible to see where they were; the arrows moved faster than the red lightning.

Long Youyou's contempt for her opponent had been a lethal mistake, but it wasn't her fault that she'd underestimated Xiaoxiao. The latter had never been outstanding. The Voidsky Skirmish had ended not too long ago, and since then, the Archaionfiend had grown stronger by devouring caeli, which was beyond the comprehension of the people of Orderia. Not even Li Wushuang, the Tumulus Pill God, and the other elders knew anything about her.

Despite Long Youyou's quick reflexes, the Dragonblood Desecration was faster and very precise. Xiaoxiao was very clear about one thing: taking advantage of her opponent's contempt to directly launch a fatal blow was the only opportunity for her to quickly establish an advantage.

Aside from one arrow that was blocked by Long Youyou's lifebound beasts, the others flew in through the gaps. In the face of the oncoming second blood arrow, Long Youyou used all her strength, breaking it with her crimson halberd. Part of the danger had been lifted, but she was covered in cold sweat. There was still a third arrow!

In that instant, the third arrow pierced her belly, the terrifying power of lightning pinning her to the tree. Blood-red lightning exploded. Together with the Archaionfiend's Bloodblitz Blast, Long Youyou's delicate skin was immediately charred. Bloodgorge Dragonmark played a deadly role as the third arrow frantically sucked her blood, and in a short period of time, Long Youyou lost nearly an eighth of her blood.

It was only the start of their duel, yet she had suffered heavy damage. Her face was pale and her lips were blue. As she miserably screamed, the desire to survive prompted her to pull out the blood arrow, finally stopping the blood loss. Otherwise, the Dragonblood Desecration would have killed her. Long Youyou tried to hold on to the arrow, but it dragged her with it, its spikes puncturing her hand.

Xiaoxiao stood on the back of the Archaionfiend, her gaze cold. Drawing the bow, she aimed the arrow at Long Youyou once more. It wasn't until that moment that Long Youyou realized what a terrifying opponent she had encountered.

"Come back!" Upon her command, the dragons that had just been separated by the explosion of lightning returned to her side, guarding her. They were fairly advanced dragons. One of them had reached six thousand stars, while the rest were five-star divine beasts. Judging by the number of lifebound beasts and the stars in their eyes, it was clear that Long Youyou's strength far exceeded Xiaoxiao's. Unfortunately, she was seriously injured before she could put her advantage to good use.

The evernight netherflame dragons were rather strange and terrifying. After staring for some time, Tianming finally caught a clear glimpse of them. Enveloped in green flames, the dragons had no flesh or blood, only bones. Their bodies were mere skeletons, yet they seemed even more ferocious and gloomy.

"Kill them!" She vomited black blood as she spoke. Looking down, she saw her scorched skin; it would take her at least a few months to recover. During that time, it was unlikely Li Haochen would touch her. Destroying her appearance was a deadly blow to her. The damage to her skin made her even more uncomfortable than being pierced in the abdomen. In fact, it had all happened so quickly that her mind was blank. She didn't dare look at Li Haochen for fear of seeing the disappointment in his eyes.

"What am I doing!" Long Youyou wanted to cry. She had never been such a disappointment. Although her first instinct was to get up and fight, the blood loss and weakness had had a devastating effect on her combat power. "I can't lose or I'll be humiliated!" At this moment, she was still clearheaded and her dragons were still at their peak. Under Long Youyou's orders, the evernight netherflame dragons surrounded Xiaoxiao and the Archaionfiend.

"Capture the ringleader and the rest will follow. Wu You, I'll hand the little ones over to you." Xiaoxiao jumped off its back.

"How can you be so shameless!" the Archaionfiend shouted. How could these evernight netherflame dragons be considered little ones? For a beastmaster like Long Youyou, the strength of her lifebound beasts accounted for at least seventy percent of her power.

As the Archaionfiend angrily cursed, the five bone dragons charged toward it, spewing green flames. Surrounded and beaten, the Archaionfiend let out a scream. Meanwhile, one of the dragons went after Xiaoxiao.

Using the branches and leaves as cover, Xiaoxiao nimbly moved around the battlefield. It wasn't as easy for the dragon. Countless attacks and green flames collapsed and burned the surrounding greenery, almost engulfing Xiaoxiao several times. After a while, she completely disappeared in a flicker of red lightning.

"Over here!"

Dragging her injured body, Long Youyou attempted another attack. To her surprise, Xiaoxiao turned around and intently stared at her. Hair fluttering in the wind, Xiaoxiao released three blood arrows again.

"What?" In that moment, Long Youyou understood. Xiaoxiao had separated from the Archaionfiend just to seek her out. But the realization came too late. Despite fleeing and dodging, a blood arrow pierced her thigh, bringing her to her knees. Another heart-wrenching scream split the air. Watching a delicate beauty being tortured like this had the audience close to tears.

Two other dragons turned around and chased after Xiaoxiao, their abilities leaving wounds and sharp claws digging into her flesh. She was almost roasted by the sea of fire several times, but she singlemindedly stared at Long Youyou, aiming and releasing arrow after arrow.

Long Youyou's severe injuries had given Xiaoxiao an opportunity. Thus, the battlefield was divided into two; on one side, the Archaiionfiend fought three dragons alone, and on the other side two dragons chased after Xiaoxiao while she closely followed Long Youyou, shooting arrows.

Long Youyou screamed as she bled more and more. Every hit of the Dragonblood Desecration was lethal.

Xiaoxiao's control of the Dragonblood Desecration wasn't what it used to be. Long Youyou was pinned to the tree again. This time, the arrow pierced through her chest and two more nailed her hands to the tree, giving her no chance to even struggle.

Her shrill screams made the watchers' scalps tingle.

"If you don't admit defeat, you'll die." Slammed into the ground by the dragons, Xiaoxiao spat a mouthful of blood. Despite her sorry state, her words crushed Long Youyou.

"Stop! Don't shoot! I surrender!" she cried.

The first duel had come to an end. The beginning, middle, and end was a huge contrast from what the spectators expected. Everyone blankly looked at Xiaoxiao. The entire scene was silent except for Long Youyou's tragic cries. Even Tianming was sluggish with shock. With this opening battle, Xiaoxiao had directly knocked the celestial orderians and Veildragon Palace to the ground and trampled on their faces.

"It looks like I won't have to fight." Tianming couldn't help laughing.

Lingfeng was confident that he could defeat an eighth-level constellier, as long as they were a totemancer. Even if Li Ruoshi hadn't belittled Lingfeng, her strength was definitely not on par with his. Therefore, two wins out of three were guaranteed; Tianming was destined to take a back seat.

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Amid the silence, Xiaoxiao put away the Dragonblood Desecration and left with the Archaiionfiend.

"My apologies. The sword is blind. Thank goodness you were only hurt, not killed. With your resources, you'll recover soon." Xiaoxiao paused and turned to Long Youyou. "If we're given the chance to fight again, I hope you'll consider me a real opponent."

Xiaoxiao's words hit Long Youyou where it hurt. The Veildragon Palace disciple had just climbed to her feet when she heard Xiaoxiao's mockery and spat another mouthful of blood, her anger resulting in loss of consciousness. In fact, she was lucky she fainted. The five dragons looked dumbfounded. If she had taken her opponent seriously, Xiaoxiao might not have defeated her, and even if she succeeded, it would have at least been a narrowly-decided life and death battle.

Instead, the outcome was unbelievable. Almost no one spoke for several minutes. The Azuresoul Palace and their allies were naturally pleasantly surprised. They finally had an outlet for all the anger they had repressed.

"What're you doing? Celebrate!" Yan Nuxia shouted.

The swordpupils finally responded.

"Lin Xiaoxiao!" Her name shook the earth.

That made Xiaoxiao extremely nervous and she immediately hid behind Tianming. In this situation, all he could do was burst out in laughter. The situation was the embodiment of courting humiliation. The people across from them were smoldering beneath their stony expressions.

"Does it feel good?" Tianming asked.

"Well I feel great! Every shot felt so satisfying," said Long Wanying.

### **Chapter 1337 - Celestial Among The Flowers**

Long Youyou woke up in a warm embrace. As soon as she opened her eyes, she remembered her defeat. Although she wished it had only been a nightmare, the burning pain throughout her body proved that her loss was an unchangeable fact.

"Top three among the celestial orderians, yet she lost to a nobody who's seventh on the imperial star ranking!"

At the thought of that, Long Youyou felt as if her internal organs were convulsing. She was too humiliated to face Li Haochen and her elders. She was an embarrassment to the Veildragon Palace.

"Big Brother Haochen, I..." Realizing that it was Li Haochen holding her, Long Youyou burst into tears. "I've embarrassed myself. I'm sorry, I didn't think she would be so powerful. She wasn't this strong in the Voidsky Realm."

"Alright, it's over." Li Haochen didn't mind how ugly she was at the moment, because she would soon recover. Caressing her head, he said, "It's fine. I underestimated them as well. This battle was a wake-up call for Shishi and me."

Long Youyou breathed a sigh of relief when she realized Li Haochen wasn't blaming her. What she didn't know was that he was smoldering with anger inside, the red-hot rage spreading to his bane-rings.

"Ruoshi, do your best. You can't lose this duel or we'll become a joke," Li Wushuang said through gritted teeth.

"Yes." Li Ruoshi nodded solemnly. She didn't think she had anything to fear, but Li Haochen was right—Long Youyou's battle served as a reminder for both of them to take the duels seriously. Taking a deep breath, she stepped into the battlefield.

"Shishi, take down your opponent," Li Haochen said.

"I will." Despite her soft temperament, Li Ruoshi showed an iron will at this critical moment. The soul tribulators were a part of the celestial orderian clan; they were totemancers. If she lost to Lingfeng, the celestial orderians would be even more embarrassed. More importantly, this was a best-of-three match. Her defeat would mean victory for the Azuresoul Palace, and Li Haochen wouldn't even have the chance to fight.

"Specter." Her gentle gaze landed on her opponent—a cold, silent, boy who was almost indistinguishable from the human race. Needless to say, the second duel had begun. The elders on both sides stared at the two, especially those from the Supracloud Sanctuary. They were no longer hanging around, but nervously watching.

"The celestial orderians won't lose two in a row, will they?"

"Long Youyou lost because she underestimated her opponent, but Li Ruoshi won't this time."

"The specter called Feng defeated a junior of the Voidword Shrine at the fifth level of the Constellation stage, but Li Ruoshi is a seventh-level constellier and possesses seven and a half totems."

There was complete silence before the duel began. The excitement and suspense peaked. What they didn't know was that Lingfeng's strength had grown by leaps and bounds since the Voidsky Skirmish.

"Please." Like a goddess in the wind, Li Ruoshi pointed her sword at Lingfeng.

A storm swept across the battlefield, howling winds swaying the Azurecloud Divine Tree. Li Ruoshi's totems appeared with a gust of wind. An illusory sea of flowers blossomed around her, spreading through the air and on the bark and leaves of the divine tree. Millions of flowers enveloped the entire battlefield, their rich fragrance permeating the air and transforming the scene into paradise.

Li Ruoshi had almost become a celestial surrounded by a sea of flowers. As her long flower dress swayed in the wind, more flowers blossomed on her clothes, covering her hair, sleeves, and even her weapon. A blaze of colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple—stretched as far as the eye could see. Amidst the vast sea of flowers, Li Ruoshi was the epitome of beauty, saintliness, and elegance.

There were countless beautiful girls born among the soul tribulators. That was the reason they were the clan of empresses. From just this scene alone, Li Ruoshi had proved that she deserved her title as second-best totemancer of her generation. Of course, that excluded Qingyu, who almost never showed her face.

Li Ruoshi and Long Youyou were able to climb to a position second only to Li Haochen because they were ahead of all the other geniuses. If Long Youyou hadn't encountered Xiaoxiao, she would be so powerful that she could do as she pleased in the Myriad Solar Sects. In terms of beauty, she was charming and lively, with a sensual figure and a childlike appearance. She was spirited and lovely, while Li Ruoshi resembled an unattainable goddess. Li Haochen knew how to choose them, and how to have a good time. Many celestial orderians envied him for having the pair of beauties by his side. Of course, there were also countless women who envied the two for their closeness to Li Haochen. However, none of that meant anything to Lingfeng. All he wanted to ask was how Qingyu was doing, though he understood that he couldn't.

"I must make an impression so they'll tell Qingyu about me when they go back...." At the thought of that, Lingfeng gripped the Evil Suppression Pillar in his hand and began his attack.

Li Ruoshi's totems came to life. The sea of flowers was merely a scene created by the combination of her constellation and totems. At that moment, a total of seven goddesses appeared in the flowers, waving their swords. The seven fantasy flower goddesses almost resembled an enlarged version of Xian Xian's spiritform. Although Xian Xian's spiritform possessed no combat power, the two were similar in nature.

Li Ruoshi's half totem had yet to take shape and remained on her body. With the manifestation of the seven totems, the entire scene belonged to Li Ruoshi. Without so much as a word, she shot toward Lingfeng amidst the flying petals, brandishing her sword.

The young man dressed in black met her halfway, the power within his body gathering and forming a black sea of fire. A huge wave swept toward his opponent. This was his ability, the Infernal Soul Curse. A burning vortex raged around him, crashing into the fantasy flower goddesses as the Infernal Soul Curse enveloped them.

"What?" Almost in that instant, Li Ruoshi could sense that Lingfeng's soul power was far stronger than she had imagined. Like poison, the flame spread from one totem to another, engulfing everything in its wake. Lingfeng's Evil Suppression Pillar slammed down onto her head while Li Ruoshi unleashed her sword art, the two exchanging blows.

Meanwhile, the Infernal Soul Curse constantly spread through her body and totems. With every hit, her flesh remained unharmed but her soul stung with pain.

In less than fifteen minutes, the psychedelic effect of the fantasy flowers had no effect on Lingfeng. The totems didn't even have a chance to demonstrate their power. Li Ruoshi had never imagined that her totems would one day become a drag. The grim young man continued suppressing her with the Evil Suppression Pillar, drawing a blood-red dagger from his head.

When the Evil Suppression Pillar transformed into armor, the young man broke through the totems, the blood-red dagger in his hand transforming into red needles that filled the sky. They shot toward the totems and poked countless holes in them. The needles seemed connected to thin, red threads through which Lingfeng manipulated them. The threads formed a dense cage, and as soon as Lingfeng pulled, Li Ruoshi's totems collapsed.

The pain intensified, making it impossible for her to fight as she usually did. The collapse of her totems reduced her combat effectiveness by seventy-five percent. In the face of Lingfeng's attacks, Li Ruoshi was completely suppressed and forced to retreat. She didn't even have the chance to use her abilities. Lingfeng had truly crushed his opponent.

The Evil Suppression Pillar returned to his hands and collided with Li Ruoshi's sword. Although she managed to block the attack, she couldn't stop the sharp needles that coursed through the air and pierced her flesh.

"It hurts...."

Li Ruoshi had never encountered such an opponent; it was as if her hands and feet were bound. When the needles stabbed her flesh, her physical body was fine, but her vita was in agony. The pain only deepened.

More and more needles flew through the totems and pricked her flesh. As the pain in her vita increased, her combat power decreased. Like a madman, Lingfeng's weapon repeatedly struck her. As he had predicted, she eventually failed to hold on.

"I...."

Li Ruoshi's vision turned dark. In that instant, Lingfeng slammed his weapon into the back of her hand, driving through her palm to her abdomen. Then he dragged her forward and smashed her into the Azurecloud Divine Tree. With a dull thud, the back of her head hit the tree. A dizzy Li Ruoshi spat a mouthful of black blood and slid down to the ground, her body limp.

"There's no need to continue, is there?" As Lingfeng spoke, the countless thin, red threads and sharp needles surrounded Li Ruoshi, threatening to stab her at any moment. Under the combined attack of the Infernal Soul Curse and Heartpiercer Soulblade, her fantasy flowers had already returned to her bane-rings and were too afraid to appear again. The outcome of the duel was apparent. No matter how beautiful Li Ruoshi's totems were, she had been crushed by Lingfeng from start to finish. It was a fact that everyone could see. She might have died if it weren't just a match.

There were no objections to the results. Thus, Lingfeng withdrew his weapon and abilities and returned to Tianming's side.

"How was it?" Tianming asked.

"It was alright, but I think I can go up against an eighth-level totemancer," Lingfeng replied.

The Soulfier hadn't joined him in battle, otherwise it would have ended sooner. The junior celestial orderians weren't weak, but the three of them had already fought similar opponents on the Violetglory Star. On the whole, the Violetglory Star was stronger than Orderia. Despite their ease, this duel had left the celestial orderians, and those of Blueblood Starocean and the Supracloud Sanctuary, even more amazed, bewildered, and depressed than the previous match. They had been humiliated!

"We already have two wins, the third match is unnecessary. So according to our agreement, it's time for you to leave."

Tianming turned to Li Haochen and the others with a smile on his face. He knew they had been stunned by the two consecutive defeats.

### **Chapter 1338 - Raising the Bet**

Li Ruoshi had lost even faster than Long Youyou. It was clear for everyone to see that she'd been badly beaten like a helpless rabbit without the slightest ability to resist, all while she hadn't underestimated her opponent one bit and had given it her all. The celestial orderians had lost the first two matches, much to the shock of every cultivator on the Supracloud Sanctuary's side.

"This..."

Even the wargodeans and those from the Blueblood Starocean held their breaths in shock.

"Is it over?"

It had turned out completely different from their expectations. They had come with full force and exerted a lot of pressure, only to be beaten back.

"Long Youyou and Li Ruoshi are both about the level of seventh-level constelliers.... Their opponents have grown much stronger since the Voidsky Skirmish!"

"These two aren't even Sky Palace disciples!"



"The four juniors of the Azuresoul Palace...."

Even the seniors from the Azuresoul Palace felt that it was too good to be true, unable to say a word as they stared at Tianming and the others.

"Heavens!"

"Is this the blessing of the forebears of our sect?"

"This has got to be the best day ever."

"Look at their expressions! It's like they stepped in dog shit!"

Putting the Tumulus Pill God aside, Lan Sha, Yun Tianque, and the others—including Gujian Qingshuang and Shi Yan—were flabbergasted. Lingfeng and Xiaoxiao had been Shi Yan's goal the entire time, since they wouldn't have to eventually leave for the Sky Palace. And now they'd demonstrated themselves able to defeat some of the best celestial orderian juniors! This was historic. Shi Yan felt her heart skip a few beats from the realization.

As for Long Wanying and the rest, they were all beaming with joyful smiles. Yan Nuxia laughed heartily and said, "They really kicked an iron plate with that one! They thought they could show off, only to become laughingstocks!"

Everyone broke out laughing, starting from the women of the Group of Celestial Maiden Halls to those from the Azuresoul Palace. Even those from the Empyrean Sword Sect couldn't stop chuckling.

"Li Tianming was right. They've won two of the three matches, so you'd better be ready to scam! You were the ones who suggested we settle it this way. Please take your loss gracefully and stop making fools of yourselves. Huh, and I thought celestial orderians had higher standards. I didn't think that the Veildragon Palace and soul tribulators wouldn't be able to compare to the seventh ranker of the imperial star ranking." Yan Nuxia didn't miss the chance to throw in a mocking comment and stoke Li Wushuang's flames.

"Well, she looked down on us and tried using a trick. They knew what they were doing," Long Wanying said. She could tell that Li Wushuang was fuming now. Those four were the only ones that represented the celestial orderians and neither she nor Li Haochen would tolerate any insult to them. However, Li Haochen was the one who had suggested the arrangement, so who was to blame after their loss?

The waves of mockery splashed on Li Wushuang, Li Haochen, Li Ruoshi and Long Youyou like toilet water. Their piss-poor performance had even made things awkward for those of the Supracloud Sanctuary. They looked more embarrassed than angry.

"Aunt Wushuang, Brother Haochen, I'm sorry." Li Ruoshi's tears fell like rain, but she tried covering her face to hide it.

Long Youyou couldn't help it and broke into tears after seeing Li Ruoshi cry. She had been utterly humiliated. No matter their status, it was clear that they hadn't suffered any real setbacks in the short twenty-odd years of their lives. They were merely overgrown children, at the end of the day.

"Stop," Li Wushuang snapped. "If you're going to keep crying, leave."

The two girls shut up and immediately stopped sobbing.

"Aunt, it was my mistake. I didn't think they'd be so powerful, unlike what our reports state about them. The mistake was mine, so don't blame them. They've done their best. I know full well how capable they are," Li Haochen said.

"That's right, Miss Wushuang. This isn't something any of us had expected. The young ones aren't at fault," the Tumulus Pill God said. Then he whispered, "Should we retreat? Or keep attacking?"

"Attack? Do you want us to break our word? Let the world know that what the celestial orderians say counts for nothing at all?" Li Wushuang asked.

"Alright, then! We'll retreat. But don't worry. We'll make preparations so that they won't be able to enjoy their victory here for long."

"I never said we'd leave," Li Wushuang said.

"What do you mean, Aunt?" Li Haochen asked, pushing down his rage.

"Haochen, are you confident in yourself?" Li Wushuang asked.

"Confident about what?"

"Defeating Li Tianming."

Li Haochen looked at the white-haired youth and said, "If his junior brother and sister have both improved, there's no way he hasn't as well. As a conservative estimate, he's probably two levels stronger than the time he fought Weisheng Moran. Even if he can face off against an eighth-level constellier, I'm still confident that I have a ninety percent chance of winning. Aunt, I didn't waste my time just sitting around these years. I've even defeated ninth-level constelliers."

"Alright. We can't not let you fight now that we've come to this point. Let it be known that we celestial orderians don't fear failure. We only fear not daring to strike back after we're defeated."

"But they've won two out of three matches. There's no point in me fighting," Li Haochen said. He would have launched into battle otherwise, but he accepted that he was the one who'd messed up by proposing what he had.

"Let's raise the bet!" Everyone turned to look at Li Wushuang after she said that.

"What bet, Aunt?" Li Haochen asked.

"Tell him that we're offering up a seven-star universal manna. If you lose, he'll get the manna. If you win, we'll get the grade-eight divine herb. The two are roughly equivalent in value, and since Li Tianming's a beastmaster, he won't be able to refuse a universal manna."

"Seven-star universal manna!" Even Li Haochen's heart shook from the thought. Even though it was useless to celestial orderians, it would be incredibly precious among those in the Myriad Solar Sects. In the Azuresoul Palace, for example, Gujian Qingshuang was the only one who had a seven-star divine beast. Weisheng Moran had obtained a seven-star universal manna from one of the dragon palaces in

the tomb. Having a lifebound beast with a star count of more than seven thousand would make one among the strongest people in Orderia.

"There's no need to feel bad about it. Our territory produces just as many universal manna as the Myriad Solar Sects', but we've given most of them to the Veildragon Palace. They wouldn't have gotten so powerful otherwise. This particular manna was obtained by me from the inside of the nova source myself, so it's fine if you use it in your bet," Li Wushuang said.

Long Youyou merely poked out her tongue without daring to say anything else. What Li Wushuang had said about giving most of the universal manna that manifested in their territory to Veildragon palace was true. In other words, they had the celestial orderians to thank for their current might. To think that she was willing to use something so precious to help the celestial orderians save some face!

"Thank you, Aunt, for giving me this chance," Li Haochen said, the fighting spirit in him igniting once more.

"It could be a chance, but it could just as well be your misfortune. Now, it depends on you. If you lose, the celestial orderians will be mocked by the Myriad Solar Sects because of you. Even though there's a risk, I chose to allow you to fight because celestial orderians have to dominate all. If you can't even overcome a Sky Palace disciple, how can you dominate everyone in the future like your father?" In other words, this was a trial that he couldn't escape. He had to do it, because he represented the very best.

"Yes!" Li Haochen knew what she was saying. This was the price someone with his status had to pay even if it could result in his embarrassment!

"Haochen, you must understand what your status represents. The blood that flows in you and lets you enjoy the best of treatment and be worshiped by countless others also comes with a burden. You have to be the undisputed ruler of all, otherwise you aren't worthy of this bloodline."

"I understand." It only took a few words to raise his will to fight.

.....

"Li Tianming," Li Haochen said, stepping up as those on the side of the Azuresoul Palace thought they were about to leave like beaten dogs. "You've won two out of three rounds, and we're fully convinced of our loss. However, it is a bit of a shame that I didn't get to show my hand during a gathering as grand as this. That's why I wish to once more fight for who takes the grade-eight divine herb by offering something of my own in exchange if you win." He looked down on Tianming with a blazing expression. "What are you offering? Are you intending to deny the results?" Tianming asked. They wouldn't even have to hear them out now, as they had won the divine herb fair and square.

"Don't listen to him! It's a trap, so let's quit while we're ahead," many elders advised.

"It'd better be something that's just as valuable." Long Wanying had been looking at Li Wushuang the entire time she was talking to Li Haochen, so she figured this was her idea. It seemed clear to her that the celestial orderians were just trying to go back on their word.

But unlike what she had expected, Li Haochen said, "If you fight me and win, I'll give you a seven-star universal manna. If you lose, I'll take the grade-eight divine herb. This is separate from our previous

agreement, which your side won. By suggesting another fight, I'm already implicitly accepting that the grade-eight divine herb is yours. We aren't going back on our word."

It sounded plenty reasonable. Naturally, Li Haochen had to take a step back and acknowledge their victory. Otherwise, Tianming wouldn't even begin to consider their conditions.

"A seven-star universal manna?" Everyone began chattering when they heard it.

"Only the chief instructor has a seven-star divine beast, right?"

"Most second-rate sects don't even have one...."

### **Chapter 1339 - Suncore**

"Chief Instructor Gujian is already more than a thousand years old, yet he's only gotten one seven-star universal manna in all his life."

"If you ask me, a grade-eight divine herb still needs an alchemy guru to refine it into a treasure. However, a seven-star universal manna can be used right away, so it's definitely far more valuable."

"Guess the celestial orderians are making a huge bet to recover their honor."

"That manna probably belongs to Li Wushuang herself."

"Man, the stakes have been raised more than ten times in value."

"I bet Li Tianming would've agreed with a six-star universal manna alone. His lifebound beasts are only four-star divine beasts, after all. They can't compare to Long Youyou's."

"It's the perfect bait."

"Tell me about it. Li Wushuang really struck right at the heart. She wants to bait Tianming into handing over the divine herb."

Discussions filled the air after the offer was made. Initially, they were all trying to convince Tianming to refuse the offer, but now even Gujian Qingshuang and Shi Yan were keeping their mouths shut. Even Yan Nuxia and the rest were stunned. Only Long Wanying alone said, "Li Wushuang is truly sharp. Tianming, I know you really need a seven-star universal manna as well, so it's up to you. Are you confident?"

"Aunt Ying, you're not going to stop me?" Tianming asked.

"Of course not. I believe in your decisions. I only want to remind you that this son of the sun emperor is a little different from the other two, so don't underestimate him."

"I understand that well. However, the bow has already been drawn and it must be released. Not to mention, a grade-eight divine herb isn't as important to me as a seven-star universal manna. Even if I did get the herb, I won't know what to do with it at the moment, so losing it won't be a huge deal either. At the very least, Feng and Xiaoxiao's performance earned us some modicum of respect. And even if I lose against Li Haochen, it won't be anything humiliating, right?"

"Of course. Had it not been for those two outperforming everyone's expectations, nobody would have expected you to fight Li Haochen at all. Losing won't be that big of a deal."

"That sounds great. However, I have another aim."

"What is it?"

"They said that the manna is Li Wushuang's own, so if I get it and make her suffer a huge loss, I'll be able to get back at her for you. Just wait and watch her freak out."

"You little... fine, I'll support you. Make sure to win!" she said, helplessly shaking her head with a smile.

"I've never backed down from a fight in my life. Not to mention, I can afford to lose right now, as my fame and status is far inferior to his. I can afford to be scorned by others, but he can't. If he loses, he'll suffer endless humiliation!" Cruelty flashed across Tianming's eyes for a moment.

"That's right." Long Wanying had to admit that he had a good grasp of the bigger picture. This would be a fight that Li Haochen could absolutely not lose, a fight he had asked for by raising the stakes, too. The mental pressure the two of them felt was different, and Tianming wasn't afraid as there was no risk of him dying with so many seniors around. As long as he wasn't at risk of dying, even a fight with only a thirty percent chance of winning was worth the challenge. Everyone watched him talking to Long Wanying about it. Not even Jiang Qingliu said a word. Shi Yan could clearly tell that Tianming had no real relationship with Jiang Qingliu, but cared for Long Wanying a lot instead.

"Is he your new son?" Li Wushuang made a snide remark.

"So what if he is?"

"You better watch out, lest a senior like you have to send off another junior to the afterlife."

"I'll send you off if you keep on going!" Yan Nuxia snapped, immediately shutting down the taunting.

As Li Wushuang was glaring at Yan Nuxia, Li Haochen asked, "Li Tianming, have you made your decision?"

Everyone waited for his word. Tianming was straightforward and didn't put up any airs. "Show me the seven-star universal manna. I want to know if it's a good fit for me."

Li Haochen called out to his aunt, who took a red-hot furnace out of her spatial ring. She opened it and revealed a golden flaming bird within. It wasn't an actual living bird; instead, it was actually seven flaming stars, each one like the sun, arranged in the form of a bird. The moment the furnace was opened, a heatwave filled the tens of thousands of meters around them.

"This manna was something I obtained within the nova source. It's called Solar Nucleus. I'm sure you can feel the power it contains," Li Wushuang said.

"Good." Tianming could immediately tell that it was a good fit for Ying Huo. There were many fire-element manna on the sun to begin with, much to Ying Huo's benefit.

"How can we be certain that you'll willingly hand over the manna if you lose?" Long Wanying asked.

"Shut up. Denying our own loss is something that's beneath us," Li Wushuang said.

"Hmph, we can't be so sure," Long Wanying said, the unspoken implication highlighting the many underhanded methods they used to gain power.

"If I don't give it, simply make fun of me," Li Wushuang said, not caring about Long Wanying at all. She turned to Li Haochen and said, "Go. Don't embarrass me."

"Rest assured, Aunt," Li Haochen said.

"Aunt Ying, don't worry. I trust that the mighty celestial orderians are at least able to keep their word. Otherwise they'd be no different from mindless animals," Tianming said, his words stoking the flames of the fight.

Everyone made way for the top junior of the celestial orderians and the first ranker of the imperial star ranking. One was the son of the sun emperor and the other was a Sky Palace disciple. These two impressive-sounding names, Li Haochen and Li Tianming, were matched with two youths that stood above the rest. One burned with the powerful flames of his birthright while the other stood firm with the vastness of the deepest oceans. Even though Tianming couldn't match Li Haochen in terms of background and upbringing, Lingfeng and Xiaoxiao's victories had put him on a much higher pedestal. Now it truly seemed like the first-ranking Sky Palace disciple would be able to match up to the sun emperor's child. The moment their gazes met, the battle began.

"I'd never have thought that I would see a disciple of the Myriad Solar Sects face up against the son of the sun emperor so bravely in my lifetime," Long Wanying said.

"That's right. It's like a dream. Even though there's been instances of such meetings, the disciples on our side didn't even have the right to challenge the sun emperor's children. Any of them could easily crush our first rankers," Yan Nuxia lamented.

Everyone concentrated on the upcoming fight with full intensity.

### **Chapter 1340 - Crimsoncloud Dragonbane**

Even though there were no skyward eyes broadcasting this fight, the aftermath would surely be felt throughout all of Orderia, especially during such sensitive times. It would cause an even larger commotion than the recent changes to the imperial star ranking, especially with the struggle between the celestial orderians and the Myriad Solar Sects being the highlight of the conflicts on the sun. It was deeply ingrained in the psyche of everyone.

Everyone watched as Li Haochen's white and gold robe burst into golden flames. Like his father, he radiated an impressive brilliance, especially the overlaid bane-rings in the middle of his forehead. Tianming basked in that bright light, admiring the imperial aura that radiated from his enemy. Li Haochen was fully integrated with Orderia, perfectly blending in with the hot and dry atmosphere. The sun was like a furnace and he was like the fire source within it that controlled everything about the environment he was in.

"A beastmaster, eh?" Li Haochen said with the full sense of superiority totemancers felt over beastmasters. He wanted to try goading Tianming into losing his cool and stoke his desire to stand up for all beastmasters. However, he wouldn't make the same mistake Long Youyou did when she underestimated her foe. Instead, he was going all out.

"Li Haochen!" Those on the side of the Supracloud Sanctuary cheered for him. Their drowning, zealous cries shook Tianming's eardrums. Li Haochen's eighth-level constellier power surged and began moving the fundamental cosmic forces of the sun, forming a vortex of flames around him. Then the roars of multiple beasts sounded out as many thousands-of-meters-long flaming beasts emerged from his banerings. They flew around with him at the center in all shapes and sizes and included fish, birds, beasts, and insects. Every one of them flared with great intensity, their appearance immediately causing the surrounding temperature to rise. These were the famous eight vastsun godbeasts.

The sounds of crackling flames and explosions constantly rang out. Each vastsun godbeast had countless golden divine patterns looping around their bodies, allowing them to change forms at will. In a sense, Li Haochen was almost like a beastmaster himself, one with eight beasts! It was said that these vastsun godbeasts weren't one bit inferior to lifebound beasts of the same level. Beastmasters had a limit of only five beasts while Li Haochen had eight totems, allowing him to dominate those of the same level.

"His totems are far stronger than those of his level...."

"The vastsun godbeasts are able to consume divine herbs to increase their totem ki. They seem much stronger than they were the last time they showed up...."

"As expected of the son of the sun emperor...."

Even though Li Haochen was only at the eighth level and couldn't compare to a grade-one swordpupil, he seemed much further ahead of everyone there in terms of talent and resources.

"It doesn't seem possible to catch up to the power of his totems."

"If Li Tianming can hold up for long enough, the fight will be entertaining at least. The two girls on their side aren't even on the same level as Li Haochen. That's probably how much more powerful the sun emperor is than the Torchdragon Emperor!"

"That makes sense."

Even Tianming could feel the pressure radiating from Li Haochen and the vastsun godbeasts that were glaring at him. He felt like he was in a furnace. I might've been looking down on him after seeing how easily Feng and Xiaoxiao won.

He admitted that to be the case, but his previous thoughts still held up. He could afford to lose, while Li Haochen couldn't. In other words, Tianming had nothing to lose, so he could go all out! He let out his lifebound beasts—a phoenix on his shoulder, a black cat in his arms, Lan Huang on the tree branch, and another tree.

"Let's go down!" Tianming descended to the ground with them. With the ground supporting them, the lifebound beasts could fight much better. Xian Xian, for instance, could take root in the ground like the divine tree, and even use the divine tree's own roots and vines for itself. Lan Huang got into position, ready to charge through the forest. Ying Huo and Meow Meow were swift, agile, and able to strike at any time. Meow Meow in particular had disappeared into the branches of the divine tree in a flash, nowhere to be seen.

And lastly, there was Yin Chen. Sharp metallic sounds chimed as two hundred thousand small silver eggs appeared beside Tianming, some from his lifebound space and some from the branches around them.

They reflected so much light that it looked like Tianming was standing in the middle of a galaxy. Looking up, Tianming saw Li Haochen charging at him with his totems, coming down like a sea of flames.

"He's a quintuple beastmaster with beasts of wholly different species and elemental types! There's been no precedent!"

"Even though I didn't get it at first, I know why Li Tianming was able to take first place now."

"He truly has many unique tricks at his disposal."

"These five beasts look unique indeed!"

"I suppose they can at least stand up to Li Haochen's eight vastsun godbeasts somewhat. No doubt, this will be a huge help to him in the future. It's a shame that he doesn't have the Ninedragon Imperius to use the Ninedragon Tribulation with. Otherwise, he could become the next Ninedragon Emperor."

"Nonsense! The sun emperor won't allow another person like him to show up, especially after having the previous Whitedragon Emperor killed."

"Look! Li Haochen took out his Crimsoncloud Dragonbane!"

"I think he wants to see Li Tianming dead."

The Crimsoncloud Dragonbane was a domineering blade of red and gold. Its hilt was shaped like a dragon's head with an expression of agony, as if that dragon had freshly been decapitated. The blade itself had a sawtooth edge, giving it a gruesome feel. Tianming had heard that this weapon was a grade-seven divine artifact and was among the top five of the grade. Its core divine pattern was called Crimsoncloud Divinity, granting the weapon a much enhanced cutting capability, especially against the flesh of beasts. It was said that the weapon was also forged with seven types of grade-seven divine hazards that packed explosive power, making it one of the best weapons in the celestial orderians' arsenal.

Given the fact that its former owner was the sun emperor, Li Haochen must have inherited the exalted blood of his father. No doubt, this weapon, the Dragonblood Desecration, Lifesteal Silverdragon, and many other weapons forged during the same time period were made with the sole purpose of slaying lifebound beasts. As the dragons of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect were known to be the most powerful of such beasts, this blade was named Crimsoncloud Dragonbane. Countless dragons had been slain by this very blade.

Li Haochen, coupled with his bane-rings, totems, and impressive weapon looked like an almighty hegemon as he descended. Others thought they were looking at the sun emperor himself.

"He's basically a younger version of the sun emperor!"

No doubt, it seemed like he had a huge advantage over Tianming. Eight stars appeared between him and his totems. The eight little flashes grew into gigantic suns a thousand meters in diameter and linked together like a ring, trapping Tianming and his lifebound beasts within. This was his octastar constellation. The eight solar stars sealed off the battlefield, raising the temperature even higher and causing many of the divine tree's nearby sprouts to burn. Even Xian Xian's branches, roots, and flowers



were set aflame, causing it to cry before the fight had even started for real. While it was a Primordial Chaos Beast, it still seemed to have a weakness to fire.

The constellation applied huge pressure on Tianming. It was swiftly followed up by a full-force attack from Li Haochen in tandem with all his totems. "Who do you think you are?" Though he sounded cold, Li Haochen wasn't underestimating his foe in the least and had gone all out. He was fuming about his girlfriends being beaten up, though he didn't feel like expressing it before.

However, Tianming couldn't be bothered to even humor his arrogant question. On the battlefield, power was everything. "Let's show him what a real beastmaster is made of!" Tianming telepathically said to his beasts. Their minds resonated with his. Unlike totemancers, who had to control all of their totems themselves, beastmasters had the advantage of letting their beasts fight autonomously.

"Pandemonium constellation!" Tianming unleashed his constellation to curb the mounting pressure.