

The Ages 1711

Chapter 1711 - Unparalleled Godflame

"Huh?!" A set of flaming armor appeared on his body. It was so domineering that he looked like a raging general. Based on the material of the armor, it was a grade-eight divine artifact. While that meant that Shenwu Fen didn't have a grade-nine divine artifact, it was already quite impressive.

The frostfire sword ki of the Frozen Glasstree, blooddrop sword ki of the Bloodweep Swordheart, flame silkworm sword ki of the Ireflare Silkworm, and the silversoul sword ki of the Silversoul Swordmount blended together with the Galactic Godsins's deathly powers as they ate into the armor with attacks of differing elements. Quite a few strands of sword ki pierced it and hurt Shenwu Fen.

"Face reveal!" Countless seniors from Skyway Bistar were already reminding him to use it. Grade-eight divine hazard sword ki was by no means rare on deific-class worlds, and Shenwu Fen could no doubt access them, but being able to absorb them into his body was a different matter entirely. Tianming was young and didn't have the enhanced physical bodies of faceless specters, but he had the Greenspark Tower and Godsins, which had allowed him to assimilate so many of them.

Shenwu Fen felt the pressure from the combined sword ki attacks. Tianming had never seen mysterian totemancers use face reveal before. When Shenwu Fen was forced back, the 'Shen' bane-rings on his face began morphing. The brushstrokes turned into flaming facial features that mimicked Tianming's. Even the shape of his face slightly changed. No doubt, many were laughing at the sight. Tianming had seen too many mysterians copy his appearance, and each time was as unnerving as the last. What was worse was that the totems with animal heads now also bore Tianming's face! After the face reveal, they were semi-unkillable. Even the totems would have enhanced regeneration and could easily reform after they were blasted apart, something that made mysterians really hard to deal with.

"Come again!" Shenwu Fen seemed much more confident after using face reveal. He tore the sword-chain aside and counterattacked with his totemic calamity, Unparalleled Godflame! The zhurong firegods' stomachs expanded like they were pregnant and they spat fire at Tianming. The flames turned into dragons, and each totem spat out a hundred plus of them. Altogether, there were close to a thousand flaming dragons in total, all of them around a hundred meters long.

Explosions filled the entire area; the dragons could even take on armies. If Ying Huo were around, it would easily be able to deal with this, but Tianming didn't plan on using his lifebound beasts. Shenwu Fen's eyes burned even brighter, making the copied face seem even more passionate. Unlike the cruel Long, his face reveal made him look like an enraged Tianming.

Raising his Trispoke Flare, he charged into the flames, the light of which was reflected in his armor. He used an eighth-realm divine art, Heavenly Cosmic Order. Now, he seemed completely like a zhurong firegod himself. All the totems above him raised their weapons and executed the same movements, able to recreate the profound divine art adequately to boost his overall combat strength.

To some degree, Tianming was being suppressed. The mysterians finally saw some hope and wildly cheered. Yet the next instant, ten thousand swords opened a path through the flames and slammed into some of the zhurong firegods, forcing them to scatter to avoid being pierced through. The sea of swords rampaged in the flames, revealing a white-haired youth with a cold glare filled with killing intent.

"Die!" Shenwu Fen changed his move to accommodate. He rose up with his totems, causing the sea of flames to follow him. While Tianming appeared calm, he was exuding an aura of divine dread. As the Godsins came piercing from a thousand meters away, the totem swords around him centered in and attacked, clashing with the sea of flames. When the pandemonium sacrosun came smashing down, Shenwu Fen's nineday sacrosun formed into a circle and clashed back.

The Galactic Godsins, the four stands of grade-eight sword ki, pandemonium sacrosun, and the Myriadsword Providence all held tremendous damage potential, especially the swords of many different attributes. With Eastdivinity Acme in the lead to take on most of the flames, the rest of the swords followed unabated from behind. The Godsins tore open an opening among the nine zhurong firegods, allowing the totem swords to seep in between them.

Shenwu Fen's expression changed as his totems fell to a disadvantage. It was almost unbelievable! What was worse was that Tianming's sword body and Godsins, coupled with the Galactic Godsins's corrosion, weren't only effective on his totems, but also his flaming armor. Some parts of his flesh were infested with traces of the Galactic Godsins, a grade-nine divine pattern that was similar to a toxin. Even within the wondersky realm, it stained Shenwu Fen's blood green before starting to suck away his body heat, causing him to feel a chill. Back during the Astralium Seeking, Tianming hadn't been properly equipped. But now, his power had risen by leaps and bounds.

As the zhurong firegods weren't able to defend against that many swords, a lot of holes appeared on their bodies. Even in their semi-unkillable state, they found it difficult to recover from the Galactic Godsins's corrosion. Their flames were robbed of their heat, making it a fatal counter for them. Even Shenwu Fen knew that he was in deep trouble.

"Long already lost, so I can't afford to! I can't let people laugh at Skyway Bistar!" If the dignity of a deific-class world was lost thanks to him, he wouldn't be able to recover from the blow for a long time. For a scion like him, that would be a stain that would mark him for the rest of his life. "I'll use my second totemic calamity, Skyscorch Wrath!"

Being forced back by the swords, the zhurong firegods were in a berserk state. They slammed into each other and formed a gigantic fireball, which turned into a gigantic bestial head that had Tianming's face on it. Then it crashed into Tianming like a meteor.

"I'll tear you to pieces!"

Chapter 1712 - Pathless

Shenwu Fen was in the middle of the gigantic ball of flame. He used his Trispike Flare to execute another eighth-realm divine art as the totemic calamity launched away. Eight Desolation Primordial Return! His suicidal final attack was terrifying indeed. Even the cultivators from deific-class worlds were shocked to see that someone in their twenties could unleash so much power. However, Tianming remained calm in the face of it.

"I see now that you're more troublesome to deal with than Long." He sounded almost nonchalant when saying that. If he weren't Li Tianming, others would think him arrogant. However, his response showed that he didn't look down on his enemy one bit. Ten thousand sword totems gathered around him in a neat formation. "Die!"

It was the same Sixdragon Tribulation fusion strike, but now it had been boosted by the pandemonium sacrosun and three other types of grade-eight sword ki, making it a level higher than before. The ten thousand swords turned into dragons, with Tianming and the Godsins making up the most powerful dragon. The Godsins' piercing ability was put on full display once more. The totem swords were initially shattered as they crashed against the meteor, but Tianming and the Godsins managed to open a hole through it, allowing countless other totem swords to follow. They aimed straight for Shenwu Fen and intercepted his second totemic calamity, causing the ball of flame to burst apart into weakened totems. Shenwu Fen had relied on his armor to take three thousand totem sword strikes, which rendered his armor almost fully broken. He was covered in holes as he smashed into the ground, but fortunately, he could still get up thanks to his monstrous regenerative abilities. His wounds healed at a rate the eye could see, but his expression betrayed a look of panic.

"Li Tianming?!" He couldn't see Tianming at all, which meant he was in danger! He looked up and saw the white-haired youth with his hair fluttering as he came crashing down, the Godsins' formless glacier creating a sharp edge coated in Galactic Godsins and other sword ki strands. The sword smashed through Shenwu Fen's helmet and pierced his head, nailing him to the ground with an unwilling look on his face.

"I haven't lost...." Though he said that, there was a forlorn look in his eyes. The wondersky realm judged it his loss, causing his body and his totems to fizzle away. With the flames gone, only Tianming and his sea of swords remained. That scene was just as shocking to see the fiftieth time as it was the first; Tianming was now a professional at raking up style points. The footage caused the Violetglorians to once more intensify their worship of him, pushing him further along the path of a world god.

"Looks like the most talented of the Skyway Bistar is just about average. I hope the other three don't disappoint me. Yanwu Dao, Weisheng Xi, and that pretty girl whose name I don't yet know...."

Yanwu Dao was a member of the Celestial Beings from Skyway Monostar. It was said that he and the other two were on a wholly different level compared to Shenwu Fen and Long. Defeating Shenwu Fen wasn't that difficult. Even if Tianming hadn't become a solarian, he could probably still win, though he might have to resort to using his lifebound beasts. Even so, his back-to-back victories over Long and Shenwu Fen had set the stage for him to publicly call the mysterians out. Right after he won, he challenged the remaining three members of Team Celestial Beings. The non-mysterians were all filled with anticipation toward the upcoming battles.

"Where are the other three?"

"They look like they aren't in a rush to come to the Bloodbath Arena."

"Perhaps the wonderian and that mysterious girl left after obtaining the Grand-Orient Sword."

"Then it won't be fun to watch anymore!"

"Don't worry, Li Tianming already issued them challenges. There's no way they won't show. At the very least, Yanwu Dao will. Otherwise, there'd be nobody left to uphold the dignity of the mysterians."

"Long and Shenwu Fen lost too horribly. They weren't able to resist at all. I must've lived long enough to be able to see the mysterians suppressed to this degree. Before this, it would be a miracle if a non-mysterian was in the top ten."

That battle had completely shown off Tianming's strengths. Compared to last time, this one was really rousing for the non-mysterian worlds of the Mysterium Cluster. Tianming had quite a few supporters, both public and private. At the very least, he knew that he would be gaining even more believers among Violetglorians.

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"Hey." Lingfeng was still there with Shenwu Yin beside him. The other talented juniors of the Skyway Bistar stood behind Shenwu Yin, completely dumbfounded. Their eyes were filled not with contempt, but respect. 'Strength inspires respect' was a universal principle. Even if they couldn't outwardly show it, they knew how they felt about it inside their hearts.

"You're so strong! What'd you eat growing up?" Shenwu Yin said in a silly tone. She had guessed that Tianming would win, but she didn't expect Shenwu Fen would be pushed to use his second totemic calamity and still be toyed with, showing the gap in power between the two.

"I was born with it," Tianming said.

"It's over.... You defeated Big Brother Fen and he has quite the high reputation back on Skyway Bistar. I worry that he'll bully you if you come to us..."

"It's fine. You'll protect me, right?"

"Of course! I have status too, you know!" she said with pride.

"Good girl."

Challenging the Celestial Beings would definitely offend the mysterians, all three groups of them. The issue was how the seniors saw all of this. Either way, the fifth level of the Tranquil Battlefield was only open to those under a hundred, so everyone there were juniors. Only a few mysterians a few decades old were there, all of them faceless. Tianming immediately received countless challenges, much to his shock. More than three hundred people of all ages were challenging him in an attempt to put him in his place.

Chapter 1713 - Cang

Tianming had spent two days gaining two victories. He would immediately be healed back to full after each battle, making it quite convenient if he wanted to jump into the next round. It would be easier if he only had a few challengers, but he had more than three hundred of them. According to the rules of the wondersky realm, one would be picked for him at random; he had no say in it. But he had already achieved the Solar stage and didn't plan on leaving, so he decided to keep fighting and leave his last three wins for the other three members of the Celestial Beings.

"When Yanwu Dao, Weisheng Xi, and that mysterious girl come in, I doubt the other challengers will stay." Tianming had taken down Long and Shenwu Fen in quick succession, and had even challenged them, so those three wouldn't just sit and do nothing. Yanwu Dao, especially, was a representative of the mysterians.

Even before he stepped out of the formation, many people surrounded it and placed their palms against it, waiting to be picked. He could delay the fight if he wanted, but there were only eight days left. If he didn't finish his win streak within the time limit, it would be reset.

"Alright. I'll keep polishing my skills then." Even though he wouldn't be facing off against the Celestial Beings just yet, he didn't let his guard down. "While their talent can't compare to Shenwu Fen's, they're much older, with some of them even in their nineties. I heard that a small number of ninth-level solarians intentionally chose to stay here to grief others."

The griefers were there to stop non-mysterians from progressing. There were quite a lot of cultivation resources up for grabs on the sixth level, so a few older mysterians stayed at the fifth level to filter non-mysterians out. If one was unlucky, they would be matched with these griefers after their seventh match and have all their efforts go to waste, but it wasn't a given that every non-mysterian would be matched with them.

Even so, nine-tenths of Tianming's challengers were mysterians. In other words, there was a good chance for him to be matched with a griever. "It can't be helped. I must accept at least one out of these three hundred challenges. When Yanwu Dao comes, these people will stop messing around." Most of the challengers just wanted to show Tianming his place after he had defeated two talented mysterians.

He accepted the subsequent challenge and the wondersky realm went about the pick randomly. The crowd watched as he looked at a green light from within the ink-green formation. The person the light pointed to would be the next opponent.

"It's him!"

Cheers erupted from outside. Some even let out joyous laughter.

"Finally, someone will teach this impudent kid a lesson."

"He'll only learn after being given a sound beating."

"Even though it's random, this can't be a coincidence...."

Hearing the laughter, Tianming knew that there was trouble. He didn't care too much, though, as the other challengers were rendered void either way. If anyone from the Celestial Beings came in before this fight was over, the others wouldn't dare mess around. No matter what, Tianming had to win this.

The opponent entered the formation and stood before Tianming. Tianming squinted when he saw that person. Even without using his eyes, he could tell that he was much stronger than Shenwu Fen, and completely overage. Those that could make it to this level were already geniuses, so what would a genius in their seventies or eighties be like? He was a specter from the Crimsonjade line, like Long and Qiang. They looked like the same red jade to Tianming. Perhaps they had a way to differentiate between their people, but Tianming couldn't. The most he could detect was a different aura. Long was young and vigorous, while this man was cold and showed a hint of cunning. His name was Crimsonjade Cang.

"Brother Tianming, he's a ninth-level solarian!" Lingfeng said. Tianming looked in his direction and saw that Shenwu Yin had told him about it.

"That's right," said Cang after he heard what Lingfeng said. He smiled and swiftly stepped toward Tianming. "I might be the strongest one on the fifth level. I just casually issued a challenge. I didn't think they'd pick me. Looks like you don't have the best of luck."

"A ninth-level solarian that keeps staying here? Have you no face to lose?" Tianming snapped.

Crimsonjade Cang's cultivation level was on par with the eight-hundred-year-old Jiang Qingliu's, and his combat ability might even be superior. As strong as Tianming was now, there was quite a gap to overcome. Cultivation level was a huge part of one's strength.

"What're you saying? I can stay where I like. You seem pretty arrogant, so I'll teach you a lesson on behalf of my nephew," Cang said, shrugging.

"Who's your nephew? Don't tell me it's Long? He couldn't even take one move from me."

Cang didn't deny it. He must have quite a high status as well, at least higher than Ying's. He drew a bloody sword and said, "I think you won't be able to take one of mine either."

"As if that proves anything. Once I reach your age, you won't even be qualified to polish my shoes."

"I'll hear what you have to say if you manage to live to that age!" Cang snapped. He was quite impatient and immediately charged in after he finished. His ninth-level astralforce and sacrosun manifested, instantly impressing upon the audience that he was not to be trifled with.

Chapter 1714 - Thorn in the Heart

Cang was Crimsonjade Long's uncle, and likely to be the younger brother of the precentennial paragon. An aura of gore surrounded him, adding to the fatal sensation he gave off. He shook and seemed to generate a few blood shadows that seemed identical to his main. Tianming was being attacked from multiple fronts. It was so fast that the bloody shadows almost instantly formed a net that entirely encircled him, giving him no grounds for escape.

"There's too large of a gap, eight whole levels!" Tianming could only take it as bad luck. Not to mention, Cang's status meant that he also had access to the best resources. Before Tianming could even deploy his lifebound beasts and totems to at least try, the net of blood came down on him. He couldn't even resist as Godsin was sent flying. Then a bloody sword was thrust into his body multiple times, containing up to seven grade-eight divine hazard sword ki strands. Tianming's body was like tofu compared to his, allowing him to easily tear Tianming apart.

The crowd exclaimed in awe. Even though this fight was bound to be Tianming's loss from the start and that Tianming's goal of getting a win streak was moot, many felt a little off about it. The mysterians were just as shamelessly dominant as they had been during the Astralium Seeking. First, Long had his plan of clearing the battlefield of non-mysterians, and now Cang stepped in as a huge roadblock. They wouldn't allow anybody but their own to get anything good if they had a choice.

"Begone! Let me tell you that as long as I'm here, don't even dream about leaving the fifth level! You want to win ten times in a row? You'll have to go through me!"

The mysterians banded together. Given Crimsonjade Cang's status and power, he could indeed stop anyone from progressing as he pleased. As long as he was there, nobody would dare to take on the

challenge. Eventually, he would pick Tianming as a challenger and the cycle would repeat itself. Being targeted in this fashion truly was troublesome; it was a clear abuse of power, but the weak could just suck it. Quite a few people were left speechless at his words.

"This isn't a fair fight at all. Cang of the Crimsonjade line, you'll just ruin the mysterians' reputation by bullying Brother Tianming so shamelessly. You make us all look bad!" Shenwu Yin said with a troubled tone.

"It does look a little bad, but this is just what faceless specters like to do. It's quite pointless," said one of the octabane geniuses beside her.

"Don't say that. The ones who'll have to lower their heads in shame are the mysterians! Li Tianming is merely an outsider," someone else said.

"Yeah. Let them do it, then!"

There were many others like Shenwu Yin who were quite speechless about this. When Crimsonjade Cang came out, a number of mysterians took his side.

"Brother Cang really is amazing. You killed him like slaughtering a chicken."

"Let's see if he can keep that smug act up if he gets killed every time he comes."

"He wants to go to the sixth level? Doesn't he know who calls the shots here?"

"Even if he goes to the sixth or seventh levels, we decide what happens there, too."

"We mysterians call the shots across the entire astralscape!"

Crimsonjade Cang smiled and said, "I just killed a simple fly, so don't make too big a deal out of it. I'll keep him securely in the fifth level."

"But what about Yanwu Dao and the rest when they come? It'd be better if they're the ones who stop Li Tianming," someone asked.

"It has nothing to do with me. All I did was put him in his place before they came. If they can't defeat him even after that, then they'd better just quit," Cang said. Even after all that, he still heard quite a lot of dissenting calls.

"So what if you defeated Li Tianming?"

"You're only relying on your age."

"If Yanwu Dao loses, no mysterian of Tianming's age can compare to him, and he only came from a heliacal-class world. If he was born in a deific-class world...."

These were thorns in Cang's heart that he couldn't just simply resolve.

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After being instantly killed, all Tianming could do was return to the wondersky realm. It would take quite some time before he could enter once more. Apart from wasting time, this loss might cost him quite a

number of believers as well. The first thing he did when he returned to the real world was to check out his Omniscient Threads.

"Half a billion?!" The increase in number was definitely due to his defeat of Shenwu Fen. He had gained two hundred million believers just like that. Apparently, being defeated by Crimsonjade Cang didn't affect him that much.

"Guess people are aware that losing to someone around fifty years older than me isn't embarrassing at all." Tianming felt quite relieved. "Half a billion Omniscient Threads from gods.... If I use their power, I wonder how powerful I'll be."

Testing it slightly, he felt his power rising in a startling manner. "At the very least, I'll be able to defeat Crimsonjade Cang. In other words, I'll be able to defend myself somewhat while I'm here."

Even though this world had quite a number of elites, Tianming was already among the most powerful even without taking the Omniscient Threads into account. If he returned to Orderia, he would probably be as strong as the top elites of second-rate factions. His growth kept his excitement going; he couldn't wait to return to the Astraldome to keep challenging Yanwu Dao and the rest according to his plan.

As for Crimsonjade Cang's grieving, he was quite speechless about it. Cang was a crook that Tianming couldn't defeat. It was quite the troublesome matter.

"So if I offend him he'll prevent me from going to the sixth level?" He heard what Cang had said after he was defeated. "So what? As long as he doesn't stop me from taking down the Celestial Beings, it's pointless."

To Tianming, the other three members of the Celestial Beings were resources he needed to increase the number of Omniscient Threads. Too bad he needed to wait a bit before going back, thanks to being grieved. "I have no choice but to wait."

There were other grade-eight divine hazard sword ki strands waiting for him and he needed the time to practice the seventh strike of Ninedragon tribulation, after all. As for Mu Ziyang, she was helping him attain a third regal soul.

Chapter 1715 - Celestial Beings of Violetglory

After some light preparation, Tianming returned to the wondersky realm. There were many people waiting for him in the Violetcloud Battlefield, and he felt warm at seeing their passionate looks.

"Don't feel bad about it. That guy was old and shameless."

"That's right. Your opponent isn't him, but the other three your age."

"They're the top three of the Celestial Beings. Take them down and make the mysterians accept their loss!"

"Don't give up!"

Tianming didn't think that people would try to comfort him before he even explained. Their looks were quite touching indeed.

"Thank you, everyone. Don't worry, as the Celestial Beings will be defeated. As for the shameless one, I'll let him bear the consequences of it one day. It's one thing for him to defeat me, but the real shock will come when I kill him," Tianming said.

"Very good!"

"We need someone as bold as you!"

The Omnisentient Threads connected them to him. After that, he spent some time watching the other battles in the Astraldome. Xiaoxiao and Lingfeng hadn't made any challenges yet and Lingfeng even returned. Only Feiling and Qingyu were still fighting in the astraldome.

"Your wife is truly fierce."

"A great beauty fit for a hero."

"I'm so envious...."

Tianming felt quite proud hearing those words of praise. Now, he was a fanboy of Feiling like the many others. The little 'primalwinger' with her Sapphire Skywings and Flashsoul Skywings had overcome one danger after another, defeating enemies along the way. The Flashsoul Skywings and her control over spacetime allowed her to roam unseen during the Astralium Seeking. Everyone was slow compared to her and nobody could find her if she didn't want them to.

"Those techniques...." She used quite a lot of skills that Tianming hadn't seen before. All of them were things she knew how to do from her past life, and felt really fresh. Tianming recalled her cute and helpless look the first time he had met her and felt nostalgic. "Ling'er has grown a lot along the way."

He felt his love for her grow more and more. He would protect her and help her through her struggles. He joined the rest and watched as Feiling ended up in the top ten in the Astralium Seeking. However, she didn't bother to struggle that badly after that and eventually got eliminated. It wasn't like she wanted the reward either.

"Looks like she's anxious to join you on the fifth level."

"That's right!"

"Brother Tianming, since you're blocked from advancing in the duel area, why not try for the group battles? Take your Ling'er with you!"

"That's right. You already helped carry Bai Feng, so you have to carry your own woman too!"

"Take Lin Xiaoxiao and Ye Lingfeng along to form our own Violetglorian Team Celestial Beings! Show the mysterians who's boss!"

They were getting excited just from the thought of it. The idea hadn't occurred to Tianming until now, and hearing them say it made him even more interested in it. "Ling'er's trying so hard because she wants to be able to fight with me in the Astraldome. She didn't get any rest at all and went all the way to the fifth level."

The thought of her efforts made Tianming feel touched. Her efforts seemed to allow her to change her focus, in a way, trying to shake off the other self she had. Not only was she obedient and didn't make him worry, she also had unyielding willpower. How could he not love such a girl? Nirvana Rebirth's return and the replacement of her personality with another was the hardest time for the both of them. Despite being able to do as they please in the wondersky realm, the manifestation of frost in real life was quite difficult to bear. Feiling was showing her stubborn insistence on their relationship in her own way.

"She never liked fighting or killing.... This isn't the life she wants. All she cared about back then was pretty clothes, accessories, and living a carefree life. I was the one who dragged her into all this, and not only did she not complain or regret, she even changed herself for me...." He felt a little bad for not noticing it until people told him about it. He had paid too much attention to the Omniscient Threads lately. "They're right. Ling'er's already in the fifth level of the Tranquil Battlefield. I must take her along with me, just like the time when we could fight together using Spiritual Attachment."

Those were their salad days, sweet and free of worry. He made up his mind. Since he would keep being stopped in the duels, he might as well fight with Feiling and the others as a group. [1]

"We'll eventually have to return to Orderia and fight our true enemy." The celestial orderians and their sun emperor were powerful foes. It wouldn't hurt to have a rehearsal before their big group fight.

"The problem is that it might be a waste of time as well. Crimsonjade Cang will just make a group to stop me. Let's see how far he'll take it then. Perhaps the Celestial Beings will join up again when they see us form our own group. Then we can all fight them together!" As the others had put it, it would be a match to see which world had the better 'Celestial Beings'. Now, his path seemed clear to him.

"Fighting by the side of those I cherish is much more meaningful and blood boiling." He decided he would form a new group before entering the Astraldome. "The problem is that I still lack one person. Qingyu's still at the second level and it'll take quite a bit of time for her to reach the fifth."

If only Qingyu had a higher cultivation level. However, it wasn't that simple. There was a reason why Xiaoxiao, Feiling, and Lingfeng grew so quickly. Qingyu was the most stable and grew at a normal rate, and she had cultivated for an even shorter time as well. It was reasonable that she hadn't reached the Solar stage yet. Given her talent, if she had started off on Skyway Bistar, she would be stronger than Shenwu Fen.

"What'll you do about the last spot, Brother Tianming?" the others came to ask.

"Why not join up with Ye Chen? He's also a Violetglorian and has already lost to you. As long as he's willing to follow your instructions, give him a chance."

"That's right. Against other worlds, Violetglorians should stand united. Ye Chen's quite powerful too."

Everyone waited to see his reaction. It was a question of how magnanimous he would be. He chuckled and said, "I won't have an issue with it, but it's up to him to agree or refuse."

The others laughed. Those words would no doubt reach Ye Chen's ears, so his answer was a matter of time.

The sky flashed white as a beautiful girl appeared in the Violetcloud Battlefield. It was Feiling, much to the shock of others. She was quite shy at the sight of so many people looking at her.

"Good day, Sister-in-law!" The young ones kept calling her that and the seniors eventually joined in. They parted to make way for the two to approach each other.

"Come, my wife, let me escort you back home," Tianming said. Their next destination was Soulburn Hall.

1. Salad days is a Shakespearean term referring to innocent, youthful times. ?

Chapter 1716 - Radiant Clouds

Now that he had decided on a game plan, Tianming was no longer in a rush to return to the Astraldome. "Next time, I must make sure to win in one beautiful streak. There's still some preparations to be made. At the very least, Feng and the others need a bit more time."

Tianming had a rough idea of the strength difference between them and the Celestial Beings. Currently, they didn't stand much of a chance of winning.

"If each of us fights our way through alone, the audience will no doubt get bored. I bet fighting together will have a much better effect." There were half a billion Omniscient Threads now. To achieve his goals, Tianming believed he had to take it step by step. He had already been booted out by a senior, and chances were that Yanwu Dao and the other mysterians were waiting for him inside. However, he would do the opposite and not enter.

"Letting them wait is also a thing I can do." That would whet people's appetite and make them anticipate this even more. He decided to let the interstellar audience wait.

"Everyone's trying their best to cultivate. Let's see if I get better results compared to them in the same timeframe."

Eventually, news of Tianming wanting to form a Violetglorian version of Team Celestial Beings spread and brought quite a lot of commotion. A genius from a heliacal-class world actually wanted to try competing with top geniuses of the Mysterium Cluster. Not to mention, the Celestial Beings didn't just have mysterians, but also backers from two other powerful factions. The formation of a group to oppose them left many with their mouths open, hungry to see what would happen next.

Tianming wasn't able to make it into the top five of the Astralium Seeking, which was a little bit of a shame. But now he wanted to take all top five places away! Amidst the complicated undercurrents of the affair, the Violetglorian cultivators anxiously anticipated the match. Some even camped in the wondersky realm, worried that they would accidentally miss the historic battle. For a single heliacal-class world to challenge the entire Mysterium Cluster was something that people would talk about even a million years later. For the first time in the history of the Violetglory Star, its people had the most hope. Tianming's invitation to Ye Chen was also spreading out among the Divineglory Alliance, roping the other half of the star. Would they really join up as friends? Many people wanted to know what Ye Chen's decision would be.

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Tianming returned to the star's core in search of suitable sword ki. There were two more strikes that needed matching sword ki, namely the Whitedragon Exaltation and Blackdragon Abyss thrust.

Sovereign Starfeather said that there were actually thirteen strands of grade-eight sword ki. Three of them had only recently been attracted by Gods in and were yet to be identified. Tianming picked two that would barely match the two sword strikes to have a sword body with six grade-eight divine hazard sword ki strands. The first was called Radiant Clouds, which was an accumulation of lightcloud sword ki shaped like a glowing cloud. Each sword ki was like a drop of water coagulating in the cloud, making it look like a white sword ki pool. Though it looked pure and clean, any living thing that fell into it would be ground to pieces.

The other one was called Blackchain Veins, which took the form of a huge gigantic net formed from black veins. Instead of blood, black sword ki flowed within the veins, making it a little similar to the Bloodweep Swordheart. It was quite suited for Blackdragon Abyss thrust.

"If I absorb these, my Sixdragon Tribulation should reach its ultimate level of power. With the Greenspark Tower and Gods in, absorbing these two strands of sword ki is just a matter of time and endurance." Tianming was already numb to it all, thanks to his previous attempts.

"Come!" He gripped the Gods in and opened a path. The yellow spring fish leaped out from within the sword, surrounded by Galactic Gods in. It attracted those two strands of sword ki, and soon, they yielded.

"Without the Gods in, I still might be able to forge such a sword body, but it might take ten times the time and torture..." Eventually, he perfected his fusion move in two months. The problem was that he wanted to master the seventh strike, Saintdragon Annihilation, by itself. That was his biggest goal for the time being.

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Since hearing about Tianming's plan, Feiling, Lingfeng, and Xiaoxiao also did their best to strive for new breakthroughs. On top of fighting in the duel area of the Bloodbath Arena, they also cultivated in real life. As expected, they ran into griefers who gleefully defeated them after three to four victories each time. Since they would be forbidden from reentering immediately after, they spent time outside the wondersky realm focusing on cultivation. Eventually, the repeated cycles of them being grieved, coupled with Tianming's absence, caused the crowds in the Violetglory Star's wondersky realm to fizzle out, but they all knew it was only the calm before the storm. The quieter it was, the harder those five were training—Ye Chen included.

"Looks like we have to count on Sister Qingyu now."

"Who're you to address me that intimately?"

"Haha..."

Ever since Qingyu absorbed the old gods' blood, her rate of improvement skyrocketed. As she fought, she strove for the Solar stage. The time of her breakthrough would come soon. But the more she cultivated, the more her bane-rings changed. Her aura also turned rather cold. While her face was still radiant, the feeling she gave off was similar to Li Wushuang's.

When Tianming saw her by herself, she seemed quite unhappy and filled with worry. However, not even Sovereign Starfeather could prevent what was happening to her. They didn't know who to turn to for help. All Tianming could do was have Feiling and Lingfeng spend more time with her to cheer her up.

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Tianming circled around within the Imperius Ruins for quite a while before spotting a red-eyed black-clothed girl sitting cross-legged and covered in sweat. Once more, she looked completely pale and seemed close to death. Those who didn't know would really think that she was dying.

"Hey, can you break through a little slower? I can't keep up, you know." Tianming was already used to seeing her like that.

"I can't afford to slow down. If I do, I won't be able to defeat a second-level solarian," Xiaoxiao said.

"You really are weird. Others fight above their levels, while you fight below."

"Don't look down on me. You said you wanted to fight as a group, so I'll be carrying you next."

"Yeah, right." Tianming couldn't help but chuckle.

Chapter 1717 - Annihilation

"Go away and don't disturb my cultivation." Xiaoxiao sank back into her own world, not feeling like bothering with him.

"Why are you constantly here at the Imperius Ruins? Are you an introvert or something?" Tianming asked.

"Why else but cultivating? Not to mention, the rest of you are all coupled up. I don't want to be the third wheel for any of you."

"You're not that young anymore. You should go find one."

"I..." she looked at him as her gaze dimmed, "I don't need one. I'm happy with how things are now. I'm not used to the way you all live. Being single is pleasant."

"Suit yourself. Tell me if you change your mind, I'll run a search for you. You can even have a harem if you want."

"Just leave..." she said, looking at him and feeling her rage rising.

"Make sure to take breaks. Don't ruin that body of yours. While you're still fine now, when your age starts to show, you'll wrinkle, lose your hair, your skin will yellow...." It sounded like concern at the start, only for it to devolve into nonsense.

Xiaoxiao ignored him and didn't bother to send him off, continuing to gain insight from the caeli imperius. But after he left, she wasn't able to get in the mood. Standing up, she patted her clothes down. "Maybe I'll go take in some sights."

She would check out the discourse about Tianming, the one who was bringing them glory. As his number-one believer, she had a mission to shape the conversation.

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After some time, Tianming went to Refined Residences for his soul to get nourished.

"Something's odd about you!" Mu Ziyang said, circling him and looking him up and down.

"What's odd?" Tianming asked.

"Have you been doing naughty stuff? Young people really need restraint, you know. Your divine soul feels a little feeble, and you're even covered in the scent of cosmetics," Mu Ziyang said with a seductive smile. The reason she could even notice that was that anything that happened in the wondersky realm still had an effect on the caelum and vita.

"Sheesh, you even expect me to replenish what you blasted into those girls.... Do I owe you that much?" she said, rolling her eyes.

"Hey, there's a limit to being direct, you know."

"Then why didn't you try to be less direct when you were up to those shenanigans?" Despite her comments, she didn't lose the slightest bit of care and focus. Their soul cultivation remained as effective as ever.

"Aaaaagh!" Every time it was over, she would end up pale and put a hand on her hips like she was going to collapse from being sucked dry. On the other hand, Tianming was rejuvenated. He always teased her a bit ruthlessly before leaving, much to her ire. Right after leaving, he also made sure to clear out the violet fog in his vita. That routine repeated for two months or so as Tianming completely ignored the Astraldome, focusing his entire attention on cultivation, especially that of his soul. Finally, he managed to attain a third regal soul thanks to Mu Ziyang's efforts.

With that, his vita would be even tougher. The vita homunculus in his sea of consciousness looked like it had solid form and was now far more resistant against soul attacks. Even without the Soul Tower, it wouldn't easily crumble. The extra soul power could also be applied to his attacks. The change in his soul caused his Trisoul Prime to manifest a new change as well. The bane texts on his vita, caelum, and terra reformed and split up more, covering them along with his totems. Now his mind was far clearer than before, from his thoughts to his comprehension abilities.

"I need to rest for quite a while before arranging new cultivation assignments for you," Mu Ziyang said.

"There's more?" Tianming groaned.

"What? You don't wanna do it? Even when I'm the one doing most of the work?"

"By no means. I just wanted you to be able to take a good rest."

"Is your concern genuine?"

"You can return it if it isn't."

"Well, at least you aren't a heartless bastard." She gave him a side-eye. "However, if you want to become someone on the level of a peak sovereign, you can't lag behind in terms of your soul. Being able to make up for this huge flaw of yours is really meaningful to me. Even if you rise far beyond where I can

see one day, don't forget what Big Sister did for you, alright? Make sure to leave a spot in your harem for me."

"Harem?!"

"What, think I'm too old? Call it what you want, but what we did was still dual cultivation, you know. You know what they say, married for a day, indebted for a century."

"It wasn't just a day...."

"You're a naughty one," she shyly said.

Tianming knew that something was going to happen as her gaze turned spicier and spicier. Even though his lower body wanted to stay, his upper body kept his rationality and suppressed it.

"Fool, Big Sis was only messing with you. You're young and fresh, but not my type," she said.

"Phew." He breathed a sigh of relief.

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"A return to nothingness?" The seventh strike was the biggest problem he had to face since picking up the sword. And that was just the basic strike, not the fused one.

"Then again, a hard move to comprehend means that it alone might be on par with the six strikes fused together." It would no doubt be another huge boost to his arsenal. For the sake of returning to Orderia, he was making his preparations and growing stronger. Yet this move had stumped him for the half year or so he was working on it. The details were too complex and it required a really high level of sword intent. Not being able to master the Saintdragon Annihilation meant not being able to make progress. He only managed to make a small breakthrough after he gained his third regal soul, which brought him even closer to the laws of the universe. His divine soul seemed able to project out into the space around him and resonate, as if it was touching the world, allowing him to better understand the concept of void return.

Annihilation referred to returning to the void, or emptiness, which also represented the space between everything that living things could traverse. To living beings, the nothingness of the void was also everything. While Feiling had the talent of detecting the powers of space, Tianming didn't. And while Infinitum Spatium, one of his totems, had something to do with space as well, he didn't understand its concepts even though he could use it.

"In other words, my third regal soul is the basis for learning the seventh strike. Back then, I lacked the appropriate soul level and affinity with the void." Understanding that seemed to clear the path.

Chapter 1718 - Star Map

"I guess I have Mu Ziyang to thank for this. Without her, I might never have been able to learn this move and would have no hope of returning to Orderia." Tianming had grown to like her quite a bit after spending so much time together. "I should find a chance to ask her about the violet fog in my soul."

If he didn't clear that up, there would always be a gap between them. He was hesitant about asking her about it as he was worried to learn the truth, as unlikely as that seemed. Still, that was a matter best left

for later. He cleared his mind and used most of his time on mastering the Saintdragon Annihilation. Eventually, his other basic moves also grew in proficiency. Holding the Godsin, which was also known as the Formless Minor, he seemed to be able to comprehend easier. After all, the formless nature of the sword was similar to the void of Annihilation. He stood at the lake of Violetpeak, thrusting it forward tens of thousands of times a day without losing focus. It was difficult and tiring.

He looked at the water, which almost resembled a prison. The godfather he respected seemed as if he was beneath it, his red hair messy and his eyes crying tears of blood as he awaited their return. Tianming wanted to take Qingyu with him and never return, but it was impossible. The water was a prison. There was space even within water. There was void.

"Annihilation returns everything to nothing, just like death. Death is also a return to nothing." He understood the basic concept, but his sword intent still seemed lacking. "Pierce through water and space, pierce through this cage and understand this move. Only then can I return to Orderia and save him! I have to hurry!"

He forgot everything, seeing nothing but the cage, the distance, and the sun emperor. Strike after strike came faster than the last.

"Break! Break!" His eyes were bloodshot red. His hands moved like shadows and the Formless Minor was like an illusion that could hardly be seen. It pierced into the water and disturbed it, but water couldn't be destroyed. It was like a cage that couldn't be destroyed.

"I have to turn the impossible into the possible! Maybe that's the true meaning of the strike!" He stilled his breath like a madman and treated the water like his biggest enemy, infusing all of his frustrations into it. Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and the rest wondered if Tianming was twitching because of a muscle cramp.

His strikes grew fiercer and fiercer, eventually involving sword ki. The Formless Minor changed in an imperceptible manner before vanishing from sight completely. He used the same move hundreds of thousands of times with minimal astralforce, raising his killing intent and will. It got more and more terrifying until he started roaring like a beast. When he next thrust, the strike no longer disturbed the water. Instead, all the water within ten meters twisted before vanishing into nothing in an instant. Even though it was a huge lake, there was a hole in the middle with no water. During that time, there was space at the center separating the water. There was nothing, there was the void. That was the power of Annihilation. While it looked rather plain, it was an ultimate killing technique. Once it was fused with the other moves, it would be even more terrifying.

"Hahaha!" He took a deep breath and began laughing. Only then did water flow into the hole to even it out. Even so, the area Tianming had attacked still seemed haphazard. If a person were there, they would be annihilated. Only he knew how powerful it truly was.

Even though it was said that the Ninedragon Tribulation was an eighth-realm divine art, Tianming believed that Annihilation alone was at that level. He had finally overcome its challenge. Fusing it with the other six moves shouldn't be too hard, since he had overcome the basic hurdle. Learning this move was incredibly important. He went back to Violetpeak and took out the wardrum formation of the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb and the eight drumsticks. He found the one corresponding to the saintdragon.

"Let's give it a try." He used Annihilation on the war drum, which didn't do much other than give the drum's surface a light tap. But soon, the celestial patterns within them changed into a star map. Tianming cried out in excitement and called for Feiling and the rest to come.

"What is it, Big Brother?"

The others also came to see what was going on. When Lingfeng and Qingyu saw it, joy filled their faces.

"Is this the star map from the Imperial Dragon Tomb? Can we find Orderia with it?" Qingyu asked.

"Let me see." As the owner of a divine astralship, albeit an amateur one, he knew how to use it to some extent. There were seven bright spots on the map, the center of which was a golden star of fire. It was definitely Orderia. Northeast from it was a violet star about the same size as Orderia, which should be the Violetglory Star. It wasn't far away, after all.

"We should be able to go back according to this star map," he concluded.

"That's great!" The others cheered with joy. This was far too important. Returning far stronger than before was the wish of all of them. They had grown up seeing the sun and felt more at home there than they did here.

"Wait." Tianming noticed something as they were celebrating. There were five other stars, all seemingly heliacal-class worlds, that weren't far away from Orderia. The Violetglory Star wasn't the closest one to the sun at all. Instead, there was a large and small white star that looked like demonic eyes not far away from Orderia.

"Isn't that the legendary Skywolf Star?" Tianming said.

"That's right."

"It's so close."

"I see...."

The two white stars were five times closer to the sun than the Violetglory Star.

Chapter 1719 - Kilodragon Tree

What did it mean for the Skywolf Star and a few other worlds to show up in the star map of the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb? Did it contain that information all along? If so, why didn't the Ninedragon Emperor pass it down to his descendants of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect?

Then again, the Ninedragon Emperor clearly didn't invent the Ninedragon Tribulation. It was likely that the move had come from another world; perhaps even one that was shown on this star map. As long as they had it, they would be able to roam the astralscape.

The old gods' blood of the sun emperor was probably obtained somewhere in the uncharted astralscape, so it was clear that he had some kind of star map in the Divine Sun Palace as well. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to find his way back. Thankfully, for now, the Divine Sun Palace couldn't cruise.

The star map came as quite a shock to Tianming. Seeing Skywolf, Violetglory, and the sun together made it seem not that simple. Perhaps even the Sky Palace in Orderia had no idea about the mystery.

"Big Brother, are we going back right away now that we can?" Qingyu said, looking expectantly at him. Her moon-white eyes slightly shook and there was a tinge of red deep within. They had left Orderia right after the battle at the Myriaddragon Mountains. They didn't know the aftermath of that bloody war, how the Myriad Solar Sects were doing, how many Dragon Imperials died, or whether Li Wudi's life was in danger. There was no way they could feel relieved when their father was in peril.

"As long as I summon it, the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb can reach us. Given my current strength with aid from the Omnisentient Threads, nobody here should be able to stop us from leaving. Still, it's best that we communicate this properly with the Violetcloud Imperium."

"It should be fine. It's not like we're leaving and never coming back. Not to mention, our caeli can always access the wondersky realm. We can still represent them in the Astraldome. With the star map, it should only take us two or three months for a round trip, right?" Feiling asked.

"That's right." Tianming was also feeling quite anxious about Li Wudi's affair. Not to mention, he had many friends, like Long Wanying, the Saintdragon Emperor, Jiang Qingliu, Yu Ziqian, and so on. He was quite worried for them. There was also his dynasty and those in the chaos skyjail, like Li Caiwei, Ye Shaoqing, and the rest. Feiling was right. Now that they had a divine astralship and knew that Orderia and the Violetglory Star were quite close, he could easily return. His caelum would also remain in the wondersky realm, so it wasn't like he was just taking the Violetcloud Imperium's resources and running; he could return at any time.

Everyone waited for him to make his decision. He gave it some thought and said, "After going back, we'll have to face off against the sun emperor if we're to save my godfather. If we can't protect ourselves, it'll be a fool's errand. While we're quite strong now, I intend to take down the Celestial Beings first and see how the Violetglorians react before going back."

Everything depended on the reactions from the people on the Violetglory Star. He had benefited too much from the Violetcloud Imperium and felt indebted to them in some way. It would be ideal if he could establish a good and communicative relationship with them. Leaving for the short term wasn't really running away, after all. He would still be fighting for them in the Astraldome.

"Alright."

At the very least, they had great caeli imperius. Cultivating here would be better than doing so at the Myriad Solar Sects, though the Astraldome could change things. It was said that the sixth level and beyond had incredible cultivation resources.

"Alright, we'll aim for the sixth level before returning to Orderia!" Tianming decided.

"Okay." The others nodded in agreement.

"Let's drag on a little bit. If we can continue making progress, let's go to Bloodbath Arena," Tianming said. That would allow them to make use of the group battles offered there. Not everyone would be able to get a winning streak of ten alone. Anyone in the party would be able to make it to the sixth level,

as long as their party had a winning streak of ten. Too bad Qingyu wouldn't be able to join them, however.

It was really hard for those under thirty to make it to the sixth level. With someone like Crimsonjade Cang stopping them at the fifth level to ensure non-mysterians didn't get access to those resources, it wasn't surprising at all. The mysterians were a large faction with just and crooked people all mixed together; Crimsonjade Cang definitely belonged to the latter category. There was a common saying that crooks are lesser than ghosts, and Cang just happened to be a specter.

The appearance of the star map was important to every one of them. Now that they had a clear picture of the upcoming fight in mind, all of them, Qingyu included, focused on making more cultivation progress. The stronger they grew, the better their chances would be.

It had been four months since Tianming had been defeated by Crimsonjade Cang and his fans were about to cry. The ones in the Mysterium Cluster also had their eyes peeled for Tianming, even though he didn't show up. Eventually, people began mocking him for being so audacious only to end up hiding himself away. The faceless specters declared that Tianming had been traumatized after his defeat by Crimsonjade Cang and no longer dared to even step in the Astraldome.

It was also said that all five members of Celestial Beings had gone to the Bloodbath Arena to wait for Tianming, but he was a no-show. Eventually, the audience began losing steam again. The Omniscient Threads in Violetglory also began declining in number, losing more than ten million in four months, once more proving that faith gained from bringing glory paled in comparison to that of bringing salvation. The Violetglory Star was a calculative place like that, even when it came to the reward system there.

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Two months had passed since the appearance of the star map, making it six months since Tianming had shown up at the Bloodbath Arena and over a year since he'd come to the Violetglory Star. The mysterians' ships should have set sail eight months ago, and would be nearing half of their whole journey. Tianming could feel the danger mounting despite the amount of time he had left.

Cultivating at the Solar stage was much harder. His breakthrough wasn't that hard, and he did it without consuming caeli or pills, but making progress was a different story. It wasn't that out of the ordinary, however. Even those in the Celestial Beings, with all their talent, took years to make a single breakthrough, especially after the fifth level. As one inched closer to the capabilities of a sovereign, the difficulty would multiply. That was why even if those in the Celestial Beings were able to reach the fifth level and above by thirty, they might not become precentennial paragons.

Once past the age of thirty, one would be past the greatest growth spurt. Progress would start slowing and gradually worsening with age. With a slowing rate of improvement and rising difficulty, leveling up became exponentially harder. Cultivating was like climbing up a slope that got steeper and steeper the higher one went. And the older one grew, the less stamina they would have. It would already be pretty decent if an old person could stop and stay at that point of the slope instead of falling off or rolling backward.

Tianming was still in his prime, not to mention, as long as his talent continued to rise, he would always be young. Even then, he felt the burn of climbing the Solar stage. Lingfeng and Xiaoxiao also felt it,

despite having the advantage of cultivating by consuming. Lingfeng's Primordial Gate seemed a little unable to process all those waste pills. Xiaoxiao kept stubbornly forcing growth as well, despite Tianming asking her to slow down.

Since Tianming had obtained his third regal soul, he kept training at the Imperius Ruins. He kept it up for around half a year even after he mastered the Saintdragon Annihilation. He had seen so many caeli during his time there, helping his Lifesbane Will catch up to his Imperial Will. His cyclic constellation eventually became a cyclic sacrosun. Unlike the imperial star above the Grand-Orient Sword, the cyclic sacrosun was actually a black-and-white vortex formed from many smaller black-and-white stars. They spun around in a vortex shaped like a yin-yang diagram. When manifested, a sea of monochrome stars appeared around him, representing the profundity of the cycle. Coupled with his pandemonium sacrosun, they made for quite a perfect combination, with the sea of stars cycling around the imperial star in the middle.

"I'm finally at the second level." Fresh astralforce surged within his albi, bringing his strength to a whole new level. The formation of both sacrosuns made his will even more firm and he glowed like an ancient deity. The five types of astralforce within his body blended together with the seven types of grade-eight sword ki, bringing his radiance to a whole new level. The seventh strand he assimilated was similar to the Frozen Glasstree, also being a treelike sword ki cluster.

It was called the Kilodragon Tree, and Tianming had been shocked by its majesty upon seeing it. Its branches and twigs looked like dragons, making the whole thing look like a gigantic draconic hydra. Every leaf was a white dragon scale, and its vines looked like the whiskers of dragons. The flowers of the tree looked like dragon eyes as well. It was a miracle of the universe for something like this to be able to naturally form. Out of all of his sword ki strands, this one seemed the strongest and was really close to a grade-nine sword ki strand. It was also suited to the Saintdragon Annihilation. Now he had a matching strand of sword ki for each move in his arsenal. Coupled with his totems, the Ninedragon Tribulation moveset rose to a whole new level.

"If the two sacrosuns can properly manifest in the wondersky realm, it'd be impressive." He was filled with confidence in his upcoming fights. Having been absent from the Astraldome for so long, he couldn't wait to start challenging people again.

Chapter 1720 - Taking Ye Chen Along

Racing for time was the greatest advantage Tianming and his group had. Even the top geniuses of deific-class worlds couldn't compete with them on that. Even if they could, Tianming and the rest had trained all the way starting from the mortal stages. There was no way the deific-class world geniuses who were already born at a certain level of cultivation could catch up. Even Ye Chen was left behind in the dust.

After nearly half a year, Tianming was the last one to complete his cultivation goals. Before that, Lingfeng relied on the Violetcloud Pillsea and Imperius Ruins to become a fourth-level solarian. At the same time, his fourth imperial soul had improved somewhat, despite still being at the same level. In terms of soul strength, he was better than Sovereign Starfeather and Mu Ziyan, becoming the top soul cultivator in the Violetcloud Imperium.

Xiaoxiao just ate and ate to become a fifth-level solarian, though without the Archaionfiend, she couldn't even defeat a fourth-level solarian. Feiling was at the fourth level now as well, on par with

Lingfeng. However, her combat capabilities weren't that well rounded. That said, her many spatial manipulation tricks were rather synergistic with Tianming. She said that she wanted to be his greatest support no matter what.

Now, all of their abilities were up to the standard Tianming had wanted and they were fit to compete with Celestial Beings. At the very least, Tianming was already terrifying despite only being a second-level solarian. Now, all they needed was one more member for the group. While Qingyu was at the first level of the Solar stage, she was still climbing the Myriadeyes Wonder, so waiting wasn't an option.

"Well, we've been letting this drag out for half a year, so we might as well go over to ask him what he thinks."

The five of them entered the wondersky realm. As the others remained in Soulburn Hall, Tianming sent Princess Shen Yu a message to request a meeting. He asked her to bring Ye Chen along to prevent a misunderstanding. Soon, she sent her reply.

"Take me there, wondersky fairy," Tianming said. Lights flashed as the environment around him changed to the princess' lakeside abode. It was a tranquil sight as always, beautiful and serene. Reminded of Soulburn Hall, Tianming figured that the other two probably frolicked around here quite a bit as well.

Looking ahead, he saw a radiant youth and a girl dressed in a grand, white dress with a divinespring in her chest. The two of them expressionlessly looked at Tianming. It seemed that more had changed than he realized. Tianming went straight to the point. "You two know why I've come, so I won't talk in circles. Let's fight together at the Bloodbath Arena. We're both Violetglorians, aren't we?"

"You guys aren't Violetglorians. Only I am a true native cultivator," Ye Chen said. That was a theory that had come to prominence lately, which had also affected the number of Omnisentient Threads somewhat. However, most people didn't believe it, and the Violetcloud Imperium also denounced these rumors.

"Nonsense. As long as the label above my head says Violetglory in the Astraldome, I'm a Violetglorian."

"I see. Are you really going to form a group of five to challenge the Celestial Beings? Apart from you, who else can face off against the rest of them? The top three of their party are all sixth-level solarians and beyond."

"Don't worry about them, but yourself. As long as you can take on one of the five, you qualify."

"Me? I think I'll make the cut. I have sovereign beasts and also broke through to the third level. Even though the weakest of them, Long, is a fifth-level solarian, I'm confident in dealing with him." Even though Ye Chen had lost quite a lot, he'd only intensified his efforts following each defeat. He also had the legacy of the Unfettered Astralord and Desolate Chaos Progenibeasts, so his overall abilities weren't weaker than Xiaoxiao's. He had also worked hard over the previous year and made substantial improvements.

Back then, he could fight three levels above his, and using Chaos Deity, he would be even stronger. While Long was among the most talented faceless specters, he was only two levels above Ye Chen, so there was a chance. Perhaps Ye Chen was even more talented than Long. He had started off from a much higher position than Tianming and the rest, after all.

"Without me, you wouldn't even have a chance to fight him. He might even ignore you."

"I know."

"Even though I keep defeating you, as long as you can take down any one of the Celestial Beings, you'll be able to restore your glory here and the Divineglory Dynasty will once more recognize your talents."

"So the price for that is to be your minion?" Ye Chen self-mockingly said. He recalled that he had made Tianming a similar offer when they'd first met.

"You're overthinking this. I'm giving you a chance to fight shoulder-to-shoulder. At worst, you're just a rival. I don't need a minion like you. Not to mention, we aren't walking the same path, so there's no need for conflict. I want you to join me because I recognize your abilities. During the fight, you don't have to listen to my orders. Just fight on your own terms as long as you can hold one of them back," Tianming said with a shrug.

"So that's it? No catch?" Ye Chen smiled. Tianming's words seemed to lift the weight from his heart.

"It's much better than pretending to be best friends all of a sudden." Their relationship hadn't been on the best of terms, thanks to their rivalry.

"Aren't you worried I'll sabotage you over a grudge?" Ye Chen asked.

"Haha, if you no longer care about your reputation and you're willing to endure a lifetime of mockery, feel free. I'm not the one you have to worry about if the fight goes badly."

The Violetglory Star as a whole did anticipate a team up between the two of them regardless of faction; everyone was hoping that they could work together. Even those of the Divineglory Dynasty wanted to feel included in the fight for their home's pride. The Violetcloud Imperium also knew about Tianming's goal and wanted his team to succeed, so it was a win-win. There was no reason for Ye Chen to refuse.

All cultivators of the star would gladly push him to Tianming's side and watch him, ensuring that he did his best. Not to mention, any results he gained would be his own. It would be a good chance for him to improve his reputation again, and Tianming didn't expect a refusal.

After all that, Ye Chen smiled and said, "To be honest, you showing up really messed up my state of mind. I've been under too much pressure lately, and I've hated you the whole time. However, I didn't think you wouldn't fuss over that in the least and give me this chance. Since that's the case, I won't dilly dally either. You're powerful and talented. Even if I have to follow your orders, it's nothing to be shameful about."

"Alright, I appreciate the frankness. Get prepared. We'll gather at the Astraldome at this time tomorrow. Let's have a blast. We'll give the audience ample time to build up their anticipation."

"As you wish."

"Alright, so long!" Tianming turned to the princess and said, "Prepare to cheer for your man."

"Thank you." The princess seemed far more reserved and nodded while holding Ye Chen's arm.

"You're welcome." Tianming vanished after that.

News of the five teaming up spread across the Violetglory Star, stoking the flames of excitement once more. Everyone had obtained that information within a single day.

Ye Chen breathed a sigh of relief after Tianming left. "Everything's changed, Wanwan. You're right. They'll eventually leave, so I shouldn't keep treating them like enemies. After they leave, I'll be king!"

"Yeah. Do your best," she said.

"However, as long as he still has the Violetcloud Imperium in mind, I'll never be able to unite the world."

"That's correct." That was the matter Princess Shen Yu was contemplating.

"That's why, while we shouldn't be enemies on the surface, I'll still kill him if an opportunity presents itself. Only then will I have a chance in this world." Killing intent seared within his sun-like eyes. It had been hidden so well and deep before.

"Yes. However, don't mess around before that chance comes." She grit her teeth, still looking in the direction Tianming had left with a look of awe and resentment.

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A day was all it took for news of the group's formation to spread. Tianming didn't immediately go in order to give time for the Omnisentient Threads to build up. While it sounded opportunistic, it was what his audience responded to best. He needed to give them a show they wanted to watch. He had been preparing for that for close to half a year. As expected, the number of Violetglorians in the wondersky realm set another record.

Even so, he didn't have complete confidence in their success; taking down those five wouldn't be easy. Shenwu Fen and Long were clear, but the other three were still mysteries to him, especially the mysterious girl who won the Grand-Orient Sword. Tianming still knew next to nothing about her.