

## The Ages 1461

### Chapter 1461 - Is It Really Li Wudi?

"Are you going to turn into her?"

When Tianming heard that, his heart skipped a beat. His and Lingfeng's hearts had sunk when Yin Chen had repeated everything to them. According to the Torchdragon Emperor and others, this kind of change in her bane-rings made it possible for Li Wushuang to become a ruler. It was equivalent to a surge in talent. However, how could a woman accept looking like a ghost? Qingyu must be more afraid than Li Wushuang.

In the face of Tianming's question, Qingyu momentarily struggled. With tears in her eyes, she said to the little cockroach in front of her, "Yes." She mentioned how the sun emperor had dripped nine drops of scarlet liquid on her bane-rings before her trip to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect.

"He said he got it from somewhere in the void. It may cause totems to evolve. Although it can increase one's strength..." The more she spoke, the more her voice trembled. Li Wushuang's current appearance was like a nightmare that she couldn't get out of her mind.

"Damn it!" Lingfeng made a dent in the stone pillar next to him, his eyes darkening. He had desperately prayed for her safety, but in the end, she'd still suffered a mishap.

"Qingyu, do you know anything else about this liquid? For example, its name?" Tianming took a deep breath, his expression icy. His godfather had asked him to protect her; it was his only request. However, the situation wasn't optimistic. Tianming was just as sullen as Lingfeng. Before this, he hadn't openly been in conflict with the domineering sun emperor. But at this moment, Tianming was finally convinced that he was the enemy! He might have indulged in a bit of wishful thinking in the past, because he didn't want to be enemies with such a powerful force.

"I don't know. Maybe Li Wushuang does." Qingyu shook her head.

"Alright, don't panic yet. We'll ask around and see if there's anything we can do to get rid of this thing," Tianming said.

As her big brother, it was Tianming's responsibility to protect her. The urgent task at hand was to figure out what this liquid was.

"Will it affect you for the time being?" Tianming asked.

"No."

"Okay, then remember, you mustn't allow your emotions to fluctuate. Also, make sure your bane-rings are kept intact," Tianming warned. He recalled that Li Wushuang's change had begun when her bane-ring was destroyed by the Wind Swordlord.

Qingyu nodded. After talking to Tianming and Lingfeng, she was no longer alone and felt an inexplicable sense of safety and confidence in herself.

"Don't worry, just follow my arrangements. I promised Godfather that I'd get you out of here safe and sound." Tianming grit his teeth.

The road ahead was difficult, and the one who stood in the way was the ruler of this world. He was extremely strong and had numerous subordinates. Facing the sun emperor right now would be impossible.

"It'll be very difficult. After I was taken there, I thought about escaping. I was so naive. With the mark he planted on me, he'll be able to find me even if I return to the Flameyellow Continent. I might not even be able to escape his control even if I traveled to other worlds with a nova source." Qingyu bitterly smiled.

Tianming had expected as much. A nonabane's talent was equivalent to the celestial orderian's progenitor. How could the sun emperor allow her to escape from the palm of his hand? Just like an inescapable net, his control stretched across the ends of the earth. They were dreaming if they thought a few juniors under the age of thirty could escape him alive. Qingyu's body was covered in invisible chains that made her despair. Because of them, Qingyu could only cultivate after arriving in Orderia.

"Don't worry. I have a way to leave Orderia with a divine astralship. But I can't be sure if it's effective." Tianming told Qingyu about the Imperial Ninedragon Tomb and the Azurecloud Divine Tree Saplings. Her eyes lit up; she finally saw a possibility of breaking out of the sun emperor's clutches.

"Big Brother, we must take our father with us if we have an opportunity to leave!" She said in a low voice, her eyes blurry with tears.

"Our father? Li Wudi?" A puzzled Tianming asked, "Didn't you say the sun emperor isn't your father?"

"Of course he isn't, but... I'm not sure, either," Li Qingyu said.

"Tell me."

"This year, I cultivated in the Ninemoon Palace. I'd also occasionally go to the Divine Sun Palace. I don't know if my eyes were playing tricks on me, but I seemed to see my father sitting on the throne once. The color of his hair is different from the sun emperor's. He didn't speak to me, just waved and pushed me out of the palace. When I entered again, he was gone." As Qingyu recalled the situation at the time, her eyes were filled with doubt.

"Did you make a mistake?" Tianming asked in shock.

"No, the flames are very strong and I was a little absentminded. But one glance was all I needed to know that he was different from the usual sun emperor. After all, I know my father very well. Even if he isn't drinking or bragging, the way he looked at me was different from the sun emperor," Qingyu eagerly said.

Li Wudi had left him a note, asking him to take care of Qingyu while he went to investigate the secret of the experiment. It was clear he had left the Flameyellow Continent. Nothing in the Tianming Dynasty and Flameyellow Continent could escape Tianming's eyes. If Li Wudi was still in the Flameyellow Continent, Tianming would have been able to find him. However, only gods at Ascension could leave the Welkin plane. All of that suggested that Li Wudi had undergone further changes after the transformation of his bane-rings.

"You mean it's possible that Godfather is in the Divine Sun Palace?" Tianming asked.

"It's possible.... Where else could he go?"

"Perhaps that devil imprisoned us because of our bane-rings!" Qingyu said, her voice filled with hatred.

"Why do you call the sun emperor the devil?" Tianming asked.

"It's something I've felt from the moment we met. I hate him. He's a terrifying man who seems to be in control of everything. He holds my fate in his hands and treats me like a puppet. I'm not allowed to resist him." Qingyu bit her lip in resentment.

Tianming nodded. Bowing his head, he contemplated for a moment and said, "If Godfather has yet to appear despite being in the Divine Sun Palace this whole time, then it's complicated. It means the sun emperor treats him differently. You're valuable enough to be nurtured. Perhaps Godfather's value can only be exploited if he's imprisoned or dead! Qingyu, do you know what Godfather was talking about when he mentioned experiments? Can you guess the connection between Godfather and the sun emperor?"

### **Chapter 1462 - Birdcage**

Qingyu shook her head in exasperation. "I don't know.... It's impossible, Big Brother. He's too strong. I'll never know anything he doesn't want me to know. Neither my father nor I have the strength to resist him."

They were merely mortals who had come from the chaos skyjail. Even after Li Wudi had awakened eight bane-rings, he was still working hard to become a god. Because of the weak spiritual energy in the Flameyellow Continent, it was difficult to attain godhood without the inheritance of caeli. How could he fight an emperor from a world with a nova source?

Tianming felt like a sea of fire stood in their way.

"Big Brother, I hope I'm wrong. I hope my father is doing well, at least better than me. He's suffered too much. The heavens can't be so unfair to him," said Qingyu.

"The astralscape of order has a strict hierarchy. They have millions of years worth of legacies and a nova source. There's no way we can fight against the sun emperor in just a few years."

In fact, Tianming's talent was extraordinary; not even the sun emperor's daughter could catch up with him. However, he was still no match for a man who had cultivated for an entire millennium. For the time being, there was no solution to their problem.

"Don't overthink it, you'll only stress yourself out. I'll think about your problem first." Tianming set aside the issue regarding his godfather and set his sights on Qingyu. Although they were godfather and godson, Tianming thought of him as family. He didn't have siblings, but he had long regarded Qingyu as his sister.

"Qingyu, what do you think of your betrothal to Long Renshe?" Tianming solemnly asked.

"It can only mean that he began planning the occupation of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect from the moment he laid eyes on me." Qingyu bitterly smiled. If the goddess married the successor of the Veildragon Palace, then the celestial orderians had reason to remain and protect her. For that reason,

the sun emperor had put on a convincing act, emphasizing how much he loved the Ninemoon Goddess. The purpose of the engagement was to take over the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect.

"So you aren't willing to marry him?" Tianming asked.

"Big Brother, are you kidding? How could I be willing? He's just playing me like a puppet." Qingyu shook her head.

"Don't get all excited, I'm just making sure on behalf of Feng." Tianming laughed.

Qingyu's behavior had Lingfeng breathing a sigh of relief. In life, the greatest joy after reuniting was discovering that neither one of them had changed.

"Feng is so silly." Qingyu pursed her lips. There was a smile on her face whenever she mentioned him.

"He's listening," Tianming said.

"Well, tell him... I miss him a little. As soon as I left the Divine Moon Realm, I thought I'd look for him in the xenomemory space if I ever regained my freedom..."

"Well there's no need for me to repeat that. He's pricked up his ears."

Their conversation made Lingfeng blush. Heaving a sigh of relief, he turned away and looked into the distance, hoping to resolve the awkwardness.

"Ye Lingfeng, you hooked up with my sister the moment I wasn't around!" Tianming gave him a kick.

The silly Yin Chen relayed that to Qingyu, who covered her face in embarrassment. "Big Brother, you've got it all wrong. I was the one who hooked up with him...." She faltered.

"Young people nowadays are so direct!" Ying Huo said with a look of disgust.

"That's Ying... Huo speaking... isn't it?"

Looking up at Ying Huo, Yin Chen repeated Qingyu's words.

"So what if it is?" Ying Huo pursed its beak.

"Shuo Yue... says it... misses you... as well." Yin Chen burst into laughter. Turning into a locust, it revealed an expression of disgust.

"Dammit, I've got love troubles! I must hold on. I can't save myself for one person like Tianming!" Ying Huo shuddered, fluttering its wings and flying away at once. Its words echoed in the air. "Fifth, tell that big white bird not to lust after my handsome figure!"

What a chicken!

A reunion was hard to come by. Even if the road ahead was filled with obstacles, even if they couldn't overcome adversity, nothing could affect their optimism. When he had finally stopped laughing, Tianming took a deep breath and said, "If that's the case, we must ruin this so-called betrothal."

"Big Brother, can it be done? Won't it cause a chain reaction? Ruining the sun emperor's plan will definitely arouse his anger. I'm afraid that innocent people will suffer as a result," Qingyu said.

"There'll be risks and danger. We still have to come up with a detailed plan. Don't feel bad, you're just a pawn of his. His purpose is to completely control the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. People will die, but it's his fault, not yours. Everyone has the right to live for themselves. If you remain his pawn, he'll have more reason to harm others," Tianming said.

"Alright." Qingyu nodded. After their conversation, she felt a release of her pent-up frustrations. Even if the chains of fate were wrapped tightly around her neck, there was hope in her heart because she had family and loved ones on her side. After all, Tianming was a reliable man. "Big Brother, I really want to see you. It's a pity I'm trapped in the Dragontooth Spring."

Like a lonely bird trapped in the sun emperor's cage, she could hardly move, even if she spread her wings. She had merely switched to a different cage in the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. Freedom was an illusion; Shuo Yue was the only one she could speak to about her suffering. But now, Tianming and Lingfeng had appeared outside her cage. The chains were still there, but at least she was smiling.

"Don't worry, we'll have plenty of opportunities. The future will be better. At least Feng and I have climbed to a position where we can see you," Tianming said. Rising from the Flameyellow Continent to the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect hadn't been easy.

"I'll try my best as well. I'll never give up. I can't disappoint those who love me." Clenching her fists, Qingyu vowed to keep fighting. Then she suddenly thought of someone. "By the way, where's Ling'er? Why haven't I seen her?"

"Ling'er is by my side. Something happened to her and I'm still waiting for her to heal." Tianming grit his teeth.

"That's good."

That was all they had to say. Rising to his feet, Tianming patted Lingfeng on the shoulder. "You two talk. I'll take a walk."

"Okay." Lingfeng was still a little nervous. Embarrassment swept across his face as he turned to the locust in front of him. Those who didn't know any better would think that he had fallen in love with the insect.

### **Chapter 1463 - Li Shenjian's Killer Move**

Tianming walked out alone and jumped onto an enormous tree at the top of Whitesource Peak. It was the Radix World Tree. At the moment, its flowers were in full bloom as it absorbed nova source.

"How's Ling'er?" Tianming's gaze fell upon the center of the tree. In front of him was a light blue flower with tiny red dots. Above the flower sat a naive little girl in spiritform. Resting its chin on its hand, it endlessly whispered to the flower.

"I don't know."

"Then what're you telling her?" Tianming asked.

"I'm complaining about you." With a trace of craftiness in its eyes, Xian Xian folded its arms.

Tianming stood beside the flower and leaned against it out of habit. He felt at ease whenever they were stuck together. Then he began to cultivate and absorb nova source. Cultivating with caeli imperius yielded great results; he had made immense progress in the shortest period of time.

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A few days later.

As the Seven Dragon Imperials expected, the fifteen million Goddess Guardians had come with an agenda. They weren't just there to intimidate. After settling down, their first move was to leave the Myriadragon Mountains in groups, making their move in the two continents controlled by the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. They said they were sightseeing while expanding the scope of the goddess' protection, but in fact, they caused trouble everywhere. There were countless cities and towns outside the Myriadragon Mountains where ordinary cultivators lived. The totemancers were there to pick a fight. As the celestial orderian army, their overall strength surpassed that of ordinary people. Although it seemed harmless, it was unpleasant having their people causing problems everywhere.

"To put it bluntly, they're trying to annoy us until we can no longer bear it and give them an excuse for a fight."

"This is just the beginning, it's all child's play. They'll continue causing trouble over the next few decades as long as the Ninemoon Goddess remains, so the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect and the people of this land will have no peace."

"There's no doubt that this shameless tactic comes from the sun emperor."

He was clearly the most powerful, yet he liked playing the fool and using the most shameless methods to annoy others. It was exactly like Li Shenjian and the others had suppressed the disciples of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect. If they didn't resist, they would continue being bullied. But if they did resist, their oppressors would have excuses to take revenge! Their behavior was incredibly disgusting.

However, the celestial orderians were indeed stronger. The only time they had suffered a loss was when Tianming and Lingfeng killed Long Wangyu, and it was a loss they wouldn't forget. Over the past few days, numerous people had tried provoking Tianming in hopes of avenging Long Wangyu. Among them were cultivators close to a hundred years old. He didn't want to pay any more attention to them; the constant shouting and hooting was so annoying that it affected his cultivation.

He was aware that Li Shenjian had a problem with him. After all, he was the leader of the junior disciples. After brainstorming with the others, Li Shenjian had listed more than a dozen ways to kill Tianming, which he would try out one by one. Unfortunately, his actions weren't a secret to Tianming.

In fact, Tianming was more curious about Long Renshe, whose reputation in the celestial orderians surpassed Li Shenjian and his brothers when they were at the same age. It was said that he possessed the Contradragon Talent, which developed from the Saintdragon Talent, yet transcended it. It was the most extraordinary talent in the history of the clan.

Long Renshu was fifty-eight years old, three years older than Li Shenjian. In terms of strength, both of them were indeed superior to Tianming. That was the basis of their confidence and the reason they

were so sure they could recover their dignity. In their eyes, Lingfeng, who wasn't a Sky Palace disciple, had to die.

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A young man in white and gold armor and another dressed in black visited the Dragontooth Spring. The square bane-ring between the first man's eyebrows was extremely eye-catching. It looked like it was stamped with a seal and contained four fiery, golden words: just, righteous, fair, and honorable. It didn't matter what the words were; as long as they appeared within the bane-ring, they were of utmost importance. The black-clad young man was obviously from the dragon clan. He had three eyes, but without close inspection, one might think he was ordinary.

They were Li Shenjian, the sun emperor's ninth son, and Long Renshe, heir to the Veildragon Palace. It wouldn't be a surprise if Long Renshe eventually became the overlord of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, the number one sect on the myriad sect ranking. However, the two were blocked at the entrance of the Dragontooth Spring. Countless Sunscorch Guards stood in their way.

"What's wrong?" Li Shenjian was stunned. "Are you going to stop me from seeing my sister?" Just by looking at the bane-ring between his eyebrows, the entire celestial orderians recognized him.

"The goddess doesn't want to see anyone," one of the Sunscorch Guards reported.

Li Shenjian burst out laughing. Narrowing his eyes, he looked at the Sunscorch Guard and said, "I'll remember you. I want to see Li Yunxi. Get her."

"The commander is in the Saintdragon Shrine. She's instructed that no one is allowed to enter until she returns."

"Very well then." Li Shenjian was so angry he started laughing. He couldn't figure it out. Even if Qingyu was the sun emperor's biological child, wasn't he his child as well? Others prioritized sons over daughters, so why was he treated like a servant when it came to the sun emperor?

"I'm her older brother. I can't see my sister? Are you idiots? Are you going to stop the goddess' husband as well?" Li Shenjian was dumbfounded.

"I apologize. The goddess has specifically mentioned that she refuses to see the two of you." The guard lowered his head.

Li Shenjian's expression twisted in a grimace. The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. Anyone would be frustrated when faced with something like this. Not to mention, from childhood to adulthood, the sun emperor had practically ignored his sons.

"My father ordered you to protect her to elevate her status so that all fifteen million of you can openly remain here. There's no one else here. Why're you still pretending? Get lost. Do you understand?" Li Shenjian was just about to push the guard away when the other Sunscorch Guards marched over to stop him.

"Your Highness, please don't embarrass us. We're just following orders," they said in unison.

"Never mind." Long Renshe shook his head. "Let's go. The goddess has traveled a long way and needs more rest. Let's not disturb her."

"You fools! You're all mad!" Li Shenjian was furious. It was a pity he couldn't force his way in, either. After hurling angry expletives, he left with Long Renshe. But the more he thought about it, the more indignant he felt. "We're all his children. Why's there such a difference?" He slammed his palm into the huge boulder in front of him, shattering it into pieces.

"Calm down. It's all right. We mustn't disrupt His Solar Majesty's plan. The goddess is an important part of it, after all. There can be no mistakes," Long Renshe said.

"I wanted her help in devising a plan to get rid of Li Tianming, but in the end we couldn't even see her," Li Shenjian despondently said.

"What're you going to do?" Long Renshe asked.

"I'll take a page out of my father's book. I want to use the same method he used to deal with Long Junxuan. It's simple and effective. Li Tianming will have no hope of recovering from it, and that Feng will die! Long Wangyu is dead. If we don't fight back, all our previous efforts will have been in vain." Li Shenjian frowned.

The sun emperor entrusted him with the task of suppressing, brainwashing, and conquering the young disciples. But as soon as Tianming had arrived, he'd given them a heavy blow so their efforts fell short. How was he going to prove himself to his father?

"You want the goddess to frame them for violating her?" Long Renshe asked, his brows furrowing.

"Yes. It's a killer move and she doesn't have to do anything. As long as she speaks, they won't be able to clear their names. My aunt didn't even see Long Junxuan at the time. With just an accusation, Long Junxuan was slaughtered on the spot," Li Shenjian proudly said. Obviously, he admired the sun emperor's wisdom.

"Let's try something else. It might be effective, but it'll affect the goddess's reputation. Besides, she won't help you," said Long Renshe. Although Li Shenjian had previously claimed he had a great plan, Long Renshe only realized now that it was such a vicious one.

"You're right. She isn't going to help me. It won't work," Li Shenjian sneered. Then, taking a deep breath he continued, "So we'll just have to use another method. We won't need the goddess' help."

"Will it work?"

"It'll work even better."

### **Chapter 1464 - Holding Heads High**

"So? What trick is that?" Long Renshe asked.

"Haha, I can't tell you yet. Let's see if it works out first," Li Shenjian said.

"Playing it mysterious, I see." Long Renshe helplessly smiled.

After having been completely ignored by Qingyu, Li Shenjian didn't want to talk about how he would deal with Tianming too much. He changed the subject and said, "Brother She, that junior disciple of Li Tianming called Feng could even defeat the tenth-level constellier Long Wangyu. Given their ages, they



both seem devilishly talented. Even with your impressive Contradragon Talent, your achievements at their age didn't measure up nearly as much. Do you think their age might be fake?"

The chaos surrounding Long Wangyu's battle seemed to have died down on the surface, but in fact, it had caused a complete uproar among the celestial orderians' side. It was already hard to accept the fact that Tianming had defeated Li Haochen, allegedly the top young genius of the celestial orderians. Yet even the normal-looking Lingfeng had been able to kill Long Wangyu. Now the young celestial orderian disciples under the age of thirty couldn't even hold their heads up high. Even the youthgrand disciples, including Li Shenjian and Long Renshe, felt threatened by those two. If they lost, it would be really embarrassing. The two apex geniuses were like poisonous thorns embedded in the hearts of the celestial orderian and Veildragon Palace youths.

"I doubt their age is fake. They participated in the Voidsky Skirmish, after all. Their origins must be really mysterious, though, given their talent," Long Renshe said.

"Perhaps they excessively relied on pills and medicines to get so powerful."

"At the end of the day, you just refuse to believe that they're just that powerful."

"There is a reason for everything. For our side, being an octabane or having Contradragon Talent is the ceiling. My sister's nine bane-rings, on the other hand, is something completely out of a myth. Even though she had a really late start, I'm still nowhere as impressive as her," Li Shenjian said.

"Perhaps! There's no certainty when it comes to cultivation. Some people start off impressive, only to languish at the later stages. Nothing's decided yet." In cultivation, the first peak growth period was before the age of thirty. The second period was considered to be between thirty and a hundred. Starting the growth of one's heavenly will before the age of thirty at the saint stages was really easy. Coupled with the fact that younger people had an easier time learning, the huge strides made during early years were only normal. In a sense, the strides one made before the age of thirty were proportionally more than those they would make between the age of thirty and a hundred, and so on.

"As the saying goes, 'the peak is in sight by the age of a hundred'. Basically, one's limits are only visible once they hit that age," Long Renshe said.

"That's right. And the basic requirement to become a sovereign like the sun emperor is to reach the sixth level of the Solar stage by a hundred years old," said Li Shenjian. Even though there was a span of nine hundred years between a hundred and a thousand years old, the progress made might not even compare to that of the first hundred years of life, especially when the things one needed to learn would only grow progressively harder. Talent was like a consumable commodity that would eventually run out.

If one was able to grow from the sixth to twelfth levels of the Solar stage in a millennium, they would stand a chance to break through to the level of top sovereigns. Otherwise, there wouldn't be any hope beyond that. Past the thousand year mark, it would be lucky if one didn't deteriorate as time went on. It was really difficult controlling so many albi in the body with divine will, after all. As for living forever, that was probably something that only completely different lifeforms like the Archaionfiends could achieve. At the very least, it wasn't something that one could do with an albus-based body.

Even though those were common facts in the cultivation world, even normal folk back in the Vermillion Bird Kingdom understood the simple principle that learning became harder as one aged. Even to them, learning anything beyond the age of twenty would be much harder than in the first twenty years.

"In other words, if we don't take down these two, none of the young disciples of the celestial orderians will be able to hold their heads up high," Li Shenjian said.

"However, we'll lose even more face if youthgrand disciples like us lose to them. That's why no matter what, you have to be careful," Long Renshe said. Now that Qingyu was there, his intentions differed slightly from Li Shenjian's. Oppressing the youths of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect was the mission Li Shenjian had been given by the sun emperor, so he was naturally far more anxious about it than Long Renshe.

"Got it," Li Shenjian said. The reason he didn't want to reveal his plans was because of Long Renshe's hesitance. If he told him about it, there was no doubt that he would try to talk him out of it, or even try to stop him. "If that's all, I'll take my leave." He turned and left, disappearing into the mountains.

Long Renshe looked in the direction he went for a long while. He had a feeling that this long-time childhood friend of his, a brother to whom he felt closer to than his real siblings, had become quite distant from him before he realized it. When they were together, they no longer felt as carefree as before and were even skeptical of each other to some degree.

"For the rest of my life, I'll have to follow the goddess no matter what. With her, I'll be on the top of the world and only subservient to her will. You can't give me that, Li Shenjian, so you don't deserve my utmost support." It was true that they had grown distant, but why should that matter? Hot-blooded camaraderie was something that would eventually cool off as they matured, after all.

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"What in the world are they talking about?" On Whitesource Peak, Tianming didn't know what to make of the conversation. As long as Li Shenjian kept his mouth shut, Tianming wouldn't know what he really planned to do, though he wasn't too anxious about it.

"There's no way he'll be able to pull off whatever he's planning alone, and as long as someone helps him out, he'll have to tell them what to do." No matter what the plan was, Li Shenjian would need to know where Tianming and Lingfeng were to plan things out, so he would no doubt need someone to spy on them. Yet nobody was more capable of espionage than Tianming at the moment. While ten or twenty million Yin Chens weren't that many and could still let some information slip through, it already gave Tianming a really wide coverage. Yin Chen had played a pivotal role back at the Azurecloud Continent, always giving Tianming the initiative to act before anybody else.

"Just keep an eye on Li Shenjian. I want to know everything he says to everyone he meets," Tianming said.

"Got it," Yin Chen lazily said. It was a walk in the park for it. As expected, Tianming soon found out about Li Shenjian's plot based on how his subordinates acted alone. It didn't take long before he left the Great Saintdragon Peak and sent informants to Whitesource Peak to monitor Tianming, Lingfeng, and Xiaoxiao. The moment any of them left the area, a report would be made.

However, when Li Shenjian noticed that the three of them weren't going anywhere, he began growing impatient. He even tried luring Xiaoxiao out into a trap; it seemed that he was targeting Xiaoxiao to get to Tianming. Naturally, she ignored the little trick and stayed put at Whitesource Peak, leaving Li Shenjian no option but to wait.

"Let's wait him out for now." Currently, the enemy side had thirty million troops and were causing trouble in an attempt to get a pretext for war. That wasn't something Tianming could currently deal with, so he merely focused on his cultivation and waited for the next development.

### **Chapter 1465 - Cyclic Constellation**

There was something that Li Shenjian didn't understand: why did it seem like Tianming, Xiaoxiao, and Lingfeng didn't need legacy caeli to cultivate at all? Most of the caeli of the sect were under the Veildragon Palace's control, while the Seven Dragon Imperials only had a small portion of them, which were the ones spread out across the seven thousand Earthdragon peaks. Caeli of that caliber weren't too different from those of the Azuresoul Palace, and the amount of caeli available to disciples within the Redlotus Worlddragon Formation numbered even fewer. Transferring caeli into the formation would take quite some time, so being protected had come at a huge opportunity cost for developing disciples.

Even then, Li Shenjian figured that the caeli of the outer sect couldn't possibly be good enough. If Tianming and the other two were to quickly cultivate with proper guidance, they would have to leave Whitesource Peak, yet he'd been waiting for two months now and nothing had changed. The three of them hadn't taken a single step away from the peak.

"Perhaps they know that I'm trying to get at them, so they're holed up for now and waiting for the incident with Long Wangyu to blow over.... Then again, I can afford to wait, but can devilishly talented disciples like them afford to not cultivate using proper caeli?"

Thus, Li Shenjian continued waiting. Tianming's goal was to take Qingyu away without incident, so there was no benefit to dealing with Li Shenjian right now unless getting to him would somehow let Tianming approach Long Renshe. Li Shenjian would never be able to imagine that Tianming was currently surrounded by nearly a hundred caeli imperius inside the wondersky realm, focusing entirely on his cultivation while Yin Chen served as his eyes and ears in the real world, allowing him to evade countless dangers coming his way.

On the ninth level of the Violetglory Pagoda, there was a gigantic red star to the left of Tianming, covered in angry flames. Even his caelum was able to feel the heat from the flaming star, whose flames seemed to take the form of a gigantic face. This was the caelum of the Radiant Sovereign.

There was a dark blue star to his right, which seemed like a beautiful core of nova source. Its surface was seemingly covered by an azure sea that was actually formed from countless blue electric snakes. Huge waves thousands of meters tall could be seen all across this star, the sounds of which resonated with his caelum. This caelum belonged to the Empyrean Sovereign.

The two sovereigns were from the two ruling powers of the Violetglory Star respectively. They used to be archnemeses that fought each other countless times in the past, but now they were nothing but egoless manifestations of heavenly laws, guiding the same junior on his path through the Constellation stage.

"It's great to not have to fend off a challenger once every ten days." Tianming could forget all unnecessary distractions and focus on his divine will, heavenly path, and the laws of the universe. Sometimes he felt like he was an infant being taught how to walk by the caeli of these two old sages. One of them explained his teachings with passion, while the other was gentle and understanding. Together, they helped him learn to walk, run, swim, and eventually, to fly.

"Sovereigns truly are on a different level." If solarians were on the level of normal soldiers or generals, sovereigns were no different from emperors. There were always few who could take up that position in every group, and only groups with enough subjects would have a sovereign leading them. Even if they didn't have a divine will that emphasized rulership like Tianming's, which allowed him to directly tap into the power of his subjects to fight, the strength of sovereigns was still dependent on all of the lifeforms under their rule. The Primordial God-Emperor was the one who pursued the path to its peak, and his shadow could be seen in the lives of many other sovereigns. Being guided by the caeli of people like these allowed Tianming to have a new understanding of what it meant to be a ruler.

"The sovereigns of the Violetglory Star might be better than those of the celestial orderians. The celestial orderians only rule over totemancers, while the sovereigns here ruled over all kinds of subjects, including specters and beastmasters." That allowed Tianming to diversify his scope of learning. His cultivation had stagnated for a time when he was at the Azurecloud Continent, but now his Lifesbane Will was making impressive progress. It took only another two months for him to break through to the sixth level.

There was a pleasant surprise that came with the breakthrough: his Lifesbane Will had also generated its own constellation! Before this, in every one of Tianming's albi, the sword-shaped divine wills turned into a black and gold imperial star when the constellation manifested, stabilizing his five-layered astral discs and the astralforce within greatly. Now, the new constellation manifested under the astral discs in the form of a gigantic vortex of black and white stars, almost like a spiral galaxy that resembled a yin-yang diagram. Like a huge spinning disc, it supported the five-layered astral discs above it, interacting with the pandemonium constellation and giving Tianming's albi even more stability. The unique nature of the constellation definitely had something to do with his Aeonian Grandbane and totems.

"It's called the cyclic constellation...." Tianming wasn't sure if it had anything to do with the Prime Tower or Li Muyang's Cyclic Mirror. The name just occurred so naturally to him. His Imperial Will seemed to correspond to pandemonium, while his Lifesbane Will corresponded to the cycle of reincarnation. He knew that this constellation was just the start; the rest was still incredibly hard to grasp.

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When he returned to the real world, Tianming summoned both of his constellations. On top was an imperial star dominating all other stars with its golden light. Below was a rapidly spinning yin-yang disc that seemed to scatter black and white stars from its side, making it look like Tianming was at the center of a storm.

"What in the world is the power of the cycle of reincarnation?" His Imperial Will focused on domination. He studied it for a long while and finally ascertained what it could do. "It looks like another incredible miracle!"

**Chapter 1466 - Infernal Dragon Purgatory**

These sudden gains were quite a delight for Tianming. He was more and more certain of the path he needed to take from now on. "My pandemonium constellation will eventually evolve into a pandemonium sun, becoming even more powerful and bringing me closer to the Primordial God-Emperor. As for my cyclic constellation, it'll become a cyclic sun... I wonder who that would resemble? The owner of the Prime Tower? Or the owner of the Cyclic Mirror?"

Tianming recalled the figure he saw within the Prime Tower way back at the Grand-Orient Realm. "Let's not overthink it."

He would take things step by step. He turned his excitement down a notch and focused on replenishing his astralforce until his power matched a sixth-level constellier's. "If I use all my totems, I should be close to being unrivaled among constelliers. Even without them, I should be able to defeat eleventh-level constelliers! I just need a little bit more until I'll be able to take on solarian seniors!" Tianming had been waiting to fight them for far too long.

"At the very least, I want to be completely unmatched by any youthgrand disciples. Fortunately, I have the caeli imperius to guide me." That was his current goal. Otherwise, there was no way for him to face off against such a huge faction like the celestial orderians.

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Tianming went to the Little Saintdragon Peak once his abilities were stabilized. He knew that Li Shenjian's informants were keeping track of him; Li Shenjian was planning to maim or kill him, which would take quite a bit of preparation, so Tianming was relatively safe if he acted without a set pattern.

His status was quite high, so it would require a huge opportunity or justification for him to be crippled. Not to mention, Yang Ce and the Seven Dragon Imperials were also at the Little Saintdragon Peak. Lately, they had been really troubled over the additional pressure of the celestial orderians. Billions of normal folk within the territory of the sect were taking the brunt of what was effectively an occupying force, suffering to no end, and there was really nothing the sect could do to stop it. What was even worse was the fact that the suffering would continue as long as they were at a stalemate.

With enough time, perhaps centuries, the disciples of the sect who had been deprived of caeli or cultivation resources by the Veildragon Palace would weaken, be oppressed, and eventually assimilated. Either way, the sun emperor's victory was set in stone, the only difference being how soon it would happen. If there was a war, it would only accelerate the process. The Seven Dragon Imperials were even more troubled by the celestial orderians, who were spread out and unabated. Killing thousands of them wouldn't solve the issue, and they might as well start the battle for real if they were out to kill hundreds of thousands of them.

"They're shameless!"

"Tianming, you said Li Shenjian had a way to deal with you. Any updates on that?" Long Wanying asked since they had no resolution for their issues.

People turned their attention to Tianming when they noticed him, glad that he felt stronger than before. This was the second time he had grown since coming to the Myriaddragon Mountains, even without the help of caeli or divine pills! They weren't aware of his miraculous heavenly locus formation.

"Aunt Ying, I have a clear idea of what he's planning now," Tianming said.

"I guess nothing escapes your eyes. Let's hear it," Long Wanying said with relief.

"It's a simple ploy, really. Xiaoxiao still holds the Dragonblood Desecration, the ancestral weapon of the Veildragon Palace. Li Shenjian is planning to brand her as a thief of their ancestral treasure when she heads out alone. He wants to reclaim the weapon, allegedly to use as a dowry for his little sister's upcoming marriage, and imprison Xiaoxiao in the Infernal Dragon Purgatory. That's basically the death battle arena of the sect, right? He plans to lure me there and fight me to the death, essentially doing to me what I did to Long Wangyu." Tianming shrugged with a hint of a mocking smile.

It was a ruthless plan, but a pragmatic one. Not to mention, the Dragonblood Desecration was a legitimate enough justification. That the people from the Veildragon Palace were eyeing that weapon wasn't a new idea to them. The only reason they hadn't come to take it away outright was that they were worried the Seven Dragon Imperials would stop them. Instead, capturing Xiaoxiao and slapping a conviction on her would give them the initiative to act, not that the plan had any merit as long as Yin Chen was around.

"The ninth son of the sun emperor sure does live up to his vile reputation," Long Wanying said. Things would be troublesome if Xiaoxiao really fell for it, which she might if Tianming wasn't around. They had already attempted to kill Lingfeng before, so they wouldn't hesitate to harm her as well. Not to mention, she wasn't a Sky Palace disciple. Both she and Lingfeng were no different from normal disciples of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect in terms of status now, and people considered them Tianming's weakness.

"It's fine, we just need to ignore him. No matter how many ploys he comes up with, they're all pointless if we see them coming from miles away. So much for being the sun emperor's son," Tianming said.

The sun emperor had quite a few sons, Li Haochen being a decent one among them. Li Shenjian, on the other hand, wouldn't hesitate to stoop low for his goals. Tianming figured that he was probably desperate to prove himself in some capacity, probably after he saw how much his father had spoiled this new sister of his.

"Alright. Make sure to tell Xiaoxiao to keep her guard up and not give them any openings. But... if enough time passes, Li Shenjian might just resort to getting the seniors to come to Whitesource Peak and demand she be handed over. I think it's better for the three of you to move to Little Saintdragon Peak. I think he plans to settle things and claim all the credit for himself for now, though," Long Wanying said.

"I see. Then we'll move here soon. Aunt Ying, Li Shenjian is a twelfth-level constellier, right?"

"Yeah. He's around fifty years old and in the crucial stage of breaking through to become a solarian. For his age, his level is pretty impressive. Li Haochen would probably be as powerful as he is now when he reaches that age."

Tianming nodded, thinking, if I could use my totems, I could defeat him. But that wasn't an option.

"Tianming, do you know why he chose the Infernal Dragon Purgatory?" she asked.

Tianming shook his head.

"There's many flame divine hazards inside, which gives his totems a huge elemental advantage. That shows how much effort he's put into his plan to deal with you, as well as how wary he is of your power."

"I see."

"Actually, that is a place that you should visit, if it weren't for Veildragon Palace's occupation."

"Why is that?"

"At the core of the Infernal Dragon Purgatory, there's some infernal dragon sword ki, a grade-seven divine hazard sword ki. It's really suited to your Ninedragon Tribulation technique. I believe it'll bring the move to a whole new level. More importantly, that place is the first level of the Sworddragon Ocean Purgatory. There's seventeen more levels beyond that, meaning there's eighteen strands of grade-seven divine hazard sword ki to be claimed there. It's a collection that was assembled over millions of years by our sect, but it's a shame the Veildragon Palace occupies it now. Otherwise, we could've given all of it to you! What's worse is that Li Wushuang has her sights on them. I believe she'll be taking them, sooner or later."

All of them were endlessly troubled that their treasures would eventually end up in Li Wushuang's hands. Only four of them had their dragonsprings now, and the Azure dragon Emperor's dragonspring was the formation core of the defensive formation around the Sworddragon Ocean Purgatory, which the Veildragon Palace has taken from them.

"Li Wushuang?" Tianming asked Yin Chen and verified that it was indeed the case. She was planning to claim them in the next few days, so Tianming would lose his chance after that. "Aunt Ying, I want to risk it. I'll go along with his plans."

### **Chapter 1467 - Prey Leaving the Cave**

Tianming's words came as quite a surprise.

"What do you mean by that, Tianming?" the Saintdragon Emperor asked. These days, they had learned a bit about Yin Chen's abilities and were utterly astonished. Even though the ore mines of the sect couldn't quite compare to the Emyrean Sword Sect's, they were still among the top three in the Myriad Solar Sects in terms of scale. Most of them were occupied by the Veildragon Palace for now, as they were an important resource, hence the ores and divine herbs had to be kept from the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect to stunt their growth.

Once Long Wanying brought it up, the others had been trying to think of a way to bring Yin Chen to the mines. Tianming currently had a total of five million Yin Chen units and he'd brought four million of them over to the sect with him. Once he reached ten million in total, it would be a completely different scale. So far, the lifebound space was still big enough to store even more units.

Yin Chen's abilities had immediately earned Tianming the trust of the Seven Dragon Imperials, to the point that they were even willing to hear out what he meant about falling for the enemy's plan. They knew that it was a judgment he had made after gathering all the information he could.

Tianming scratched his head and said, "Well, I wanted to ask a bit more about the Infernal Dragon Purgatory first before I decide whether to take the risk."

"Alright, ask away. We'll answer everything we know," Long Wanying said.

"Well, first, I want to know how big the place is and what kind of environment it has. Is there any way for me to hide inside?"

"It should be pretty huge and filled with fire divine hazards of all sorts, mainly in the form of sword ki. It's basically a volcano, so there's quite a lot of huge blind spots. Normally, it would be harder for larger lifebound beasts to manifest within, but if beastmasters really try to run and hide, it would take a pursuer quite some time to find them."

"I see. What about the Sworddragon Ocean Purgatory? How do I get to the deeper levels?"

"There's a different type of elemental divine hazard on every level, and each level is separated by a defensive formation. The deeper you go in the levels, the higher the grade of divine hazards. The first ten or so levels are guarded by grade-six divine formations while the lowest one has a grade-seven divine formation, all of which are controlled by the azure dragonspring that's in the Torchdragon Emperor's possession. We are unable to enter it."

The Azuresky Myriadsword Formation was one such grade-seven divine formation, yet the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect was using a formation of such high grade to keep the divine hazards locked up. Quite a few of them, in fact.

"I see. So, what would happen if I say I want to fight Li Shenjian but secretly try to sneak into the lower levels?"

"The Infernal Dragon Purgatory is filled with fire divine hazards. According to our sect's rules on death duels, only the two of you may enter while the rest must watch from outside. If you disappear, most people will just think that you're trying to hide. We won't be able to see if you've gone to the lower levels for sure. However, if you destroy a formation to enter, the bearer of the azure dragonspring will definitely notice something," the Saintdragon Emperor said.

"That might not necessarily be the case," Tianming said with a smile. With enough time, he could just use his unique trait as a sky plunderer to burrow his way down to the lower levels without alerting the owner of the formations. The only issue with that was that the first level of the purgatory was usually guarded by the Veildragon Palace, so he had no chance to even get in in the first place.

"Tianming's also a really impressive formation guru. He claims that there's no formation that can keep him locked up for good," Long Wanying said.

"Surely, that can't be." The other Dragon Imperials were skeptical.

However, Tianming already had the information he needed. "Seniors, is there a special significance to death duels in the Infernal Dragon Purgatory?"

"There is, in some sense. That's the place where our forebears broke off from the Veildragon Palace. Eventually, it became a place we went to settle our conflicts and disagreements. No outsider is allowed to interfere, and there's strict and fair rules to be observed during such duels."

"So nobody's allowed to leave until one or the other dies?" Tianming asked.



"Backing out from a fight is really humiliating. If you lose or run away, it'll greatly affect our morale. After all, our disciples and even full-fledged sect members already see you as a symbol," Long Wanying said.

"I see." He gave it a little more thought and smiled. "I have a good idea of what I need to do now."

"Are you sure you'll have to go along with Li Shenjian's plans and arrange a death duel with him to infiltrate the Sworddragon Ocean Purgatory? Putting aside whether or not you can bust through the formations, it probably isn't a good idea to let Xiaoxiao be captured and have the Dragonblood Desecration taken away, right?" Long Wanying asked.

"Aunt Ying, Xiaoxiao won't be that easy to deal with. We don't have to risk her safety by letting her be captured. We just have to use a part of the Dragonblood Desecration as bait and spark some old grudges to get it to work."

"Are you really confident?" Long Wanying was still skeptical about the details, but she didn't press it, seeing that Tianming still seemed rational.

"I can't say for sure, but at the very least, I know that neither Xiaoxiao nor I risk losing anything from this." Even though it would be really hard to take down Li Shenjian without his totems, that wasn't Tianming's goal. What he wanted was to enter the deeper levels. Given his current power, he wouldn't be able to take out Li Shenjian, but the same was the case the other way around, especially considering the fact that Tianming's survivability far exceeded most of his peers. He had already done his best to mitigate most of the risks, so it would be a shame to miss out on such a good opportunity just because of cowardice.

"Alright. We trust your judgment," Long Wanying said, representing them all. While the Saintdragon Emperor and the rest were still a little hesitant, they still nodded in agreement.

"I'll get Xiaoxiao to start," Tianming said.

"We'll eagerly watch the show, Tianming," the Saintdragon Emperor said. He had a feeling that this youth was different from most from the moment he'd met him at the Voidsy Realm.

"I can't promise a good show, but I won't just sit there while someone else takes the sect's treasures away, either."

That was how the plan within the plan came to fruition.

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In the Grandcloud Palace, which was situated on Grandcloud Peak, Li Shenjian stood at the window with his hands behind his back, looking into the distance. There were tens of handsome celestial orderians youths around him, all of whom looked to be the best of their ilk. Though the cultivators of the Blueblood Starocean were cultivators like them, it was immediately obvious that they were in a completely different league.

The celestial orderians were a massive race of people, with subraces among them ranging from soul tribulators, soulswords, and many more. The totems of these dozens of people in Grandcloud Peak were incredibly varied as well, but they were all loyal followers of Li Shenjian.

At that moment, a transmission stone flew into his hand. He looked at it and his eyes brightened with joy. "The prey is leaving the cave. Let's go."

### **Chapter 1468 - Interception**

Dense, hot nova source swept past amidst the strong winds of the storm, causing one's face to heat up and even crack. Many women were reluctant to leave their homes when the density of nova source outside was this high. At the end of the day, nova source was akin to a wild force of nature, and while divine will could be used to suppress it, its fundamental nature couldn't be altered.

Cultivating using nova source was almost like dancing on the tips of blades, a feeling that Xiaoxiao was all too familiar with. Her every breakthrough made her feel like her divine will couldn't keep up, causing her to be unable to control her nova source very well. Time and again, she ended up heavily injured during breakthroughs for the same reason. But thanks to her altered body from symbiotic cultivation with the Archaionfiend, however, she recovered rather quickly and gradually grew numb to the pain.

Long Wanying had given her quite a lot of caeli to consume, and she'd done her best to get better and stronger until the time came for her to realize her true potential. Today was one of the days she could show her value. It wasn't too uncommon for a quiet person like her to be traveling alone. She headed toward Little Saintdragon Peak in the midst of the storm, when all of a sudden, people came to stop her from the front and back.

"Stop, Lin Xiaoxiao!" They were disciples of the Veildragon Palace, led by a girl with waist-length hair. She had a black eye and a red eye and luscious, red lips. According to Tianming, she was Long Yaojin, one of the Blooddragon Emperor's granddaughters. She had a similar status as Long Wangyu and was about the same level in power. Her lackeys surrounded her and spread out after they stopped Xiaoxiao in her tracks. Then dragons emerged from their lifebound spaces, completely sealing off any way ahead. Their dragons looked bloody and savage; it was one of the factors why they had broken off from the larger sect as a whole.

Xiaoxiao furrowed her brows. Just as she was about to back off, she saw a dozen celestial orderian disciples behind her. Though they didn't summon their totems, they did cut off her escape route.

"Forget escaping. It's impossible for you," Long Yaojin said, standing on top of a gigantic black dragon with a single horn with her hands on her waist, looking down on Xiaoxiao from above. Her seductive figure exuded temptation in that pose. Compared to her, Xiaoxiao looked like a cold, boring rock. Everything apart from her slightly odd gaze was suppressed.

"What's your deal?" Xiaoxiao asked. Looking around, she saw that the other disciples were looking at her with smirks. They had turned their sights on her as expected, since she didn't often show her talents. Tianming and Lingfeng were always in the limelight.

"Listen up, Lin Xiaoxiao!" Long Yaojin had her dragon fly close enough that she could glare at Xiaoxiao in the face. She pointed a finger at herself and said, "I'm a descendant of the Blooddragon clan, Long Yaojin. My ancestor used to possess a top-tier grade-seven divine artifact that has been lost and taken. It's called the Dragonblood Desecration."

"So?"

"You aren't one of our clan, yet you forcefully assimilated the exalted blood of our ancestor and stole our treasure, sullyng the Dragonblood Desecration with your filth. That's a sin that can't be forgiven. As a descendant of the clan, it's my duty to right this wrong done to our clan by punishing you and retrieving the artifact!" she spat. Every word she said had been carefully chosen by Li Shenjian. She had been waiting for this moment for two whole months. Given her status as the Blooddragon Emperor's granddaughter, letting her pin the crime on Xiaoxiao would be far more legitimate.

"Lin Xiaoxiao, you'd best submit to us without any resistance. Otherwise, you'll end up dead. You're just a normal disciple of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, after all, so nobody will care even if you die!"

"Your comrade Feng has already committed the grave crime of killing Long Wangyu and he would've died if not for the Seven Dragon Imperials stepping in!"

"Right now, you're alone, so you better not do something you regret."

The ones from Veildragon Palace made threats while the celestial orderians stayed quiet.

"Hand it over!" Long Yaojin knew that they were at the Earthdragon peaks, so they had to settle things quickly. Once she made the accusations, she immediately struck. The others surrounded her as they waited for any sign of resistance, prepared to use even more force if she did.

As expected, Xiaoxiao fought back. She took out the Dragonblood Desecration and knocked it as she summoned the Archaionfiend. An explosion of blood lightning immediately shook the surroundings. Even now, Xiaoxiao had the highest level of the trio, being a ninth-level constellier. Her Archaionfiend's combat capabilities far exceeded even hers, its lightning blast being a few times stronger than the time it was used to defeat Long Youyou. Long Yaojin, a tenth-level constellier, was immediately sent flying from the wave of power.

Blood lightning crackled, sweeping across the ground and smashing boulders, causing the dust on the ground to rise. Using that chance, the Archaionfiend flapped its wings and zipped into the sky. Now a six-star divine beast, it was gigantic, especially with its wings spread open as it spread its bloody lightning bolts all across the sky.

"Stop her!" Long Yaojin cried with a hint of shock and frustration from the initial blast. She felt how much power Xiaoxiao actually had. "Yet another monster? Are these three really only in their twenties?" Long Yaojin couldn't believe it no matter what. "Maybe they used some way to change their age to keep their power hidden for crucial moments...."

It was one thing for Tianming to be powerful; his genius was undeniable. Yet Xiaoxiao seemed so plain in comparison. How could she possibly be more powerful than Li Haochen, the son of the sun emperor?

The instant Long Yaojin furrowed her brows, Xiaoxiao broke out of their encirclement and the celestial orderians reacted by summoning their totems. There were plants, swords and totems of many other forms and shapes, filling the sky. The Archaionfiend soon found itself forced down to a lower altitude, its lightning shield seemingly shattered by the totems' totemic calamities.

Even then, they still found Xiaoxiao to be truly powerful. "She isn't any weaker than that Feng kid. What in the world?" They immediately found themselves troubled the moment they fought her. What was

even more troublesome were the blood arrows that came firing from the head of the Archaionfiend as it fought in hand to hand with them. The arrows were swift and unrelenting!

"She's nearing a tenth-level constellier in power!"

"Don't get hit! It's the Dragonblood Desecration!"

### **Chapter 1469 - Octabane Totems, Justice Emblems**

The Dragonblood Desecration was a divine artifact that stood out even among other grade-seven artifacts. Once Xiaoxiao had grown familiar with it, its damage potential far outstripped that of other grade-seven divine artifacts, and Long Yaojin's group didn't have anything that could rival it.

The blood arrows fired in an intricate, almost net-like pattern, almost instantly impaling one of the dragons that tried attacking the Archaionfiend and digging its way in. Then tens of thousands of blood-colored lightning bolts wormed into the dragon through the open wound, exploding within and causing a rain of flesh to burst out as the arrow's bloodgorge dragonmark began draining away the blood. The dragon immediately fell to the ground.

"Aaaah! Kill her!" Seeing his precious lifebound beast sustaining heavy injuries, the Veildragon Palace disciple came charging at her like a madman.

"Careful!" Long Yaojin cried. As she gave chase, her lifebound beast shot an ability toward the Archaionfiend, who blocked the attack for Xiaoxiao with its own abilities like a meat shield.

The next instant, Xiaoxiao fired three arrows at Long Yaojin's vitals, forcing her to evade. Though her vitals hadn't been struck, the blood lightning infused in the arrows did send her flying again, completely dismounting her! The Archaionfiend charged in for a counterattack, clasp one of her dragons with its claws and biting off a huge chunk of meat from it. Thankfully, the totems of the celestial orderians came to its rescue, causing the Archaionfiend to shield itself and Xiaoxiao with its wings and grounding the both of them.

"Kill her!"

"Now's our chance!"

People began swarming toward her, only to charge into a volley of blood arrows. The arrows were fired so quickly that it was almost like tens of thousands of them were unleashed in a single volley! The foremost two celestial orderians were roughly eighth-level constelliers. They were careless and didn't manage to block the arrows, which pierced through their totems and continued on toward them! One got impaled in the abdomen and the other got hit on the upper torso, only to be sent flying instantly. The one who was struck in the chest cried out in pain before he was sucked dry by the bloodgorge dragonmark, his death marked by the abrupt disintegration of his totems.

Logn Yaojin and the others were utterly shocked to see that. It was completely brutal! By the time they turned to Xiaoxiao and her beast, their expressions had completely changed. Fortunately, a group of people from the Skydragon peaks came flying toward them, led by Li Shenjian, who was dressed in platinum armor. He had even more of an imperial air than Li Haochen and seemed far more regal and authoritative.

Along the way there, he figured that Long Yaojin had more or less finished taking Xiaoxiao captive, but the situation turned out to be the complete opposite. Not only were they no threat to Xiaoxiao, but the celestial orderian disciples had suffered casualties instead! His forehead immediately wrinkled in frustration.

"Yet another devilish talent?" Why was it that geniuses far more talented than the best celestial orderians kept showing up one after the other? The world seemed to have stopped making sense!

Disgruntled, Li Shenjian cried, "Let me handle it!" He accelerated, turning into a blinding beam of platinum as he charged into the battlefield, knocking away a few celestial orderian disciples. His totems manifested with a loud bang, each of them coming out from the square-shaped arrangement of bane-rings between his brows. They looked like burning metal mountains, but upon closer inspection, Xiaoxiao noticed that they took the forms of imperial seals. They all had blocky bases and a golden qilin ornament on top. The bottom of the seals had golden words that read 'Radiant Justice'. The words shone with great power and seemed to assert a kind of imperial authority over anyone in their presence, forcing people to lower their heads from the pressure.

The eight totems were called justice emblems and they weren't one bit weaker than Li Haochen's vastsun godbeasts. Li Shenjian's might came bursting out from his totems as they sealed off the surroundings, bearing down like flaming mountains. Xiaoxiao's blood arrows merely bounced off and created sparks when they struck them, barely being able to push back at them.

"Keep your head down!" Li Shenjian ordered as the emblems pressed down on her from above, trying to force her into a world of gold.

The Archaionfiend's lightning burst out once more, but that wasn't enough to offset the pressure of the totems. The sheer force that crushed it caused it to suffer quite a number of broken bones. Even with its protection, Xiaoxiao was still sent flying.

"Such power...." Naturally, she was just bait and wouldn't go all out fighting Li Shenjian. She feigned a heavy injury and let go of the Dragonblood Desecration, allowing Li Shenjian to pick it up in the nick of time. Then all nine blood arrows returned to Xiaoxiao while Li Shenjian called his totems back to keep the bow that was raging to break free subdued.

"She's done for! Capture her!" he ordered. The remaining tens of disciples charged toward her. Right as she was about to be swarmed, a metallic stream came from Little Saintdragon Peak's direction, bursting out of the ground and blocking them right as they were about to reach her. By the time they managed to react, the Archaionfiend had returned to Xiaoxiao's lifebound space. The sea of metallic insects fused into a kilometer-long centipede that swatted away the surrounding dragons and totems before escaping in the direction of Little Saintdragon Peak.

"It's Li Tianming's lifebound beast!"

"Quick! The Seven Dragon Imperials are probably on the way here!" Li Shenjian called for his allies to charge. He had also notified his seniors to send the Dragon Imperials of the Veildragon Palace here.

"Even though I got the Dragonblood Desecration back, it's still better to keep Lin Xiaoxiao here. She'll serve as better bait for Li Tianming to fall for the trap."

He doubled down on his efforts, but a phoenix appeared in the distance near Little Saintdragon Peak, flying to meet with Yin Chen. Li Shenjian saw Tianming riding on the phoenix. His other lifebound beasts appeared to stop the pursuers, allowing him to quickly secure Xiaoxiao.

"Aren't you a daring one, Li Shenjian?!" Tianming said, feigning anger. He had told Xiaoxiao to intentionally let Li Shenjian have the bow of the Dragonblood Desecration, which would be a good reason for Tianming to accept Li Shenjian's challenge to go to the Infernal Dragon Purgatory. Additionally, the bow was useless without its arrows.

More and more elites began gathering after noticing the signs of battle, so Tianming prepared to take his leave.

### **Chapter 1470 - Far-fetched**

"Apologies... I didn't think she'd be so fierce," Long Yaojin said, riding her dragon to Li Shenjian's side. Others aside, even she showed signs of being hurt by the Dragonblood Desecration. Even the slightest brush of the arrows could take away huge chunks of flesh and cause one to continue withering as if one was poisoned.

Long Yaojin was in her fifties and her power should've been enough to take down the ninth-level Li Haochen, yet she had been injured by Xiaoxiao despite ganging up on her with others. It was rather distressing for the celestial orderians that a nameless female disciple like that could perform so well, to the point that the celestial orderian youthgrand disciples began to doubt themselves.

"Enough." Li Shenjian locked gazes with Tianming, who was just ahead of him. Even though he was someone more than twenty years younger than him, his aura wasn't one bit inferior. It was clear now that Li Shenjian wouldn't be able to take Xiaoxiao captive. "Thankfully, I got the Dragonblood Desecration."

He used a few of his totems to suppress the struggling bow that had turned into its dragon form. It required quite a lot of effort on his part, and the slightest mistake would allow it to escape.

"Lord Ninth, they still have the blood arrows that come with the bow. The Dragonblood Desecration is useless without its arrows," Long Yaojin said in a low voice.

"Oh!" Li Shenjian grit his teeth. "This'll suffice for now. We'll see if it's good enough bait for Li Tianming to follow me into the Infernal Dragon Purgatory. If anything, he should be the one that's anxious about losing the bow."

As expected, Tianming was quite brave as a Sky Palace disciple. He came toward Li Shenjian and the tens of people there with Xiaoxiao by his side. "Li Shenjian, you attacked us for no reason and took away our weapon. If you don't offer an adequate explanation for that, you won't be allowed to leave the seven thousand Earthdragon peaks!"

"For no reason?" Li Shenjian had wanted to see Tianming mad. He patted Long Yaojin on the shoulder and said, "I'll let those from the Veildragon Palace tell you why."

Long Yaojin cleared her throat and repeated what she had said to Xiaoxiao. "Lin Xiaoxiao, hand over the nine arrows and we'll even forgive you for the crime of assimilating the exalted blood. Otherwise you'll be punished according to the sect's regulations!"

Even though it was daylight robbery, they sure had dressed it up with all the right-sounding reasons. By now, the elites of both sides had arrived. Tianming was surrounded by many powerful fighters of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect; the Seven Dragon Imperials and Yang Ce had coordinated the timing with Tianming and arrived right on time to hear Long Yaojin's justification. Not to mention the Seven Dragon Imperials, the other elites were also enraged.

"Nonsense! The Ninedragon Emperor himself picked Lin Xiaoxiao to be the successor of his Dragonblood Desecration!"

"Again with your lawless nonsense, you robbers!"

"Li Shenjian, if you don't let go of it, don't blame us for getting rough."

Li Shenjian was naturally unfazed by the threats. While he hadn't discussed anything in detail with his seniors, he had told them about his plans right before he left. By now, quite a few senior celestial orderians had already come. Even the three Dragon Imperials of the Veildragon Palace, Li Xiaoyan, and Apothecary Li were there. Nearly a thousand people had almost instantly gathered.

"What's going on here?" Though Apothecary Li immediately knew what was going on when he saw Li Shenjian holding the Dragonblood Desecration, he feigned ignorance.

Long Yaojin explained the situation again, and the Torchdragon Emperor nodded in acknowledgment.

"Long Yaojin is correct. The Dragonblood Desecration is an artifact that was passed down by our ancestor, and traditionally, nobody outside of our branch has taken it. Reclaiming it is only right. However, we also understand that young people often act without too much thought, so we won't punish Lin Xiaoxiao for assimilating the exalted blood. After all, she's also part of our sect." He turned to her and said, "Don't be afraid, Xiaoxiao. Hand us the blood arrows and all will be well."

As he spoke, Apothecary Li and Li Xiaoyan came to Li Shenjian's side, secretly approving his actions. It had been one of the things on their agenda for quite some time, and having a junior like Li Shenjian take care of it was perfect, as Xiaoxiao was also among the young generation.

"If you take any action in the future, do inform us about it in advance," Li Xiaoyan said.

"Very well. It's too bad that Lin Xiaoxiao is more powerful than I expected. Otherwise we could've got the arrows as well," Li Shenjian said.

"Why'd you take it?" Apothecary Li asked.

"Apothecary, my true goal today is to force Li Tianming to come into the Infernal Dragon Purgatory with me. They definitely won't be willing to lose the Dragonblood Desecration just like that," Li Shenjian said.

"Well done, Young Lord Ninth," the apothecary said with a look of approval.

Li Shenjian was glad that things were going his way. As expected, the Seven Dragon Imperials immediately disputed the Torchdragon Emperor's words.

As for the Saintdragon Emperor and the rest, they criticized Li Shenjian and the Torchdragon Emperor's actions, citing the Ninedragon Emperor as justification. Tensions began rising on both sides as more and more people gathered. As most of them didn't know that this was all part of Tianming's plan, they were getting angry for real—none of them would accept losing the Dragonblood Desecration to the enemy for

no good reason. Not to mention, it was partly their fault for underestimating how shameless the Veildragon Palace would be to attack their disciple in their territory and take the bow away. If it weren't for Li Shenjian wanting more of the credit, they would have taken the nine arrows too.

The issue was that the bow and arrows were part of a set and couldn't do without each other, so the situation was rather awkward as the enemy only had the bow. It was as useless as a broken sword. Naturally, Li Shenjian was fully aware of that fact.

By then, the Dragon Imperials on both sides were already furiously shouting at one another. Long Wanying even dragged Xiaoxiao along and yelled, "Are you really going to be so shameless, Veildragon Palace? Lin Xiaoxiao was acknowledged by the exalted blood of the Ninedragon Emperor! How dare you say that she doesn't have the right and refute the Ninedragon Emperor's decision? You are the ones who're bringing our ancestors to shame! She isn't even thirty, yet not even the tenth-level Long Yaojin is her match! If we're to be real, perhaps the Ninemoon Goddess can't even compare to her in terms of talent! She's the person best suited to wield the Dragonblood Desecration, yet you're trying to rob it from her? Open your eyes and look! See if the Dragonblood Desecration agrees with your decision!"

As she spoke, the bow was still struggling in Li Shenjian's hand. By now, she knew what Tianming was planning to do. Giving away the bow was no doubt risky, but they had to risk something to gain something. At the very least, this was better than letting Xiaoxiao be taken hostage. Her words only sowed more discord—especially among the celestial orderians, whose precious goddess was brought into the conversation. Even though Qingyu didn't show her hand often, it was still quite improbable that she would be able to defeat Long Yaojin within such a short time of cultivation. The celestial orderians truly didn't have anything with which to refute the power of Lingfeng and Xiaoxiao, leading to their current awkward predicament.

"Shut up, Long Wanying! Who knows how many pills you had her pop?"

"You think she can even compare with the Ninemoon Goddess? Laughable!"

"What an ignorant wench!"

Those from the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect didn't take it sitting down.

"Stop boasting and have your goddess step up and fight for once!"

"So anyone that defeats you is doping? Maybe you should give it a try then, since it's obviously not working out for you! Celestial orderians have many alchemy gurus among them, right? Make some pills for Li Haochen and Li Shenjian, why don't you?"

The two sides were on the brink of conflict. At that moment, Li Shenjian found his chance, staring at Tianming as he said, "Since this is a conflict within the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect, let's resolve it another way."

"How do you plan to resolve it?" Long Wanying asked.

"I heard that the Sky Palace Disciple, Li Tianming, has become unrivaled among youthgrand disciples. Not even solarians are a match for him, but I beg to differ. I believe that every disciple from both the inner and outer sect would like to witness the power of an absolute genius like him. So, I challenge him to a duel to decide who gets to keep the Dragonblood Desecration. That should put an end to the



arguments and speculation," Li Shenjian said. Naturally, the rumors he mentioned didn't exist and were entirely inflated fabrications of his making, but many people simply took things at face value. It was quite a claim to say that a less than thirty-year-old disciple was unrivaled among youthgrand disciples, even those up to a hundred years old. The tens of thousands of people raised their brows upon hearing his words.

"Was there such a rumor going around?"

"I think so!"

"That Feng kid defeated Long Wangyu, so they began asserting that Li Tianming was unrivaled. They said that not even Li Shenjian would be able to defeat him."

"That's too far-fetched. Consider the age difference!"

"Since the moment he defeated Li Haochen, it's no longer an issue of age."

Tianming's defeat of Li Haochen was something that still heavily weighed on the minds of the celestial orderians. The prouder they were, the more humiliated they felt. Even if they needed the much older Li Shenjian to show Tianming his place, it would still be some kind of relief to them, hence their immediate support for the idea.

"Accept the challenge if you dare, Li Tianming!"

"Don't tell me he'll chicken out?"

"I don't think he will. He's proud and arrogant. Someone like him will definitely fight!"

The crowd grew rowdy in almost an instant. Tianming smiled at how well Long Wanying understood him. The moment he'd been waiting for had finally arrived, and without even needing him to say a word no less! Needless to say, Yin Chen had contributed the most to the state of events, allowing Tianming to understand the plans and motivations of his enemies. He just needed to play by the script they laid out in order to get his plan running!