

The Ages 1701

Chapter 1701 - Bloodbath Arena

After two months of silence, the Violetglory Star's wondersky realm flared up again.

"Quick!"

"I have to inform my senior disciple sister first! See you later!"

"Her? I heard she was going to give birth right before coming in. Even the midwife is ready."

"It doesn't matter! She said that she'll drag her caelum here even if she's mid-labor!"

The number of people within the wondersky realm instantly decupled, a sign of the stark difference between Tianming and his other friends. Naturally, a huge part of that was thanks to the Omnisentient Will and Threads that had formed. Despite all of them being geniuses, he was the only one able to inspire the masses, and it definitely had something to do with his personality.

"Have faith in Tianming and gain eternal life!" someone shouted.

Even before entering the Astraldome, Tianming felt that the Omnisentient Threads that'd faded in the past two months had recovered.

"Dammit, it's like I'm a circus animal dancing to their tune. If I do well, I get praise, but if I stop performing tricks, I lose fans...."

Perhaps that was the difference between being a glory-bringer and a savior. He had saved the Flameyellow Continent, so its people wouldn't forget him no matter what. But if all he brought the Violetglorians was a sense of pride, he would be a footnote in the legends once that faded. However, he didn't really care too much about it; he had to focus on strengthening himself to weather fate!

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"Please be prepared. You will soon arrive at the fifth level of the Tranquil Battlefield. Welcome to the Bloodbath Arena!" announced a voice when he was at the end of the transport corridor. His ears filled with countless sounds of cheering and shouting. This was a place made for battle, as its name suggested.

Before Tianming entered, he had asked Old Master Shengui about the rules of the fifth level. Historically, some Violetglorians had made it there, and it isn't too hard for geniuses near a hundred years of age. However, that was about the limit of Violetglorian geniuses across history.

The sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth levels were only available to those under a hundred, and no Violetglorian genius had ever managed to qualify. It was said that the sixth and seventh levels were filled with geniuses from skypiercer-class worlds, and only mysterians made it to the eighth and ninth. As for those under thirty, the fifth level was their upper limit.

During the last Astralium Seeking, those who had made it to the top ten were allowed to go to the fifth level. The fifth level didn't have any separation between those under thirty and those under a hundred, however, so the majority of people there were in their forties. Even the Celestial Beings would have a

hard time making it to the sixth level as they competed with geniuses much older than them, some of whom were qualified to be their seniors.

The rules of the Bloodbath Arena were simple. There were two sections in the arena for duels and group battles respectively. As long as one had a winning streak of ten in either arena, they would make it to the sixth level, with a caveat: the winning streak had to be obtained within ten days. In other words, the winning streak would be reset ten days after the first win. The rules were rather crude, but effective. Anyone intending to make it to the next level had to keep fighting time and time again, and others could sabotage their streak by challenging them!

Getting a winning streak at the duel area was easier than the group area. As long as a group won a battle, their defeated members would be revived to full health for the next battle. Basically, it was designed for mysterian seniors to carry their juniors to the next level, but the presence of weaklings in the party would put them at a huge disadvantage against other parties. Thus, carrying a weaker junior through a winning streak wasn't easy.

"Since I'm alone, I should join the duel area." He entered the arena's duel area, which was separated from the group area. Many names were hanging in the air, each with a number beside it ranging from one to nine that probably represented their winning streak. Tianming's name wasn't there yet, as he hadn't even won once. Nobody was paying attention to him for now.

He looked ahead and saw different inky-green spheres that seemed semi-transparent. When he approached, he saw two people fighting within each of them alongside totems and lifebound beasts. Each bubble showcased a bloody battle for all to watch. As there wasn't an age limit, the people fighting there had an overall lower level of talent, but more battle experience and technique.

"How fierce...." Tianming's heart pumped from the sight, knowing that his Violetglorian audience was anxiously awaiting his fights to start. The thought of achieving that winning streak in ten days was exciting, to say the least. He turned to the list of names again and knew without a doubt that those with more than eight victories were the most watched. They would be able to move on in another battle or two, but that only made it so that more people wanted to pull them back down.

Apparently, the wondersky realm assigned weaker fighters to those that defeated people who had higher winning streaks. It wasn't an outright rule, but the reported experience of many.

"I have to see if my luck will let me have an explosive start." Tianming began looking through the list of people to challenge.

Chapter 1702 - Someone is Copying My Face

Tianming didn't recognize any names, since these were mostly cultivators above thirty years old. He quickly scanned the list and he found a name that stood out from the sea of foreign names: Long. He looked at it a few more times to confirm he had seen it correctly.

Skyway Tristar, Crimsonjade Long!

The number after his name was four. Four consecutive victories wasn't too impressive, so his name wasn't too far in front.

Tianming couldn't help but grin. "I haven't been here for two months. In that time, Long joined another normal Astralium Seeking after his one month ban before successfully making it here.

Previously, Long should have been able to comfortably enter the top five and directly enter the fifth level. However, Tianming had ended up making him the butt of a joke.

"I hope that, this time, I don't need to sacrifice my totems and can just use my personal power to kill you." Both were victories, but each was different in essence. The Violetglorians knew that he hadn't been Long's opponent the previous time.

The ranking marked out the Bloodbath Arena that Long was at. Long had more or less taken over a Bloodbath Arena, which was his turf for as long as he remained undefeated.

"Let's go!" Tianming passed by many people. When he reached his destination, he found the Bloodbath Arena quiet with no sounds of combat. That could mean two things. Long had either returned to the real world, or there were no challengers.

Tianming looked through the dark green formation and saw that crimson figure present. It was the latter then; no one dared to challenge him. If Tianming dared, he would be Long's fifth opponent.

"How coincidental." Tianming chuckled and placed his hand on the formation without hesitation. He was initiating a challenge.

His expression was relaxed, but his actions caused a storm among Violetglorians and everyone in the Mysterium Cluster.

"It's him!"

"Violetglory Star's Li Tianming is here."

"He went straight for Long!"

The last time, Tianming had shaken the Mysterium Cluster when he had killed Crimsonjade Long while in desperate straits. He had been the talk of the town there for the last two months.

The uproar was especially great at the Violetglory Star; they all felt their blood pumping.

"He previously eliminated Long, but he wasn't actually as strong as him. But he's diving straight in this time! How domineering!"

"So fierce."

Tianming's actions drew the exclamation and anticipation of all non-Mysterians.

Of course, he wouldn't have attracted so much attention if he didn't go for Long.

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Tianming casually entered a vortex and passed through the formation.

It was very quiet inside. Long wasn't surprised to have a new challenger after waiting for so long. However, when he looked up and saw Tianming, who had brought so much humiliation to him, his murderous intent soared up.

“Very good. I’ve been waiting here for you for a month.” Long stood up. He stretched, making all the bones in his body let off cracking sounds.

When he clenched his fist, Long’s body transformed into blood-colored steel and his body became so strong that it emanated a suffocating pressure throughout the arena. Long had become a fierce beast that was glaring at Tianming. It was clear how much he wanted to take Tianming down and restore his honor. His exit from the battlefield had become a thorn in his heart that tormented him day and night. He couldn’t even go out and meet people, lest he be cursed at. So how could he not hate Tianming?

He had bottled up so much anger that he didn’t even want to say a word and go straight to tearing Tianming into pieces.

Skyway Tristar, which was behind him, similarly also burst into an uproar.

“Kill him!” Despite all their cursing toward Long, the faceless specters also wished that he would wipe away his past shame.

The furious Long provided a stark contrast to Tianming, who looked calm.

“This is the wondersky realm, Li Tianming. When we meet in the real world, you’ll have to look up to me,” Long said. Currently, even his fingers were as tough as a grade-eight divine artifact.

“Is that so? Let me give you some advice then,” Tianming lazily said.

“Speak!” Long began crossing the distance, the pressure he let off making him seem like a titan bearing down on Tianming.

“Surrender early before you get embarrassed again.”

Those simple words incited Long’s fury again, as well as made the spectating faceless specters feel the sting of humiliation. No one had ever embarrassed them before!

“Haha....” Long was so furious he started laughing instead. His hand covered his face and he hoarsely said, “As you wish.”

When he moved his hand away, Tianming’s face appeared, except it was tinted with the color of blood. Its features and lines were also too hard, making the face rather ugly.

“Copying my face and yet still looking ugly. What a tragedy,” Tianming said.

“Done talking?” After the face reveal, Long’s attack, defense, and speed had all greatly risen. Furthermore, he had also been granted an undying body that would even survive decapitation and regenerate lost limbs.

“Yes,” Tianming said.

“Heh, it’s time for you to die!”

Chapter 1703 - I Grant You Gods in

Long could no longer endure Tianming’s naked provocation. It was the same as last time, when he had ended up losing. The fire in Long’s heart had never burned so bright before.

Skyway Bloodpiercer! Bloodhell sacrosun!

Over a thousand spikes of blood shot out of his body and revolved around him. His bloodhell sacrosuns expanded as well, immediately turning the area into a hell of blood that belonged to him.

After using his face reveal, ability, and sacrosun, Long was much stronger than before. His body didn't look very strong, but it was on par with a cosmic wildbeast. The Bloodbath Arena wasn't very large, and he arrived at Tianming in an instant. The air was violently torn apart by his fist.

The audience couldn't breathe. How would Tianming respond?

In the face of the threat, Tianming remained calm. A transparent sword appeared in his hand and stabbed out to meet Long's fist.

After a loud clash, he was sent flying. He crashed into the arena's wall, but he still managed to land with grace.

"Eh?" Although Long stayed at the same spot, he frowned. He raised his hand and was surprised to see there was a bloody hole in his fist. Previously, his fist had shattered the Grand-Orient Sword! This time, however, he had been made to bleed. He would have been injured if he hadn't used his face reveal. Although it healed, the pain remained. He grit his teeth and glared at Tianming. "Grade-nine divine artifact?"

"Yep. I actually have a very rich family. If I'd brought this last time, what could you have done?" Tianming flicked the Godsins, scattering drops of dark green blood from it. Long finally realized that, although his fist was healing, the blood vessels had turned dark green. He felt a chilly pain spreading through his body that couldn't be stopped.

"Grade-nine!" Long was jealous. Not even he had one, so how did Li Tianming qualify? However, he didn't realize that the really shocked party was every spectator from the Violetglory Star!

"Godsins!"

The uproar was especially great among the cultivators of Violetcloud Imperium. There had been no update after Tianming had gone to challenge Godsins, so they had all assumed he had failed. This pleasant surprise now was very unexpected.

"That's Godsins, which generations of Violetcloud Imperium Sovereigns failed to subdue!"

"Only a true natural sovereign could subdue it!"

"I already said long ago that he's the greatest miracle of our star...."

As expected, the uproar increased Tianming's Omniscient Threads. This current response was exactly what he wanted. Of course, the icing on the cake would be elegantly taking down Long!

"Playtime's over now!" Tianming didn't summon Ying Huo and the rest in this fight; instead, he summoned nine of his decapath era godswords and used his first totemic calamity. Myriadword Providence was naturally far more majestic than Long's Skyway Bloodpiercer!

Ten thousand swords whistled in the air.

The Frozen Glasstree, Bloodweep Swordheart, and Ireflare Silkworm.... Three grade-eight divine hazard sword ki surged toward Godsins as the Galactic Godsins came alive. With ice, blood, and fire combined with the Galactic Godsins, the sword was several tiers above the previous combination of the Grand-Orient Sword and Frozen Glasstree.

“Faceless specters are mighty?” Tianming struck out with a sword stance he had honed to mastery. Sixth-fusion strike! The most terrifying thing in this line-up was the Galactic Godsins; his sword body was just a supplement. The ten thousand swords around him crashed down on Long like a tidal wave.

Long roared and his sacrosun shone in response. The spikes around him turned into spears that flew at Tianming. His speed was terrifying as he charged toward Tianming again.

Tianming’s eyes were cold. Godsins joined together all the different powers before exploding together with Myriadsword Providence!

Long never expected this attack would be even more powerful than Tianming’s second totemic calamity from before. And since then, he hadn’t improved.

Godsins turned into the sharpest blade and pierced through the spears while the Myriadsword Providence tore through the sacrosun before raining down on Long. Multiple swords ran through his body.

Long was flustered as he saw a figure appear in front of him. Expression disdainful, Tianming stabbed Godsins into Long’s head. Long directly exploded on the spot, his death even smoother than before.

The Skyway Bloodpiecer and bloodhell sacrosun all collapsed, leaving only Tianming in the Bloodbath Arena. He casually blew away the blood on Godsins, as if the battle he had just gone through was insignificant.

“Is this all Team Celestial Beings amounts to? Honestly, I was kind of expecting a challenge.” Tianming’s muttering stabbed into the hearts of the watching faceless specters. And of course, it reinforced the faith from the Violetglorians.

Chapter 1704 - Sovereign Brightscorch

The Violetglory Star’s wondersky realm experienced another round of cheering that was just as loud as during the Astralium Seeking.

Last time, Tianming had miraculously counter-killed Long, but this time, he’d killed him through overwhelmingly superior power!

Both were wins, but they had been accomplished in different ways. It also proved Tianming’s godly rate of improvement. His growth rate was far superior to the top five geniuses of the Mysterium Cluster. If the mysterious woman from the wonderians was ignored, Long would be in the top three. The Ninelives Crimsonjade was the greatest talent in the faceless specters.

After this lightning-fast kill, the passion of the Violetglorians was inflamed once again. Those who had already provided Tianming with Omniscient Threads had theirs grow thicker, while some who’d been indifferent joined those who were deifying him.

Omnisient Threads came from the legacy of the Primordial God-Emperor. If it weren't for the legacy, Tianming wouldn't have Omnisient Will no matter how shocking his performance was.

At the massive Violetcloud Battlefield, there weren't any battles going on right now. Instead, people were jostling for space with excited expressions. As the place that youngsters gathered, it was also the place with the highest emotions right now. Somehow, some time, there had come a day when everyone put aside their business to watch Tianming's journey through the Astraldome, which had become a must watch.

Those in the VIP rooms up in the sky could clearly see the scene. In one of the most luxurious rooms, the most elite Violetglorian was present. He was the current emperor of the Divineglory Dynasty, Sovereign Brightscorch. He had been quietly watching when Tianming stepped on the battlefield. And when Tianming killed Crimsonjade Long, he began clapping with heavy hands. Each clap hammered at the hearts of the two youths next to him, Ye Chen and Princess Shen Yu.

"Royal Father, why are you clapping for his unstoppable rise? He isn't part of our Divineglory Dynasty," Princess Shen Yu said in a low voice. Her face was no longer filled with confidence or energy like before. She had realized how utterly far behind they were when Feiling appeared in the Astraldome.

"He doesn't belong to the Divineglory Dynasty. However, he doesn't belong to Violetcloud Imperium either. Even if the deific-class worlds don't come, the skypiercer-class worlds will. Our star can't contain such a genius. Furthermore, those four by his side aren't any weaker than Ye Chen." Sovereign Brightscorch actually seemed more relaxed than before.

When he heard his name, Ye Chen grit his teeth. While he seemed to remain casual, the sovereign didn't miss the darkness in his eyes.

"Some people say that even if he leaves, he might still return to help the Violetcloud Imperium in the future," Princess Shen Yu said. Her worries proved the utter defeat of the Divineglory Dynasty. There were even believers of Tianming in their dynasty at this point.

"Maybe not. People go for greater heights while water flows downwards. Violetglory cannot produce such a genius, and especially not five of them. We don't even have any information about them, their parents, or their clan. They aren't of our star, so they won't see this place as home. This is just a training ground for them. I believe they should actually come from a deific-class world outside of the Mysterium Cluster." Sovereign Brightscorch frowned.

"Deific-class world? Then why come here to waste time?" Princess Shen Yu was surprised.

"Perhaps something went wrong. Anything can happen in this vast astralscape. Maybe even deific-class worlds can fall. After all, all nova sources will all eventually come to an end. There are no eternal races," Sovereign Brightscorch said.

"I see.... Much of the shock was due to his birthplace. If he came from a deific-class world, defeating Long is normal."

"Not really. When Li Tianming first appeared, he supposedly wasn't even a constellier. And that was two or three years ago," Ye Chen suddenly said. The information came from a girl called Liu Wanwan from Mystgod Pavilion.

"Maybe he was keeping himself hidden. The power you show in the wondersky realm is just what you record. The battle at the Observatorium was when he first revealed himself," Princess Shen Yu rebutted.

"Yes." Ye Chen couldn't say much more.

"Royal father means that we don't need to worry too much. Although those five are frightening, they don't have any emotional attachments to the Violetcloud Imperium. When the Mysterium Cluster comes, they won't stick around, whether they choose to run away or go along. Ye Chen, the future of our star is still in your hands." Princess Shen Yu held his hand, her expression much warmer.

"Yes, Wanwan." Ye Chen squeezed out a smile.

"Is there something you're dissatisfied with?" Sovereign Brightscorch slowly asked.

"Of course not. My debt of gratitude toward the sovereign and Wanwan is as heavy as the mountains," he hurriedly replied. In the past, they had all been very close. However, after Tianming's arrival, fractures had inevitably formed. Ye Chen now had imperius manna, but he'd also been bound. Even if Tianming left, things would never return to the way they were before.

The uproar below suddenly increased; Li Tianming had returned.

"He didn't continue his challenges?"

Everyone was looking up at the sky above. A youth with white hair and black clothes had appeared there. One hand was holding Godsins, while the other was a black arm covered in scales. His black and gold eyes carried the prestige of an emperor. It was like the return of the Primordial God-Emperor from yesteryear.

The Violetglory Star had shown Tianming the strongest form of Imperial Will. Blazing with excitement, Tianming pointed Godsins at the sky. "Brothers and sisters, I just have one question for you: was that awesome or not!?"

It was clear that he was trying to hype up the area.

"Awesome!!" The entire wondersky realm shook from that roar.

Chapter 1705 - Awakening from a Dream

Everyone turned their fervent gazes to Tianming. He laughed and said, "This is only the beginning! I'll prove to you all that even geniuses from deific-class worlds in the Mysterium Cluster aren't a match for me!"

The crowd broke into another wave of cheers. The way they looked at him grew more and more proud.

"Kill!" His roar inspired the audience to respond in kind. He was a symbol that the Violetglorians had never had before. Even sovereigns rarely commanded such an ability to unify people.

"Even though I'm a divineglorian, he's my hero! Forget Ye Chen!"

As they intently watched Tianming, his Imperial Will grew even more.

"This is the sovereign of the astralscape!"

Tianming felt rather pumped by the fact that so many people saw him like this. Every one of his believers weren't just numbers. He knew a lot about them through their Omniscient Threads, which allowed them to make a mark on him. "I shouldn't underestimate them. Instead, I should get to know them and be their friend, understanding their joys and pains. We're all walking the same path, and I'm their leader along the way." Respect was to be mutually given.

"The sea can both transport and flip over ships. One must never lose their respect for the sea!" When his Imperial Will interfaced with everyone's divine wills, mutual respect and concern was born.

"Everything's interrelated. Just as I gain the power of faith from them, they'll be able to gain insights better than those gained from looking through caeli. As I grow, they grow too! If I'm able to reach a new high, they might be able to break through as well."

Given his current divine will, if he returned to the Flameyellow Continent, he would probably create an age of countless gods. "A sovereign ruler is one with his people. Together, they form a gigantic will that projects itself throughout the universe!" They were all on the same path, and Tianming was their center.

"Those who aren't on the same path as I am won't support me in the first place. The ones that are with me now, like the others from the Flameyellow Continent, are all on the same path. Once the paths diverge, the sovereign will lose his subjects, leaving only a lone ruler of nothing." Sometimes, contemplating insights was more important than hard training on the path of cultivation. Seeing all their different looks, he had gained a new understanding into the path he'd chosen to walk.

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Tianming left the wondersky realm and returned to the real world, awakening from the dream while being able to recall it perfectly. The first thing he felt was the strengthening of his Omniscient Threads, a huge spike since the loss of his fans in the past two months. He saw a white veil surrounding the sky around Violetpeak, which was actually a representation of the countless Omniscient Threads that stretched from everywhere on the planet. Each of them was connected to one of his albi, specifically the sword-shaped Imperial Will. The path they walked tightly united them. Crushing Long and going back to give that speech had drawn many people who still had doubts straight to him.

"Three hundred million threads!" It was an explosive increase that came with observable benefits. Even though that number was a small one, relative to the total number of Violetglorians, they weren't just simple numbers. Each of them represented a life with their own experiences and stories, and they were just as real as Xiaoxiao was. It was like three hundred million Xiaoxiaos had gathered by his side.

"I wonder how powerful I'll become if I use their power?" While he wanted to hold back and keep his trump card as a last resort, he felt an increasing urge to use it. He still clearly remembered how he had fought tens of thousands of gods alone back at the Flameyellow Continent.

"Alright, I have to keep on going." The Astraldome was incredibly beneficial for him, allowing him to challenge the best of the best across the astralscape. "But before returning to the Bloodbath Arena, there's something more important that I have to attend to." He had to calm his mind and keep striving to reach the Solar stage, and this would be a good chance. He felt his connection with the three hundred million believers through the threads as the constant flow of Omniscient Will nourished his Imperial Will more and more.

"I'll unite all of those who are on the same path as me. There's no challenge we can't overcome together." Even normal folk, when standing united, could crush anything with their combined might! The hardships of those in the lower echelons would be heard all the more!

"Rather than studying caeli imperius, I might as well analyze the life experiences of those connected to me, see things from their perspective, and empathize with their feelings. Everyone has their own joys and hardships. Such is the nature of life."

A rich life wasn't limited to strong cultivators. Even the short-lived mortals of the Vermillion Bird Kingdom went through all kinds of hardships and experiences, weathering one sickness and childbirth after another. Some even had their dignity trampled on. Tianming had inscribed their experiences onto his Imperial Will through the Omniscient Threads.

"I'll face it all together with them." Analyzing the hearts, souls, joys, and sorrows of these three hundred million Violetglorians might be even more important than scanning caeli imperius. "The role of 'ruler' is just a title. A true ruler walks the same path as his subjects. In other words, Imperial Will doesn't represent the rule of a ruler over his subjects. It isn't a way for me to suck the subjects for power like a vampire. If I grow prideful because of it, I'll have betrayed its true essence."

He felt like he was on the cusp of a breakthrough. The power came flooding in, but was also fleeting. It could only be maintained as long as mutual respect and connection was maintained. It would be mistaken of him to think himself above them. Finally, the growth of his Imperial Will reached an apex as he resonated with his thoughts, and it began transforming.

Chapter 1706 - Pandemonium Sacrosun

The Grand-Orient-Sword-shaped Imperial Will grew denser without changing in size. Even though it looked like a normal weapon, it was incredibly tough and could stabilize Tianming's astral discs. The transformation of his Imperial Will caused his constellation to change as well. The shining lights above his astral discs formed many physical bodies, giving rise to an imperial star above the sword. It looked identical to the gigantic colorless star within the actual Grand-Orient Sword! Such imperial stars formed in every albus in his body. Once they were released outside, they would form a pandemonium sacrosun. The pieces were all in place.

"Come!" He called his lifebound beasts for symbiotic cultivation. He absorbed nova source to fill up his astral discs and totem ki, his path toward becoming a solarian already firmly set. The codices of his lifebound beasts all started circulating. The burning infernaldiscs, sparking genesisdiscs, mountainous and oceanic primordialdiscs, verdant radixdiscs, and flowing metallic immortaliscs enlarged and linked together, letting out a burst of mixed power. No matter how fierce the energy was, the pandemonium sacrosun and Imperial Will fragments in every albus were able to hold it back.

"Finally! The first level of the Solar stage!" He had finally made it. "I finally caught up to the rest!"

In fact, if Xiaoxiao didn't consume caeli and Lingfeng didn't consume pills, Tianming's rate of improvement would be considered really fast. He had grown by two levels before Crimsonjade Long could even improve.

"My pandemonium sacrosun!" He was already itching to use it, having seen others use theirs so many times before. He went to the lake within Violetpeak and had all five of his beasts come out. Ten million

Yin Chens tacked up to form a silver mountain, Xian Xian's tree took root to the left of the lake, and Lan Huang dove into it right away. Only Ying Huo and Meow Meow didn't take up much space.

Tianming's pandemonium sacrosun would be formed by both him and his beasts, while his cyclic constellation was formed with his totems. He began to float and glow gold and black. Countless streams of starlight emerged, forming an imperial star the size of a thousand meters in diameter above his head. It was an explosively large body of energy that he could manipulate using his Imperial Will. The light from the imperial star connected with Tianming's beasts, allowing them to replenish their energy stores through it. This was the king of sacrosuns, and it could even suppress other sacrosuns on top of attacking. It moved around, whooshing through the sky.

"It seems fierce. Now, I'm strong on all fronts. Thanks to Long, I managed to break through twice." Even if his sacrosun hadn't manifested, one could tell from his aura alone that he was more powerful. Now, only a sovereign could compare to him in terms of regalness. His black and gold eyes had already made him look quite domineering to begin with; he always stood out based on appearance alone.

When the three hundred million people that were connected to him felt the growth in his power, their faith strengthened even further.

"Three hundred million isn't enough! I want a billion! Sorry, Team Celestial Beings, I'm going to have to dismantle you to achieve that goal!" The Violetglory Star had turned out to be an incredible place that'd stoked his growth. Without the sun emperor threatening him, he grew by leaps and bounds. "There's still enough time for me to get ten wins in ten days. I should go to the core."

He was close to finishing the absorption of his fourth grade-eight divine hazard, called Silversoul Swordmount. It looked like a conventional sword ki strand, being a silvery sword-shaped mountain formed from dense silversoul sword ki. It had incredible piercing power and was well suited for the Silverdragon Flashkill and Godsin, which killed without form.

"With Silversoul Swordmount, I'll have four strands of grade-eight divine hazard sword ki. I need two more to be able to perfect the Sixdragon Tribulation, both of which I've already tracked down. I just need the Godsin to help me absorb them. The bottleneck I'm facing now is the seventh strike of the Ninedragon Tribulation...." If the basic strike itself was already so difficult, fusing it would be even harder. Perhaps mastering it would allow him to control the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb even better.

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After a day, he finally finished absorbing the Silversoul Swordmount. With so many strands of powerful sword ki in him, he could kill lower-level constellers with a glance or a breath. Bloodweep Swordheart, for instance, had fused with his own heart, allowing each drop of his blood to contain sword ki. His blood could pierce grade-six protective divine artifacts. A sword body was an offensive body-refining art that could increase one's attack apart from boosting defense.

He went back to the wondersky realm. Everyone knew that he would finish his win streak in ten days, so they had stayed in the wondersky realm to wait for his return. The wondersky fairy announced that he would be returning to the Astraldome once more, making their excitement rise.

"Let's go!" There was no hesitation in Tianming's eyes. Finally, he reached the Bloodbath Arena. When he had last arrived, there was no commotion at all, but now he was the center of attention.

"He's here!"

Everyone focused their attention on him, as he had returned to the real world after defeating Long. Now, people from all kinds of worlds looked at him, some cold, some with praise. However, nobody dared to approach him.

"Tianming," someone called out.

He turned back and saw Lingfeng. "You're here too?"

"Yeah. The Astralium Seeking was rather hard, but I managed." Without the special absolute genius category, the Astralium Seeking was just a normal event with two thousand participants. As there were a lot of people joining the normal category, Lingfeng hadn't had to wait long for the next one to be held.

"How powerful are you now?"

"After making it through the fourth level, I went back to the Violetcloud Pillsea and broke through to third-level solarian."

"Not bad." Tianming nodded, envious of Lingfeng's speed.

"Haha, I finally caught up to you."

"If there's a chance, we should fight together. By the way, did you see Xiaoxiao?"

"She was in the same group as me during the last event, and she also made it to the top ten working with me. However, she didn't come in this time," Lingfeng said. In other words, Tianming had two others with him on the fifth level, leaving only Qingyu and Feiling behind. Feiling also had a chance to come here, but Qingyu would need more time.

"Hey!" A familiar child ran toward them as they chatted.

Chapter 1707 - Fishing for Information

Many people on the fifth level had taken note of Tianming. For now, nobody dared to approach him to speak, as they didn't want to be the center of attention. But for that girl, she didn't need to think about it too much, given her status.

"We meet again!" She was dressed in a short blue skirt and had long, flowing hair. As a mystorian, she didn't have facial features, aside from the 'Shen' character on her face that demarcated her high status. Those were also her bane-rings, the core of all her power. She was Shenwu Yin from the Shenwu tribe of Skyway Bistar. Tianming still clearly remembered her totems. If she were a bit older, she might have qualified as a member of Team Celestial Beings. After all, she was a nonabane, and that was rare even in the Mystorium Cluster. Her totems were said to be legendary arcane gods that used to dominate the astralscape. She was among the few mystorians that wasn't hostile toward Tianming.

"Yeah, we meet again. You're quite capable, for you to come to this level so soon. Did you make a breakthrough?" Tianming asked with a smile.

She blushed and said, "No... how could it be easy? Cultivating is hard. I joined the normal Astralium Seeking, so my elder siblings carried me up here."

That was the loophole that had allowed the mysterians to clear out the battlefield before fighting for the top ten. They could just use their numbers and status to pick their ranks as they pleased, allowing geniuses like Shenwu Yin to come to this level, where she would grow much faster by fighting powerful challengers.

The Bloodbath Arena's group battle also had loopholes. Shenwu Yin's elder siblings could continue carrying her to the next level, but it would be much harder than in the Astralium Seeking. She could well become the weak link of the chain.

Seeing Tianming there, Shenwu Yin's curiosity grew. Though she didn't have eyes, Tianming felt her look of praise on him. She said, "Brother Tianming, I saw you use your totems to defeat Long of the Crimsonjade line, and you just did it again. I heard your true body is far away, so you might not know that you're the hottest topic in the Mysterium Cluster now."

"Is that so..."

"Yesterday's battle caused quite a bit of chaos at Skyway Tristar. I heard Brother Long vented for a long time and killed a few people before being punished. You gave him too much grief."

"Then do I need to apologize?"

"Umm... of course not! You defeated him fair and square! They're all saying that you're much stronger than you were on the fourth level, so you've clearly broken through."

"That's right." Tianming nodded and squinted his eyes. "But I'd like to know whether I'll be given payback for defeating a genius from Skyway Tristar despite my low status. Will Long find someone to assassinate me?" He had intentionally chosen those words, as he knew that people from multiple worlds were watching. Before they could make any moves, he would morally blackmail them.

Shenwu Yin seemed anxious at hearing that. "How could we? We mysterians are fair and just! It would be utterly beneath us to strike you down over a fair fight. In fact, we'll even protect you! I heard my seniors say that they've sent people to seek you out for you to be brought to Skyway Bistar for nurturing. We'll be able to meet then!"

"Skyway Bistar? How long will it take for you to reach me?" Tianming asked, trying to fish for the most important piece of information.

"Oh? Are you itching to come here right away?" she asked, face full of smiles.

"Somewhat. I'll be able to meet you then and I'll be counting on you to cover for me. I haven't even seen what a skypiercer-class world is like, so getting to see how majestic deific-class worlds are like would be awesome."

"Alright! Pinky promise!"

"Sure."

"Great. Liar gets hanged, okay?" She seemed a little too pure. Teenagers were no different from infants, as far as cultivators over a thousand years old were concerned. Her seniors hadn't exposed her to the devious and ruthless world. "Brother Tianming, once you come, I'll be your guide. I'll be twenty by then,

so we'll be able to go anywhere you want! Even though we aren't as large as Monostar Skyway, our star is the most beautiful! I heard them say that you're to come here, since you're a nonabane."

She was quite curious about nonabaness outside of the Mysterium Cluster. Tianming had defeated Long—a specter from Skyway Tristar—twice, and she didn't feel any kinship with him. Thus, she bore barely any hostility toward the white-haired youth.

"If you'll be twenty when I arrive, that means a round trip takes at least four years, right?"

"Yeah. It's a little far, so it can't be helped. But it doesn't matter. Our divine astralships have nova sources and caeli imperius, so your cultivation won't be affected."

"It sounds far indeed," Tianming said, feigning a melancholic look. He didn't intend to go to the Mysterium Cluster at all, and was relieved to hear that it would take quite some time. At the very least, he would be safe where he was for another year. If he didn't have that information, he would have to constantly be wary of the imminent danger. It would be horrible if he was close to the Mysterium Cluster.

"Did only Skyway Bistar send divine astralships?" he casually asked.

"Nope. I heard Skyway Tristar also sent ships. Long's father, Qiang, is among them. He's a precentennial paragon, someone that was already close to becoming a sovereign before the age of a hundred! He dominates the ninth level of the Tranquil Battlefield. I wonder if he'll give you trouble on account of his son.... You can always choose to go with my cousin-sister on Bistar's ship instead. She's really nice and will treat you well."

"Alright. Thanks, Yin." He remembered the name Qiang well. His sobriquet sounded frightening indeed. However, he felt like he'd be able to achieve what Qiang had himself. Either way, he had two years at most before the time came. I'll get as strong as I can and try to find my way back to Orderia.

Chapter 1708: Shenwu Fen

Shenwu Yin began looking forward to Tianming's arrival. Holding his hand, she excitedly said, "Brother Tianming, when you come here, I'll take you to the Sea of Old where the old gods are said to rest! There's even old god's blood there. It's really a beautiful place."

"Sure thing," Tianming said. If I had a stable background like her's, I'd love to go to a deific-class world too. It was one thing that he could only rely on himself. But right now, both Orderia and the Violetglory Star alone were potential threats to him. How would he even fare in a place like the Mysterium Cluster?

The two happily chatted and Tianming introduced her to Lingfeng. However, things began feeling heated when people approached the group.

"Yin," said a deep voice from behind Tianming. It sounded like it came from a volcano and hurt to hear, and there was a hint of dissatisfaction in it.

"Brother Fen...." Shenwu Yin meekly turned back.

"Come here."

"Yes...." The 'Shen' character on her face gave Tianming an unwilling 'look' as she bade him goodbye. The one who had just spoken no doubt had a lot of authority. Tianming turned back and saw around twenty people some hundred meters behind him. All of them were mysterians with the 'Shen' character on their faces, making them totemancers of the Wushen tribe. Their leader was the one who had just spoken.

He was dressed in a dark, fiery-red robe that matched his crimson eyes. Each strand of hair looked like singing embers. His hair covered half his face, giving him a sinister air. The 'Shen' character on his face, unlike the wavy one on Shenwu Yin's, had crude brushstrokes that looked like flowing magma. There were nine strokes of the character, and if all nine of them shone, that would indicate that the person was a nonabane. And this guy, like Shenwu Yin, had all nine strokes. The other twenty-odd Wushen tribe members had one fewer brushstroke, meaning that they were 'only' octabanes. The two nonabanans aside, all of those octabanans would be top geniuses in any heliacal-class world. [1]

Looks like deific-class worlds have quite a lot of sovereigns. Tianming had seen this person at the Astralium Seeking before. Even though he hadn't interacted with him, unlike Weisheng Xi and Crimsonjade Long, he was one of the prominent members of the Celestial Beings, having nine totems as he did. It was said that he had ended up in fourth place in the event, and it wouldn't make a difference even if Long wasn't eliminated. Shenwu Fen was the stronger of the two, and Tianming could feel the hostility coming from the character on his face.

"Yin, don't mouth off by yourself next time," he said strictly.

"Got it!" She skipped to his side and whispered, "I'm just trying to make friends, you know."

"Hmm?" He gave her a look, causing her to look down. "Move aside." He walked toward Tianming with the other geniuses and said, "Li Tianming, Yin is right. We mysterians have indeed sent divine astralships to pick you up. It'll take some time, and all you have to do is wait. As for where you'll be going, the decision hasn't yet been made. Don't listen to Yin's speculations. Not to mention, you don't have to worry about us mysterians mistreating you. We're an apex race, and it'd be laughable if we were as narrow-minded as you imagine. Additionally, you defeated Long of the Crimsonjade line. Given his personality, he'll definitely seek revenge against you. However, don't mind his threats. He doesn't speak for the mysterians—not even his father has that right. Lastly, I want to congratulate you. At the very least, with your talent, you'll break the custom of mysterians not taking in foreigners. The seniors are quite interested in you and your fellows."

He didn't give Tianming any leeway to speak. Even though he didn't seem as short-tempered as Long, it was clear that he was only showing politeness out of courtesy. Tianming had to be thankful for the chance the mysterians were giving him, and his gratitude was something they naturally expected.

"Understood. I'm honored and grateful and will be patiently waiting. I only worry that our distant star won't be able to provide adequate hospitality for honored guests like you," Tianming said.

"It's fine. We aren't going there for a tour. The Mysterium Cluster has more than enough fine sights," Shenwu Fen said.

"I want to see what the Violetglory Star is like, though. There's so many impressive big brothers and sisters there. There must be something special about it," Shenwu Yin said.

"Go away and play by yourself," Shenwu Fen said, pinching her cheeks. By now, they had established basic contact.

Tianming couldn't wait to start the challenges to get his winning streak; there was no way he would stop after tasting the benefits of defeating Long. Then, he met the gaze of Shenwu Fen.

There's countless cultivators here that're as strong as Shenwu Fen, but they're in their sixties and beyond. Defeating them won't have as much of an effect on the Violetglorians compared to defeating Shenwu Fen. He saw Shenwu Fen as a gift waiting to be plundered. Not only was he stronger than Long, there was also the fact that Tianming was considered a nonabane rather than a beastmaster. Shenwu Fen was also recognized as the most talented totemancer that represented Skyway Bistar. Doubtless, there would be some hostility between the two.

It was also known that the number of totems paled in comparison to the type of totems, and celestial being totems were considered stronger than sword totems. In some ways, Skyway Bistar had the upper hand on that aspect. Shenwu Fen only got fourth place because of the presence of the mysterious girl and the wonderian in the Astralium Seeking. Otherwise, he would have taken second place.

"Feel like going for a round?" Tianming challenged with a calm smile.

"Very well," Shenwu Fen said.

The crowd gasped. Those words had stirred up many undercurrents.

1. The 神 character is written with nine strokes. ?

Chapter 1709 - Zhurong Firegods

This was yet another high-profile battle. Instead of Skyway Tristar, Tianming would face off against a representative of Skyway Bistar, which was considered to be the origin of the lifesbaners. Their totems were the kings of all totems and they were all the offspring of the old arcane gods.

Shenwu Fen's hair fluttered from the power he radiated. He had three victories under his belt, while Tianming only had one. The loser's count would reset after the battle.

"What? Brother Fen, are you two going to fight?" Shenwu Yin cried out.

"What're you doing?" Shenwu Fen asked.

"I want to see him beat you up for always pinching my face and messing with me, hmph!"

"Hehe..." he chuckled and glanced at Tianming, then headed toward an empty ink-green formation. His followers all glared at Tianming as well.

"A match between those with the strongest totemancy talent, eh?"

"This'll be interesting."

"Shenwu Yin is too young, and her loss was a sore spot for the Wushen tribe. Shenwu Fen's the real undefeatable one."

"Though, even Long would have a hard time dealing with him despite being a stronger single fighter."

"Li Tianming really didn't eat his words. He came straight to settle things with the Celestial Beings and even defeated Long in a straight fight. Now, it's Shenwu Fen's turn. Do you think he'll keep climbing toward the top three?"

"Forget that. Let's see how he handles Shenwu Fen first."

"Then again, Long is truly odd for having lost twice. Given his power, he shouldn't be suffering such humiliating losses either."

Unlike the masses, those from the three deific-class worlds already knew that Tianming would go after those in the Celestial Beings, and Shenwu Fen was only the second in the line. This was an unprecedented challenge toward the mysterians as a whole. While those two were juniors, it still held quite a bit of significance. No mysterian had been so publicly challenged before.

Tianming and Long were of different races, but Shenwu Fen was a match for him. They considered Tianming a totemancer, after all. At the very least, the mysterians from Skyway Bistar and those from the Wushen tribe were relieved that Shenwu Fen didn't pale in comparison in terms of talent. They were still rather nervous, however, given how fierce Tianming's rise had been. Long had underestimated him the two times he fought him, and he wasn't that much weaker than Shenwu Fen either.

The Violetglory Star, on the other hand, flared up with excitement and countless fireworks were unleashed in the wondersky realm. In a world where martial prowess reigned supreme, nobody would miss out on a battle on the universal stage.

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The ink-green formation was immediately surrounded by spectators. Shenwu Fen casually stepped inside it and the character on his face began glowing like magma, instantly causing the surrounding temperature to rise. Skyway Bistar went wild before the battle had even started. If Shenwu Fen also had Imperial Will, he would no doubt have many believers on his home star. The heartbeats of the countless spectators alone sounded like the clap of thunder.

Then Tianming stepped into the battlefield, raising his flawless, razor-edged sword. It was clear as crystal, making it hard for the eyes to see. However, it glowed with a faint sharpness. His white hair, black and gold eyes, black arm, and formless sword made for an impression that was no less impressive as Shenwu Fen's.

"The top geniuses I've seen over the years, apart from Weisheng Xi, are all faceless people. But now there's another one with a face."

"He looks much stronger than Weisheng Xi, who's a handsome man one moment and a beautiful girl another... nobody can resist that person."

"That's right. I heard that he has both boy and girlfriends among the mysterians."

Those conversations were all private. Nobody dared to say that they thought the wonderians were weird, but they all agreed that Tianming was more 'normal' than them. Not only that, his looks fit the beauty standards of the universe. While Weisheng Xi was good looking in his own right, who would dare to approach him?

Tianming's reputation began rising, and Shenwu Fen gave him his full attention. Unlike Long, he wasn't one to look down on his enemy. He could tell how terrifying Tianming's powers were and took him seriously from the get-go.

"Use both your totems and lifebound beasts. Don't hold back," Shenwu Fen said.

"It's a battle between totemancers. What do lifebound beasts have to do with it?" Tianming said.

"Oh? Then I expect you to not use them until the end." Shenwu Fen summoned the totems that stemmed from the character of his face. Nine ancient gods emerged, causing flare and flame to spread throughout the area. The nine flaming giants burned with the flame of gods, their ends still connected to Shenwu Fen's face. Unlike their slender totemancer, the giants had burly physiques, messy hair, and animal-like faces. Flaming dragons seemed to circle them. They were also part of the totems, forming halberds for the totems to use.

Old god totems were indeed different. Li Haochen's Vastsun Truegod was a fire-type totem too, but it looked puny in comparison to the zhurong firegods. Both zhurong firegods and gonggong watergods were among the strongest totems the Wushen tribe had, and only nonabanes had them. They looked fiercer than the gonggong watergods and seemed a better fit for combat, making Shenwu Fen look like a demon from hell.

"Looks like this totem match will be a fun one."

Chapter 1710 - Trispoke Flare

The zhurong firegods hovered in the air, raging flames reaching the top of the formation. Their bestial heads growled and revealed their gnarly fangs. Their gigantic weapons clashed, creating a booming sound that sounded like a dragon's roar. Even though many had seen them before, they were just as shocked as the first time they'd seen them. The owner of these totems was destined to stand at the peak of the astralscape.

Like his totems, Shenwu Fen also wielded a polearm. It burned bright and had three blades that were covered in three different flaming patterns, each of them generating a different flame. They were all grade-eight divine hazards. While this Trispoke Flare was a grade-eight divine artifact, it was a tier-four one, making it not too far off from the Godsins. Forged from godflarium, it contained three divine hazards, namely the Azure Sanctiflare, Crimson Lotusflare, and the Blackheart Arcaneflare. Black flames burned between the azure and crimson fire.

The only reason Tianming had a weapon like the Godsins was because he was a historical exception. No Violetglorian had been able to tame the legacy of the Skywolf Star, so it ended up in his hands. Not even the three deific-class worlds had that many grade-nine divine artifacts, so juniors seldom got their own.

I heard the grade-nine Grand-Orient Sword ended up with the mysterious girl. Looks like even the mysterians missed out. Tianming squinted as he looked at the flaming devil before him. The flames reminded him of the sun emperor, but the flames of celestial orderians had a gold tint. Shenwu Fen's were crimson.

The three divine hazards on his weapon burned in tandem with the totems sticking out of his head, fueling each other. The flaming character made his expression seem intense, reflecting his fighting spirit.

He also had a sacrosun. One after another, blazing suns emerged from his albi, making up nine in total that burned bright above the heads of his totems. It was the nineday sacrosun. It allowed him to blend his astralforce together with his totem ki, converting them between one another, and could also be used for domain suppression. While Shenwu Fen didn't have a tough body like specters, nor did he have a powerful sword body, his abilities were quite well-rounded overall.

However, Tianming didn't pale any bit in comparison. His sword totems, while not looking as impressive, seemed sharper than before. They each had unique shapes and abilities. Godsins also drew a lot of eyes with its insect-wing-thin blade that caused those who looked at the edge to feel a chill at their necks. It was a magnificent display of the essence of sharpness.

The Frozen Glasstree, Ireflare Silkworm, Bloodweep Swordheart, and Silversoul Swordmount came bursting out, covering his body and sword. Sword ki was a kind of sharp divine hazard. While the Galactic Godsins didn't spread quickly, its power increased when it seeped into the sword ki instead. Tianming had turned into an ultimate sword god that could kill with a single gaze. The terrifying power of the Galactic Godsins spread across the sword, allowing it to formlessly suppress the enemy's sacrosun and weapons. The sword ki and flaming aura violently clashed.

"Li Tianming, I don't buy that you're from the Violetglory Star. You must have only claimed it to be your home. Perhaps your real body isn't even there," Shenwu Fen said.

That was a new theory that Tianming hadn't heard of. "Oh? Why do you think that?"

"It's one thing if one person like you appears in a heliacal-class world, but it's extremely unlikely that two or more could arise from one."

"Hehe." Tianming neither confirmed nor denied. Even though the Mysterium Cluster claimed to be the center of the universe, they were just as ignorant about the uncharted parts of the astralscape.

That aside, the main focus now was the fight. Since becoming a solarian, he had grown much stronger. The fifth-level Shenwu Fen was only four levels above him, and geniuses on his level could fight a level or two above the average. Tianming didn't know how much of an edge he would have until he fought.

He summoned his sacrosun for the first time. A gigantic black and gold imperial star formed a constellation, then turned into a sacrosun. It looked so solid that it seemed like a corporeal presence. Tianming noticed that during the registration of his sacrosun, its ability to suppress other sacrosuns didn't manifest. But fortunately, the corporeal imperial star still boosted his offensive capabilities, giving more support to his astralforce reserves. While he was a few levels inferior in terms of cultivation, his other boosts made up for the difference. The imperial star also made the imperial aura around Tianming even more defined.

"Come!" The two of them attacked at the same instant. Shenwu Fen came charging with his Trispikes Flare in one hand, still bathing in flames. His totems gave him a boost as he shot three pillars of flame out of his halberd.

Tianming expressionlessly looked at the Godsins and flicked his wrist, looking like he had thrown the sword away. The transparent sword seemed to soften before splitting into segments, making a long white chain that was ten thousand meters long. The sword ki from his body, along with the Ninedragon

Tribulation's dragon manifestations, traveled along the chain blade, then was further pushed along by his astralforce and sacrosun as he used Goddess Flowerfall.

Shenwu Fen didn't expect Tianming's sword to be able to turn into a whip. The Godsins wrapped itself around the Trispike Flare multiple times as the blade segments crept closer to the hand that wielded it. It formlessly moved, and seemingly without pattern!

Shenwu Fen was forced to change forms, pulling back and grabbing the chain. Given his superior astralforce and sacrosun, he should win against Tianming in a tug of war. But while Tianming's strength from his sword body couldn't compare, the four grade-eight divine hazard sword ki strands channeled the Galactic Godsins along the chain, tearing through the Trispike Flare's divine hazards and piercing toward Shenwu Fen himself.