

The Ages 1441

Chapter 1441 - Father and Daughter

Fiery rain began falling on the ground of Ordieria. The firestorms on the northern hemisphere of the star were far stronger than those of the southern hemisphere, to the extent that it seemed like the whole world was set aflame. Countless totems were baptized by the falling flames, though their semi-ethereal bodies made them quite suitable for life in such a harsh environment. The rain also seemed to have an impressionable effect on the temperament of the lifeforms on the sun.

However, the Ninemoon Palace seemed like a lone island in the world of fire. The light present there was gentle, like the moon's, and the sights were tranquil and beautiful. This was the palace the sun emperor had explicitly built for his daughter. Not even his ten sons were able to enjoy such a luxury.

Within the palace, a group of beautiful maidservants were chattering nonstop.

"Goddess, do you want to bring this outfit with you?"

"Do you have enough divine herbs? I heard the nova source there is lacking and far from what we have here."

"How long will we be there? Will the goddess's cultivation be interrupted?"

It was quite a rowdy procession, but everyone fell silent when the air tensed up. The maidservants gradually turned around and saw a huge man in golden flames at the entrance of the palace, standing some six meters tall. He looked like a mountain that towered over everyone else.

"Long live the Sun Emperor!" The maidservants all lowered their heads and knelt in unison before neatly plastering their heads on the ground, staining it with their cold sweat.

"Very good." The man waved and said, "You're dismissed."

The maidservants carefully backed away without turning and disappeared into the palace, leaving only a girl with long white hair behind alone in the great hall with the huge man. She coldly looked at him before turning to leave, only to find that she couldn't move at all. She began nervously sweating. She closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and turned back to look at the giant.

The flaming man took a few steps toward her and stopped when they were less than half a meter away, the flames on his body already licking the girl. "Daughter," he said with a slight smile.

The girl didn't respond. She had heard that word countless times. Though she didn't deny it, there was a trace of hatred in her eyes. She didn't like being called that.

"I'm about to leave. Don't stop me, alright?" she said, gritting her teeth. No matter how fierce she appeared, she deeply feared this man at her core.

"Before you leave, daddy has a gift for you," he said with a gentle look. He took out a nondescript black bottle containing a crimson liquid within. The girl felt a nightmarish aura coming from it.

"What is it?" Alarmed, she tried to struggle and leave, but it was a vain effort. There was nothing she could do but speak.

"I found this treasure in a place called the Necrovoid. It's incredibly precious, almost sacred for totemancers. It is something that allows totems to evolve! You can consider it something akin to universal manna for lifebound beasts." He gently smiled as he reached out his gigantic hand and held the girl's arm. It looked like a giant bear was grabbing the arm of an infant. Then he carefully rolled up her sleeves without harming her and looked at the five moon bane-rings.

"Let go! Go away! Leave me!" she cried in a panic, but her arm couldn't move in the slightest.

"Qingyu, don't give me that look. Daddy loves you. One day, you'll surpass even me and become eternal. You must understand what I'm trying to do for you. The effects of this treasure have already been tested on your aunt, and it was proven to work," the man said, frowning his brow.

"I don't have an aunt, I never had one! I don't even know you! Kill me if you want! Just stop torturing me!" She was on the brink of a breakdown. Tears flowed as despair filled her entire being.

"Sigh... you're the child I raised myself. I remember each and every moment, so how could you forget? Who you were in the chaos skyjail isn't who you really are. How could you confuse it? You've been a nonabane from the very beginning. Your pentabane self was only the outer skin you shed away, yet you can't seem to let go of it," he said, helplessly shaking his head with a pained look. However, he didn't let her go and opened the black bottle, then dripped its contents on her bane-rings.

That instant, the girl gave off an incredibly bloody aura. Even the whites of her eyes seemed to flash with the appearance of a ghostly face. A bloody flush appeared on her skin, then immediately receded.

"Let me go! You're a demon through and through! Let go of me!" She was yelling so hard that her body shook, but she was nothing but a weak bunny before a force of nature. There was nothing she could do but despair. In fact, she could no longer make a sound. Oh, her lips still moved, but her throat itself didn't vibrate. One after another, ghostly faces flashed across her eyes. Five drops were applied—one on each of her bane-rings on one arm. Then four more for the bane-rings on her other arm. The blood seeped into her white moon bane-rings. The totems within them were visibly struggling as the blood permeated their bodies and fused with them. Then it was finally over. The last drop flowed out and left the bottle entirely empty.

"Perfect. I used eight drops before, and nine drops now. It's finally finished. I leave the best stuff for the two people I love the most in the world," he said, his flaming face smiling as if he was someone who had sacrificed something precious.

He let go of the girl's hand, causing her to fall flat on the ground. She looked at her bane-rings, only to find them looking completely like they had before, as if nothing had changed. However, they seemed different on a fundamental level. She curled up on the ground as if in a daze.

The man knelt down and stroked her head. "Qingyu, you're still too young to understand the burden of being a parent. But as long as you trust daddy, you'll become someone mighty. One day, daddy will grow proud of you. Now go and have fun with them. Let your mind wander. The other matters are also prepared, so you'll be getting married soon. I hope that once you start your own family, you'll grow and mature and abandon that old skin of yours to become who you really are." He pinched her face a little and continued, "My dear daughter, now that you've grown up, you haven't ridden on daddy's shoulder

for a long time, or asked me to take you on a voyage through the astralscape in the Sun Palace...." He stood up with a pained smile and left.

"Sun Emperor!" the girl cried, causing him to stop. She struggled to get up, tightly clenching her fists. She looked just like she had when she tried to get up after falling down. "Feel free to keep toying with me and lying to me, even threatening me. If I really surpass you one day, the first thing I'll do is kill you!"

"Hahaha! Daughter, you wouldn't go through with it. You'd never...." He kept on laughing as he left the Ninemoon Palace. Even the pure white curtains around the area seemed like they had been stained with a ghostly air.

Chapter 1442 - Return to the Tomb

It'd only been a few months since Tianming had left the stormy Voidsky Realm, but now he was returning as one who had control over an entire continent despite being under thirty. The Azurecloud Continent was much larger than the Flameyellow Continent, and the higher lifeforms that lived on it were completely different from the denizens of the mortal world.

The sunstorm was so heavy that it completely occluded vision, making it really difficult for normal people to move through it. Tianming was accompanied by Long Wanying alone. Yang Ce, Lingfeng, and Xiaoxiao didn't follow them there, as Yang Ce was in charge of looking after the unconscious Li Wushuang. They couldn't afford to let the Sky Palace notice her.

"Aunt Ying, here it is." About a million silver eggs emerged from Tianming's lifebound space and turned into many locusts. They landed on the ground and began digging a tunnel. The two of them immediately entered the tunnel, which was filled up behind them by the dirt that flew around thanks to the sunstorm. It was as if nobody had been there. The millions of locusts continued tunneling down.

"Wow, it's buried so deep," Long Wanying said, her dress fluttering around as she twisted her body to fit through the cave.

"We'll be there soon," Tianming said. Almost immediately, they emerged and saw the gigantic, ancient wall of the tomb before them.

"It is a divine astralship after all! The materials of the outer hull are top-grade divine ores. However, they're so old that I wonder if their divine patterns still work," Long Wanying said as she traced her fingers across the hull of the tomb.

Tianming took out a drum that depicted nine black dragons. It was the formation core of the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, akin to the dragonsprings of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect.

"Can I use it?" Long Wanying asked.

"Give it a try." Tianming handed her the war drum. Unexpectedly, the dragons on the drum roared the moment they touched Long Wanying's fingers and the drum vanished into a puff of black smoke, reforming in Tianming's hand.

"That means the Ninedragon Emperor has given the tomb to you alone. Nobody else can use it," she said.

Tianming nodded. That was good news, since people wouldn't be able to take it from him.

"Open it and let's go in," she said, her voice echoing throughout the underground chamber.

Tianming did as he was told and struck the drum using the basic moves of the Ninedragon Tribulation in tandem with the special drumsticks. Each drumbeat seemed to resonate with the tomb, causing it to shake. Eventually, a path opened up in front of them, causing light to shine out from within.

"There's light inside, too?" Long Wanying was taken aback.

"That's right. Apart from a power source, I might need to light up even more dragon palaces before I can pilot it. So far, I have two of them lit up. It's related to my mastery of the Ninedragon Tribulation," Tianming explained.

"I see...." She looked inside the tomb with a look of awe.

"Aunt Ying, transporting Li Wushuang to your sect is of the utmost importance. We have to act fast."

"Okay."

The moment the two of them entered, the door closed behind them. Tianming easily found his way through the confusing maze, having the entire layout of the tomb in memory already. "Not only does the tomb not keep nova source out, it even absorbs it. It just doesn't have anything to store that nova source in, which makes it a perfect fit for the saplings!" Once the saplings absorbed enough nova source, the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb could come back to life.

"While the power of the saplings can't compare to that of a miniature nova source, it should be enough for interstellar travel. The saplings will no doubt also power some of the combat systems of the ship, so either way, you'll be invulnerable inside the tomb as its controller," Long Wanying said, her eyes still glistening with the light from the interior of the tomb.

Divine astralships, fusion formations, miniature nova sources, and astralguard formations were all products of the greatest intelligences among the cultivators across the astralscape. Miraculous treasures like divine astralships were probably worth more than the sun emperor himself.

"Something like that is still quite far off. Let's just see what the saplings can do," Tianming said. To reach the point Long Wanying had described, they first had to allow the saplings to charge up and power the ship and light up more of the dragon palaces. As for how many he would need before he could control the entire tomb, he wasn't too sure. If it required all nine to be lit up, that would be quite far off. He would need to perfect his mastery of the Ninedragon Tribulation for that to happen.

After that, Tianming and Long Wanying placed the thirty-five pairs of saplings in a spread out manner across the ship.

"Once they absorb enough nova source, they'll grow larger. Eventually, they might take up two-thirds of the space inside, but that'll still leave enough space for tens of millions of people to come in here." When the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb had first shown up, tens of millions of people had entered to fight within.

Eventually, they were done placing all the saplings. They began to absorb and store the nova source that the tomb sucked in from the outside world, visibly growing from the size of normal humans to

something larger. Eventually, a hint of gold appeared on their surfaces, but that was only the start. Tianming left ten thousand Yin Chens in the tomb to monitor the growth of the saplings.

"I won't... do it... there's no... bath to... take here!" Yin Chen angrily complained.

"Bathing my ass." Tianming rolled his eyes and ignored it. Then he used the dragon drumsticks to execute Blazedragon Fireblast, Blackdragon Abyss thrust and Whitedragon Exaltation to light up the three corresponding dragon palaces. Now five of them had lit up, more than half of the total. Shiny new buildings appeared at each of the sites, though they were all empty for now.

"I wonder how the tomb will change once it's been fully activated." Tianming looked at the war drum in his hand, noticing a change in it after all five dragon palaces had been illuminated. It was clear that many of the functions of the tomb were still locked away, though that was something for him to discover in his own time. Li Wushuang's matter was far more urgent for now.

"Let's go, Aunt Ying."

"Got it."

The two of them flew out of the bright tunnel.

"Tianming," she called out.

"Yes?" He saw that her gaze was incredibly deep and pensive.

"Do you know what it means to have a divine astralship?"

Chapter 1443 - Myriadragon Mountains

"I do. The Myriad Solar Sects have always had the scales tipped against them because of the Sun Palace, which is basically a superweapon that only the celestial orderians can use. Not only can it be used to transport an army of ten million without leaving any trace, it's a mobile fortress that can be used to ram directly against defensive formation," Tianming said.

"That's right. That's why you have to look into what the tomb can do. At the very least, if we lose, escape to the astralscape is still an option. The astralscape is far too large, and wandering it to discover its secrets is a dream of every cultivator. No matter how large Orderia is, it's nothing but an isolated island in the vast sea of stars. Having a divine astralship is like having a ship that spares you from being stranded on that island, allowing you to sail toward unlimited possibility and hope," Long Wanying said.

"Got it!" That was why Tianming was in such a rush to send the saplings over. He had a feeling he would be going against the sun emperor, one day. If he wanted to bring Qingyu away with him, he couldn't escape to the nearby mortal worlds, for they were still in the sun emperor's sphere of influence. The only way would be to plunge into the unlimited depths of the astralscape.

He closed Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, then the dirt around the area buried the tunnel, removing all traces of the entrance. Nova source from the fusion formation continued pouring into the tomb and being stored by the saplings.

"Now, the saplings are in place. All that remains is my mastery of the Ninedragon Tribulation!" Tianming went back with Long Wanying and joined the rest, thinking about the day his family and friends would

be able to roam the astralscape. "Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, we're coming." It had been a few months, but they would head to that destination all the same. And now, Tianming wasn't just the top ranker of the imperial star ranking.

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The worldcleanse whitesoul dragon flew high in the sky where the flaming sunstorm was rather powerful as a result of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's territory being located close to the Voidsky Realm. The flaming embers that endlessly fell caused the air itself to feel like it was burning. Conversely, cultivating there felt far more efficient thanks to the density of nova source, especially after staying at the Azurecloud Continent for an extended period of time.

This was a place that belonged to dragons, with draconic lifebound beasts on every corner, ranging from every shape to every size. Some were even as small as snakes that could wrap around one's body. The variety of bloodlines of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect was many times more diverse than that of the Flameyellow Continent. Though the place seemed bustling and busy, it still couldn't nearly compare to how it was before the Veildragon Palace's return.

"We'll arrive at the Myriaddragon Mountains soon," Long Wanying said, standing at the head of her dragon. The mountains were the base of the sect, just like how the Azuresoul Palace's main base was the Azuresoul Sword Mountain. The Myriaddragon Mountains were where the clan of dragon beastmasters originated. The true Archaic House of Xuanyuan had risen and developed over millions of years here to become the only group of beastmasters who could somewhat resist the celestial orderians!

The Myriaddragon Mountains had tens of thousands of dragon-shaped peaks, hence the name. As the second-ranked faction of the Myriad Solar Sects, the territory they occupied had among the top concentration of nova source. Even in its current state, Tianming saw tens of thousands of dragon-shaped storms reaching for the clouds far away in the horizon. Unlike the tranquil Azuresoul Sword Mountain, this place was the complete opposite. The atmosphere was thick, heavy, and grand.

The ten thousand dragons seemed to be rising toward the flaming clouds, almost symbolic of the sect's will to rise to the top. This was a people that were filled to the brim with fighting spirit. Even before they were close, the spicy odor of conflict coming from the place overwhelmed Tianming's sense of smell. This was where the tensions between the Myriad Solar Sects and the celestial orderians were at their highest, making the conflicts of the Azurecloud Continent seem petty in comparison. The only difference was that an all-out battle hadn't taken place here yet. If it did, the Myriaddragon Mountains would be sure to end up as complete ruins.

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When they drew closer, Long Wanying had her dragon return to her lifebound space for discretion, lest they reveal that they had Li Wushuang with them. They made their approach with a low profile, ostensibly to avoid the informants the celestial orderians had no doubt planted around the sect they were trying to take over.

"We must use Li Wushuang as a hostage at a crucial moment." Tianming felt an odd sense of order since he arrived. "Aunt Ying, Yang Ce!"

They were traveling on foot. Not long after he called out, two elders suddenly showed up. They were the Greendragon Emperor and Violetdragon Empress. Tianming had seen them at the Voidsky Realm.

"Over here," they waved, urging Yang Ce and Long Wanying to carry the unconscious Li Wushuang to them.

"Is she still out cold?" the Greendragon Emperor asked, somewhat surprised.

"Yes. Her bane-rings and totems seemed to have some kind of problem, resulting in some kind of internal conflict," Yang Ce said.

"It's a good opportunity for us either way. We have to hurry up," said the Violetdragon Empress.

"That's right. Let's increase her bindings to make sure she can't move at all. Then we'll immediately head back. The Saintdragon Emperor has prepared everything in advance," the Greendragon Emperor said.

"Alright."

They were planning to exchange Li Wushuang for the three Dragon Imperials on their side who had been captured. Currently, it wasn't even known if they were still alive, and they were the crux of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. Any time the enemy threatened the rest of the sect with their safety, there was nothing the sect could do. If they could be rescued, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect would be in a much better position even if their side held fewer dragonsprings. The two elders used two kinds of top-grade divine artifacts to bind Li Wushuang, ensuring that she couldn't move at all.

"Let's go!" Apart from Yang Ce, who took Li Wushuang with him, the other seniors there each had a junior with them. They traveled so quickly that Tianming could barely open his eyes against the wind.

"Wanying, why'd you bring these kids here? The Myriadragon Mountains are far too dangerous, especially when we're about to start fighting back. There might be a large-scale conflict," the Greendragon Emperor said.

"Uncle, there's nobody else at Azurecloud Continent, so I don't feel that it's safe for them to remain there. Don't worry, I'll make sure to take care of them," Long Wanying said.

"Good."

The two elders seemed really receptive and kind. They only gave Tianming and the rest a few words of warning before leaving them to their own devices. Even though they were a couple, they were completely different from the Wind and Rain Swordlords.

Despite only being a spectator to the grand conflict that was to come, Tianming was curious to know if the troops at the Myriadragon Mountains were prepared to fight. "Aunt Ying, can you give me a brief explanation of the troop placements?"

"Of course." Long Wanying was pacing about with her head held high and proud. Looking at the mountains, her expression grew cold. "Initially, the sun emperor destroyed our defensive formation and sent ten million Veildragon palace warriors and five million celestial orderians to us. Those fifteen million people now control the three thousand Skydragon peaks, while those on our side retreated to the seven thousand outer Earthdragon peaks."

Chapter 1444 - Ninedragon Army

Tianming looked into the distance at the three thousand central mountains. They looked ever so vast, while seven thousand other mountains circled it from the outside, demarcating the inner and outer circles of the sect. The inner sect was where the elites stayed.

The Veildragon Palace and celestial orderians had taken over the inner sect while the original sect members were driven to the outer sect, deprived of the higher-quality nova source, divine ores, caeli, pills and other resources of the inner sect.

"There's nothing we can do about it. They have six of the dragonsprings that control the inner sect's formations. If we hadn't retreated, we would've easily been attacked," Long Wanying said. Losing their dragonsprings was the same as having a blade held to their necks. When the Veildragon Palace broke off from the sect ages ago, they took three dragonsprings with them, something the Seven Dragon imperials couldn't stop.

"How powerful are the fifteen million cultivators that came?" Tianming asked.

"The ten million from the Veildragon Palace are part of their Veildragon Army, which has a minimum entry requirement of being a fifth-level constellier. Basically, the Veildragon Palace had everyone who was stronger than a fifth-level constellier come here. There's also around a million people who are ninth-level constelliers or higher. They're called Torchdragon Souls and are about as strong as a hundred thousand swordpupils."

"So, up to ten million fifth-level constelliers and around a million from the Torchdragon Souls that are ninth-level constelliers or above...." Tianming felt a headache building up. There were far too many powerful elites on Orderia; even normal soldiers here were at least constelliers. Those beyond that would be in the elite army units. The Veildragon Palace was far stronger than Supracloud Sanctuary, whose army mostly consisted of people under the fifth level.

The Veildragon Palace probably had near a total of a hundred million constelliers across all levels, making them comparable to first-rate factions, perhaps even the Emyrean Sword Sect. They also had a million swordpupil equivalents, roughly the same number as the Emyrean Sword Sect. Their forces, coupled with the celestial orderians', made them one point five times as powerful as the Emyrean Sword Sect.

"What about the five million celestial orderians?" Tianming asked.

"They're part of the Flamefiend Army and all of them are fifth-level constelliers and above. There's more than five hundred thousand of them who are stronger than ninth-level constelliers."

Not even the alliance's million-man army would be able to rival them in numbers or proficiency. Even so, Tianming wouldn't let that keep him down. These elites had been cultivating for centuries and had reached the peaks of their lifetimes, so it wasn't something a junior could possibly contend against. Such a gap between the generations was only to be expected.

"What about those on our side?" Tianming asked.

Long Wanying smiled and said, "So far, there's twenty-five million troops in the Ninedragon Army, among whom are the Saintdragon Souls that number two and a half million elite ninth-level constelliers

and above. That's all the forces our sect can muster. Naturally, we have many more constelliers below the fifth level, but they're too spread out and can't be called to us yet."

That was the full extent of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's might. The Ninedragon Army was comparable to the Veildragon Army, while the Saintdragon Souls were equivalent to the Torchdragon Souls. In terms of number and proficiency, the scales were tipped in favor of the sect.

"Even though we have many more people, they have the dragonsprings and are holding three Dragon Imperials hostage. If we fight without the support from our formation, we'll lose eight hundred people for every thousand we defeat. That way, even if we win, our sect will still be ruined. The celestial orderians definitely have no qualms about seeing us suicidally wipe ourselves out against the Veildragon Palace," Long Wanying said.

"I see...." That wasn't a fight that they could afford to take place. Even so, Tianming was really impressed at the might the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect possessed. By now, Tianming and the rest were now inside the Myriadragon Mountains. The ten thousand dragon peaks looked even more impressive up close, each of them a home to many beastmasters and dragon lifebound beasts. It was a haven for dragons! Lan Huang was extremely excited to be there; despite its odd appearance, it was still a dragon at its core.

They were welcomed by about a thousand elite seniors led by the long-horned Saintdragon Emperor. "Wanying, Yang Ce, you successfully came back!" The Saintdragon Emperor and other elites could barely stifle their excitement.

"It's really Li Wushuang!"

"To think that she dared to cause trouble at the Azurecloud Continent at a time like this.... She's really looking down on us too much."

"The Whitedragon Empress and the grand minister must've spared quite a bit of effort to catch her."

The Greendragon Emperor gave a look to the Saintdragon Emperor, who turned to them and said, "Mobilize the troops and march for the Skydragon peaks! We'll pave our way with Li Wushuang!"

"Yes!" said the thousand generals and officers of the Ninedragon Army. They immediately scattered and rallied their troops and almost immediately, the mountains were filled with bustling activity. Tianming saw countless dragons soar into the sky, mounted by their beastmasters as they assembled into neat, orderly ranks. It was a majestic sight to behold. Tianming had only seen battles on the scales of millions of people, but this was a wholly different thing. Dragons filled the skies wherever the eye could see.

"Ninedragon Army!" the Saintdragon Emperor's voice could be heard all across the mountains. "Join me in a march to reclaim our dignity from the celestial orderians and Veildragon Palace for the sake of the three Dragon Imperials!"

"Aye aye!"

The cultivators here were far more organized and disciplined than those of the Azurecloud Continent. They were a superior fighting force by every measure.

"Onwards!"

Tianming found himself in the midst of countless troops the moment he arrived. They swarmed toward the three thousand Skydragon peaks without delay. A huge commotion came from the inner sect, a clear sign that they hadn't been expecting a sudden attack. However, that wasn't to say that they had been completely at ease. It was wartime, after all.

Soon, tens of millions of troops emerged from the inner sect. The two armies of dragons met at the border separating the inner and outer circles. The oppressed Ninedragon Army seemed far more ferocious, thanks to the person the Saintdragon Emperor had as a hostage.

"That's the sun emperor's sister, Li Wushuang!"

"I heard that she's the second most powerful person in Orderia! Not even the Dragon Imperials dare to mess with her!"

"I see, so they're trying to...."

"Our chance has come."

The warriors had been waiting far too long for this day.

Chapter 1445 - Torchdragon Emperor

There were dragon beastmasters everywhere the eye could see. In a place as large as Orderia, lifebound beasts usually roamed outside their lifebound spaces. Tianming had seen all kinds of beasts before, but the sight of tens of millions of dragons in the sky was still breathtaking to him.

The two armies were facing one another. Apart from the fighters of the Veildragon Palace, Tianming also spotted many celestial orderians in formation behind them. There were around a million of them in total, all proud of the might of their race. Their expressions clearly held derision and superiority. Even after seeing the tens of millions of troops of the Ninedragon Army assemble, they didn't seem the least bit fazed.

"Has the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect finally gone mad?"

"Don't they know that we're waiting for them to attack?"

"If they harm any one of us, we'll have a pretext to pay them back ten times."

"That's right. Even though there's only ten million troops of the Veildragon Guard here, we celestial orderians can send thirty or forty million once we have a pretext!"

They didn't even need to compare the whole might of their kin. The Flamefiend Army alone had ten legions, each of them containing five million troops. They just lacked a pretext for deployment. That was why the celestial orderians seemed so eager for the upcoming fight.

"Three Dragon Imperials and the Flamefiend Lord, Li Xiaoyan, have arrived!" The three Dragon Imperials were the leaders of Veildragon Palace, the Torchdragon Emperor, Blooddragon Emperor, and Voiddragon Emperor respectively. Li Xiaoyan, on the other hand, was the commander of the Flamefiend Army and the right-hand man of the sun emperor. Countless people watched as the four top elites appeared before the Saintdragon Emperor and the rest.

Li Xiaoyan was a blonde man of tall stature. His white and gold robe bore a huge insignia depicting the sun, marking him as a man of authority among the celestial orderians. The three Veildragon Imperials were also no simple folk. The Torchdragon Emperor looked the youngest, seemingly around the age of Li Xiaoyan and Li Wushuang. Right now, he was at his peak.

The Torchdragon Emperor seemed bathed in flames and had a similar aura to Li Xiaoyan. However, Li Xiaoyan's aura was the flame of a sun that brightly burned, whereas the Torchdragon Emperor's was an insidious flame. His pale face starkly contrasted against his black robe. As a member of the Trioptic True Dragon Branch, he also had three eyes, but the third eye between his brows was closed. His other two eyes burned with black-crimson flames that seemed to be able to set souls on fire.

The Voiddragon Emperor and Blooddragon Emperor beside him wore a green robe and red armor respectively. Both of them had heads of graying hair, as they were about the same age as the Greendragon Emperor and Violetdragon Empress, with comparably domineering auras. Even though they were aged beyond their peak and had begun declining, they still had a lot of power.

These four were the thorns in the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's eyes. Even though the Ninedragon Army was far superior in number, it would still be difficult for them to remove the invaders from their sect. The Torchdragon Emperor especially was definitely not one bit weaker than the Saintdragon Emperor, with the caveat that he was much younger. The age difference was also within the sun emperor's calculations. Even if the Torchdragon Emperor didn't fight, time would wear out the Saintdragon Emperor's side first, eventually replacing them with the younger invaders.

The atmosphere now was incredibly tense. The Saintdragon Emperor was holding the unconscious Li Wushuang in his arms; she looked completely pale, weak, and feeble. The four on the opposite side immediately spotted her, Li Xiaoyan especially. There was no way he wouldn't recognize her.

Even so, Tianming noticed that their expressions didn't change at all. They seemed alert, but unafraid.

"They captured Lady Wushuang!" That news spread like wildfire across the ranks.

"What?!"

Most of the Veildragon troops and celestial orderians only just realized what the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect was counting on.

"How daring of them. Don't they know how much the sun emperor spoils his sister?"

"It's over for the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect...."

Many of them were building their rage, their weapons already unsheathed. It took the Torchdragon Emperor raising his arm to signal them to fall silent for the chatters to subside. "Saintdragon Emperor, what're you doing? Lady Wushuang is a guest of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. How could you treat her so rudely?" Though he said that with a smile, his forceful gaze was revealing.

"Let's stop wasting our breath. Our goal today is simple: return the three Dragon Imperials you hold hostage in exchange for her safety. If they're safe and sound, she will be too. If not, don't blame me for not showing mercy," said the Saintdragon Emperor.

"How dare you take someone like this hostage?! Think twice before you attempt to seduce the sun emperor's wrath! Can you take it?" Li Xiaoyan said.

"So you can take our people hostage but we can't do the same to yours? You were the ones who made the rules. We simply followed them," Long Wanying said, rolling her eyes.

"Nonsense. The three Dragon Imperials are with the Veildragon Palace as guests. It has nothing to do with the celestial orderians. Yet your lot actually went to harm and capture the sun emperor's sister. Are you trying to spur the celestial orderians to send troops out to rescue her? Saintdragon Emperor, properly think through this. Once their army comes, the Veildragon Palace won't pay for your mistakes. The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has just reunited after much hardship! If we fall again as a result of your actions, history won't hear the end of your crimes!" the Torchdragon Emperor threatened. Calling themselves part of the sect was merely semantics, as was the claim that the celestial orderians were only there as guests.

By those definitions, the capture of Li Wushuang could be seen as an affront, which would serve as a pretext for the celestial orderians to properly send troops to deal with the sect. Long Wanying and the rest were naturally aware of the implications.

The Saintdragon Emperor merely smirked. "What're you talking about? If the three Dragon Imperials are staying with you as guests, Lady Wushuang is our guest too. We're just being good hosts to our guests, aren't we? What's this talk of holding hostages? Stop messing around. The Veildragon Palace is nothing but a defector on the celestial orderians' side, using an excuse to invade our sect to claim the rightful legacy of our ancestors for your masters. You've thoroughly turned against everything our forebears had stood for! You let down the blood that flows through your veins!

"If you want to betray us, be direct about it and stop coming up with weak excuses. Since ancient times, the Myriad Solar Sects have been enemies of the celestial orderians. Yet, you invited five million of them to Myriaddragon Mountains just like that. Forget returning to us, you're still traitors at the end of the day. Torchdragon Emperor, if you really want to speak on our behalf, you should stand on our side and draw a line with the celestial orderians. That's what a proper return looks like, got it?" Long Wanying said. Everyone knew that their return was just an excuse, as was shown by how strongly those of the sect reacted to what they heard.

The Saintdragon Emperor yelled, "Enough nonsense! Let them go!"

"Release them!" echoed the troops. Regardless of the reason, having the sister of the sun emperor paraded around like that was embarrassing, to say the least. Li Xiaoyan and the five million celestial orderians couldn't bear to look anymore.

"Saintdragon Emperor, I'll give you one last chance! If you don't release Lady Wushuang, we celestial orderians will lay waste to Myriaddragon Mountains!" Li Xiaoyan growled.

"If your seven branches die out, it'll all be your fault!" the Torchdragon Emperor added.

Chapter 1446 - Stubbornness

"Very well, do your worst. We aren't afraid of dying. Even if we die, we'll do it with our spines straight, unlike you traitors who kneel and grovel like dogs! Even if the celestial orderians wipe us all out, let's see

what point there is for you to take over a husk of a sect," the Saintdragon Emperor said, laughing heartily.

The Veildragon Palace's return and the restoration of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect to its former glory were completely separate matters. The sun emperor was only able to prevent the other factions from coming to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's aid as the Veildragon Palace used to be part of the sect. However, actual conflict between celestial orderians and the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect would be a wholly different matter. The sun emperor might not want something like that to happen. Not to mention, fighting enemies with a death wish came at quite a substantial cost. They would lose at least eight hundred for every thousand they slew.

As the Saintdragon Emperor spoke, his fingers tightened around Li Wushuang's neck. The fifteen million invaders could clearly see how she was doing. "My request is simple: return the three Dragon Imperials to us unharmed!"

He didn't even want the dragonsprings, knowing that it was impossible. They had been taken by the sun emperor himself. Attempting to use Li Wushuang to solve all the sect's problems would only make the enemy lose their patience and do something reckless that couldn't be taken back. Exchanging her for the three Dragon Imperials was the best they could realistically do.

The Ninedragon Army's troops kept chanting 'release them' with great fervor. They were fully set on defeating these invaders, even willing to die rather than bow their heads and submit. Faced with such a stubborn crowd with millions of years of heritage, the sun emperor would find it hard to brainwash them or their descendants into submission.

However, the existence of the Veildragon Palace was still a thorn in their side. It was proof that even some of the most stubborn clans would defect and betray their own. Though, granted, they were the exception rather than the rule. Faced with the Ninedragon Army, the celestial orderians and Veildragon Palace couldn't do much. Massacring them would be easier than forcing them to submit.

The chant continued echoing nonstop. Li Wushuang's hair was messed up and her skin was completely pale. It was like a brilliant white dove was being trampled upon. As the pressure mounted, the twenty-five million troops charged toward the three thousand Skydragon peaks with war drums loudly booming across the battlefield, accompanied by the roars of countless dragons.

The Veildragon Guard and celestial orderians were surrounded by enemies more than twice their number. Coupled with the pressure of Li Wushuang being held hostage, they resolved themselves to fight to their deaths. People like them wouldn't relent just like that by virtue of how strong their spirits were. The mounting pressure would only prompt them to double down, rather than back off.

"Release them!" The chants were getting louder and louder, to the point that many people bled from their ears. The Saintdragon Emperor brought Li Wushuang to face the Torchdragon Emperor and the rest. Even though they didn't say a word, the four Dragon Imperials and Yang Ce's expression sent a clear message. War could spark at any moment!

"We don't have to fear death! These animals have been trying to crush the confidence of our juniors and force them to join their side! If we don't get rid of them, your descendants will also wag their tails for these outsiders! Even if our lives themselves aren't worth that much, that doesn't mean we can kneel

before we fight! This land was cultivated by our ancestors, and only the vilest of our kind would sell it out to outsiders! The Torchdragon Emperor, Blooddragon Emperor, and Voiddragon Emperor might look like peak elites, but they're just lowly suckups!"

They were venting the pent-up rage of the sect that had accumulated over the past few months. If the Saintdragon Emperor gave the order, the entire army might just go on the attack without any regard for consequences. Nobody could endure having their children beaten and humiliated and even not allowed to return to their own homes.

"If you let others piss all over you just because you're worried about death and destruction, what's the point of cultivating?"

"Who could live their whole lives wagging their tails at their masters?!"

"We'd rather die as humans than live as dogs!"

Such sentiments were widespread across the twenty-five million troops.

"If you don't release them, we'll gladly die with you all!"

The forceful wave of fervor forced the celestial orderians and Veildragon Guard to back away step by step. If it weren't for the Ninedragon Army's excellent discipline, the slightest misfire could cause the battle to immediately begin. Seeing the direness of the situation, the peak elites had changed their tune.

"Do we reach out to the sun emperor and ask about this?" the Torchdragon Emperor asked.

"It's too late for that," Li Xiaoyan said.

"Alright, then let's release those three old crooks. We have the dragonsprings with us anyway, so they're useless."

"Wushuang is far too precious. Even though it's a slight to our kind's reputation for her to be taken hostage, the main concern now is that they've come in full force while we weren't prepared for it. It isn't a good time to fight, and we can't change the fact that they have Wushuang. Let's take her back first and await further orders from the sun emperor to see whether we should use this chance to gravely wound them."

"Brother, you can't wait to spill blood, huh? I'm sure we've been far too cordial with them."

"Let's see if the sun emperor gives us that chance, hehe...."

"Last time someone disrespected Lady Wushuang, they were left for dead outside the Myriaddragon Mountains.... He was someone who could've become a sovereign too, hahaha...." Speaking of Long Junxuan, the Torchdragon Emperor couldn't help but laugh. Then he stood up, attracting the people's attention. "Alright, we'll release them."

Hearing that, the Saintdragon Emperor raised his hand and the army quieted down. If it weren't for the fact that he didn't have a choice, he wouldn't have wanted to besmirch the good name of the sect by using someone's life as a bargaining chip. "Go ahead."

"Fetch the three Dragon Imperials," the Torchdragon Emperor instructed. This was the first time the Veildragon Palace and celestial orderians gave ground. Naturally, most of them were unhappy about it.

As they watched, three Dragon Imperials of rather advanced age were brought to the forefront. They seemed really worn out, a sign of their obvious discomfort from the mistreatment. However, people at the peak of power like them would still be able to stand with their backs straight despite that. At the very least, they looked to be in better shape than Li Wushuang. The Torchdragon Emperor undid the shackles that bound them.

"You call that hosting guests?"

After the shackles were undone, the three Dragon Imperials stretched their bodies and turned back to glare at the Torchdragon Emperor. "We'll pay back the hardship we suffered ten times the amount one day," said the Azure dragon Emperor. The other two were the Crimson Dragon Emperor and Blue dragon Emperor.

The Torchdragon Emperor merely smirked without bothering to answer. Then the three previously captured Dragon Imperials swiftly returned to join the other four.

"How was it?" the Saintdragon Emperor asked.

"We suffered quite a bit, but it's nothing serious. We'll recover with some rest. Our old bones won't break just from that!" the Azure dragon Emperor said.

"Alright."

After that, the Saintdragon Emperor removed the shackles binding Li Wushuang as everyone watched.

Chapter 1447 - Goddess Guardians

Li Wushuang was a hot potato. Now that they had achieved their goal, it was better to act quickly. Long Wanying was extremely unwilling, but could only watch as the Saintdragon Emperor tossed her over to Li Xiaoyan.

Upon inspecting her, he coldly glared at the Seven Dragon Imperials and asked, "What'd you do to her?"

"She fell unconscious on her own. If you want to know the answer, ask your emperor!" Long Wanying retorted.

Li Xiaoyan coldly snorted. But when he caught a glimpse of Li Wushuang's ghost-faced bane-ring, his eyelids twitched and he quickly blocked it.

"What happened to Lady Wushuang?" The Torchdragon Emperor and the others asked with concern.

"It's no big deal. She's unconscious but uninjured," Li Xiaoyan replied.

"That's a relief."

"I'll take her to rest." With that, Li Xiaoyan left and quietly glanced at Li Wushuang's other bane-rings.

"They're all starting to change...." If he looked closely, he could see that every moon-shaped bane-ring was turning into a ghostly face. A pair of scarlet eyes had already appeared on some of them.

"After this transformation, Wushuang is probably going to improve by leaps and bounds. I knew it. How could Long Wanying and Yang Ce have captured her? It turns out she was unconscious." Li Xiaoyan turned and looked at Long Wanying in the distance, his eyes filled with killing intent.

...

With the exchange of the hostages, there was no need to fight each other. For the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, the safe return of the three Dragon Imperials was a great joy. They had greatly benefited today.

"Withdraw."

At the order of the Saintdragon Emperor, the more than twenty million troops retreated and dispersed like the tide.

"Don't be so pleased with yourselves, this isn't over!" those from the Veildragon Palace continued shouting.

"Hide your children. Make sure we can't find them."

"They speak with such unyielding character, but they're all trash."

"No wonder they've fallen to second place on the myriad sect ranking. Their descendents are good-for-nothings."

During this period of time, the juniors and youthgrand disciples of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect had had a hard time.

"Who was the one with the Ninedragon Imperius? Was it Long Longlong? He's lost one of his balls."

"He was a sissy to begin with, but now he's no different from a woman, and he's the Saintdragon Emperor's grandson!"

The Veildragon Palace relied on such tactics to humiliate the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. With so many people gathered in the Myriaddragon Mountains, there was bound to be conflict. Even so, there wouldn't be a fight today.

But at this moment, a pair of sharp eyes noticed the white-haired young man beside Long Wanying.

"Who's that? He's rather familiar."

"I think that's Li Tianming!"

"Isn't he in the Azurecloud Continent?"

In an instant, the juniors of the Veildragon Palace and celestial orderians turned and stared at him.

"Li Tianming!" They shouted.

Tianming turned around.

"It's really him!"

The juniors were in an uproar.

"He's the one who defeated Li Haochen twice."

"Among those under thirty, he's invincible."

"Who cares if he's below the age of thirty? The sun emperor said that everyone who's under a hundred years old are youths that should learn from each other and keep fighting!"

"Let me get payback on behalf of Li Haochen."

"Stop bragging. Get Li Shenjian and Long Renshe. Li Tianming should be dealt with by people like them. Only then will he be crushed and humiliated."

The masses continued discussing amongst themselves. Unbeknownst to them, the two people they were talking about were looking at the white-haired young man from a distant corner. These youthgrand disciples were over thirty years old.

"The two of you have a new goal. Isn't it more interesting to beat up Li Tianming, since he's the benchmark for the Myriad Solar Sects?"

At this moment, many were looking for them.

...

On the other side, the three Dragon Imperials from the Veildragon Palace ordered the others to retreat. Silence descended upon the great hall when a gold transmission stone arrived. The sun emperor's figure seemed visible amid the golden flames.

"Greetings, Your Solar Majesty!" The three dragon imperials fell to their knees.

"Is Wushuang all right?" asked the sun emperor.

"The Flamefiend Lord says she's fine, but she was unconscious. He's already taken her to rest," the Torchdragon Emperor reported.

The sun emperor nodded.

Gritting his teeth, the Torchdragon Emperor added, "Your Solar Majesty, judging from their reaction today, it won't be easy to subdue them bit by bit. They still have twenty million people. Even if they're constrained, they still have confidence in their combat power, which makes it difficult to demolish their fighting spirit. If we want them to surrender, we must frighten them. Our army must surpass them in numbers."

"You're right, especially the second point." The sun emperor smiled.

"Then...."

"The Myriaddragon Mountains falls under the Myriad Solar Sect's territory. It isn't a problem for the Veildragon Palace to return, but the presence of five million celestial orderians is a thorn in their side. Sending more people isn't appropriate."

"Then we have to find an opportunity to intimidate them, so they truly fear us," said the Torchdragon Emperor.

"It's alright. We'll let nature take its course. Forget about intimidating them." The sun emperor smiled.

"Yes." The Torchdragon Emperor lowered his head. Although their progress was slow, the sun emperor didn't seem to be in a hurry. There was nothing he could do about that.

"There's one more thing," the sun emperor added.

"Please tell me!"

"The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has been so bold to kidnap my sister. It seems we can't rely on the Myriad Solar Sects. My daughter has expressed her intention to visit the Myriad Solar Sects to relax and see Long Renshe. I must send people to protect her so the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect doesn't hold her hostage."

"How many people will you send to protect her, Your Solar Majesty?" The Torchdragon Emperor's eyes lit up.

"Although she's the Ninemoon Goddess, we can't be too excessive. Let's keep it simple—I'll send fifteen million people!" the sun emperor said with a smile.

Fifteen million celestial orderians! That was equivalent to the number of people from the Veildragon Palace as well as the celestial orderians that were already in the Myriaddragon Mountains added up!

"Your Solar Majesty, I'll prepare to welcome the arrival of the Goddess Guardians!" He had to admit that the sun emperor was amazing. Fifteen million guards? Were they really meant to protect the Ninemoon Goddess?

"Even if the Ninemoon Goddess changes her mind, she'll still be escorted here." The Torchdragon Emperor smiled. How could the sun emperor be comfortable with sending the Ninemoon Goddess into a hot zone during this period of time?

...

Tianming, Lingfeng, Xiaoxiao, and Long Wanying stayed on Whitesource Peak. They were safer there in the center of the Earthdragon peaks, since the defense formation of the entire mountain was under their control.

"Tianming, the Veildragon Palace and celestial orderian disciples under the age of a hundred will come looking for trouble. Be careful. Their purpose is to humiliate you," Long Wanying reminded him.

"I know!"

Long Wanying didn't think he was weak. As soon as they arrived, twenty million cockroaches began spreading across the entire mountain. Their opponents were extremely devious and some of the disciples were about eighty years old. It was impossible to guard against all of them.

After settling down, Tianming immediately entered the wondersky realm.

"I haven't had a chance to enter the ninth level of the Violetglory Pagoda and try out the caeli imperius after taking first place on the Violetglory Ranking yet...." Cultivation was his main priority.

Chapter 1448 - Apothecary Li

Inside the Ninemoon Palace.

"Goddess, His Solar Majesty has ordered us to stay by your side and serve you. Please don't blame us." A group of young and beautiful celestial orderians stood in front of Qingyu with their heads lowered as they spoke.

"Fine...." The girl helplessly pursed her lips.

"Goddess, your escort has arrived."

A voice sounded from outside the palace, requesting to speak to her. Upon receiving permission, a man entered the Ninemoon Palace and appeared before Qingyu like a puff of gray smoke. The gray fog condensed into an old, gray-robed man with wrinkly, dark gray skin that almost resembled a frog. His skin was so dry that his fingers and face were peeling. This was an ugly, rickety old man. Ordinarily, such a person would be reclusive, or at least eccentric, but he wasn't. Instead, he revealed a bright smile as he greeted Qingyu on one knee. "Greetings, Goddess. I'm Apothecary Li and I've been ordered by His Solar Majesty to escort you to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. I am but a rough fellow so please bear with me if I overlook anything during the journey."

Although Qingyu didn't recognize the man, she noticed the maidservants' response; they bowed their heads and respectfully took a step back. Some of them were even trembling. It was clear that Apothecary Li was a terrifying figure to the celestial orderians. There were many outstanding talents among the sun emperor's subordinates.

"Are you alone?" Qingyu asked.

Apothecary Li smiled. "Do you prefer to remain discreet?"

Qingyu nodded.

He bowed. "Goddess, please."

The maidservants surrounded Qingyu as they followed her out of the palace. After fighting so long for this, Qingyu was excited to finally have the opportunity to meet Tianming and the others in the Myriad Solar Sects. However, the women froze as soon as they exited the palace. In front of them was an endless sea of people stretched out as far as the eye could see, each dressed in white and gold armor. They were a mighty army; fortunately, they were all totemancers and didn't possess any lifebound beasts, or else their presence would have filled the sky.

"Greetings, Goddess!"

With respectful gazes, the celestial orderians fell to one knee and paid obeisance to Qingyu, their voices causing a violent sound wave that shook the Ninemoon Palace's defensive formation.

"There must be ten million of them."

"I think more like twenty million."

"I think fifteen million. All three of the legions commanded by Apothecary Li are present."

The pale maidservants whispered amongst themselves. They couldn't resist enviously looking at the Ninemoon Goddess. Fifteen million guards for one trip! Was there anyone on the entire sun who could compare? She was the true embodiment of heaven's beloved daughter. If it were Li Haochen, ten thousand guards would suffice.

"His Solar Majesty's love for his daughter is truly staggering." The girls stuck their tongues out, their gazes filled with envy as they turned to Qingyu.

Qingyu stood there transfixed, deeply frowning. The scene before her eyes was beyond anything she could ever have imagined.

"Goddess, your safety is more important than the lives of these fifteen million people. You're the future of the celestial orderians, so please don't reject us. Although having this many people around is a bit of an eyesore, we'll be able to protect you and guarantee your safety. Please understand His Solar Majesty's good intentions," Apothecary Li said with a flattering smile.

"Fifteen million people? Just to protect me?"

In fact, more people meant slower progress and more difficult supervision. If they truly wanted to protect her, fifteen million people weren't as good as a hundred top experts.

"Goddess, haven't you heard? A few days ago, the audacious Whitedragon Empress actually kidnapped Lady Wushuang. Fortunately, she was able to escape from that dangerous situation. To teach those sinister lowlifes a lesson, His Solar Majesty has ordered us to prevent the same thing from happening to you," Apothecary Li explained.

"It's too much.... Since he's so worried about me, I'll make it easy for him. I won't visit the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect." With that, she turned to leave, her expression remaining the same.

"Goddess!" Apothecary Li quickly stopped her. "Why'd you suddenly change your mind? It isn't necessary. Don't worry, with us here, your status is no different from an empress' even in the Myriad Solar Sects. Those bandits won't have a chance to raise their heads"

"Is that so? Then why do I feel like you're using me as an excuse to enter the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect and invade their territory?" Qingyu indifferently said.

"Goddess, you've got it all wrong!" Apothecary Li said anxiously.

"Leave!" Even if she wanted to see Tianming and the others again, she refused to do anything that would bring disaster to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. These old foxes would take advantage as soon as they had an opportunity or an excuse. Li Wushuang's kidnapping gave the celestial orderians an excuse to send fifteen million troops, which she hadn't expected at all. Without another word, she walked past Apothecary Li, determined to return to the Ninemoon Palace. But at that moment, the old man gently blew and a fog enveloped Qingyu. Before she could take even two steps, her body fell to the ground, limp

"How dare you!" The little maidservants panicked and rushed up to protect Qingyu. Upon closer inspection, they realized the Ninemoon Goddess was breathing and her face was rosy. Other than being unconscious, there was nothing wrong with her.

"What's all the fuss about! The goddess is just sleeping. Serve her well. When she wakes up, we'll have arrived at our destination," Apothecary Li said.

"Yes." From the conversation, the maidservants knew what was going on. Dragging the goddess to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect was definitely the solar emperor's intention. Otherwise, Apothecary Li wouldn't dare commit such an offense even if he had all the courage in the world.

"You've asked so many times, and His Solar Majesty has finally agreed. How can he go back on his word? It's best you allow this old man to safely escort you to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, Goddess!" Apothecary Li laughed.

"Let's go!"

"Yes!"

Under his leadership, fifteen million Goddess Guardians officially set off.

Chapter 1449 - The New Myriad Sect Ranking

This was the first time Tianming had entered the ninth level of the Violetglory Pagoda. Not even the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, with its twenty-five-million-strong Ninedragon Army, could provide something like this. There were a hundred caeli imperius here—fifty from the Violetglory Imperium and fifty from the Divineglory Dynasty, which was a fair arrangement. In the real world, the two major forces must possess more caeli imperius.

Both the Divineglory Dynasty and Violetglory Imperium are giant forces on par with the celestial orderians. With that thought, Tianming stepped into the ninth level of the pagoda.

"The Violetglory Imperium's Aster Sovereign was born millions of years ago and lived to the ripe age of 3,851 years old. His caelum imperius has guided generations of Violetglory Imperium disciples on the road of cultivation. After the establishment of the wondersky realm, the Violetglory Imperium offered the Aster Sovereign's caelum imperius for the cultivation of all on Violetglory Star. Only number one disciples are qualified to pay respects to him!"

Following the wondersky fairy's explanation, an enormous violet star suddenly appeared in the passage in front of him. Tianming quickly approached it. His caelum experienced the same shock from the star as it would from a nova source.

On the violet star were the faint outlines of a mouth, nose, eyes, and ears. It was the face of a profound old man with a sense of antiquity, vicissitudes, and a wisdom that suggested he could see beyond the facade of life. Just a glance made Tianming realize what a vast difference there was between the Solar stage and the sovereign's cultivation level.

"Descendent, fate has brought us together to comprehend life," the old voice echoed in Tianming's ears.

"Senior!" Tianming truly felt as if the old man was alive. Even if his vita and terra had dissipated, the remnants of the old man that was left behind in his caelum were far deeper than any regular caeli.

There was a deafening roar as countless voices brushed past his ears, speaking at the same time, like millions of flies were flapping their wings. Light and shadow flickered before his eyes as figure after figure flitted by.

When he crashed into the violet star, the light instantly engulfed him as his caelum collided with the Aster Sovereign's. In that instant, for a time, he seemed to have burst into a real world. Before his eyes was a bustling palace. Just as he was taking in his surroundings, the sound of a baby's cry came from deep within the palace. It originated from millions of years ago.

"The Aster Sovereign is born!"

Everything was so real. It all began from his birth.

"I'll accompany you on your journey." Tianming took a deep breath.

...

On this day, the number of transmission stones flying throughout Orderia increased by a hundred times. Everyone was reporting the same thing: the new myriad sect ranking has been released! The complete ranking was displayed on the Skyward Stele in the Voidsky Realm, replacing the previous imperial star ranking. The myriad star ranking was even more eye-catching now. As soon as the new ranking was out, the nearby Myriadragon Mountains became the most busy place.

"After ten thousand years, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has once again reached the top of the ranking!"

This was the myriad sect ranking's most sensational change. The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect had overtaken the Dreamless Celestial Palace. And what did they rely on? There was no doubt it was the return of the Veildragon Palace. Did this mean the Sky Palace acquiesced in their return and recognized them as part of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect? The answer was obvious.

The Myriadragon Mountains were filled with a cacophony of voices. Reaching the top of the myriad sect ranking was the dream of all the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect members. However, they could not muster the slightest bit of joy. Their position on the ranking was reliant on the Veildragon Palace returning against their wishes. Additionally, the Myriadragon Mountains were in fact under the celestial orderians' control. On the other hand, the people from the Veildragon Palace were elated. It almost seemed as if they were really part of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. Because of the new myriad sect ranking, the Myriadragon Mountains were divided—some rejoiced, while others expressed indifference. It was a juxtaposition of ice and fire.

...

Tianming left the wondersky realm and noticed the change in the Myriadragon Mountains.

"Why does the power of the nova source feel stronger?" Tianming asked in confusion.

"The new myriad sect ranking was released and the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect won first place. The Sky Palace revised the distribution of nova source, increasing the nova source within the territory of Xuanyuan Dragon Sect and reducing it within the Dreamless Celestial Nation," said Lingfeng.

"Didn't the Empyrean Sword Sect say that the Sky Palace wouldn't change the distribution of nova source unless it's to weaken the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect?" Tianming asked in confusion.

Lingfeng and Xiaoxiao both shook their heads. They didn't quite understand either, nor had Tianming's cockroaches in the Sky Palace seen anything. Up until now, the Sky Palace remained a mystery.

"I don't know if it's good or bad that the nova source has temporarily increased," Xiaoxiao said with some worry.

"Brother Tianming, will Qingyu get here soon?" Lingfeng softly asked.

"She should be here soon. My cockroaches are slowly spreading out. I'll be the first to know if anything happens," said Tianming.

"Alright."

They wanted to see her as soon as possible to confirm her situation.

"What about the Azuresoul Palace?" Tianming asked.

"They're now ranked thirty-first, going up several places," Xiaoxiao replied.

That meant there was more nova source in the Azurecloud Continent. The Azurecloud Divine Tree might bear more fruit in the future.

"Alright!"

Was having more nova source a good or bad thing? Tianming didn't know either. But at least it would save him a lot of time.

After their brief conversation, he immediately entered a state of cultivation. Having cultivated with caeli imperius for a period of time, he had immensely gained. His Lifesbane Will had rapidly grown and had undergone a complete transformation. He wanted to see if he could become a fifth-level constellier in one go. The nova source awarded to the first place was indeed powerful; Tianming already felt as if he possessed the strength to overcome this level.

...

Somnium City was hidden in the deep sea, surrounded by dreamlike illusions. The reduction of its nova source was experienced by all and the city fell into chaos for a while; its citizens screamed and cursed. In the center of the city, a bewitching young man stood above the palace and looked up at the sky, his lips curled into a sly smile.

"Something happened to the Sky Palace. Will the divine wondersky race soon have our opportunity?"

...

A sea of fiery clouds filled the sky. Amidst the flames that covered the entire world, a masked, rock-like swordsman stood still with his arms folded until a figure appeared in three different directions.

"Northdipper Swordsage, you said the Sky Palace would reduce the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's nova source and completely give up on them. So how do you explain the current situation?"

Chapter 1450 - Son-In-Law's Sect

The return of the Veildragon Palace and the promotion of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect on the myriad sect ranking didn't matter. The ranking wasn't important, but an immediate adjustment of the nova source was a problem. The weight of the nova source was related to the lifeblood of any force. If the Sky Palace

didn't control that lifeline, it wouldn't be so important that no one dared to challenge their authority. No one would raise objections if the Sky Palace didn't change the distribution of the nova source. But now, the Dreamless Celestial Nation might have something to say about the change.

"What are you all anxious about? The Dreamless Celestial Nation is the one who should worry. And as far as I know, even the Voidword Shrine has been affected. Part of their nova source has also been allocated to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. The Sky Palace is weakening the foreign races," said the Northdipper Swordsage.

"Weakening them? The majority of the Sky Palace are from those two forces," came the voice of a sturdy figure.

"Once they enter the Sky Palace, their origins don't matter. After a granduncle of mine entered the Sky Palace, we barely had any contact so don't expect them to be partial. The Sky Palace has its own will," the Northdipper Swordsage replied.

Despite his words, he tried to rope Tianming and the others in in the hope they could speak for him when they entered the Sky Palace in the future. It was clear that he didn't fully believe in his own words.

"I think the Sky Palace is trying to push the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect into making a decision—either fight or remain quiet. Their tepid response isn't at all beneficial for the Myriad Solar Sects. This matter won't affect us for the time being, though. Even if the sky falls, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect will be the first to bear the brunt. For the time being, we'll wait and see what happens," the Northdipper Swordsage added.

"I hope so."

"I assumed the sun emperor wanted to devour the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect bit by bit, but according to the latest news, I don't think he can wait for results that might take generations. The Xuanyuan Dragon Sect is about to undergo major changes."

"You're talking about the fifteen million Goddess Guardians, aren't you?" the person on his right said in response.

"I heard that as well."

"It's Apothecary Li's legions, the most sinister group of people in the celestial orderians. They're the ones responsible for burning, slaughtering, humiliating, and plundering on the sun emperor's behalf."

The Northdipper Swordsage nodded. "Once they join in, the celestial orderians will have the advantage in the Myriad Dragon Mountains. Coupled with their control over the dragonsprings, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect will be in a more difficult situation. Once the sun emperor finds an opportunity or an excuse, he may severely hit the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, beat those people into submission, then slowly erode and brainwash them. They'll save at least ninety percent of the time they would have taken otherwise. That's how the sun emperor operates."

"An opportunity or excuse? The sun emperor is the best at finding high-sounding reasons. When his sister was insulted, he killed Long Junxuan. Then his sister was kidnapped and he sent fifteen million people to protect his daughter. If the key individuals in the Myriad Dragon Mountains are dead, he can launch an attack on the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect."

"So the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect is doomed this time."

"Long Wanying was bold enough to kidnap Li Wushuang to exchange for the three dragon imperials. They might've gotten them back, but they've also led an army of fifteen million to them."

"That isn't really the case. Without Li Wushuang, the sun emperor can still find another reason. That's where he excels, isn't it?"

"The question is, what do we do?"

The three turned to the Northdipper Swordsage.

"What can we do? The Dreamless Celestial Nation and Voidword Shrine have yet to say anything. I formed an alliance, yet one tree was all it took for the alliance to fall apart. If the Sky Palace doesn't step in, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect will have to fend for itself." The Northdipper Swordsage helplessly shrugged.

"Don't make yourself sound like such a good person. The so-called 'alliance' wasn't formed to help the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect," someone sneered.

"That's right. Thank you for reminding me. I was almost moved by my actions." The Northdipper Swordsage laughed. "In truth, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has always been first among the Myriad Solar Sects. Their foundation surpasses the two major foreign forces. If the celestial orderians want to take them down, they'll definitely bite back. It's hard to say who'll win. The best outcome is that neither side wins."

"Then the Emyrean Sword Sect will swoop in and take their position?"

"If the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect falls, we all have a chance to climb up and we'll all benefit. It's best if the Dreamless Celestial Nation and Voidword Shrine join the battle and lose part of their forces!" the Northdipper Swordsage said with a smile.

"Swordsage, I thought the wargodeans would at least fall to fifth place after losing more than a hundred thousand of their elites in the Azurecloud Continent."

"Yes."

Beneath his mask, the Northdipper Swordsage's countenance shone with a cold light. In fact, that was the source of all his unhappiness today. He had assumed that the Emyrean Sword Sect would be able to reach fourth place on the myriad sect ranking under his leadership. When he had first become the sect master, the wargodeans were the reason they'd fallen from fourth place. He was under enormous pressure; in the Emyrean Continent, all fingers were pointed at him. Since then, he had dreamed of reclaiming the fourth place, or even making it to the top three. His lifelong dream was for the sect to reach number one.

"The stoneword race is extremely talented. If we possess the most nova source, our clan won't lose to the Xuanyuans!"

...

Whitesource Peak, the Myriaddragon Mountains.

Tianming took a deep breath. The air was so hot it seemed like he was breathing fire. It was obvious how hot his body was after absorbing the nova source.

"The changes are astounding."

The Azurecloud Continent and the Myriadragon Mountains were as different as the sky and the earth. The nova source here was similar to the Voidsky Realm, though not as violent as the Voidsky Flame Pillar. It benefited not just one person, but billions.

"The myriad sect ranking is extremely important." Rising to his feet, he stretched his limbs. Like hot glass, his body seemed to pop and crack. He made a thunderous boom by clenching his fists and circulating his astral force.

"I've stabilized my cultivation level. Compared to my last match against Ye Chen, I'm definitely stronger. It's just a pity that I can't use the decapath era godswords in Orderia."

Walking out of the courtyard, he saw Lingfeng standing at the entrance.

"What's wrong, Feng?" Tianming asked upon noticing his solemn expression.

"Aunt Ying asked us to go see her. There's news regarding Qingyu," Ye Lingfeng said.

"Let's go!"

Long Wanying was most likely with the Saintdragon Emperor, so the two flew over the dragon-shaped peaks and headed to the Little Saintdragon Peak, which was considered the mountain with the best resources among the seven thousand outers. It was completely enveloped in nova source like a scorching flame. However, this was only the Saintdragon Emperor's temporary residence. His real residence was in the Great Saintdragon Peak which was in the middle of the three thousand central mountains. That was the core of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, the highest mountain among the Myriadragon Mountains.

"I heard the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect has been allocated more nova source than the Dreamless Celestial Nation previously received. It's the most any sect has ever received. They've transferred part of the Dreamless Celestial Nation and Voidword Shrine's portion to us," said Tianming.

"Those two sects must be unhappy," Lingfeng said.

"I wonder if they'll protest to the Sky Palace or celestial orderians?" Tianming smiled. They arrived at the Little Saintdragon Peak and entered the great hall together. This was the heart of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. The Seven Dragon Imperials and Yang Ce were the only ones present.

"Come here." Long Wanying beckoned to them.

"Aunt Ying, Yin Chen said there's fifteen million celestial orderians escorting the Ninemoon Goddess here?" Tianming asked.

"Yes. You understand what the sun emperor wants, don't you?" Long Wanying said.

"I do." Tianming nodded. The connotations of the word "escort" sufficed. To put it bluntly, they were openly playing tricks.

"They can't use this excuse forever," Tianming said. He believed it was unlikely that the sun emperor would leave the army here. Qingyu would eventually return, otherwise her cultivation would be affected.

"You're right, but the sun emperor has a new countermeasure," Long Wanying helplessly said.

"What is it?"

"He's betrothed the Ninemoon Goddess to a descendant of the Veildragon Palace, Long Renshe. You've heard the news, haven't you? However, the wedding date hasn't been set. Our informant says that the sun emperor wants to marry the Ninedragon Goddess to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect so the fifteen million troops can stay here to 'protect' her. He can say it's her dowry.... We never expected such a thing. The sun emperor's had sinister plans for the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect from the day it was rumored that the Ninemoon Goddess would wed into it."

The wedding date wouldn't be set far off, so the fifteen million people could openly stay and support the Veildragon Palace. Tianming and the others already knew about the betrothal, but it was merely a promise at the time. Qingyu was too young to be married; however, the matter was clearly on the agenda now.

"We expect the sun emperor to hold the wedding in the Myriaddragon Mountains to completely separate the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect from the Myriad Solar Sects. That way, the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect will become in-laws with the celestial orderians. With that, the celestial orderians will operate in the Myriaddragon Mountains and in all of our territories. This is detrimental to us in the long run..." Long Wanying explained.

"This sun emperor is really shameless and insidious," Tianming said, his gaze narrowed.

It was terrifying when the strong were unscrupulous. If this wedding was really held in the Myriaddragon Mountains, would the Myriad Solar Sects come to congratulate them? Would the sun emperor be present? And the most important question was, did Qingyu agree to the marriage? Based on what Tianming knew about her, neither she nor Lingfeng would agree. He turned around, only to see demon ki surging in Lingfeng's crimson eyes.