

The Ages 1721

Chapter 1721 - Let Them Party Up

There were so many people dreaming in the wondersky realm that the whole Violetglory Star seemed to quiet down. People of all ages were asleep, their caeli waiting to watch that battle. The wondersky realm itself was filled to the brim.

Before the fight, the sovereign, the patriarchs of the Pentarchy, the forty-eight astralkings, and the tens of millions of troops in the imperium's army held a send-off for Tianming and the gang. "We pray for your victorious return, Astralking Tianming!"

Tianming had regained quite a number of lost Omnisentient Threads without even having to do anything. "Thank you, everyone."

"Alright, now go!" Sovereign Starfeather said. It was a miracle for a heliacal-class world to have a team capable of rivaling the Celestial Beings. Everyone was pumped with anticipation for this age of heroes. Ye Chen's participation also showed a united front across the whole world. Even those from the Divineglory Alliance cheered for the event and no longer felt awkwardly left out.

"Let's go!" Tianming, Feiling, Lingfeng, Qingyu, and Xiaoxiao all entered the wondersky realm together. While it was quieter inside Soulburn Hall, they could still hear booming cheers outside.

"Big Brother, Ling'er, Feng, Xiaoxiao, I'll cheer for all of you here!" Even though Qingyu couldn't join the fight, she kept an open mind about it. She knew she didn't have enough combat experience yet.

"Go to the Violetcloud Battlefield. Don't stay here alone," Tianming said, worried that her bane-rings would change while she was alone. It would be easier for her to forget herself with other people around.

"Okay, Big Brother." She smiled, sensing his attentiveness. While Lingfeng was a little stiffer in that regard, Qingyu was well aware of the nervous and worried looks he shot her. "Feng, make sure you do well."

"Wait for me to come back."

"Okay."

Qingyu went to the Violetcloud Battlefield to watch the battles from there. Tianming then called for Ye Chen and the five of them entered the Bloodbath Arena together.

"We're coming!"

.....

This was the first time all five of them had come to the Bloodbath Arena together. It had been close to half a year since the rowdiness, so the place was much quieter. Though there were still some that cheered, it wasn't as populated as the time Tianming challenged the mysterians.

The resources on the sixth level were the goal of many non-mysterians, but they were stopped here, unable to progress. Even so, they still fought hard, hoping that they would eventually come through. It was said that there were tens of thousands of caeli imperius on the sixth level alone, let alone beyond.

All those caeli were donations from other wondersky realms, including the two main factions of the Violetglory Star. That was why people were so excited to see the results.

Tianming finally arrived. They initially missed him, but eventually started mocking him. However, those who said the worst things usually didn't dare to back it up. Now, Tianming was faced with odd stares rather than cheers.

"He's still alive?"

"I thought he'd been killed in reality or something."

"Even though he challenged our Yanwu Dao, he didn't show up. What a coward."

"I thought he was scared of coming back."

"Ha, like you're one to talk. He was able to defeat Long and Shenwu Fen, so it's proof he's strong."

Many others remained on the sidelines, not daring to cheer them on as they were unaware of what the mysterians currently thought of Tianming. Naturally, Tianming didn't just stay there.

"Let's go to the group area." They had spirited looks in their eyes.

"Brother Tianming!" a clear voice called from behind. It was Shenwu Yin. She scurried over and complained, "You're finally here! I've waited for you for a long time, you know! I kept explaining to them on your behalf but they ignored me! They're envious of your abilities and even accused me of siding with an outsider! What ignorant fools! Once you come to Skyway Bistar, you'll be one of us, yet all they care about is their own bottom line. How shortsighted, don't you think?" She seemed rather anxious and said everything she had kept pent up.

"That's right. I get it. United, we stand strong."

After that, Shenwu Yin spotted the other four behind him. All of them were labeled with the Violetglory tag. "Whoa! So you're all Violetglorian cultivators! I heard you were special too!" Shenwu Yin and the others' grasp on their powers were already outdated. Even though they were amazing, they were still far from the Celestial Beings' level.

"They're my friends and teammates," Tianming said. "Yin, I intend to fight in the group battles with them."

"Huh?" Shenwu Yin seemed stunned. "But Brother Tianming, didn't you say you wanted to challenge Yanwu Dao here?"

"Did I ever say that?"

"You did! Yanwu Dao kept coming here often to wait for you, only for you to be absent for half a year! Skyway Monostar is pissed! And now that you're back, you're going to fight in the group battles? What about your challenge?"

The reason Tianming had said so much to her was there were many mysterians who kept their eye on her, thanks to her status. Her words were basically announcements to the entire Mysterium Cluster.

"Well, they can just party up again to fight me in the group battles. We're in no rush to fight. I can leave the first fight for them," Tianming casually said, as if he were joking.

"Huh?" Even Shenwu Yin was dumbfounded.

Chapter 1722 - Fanning the Flames

Shenwu Yin shook her head and snapped out of it. "Brother Tianming, are you joking? People do say that you're powerful enough to face off against the Celestial Beings, but they're talking about single duels!"

"I'm not fighting alone. Those four are my teammates. It's a fair five-on-five," Tianming said.

"Will they... make a difference?"

"Little girl, don't look down on us. We're capable, too," Feiling said.

"Is that so? But the Celestial Beings...." Shenwu Yin's surprise was only natural. The other four had never shown enough power to be able to rival the Celestial Beings. Even Tianming had only managed to defeat the weaker Long and Shenwu Fen, yet now they were going to fight as a group before Yanwu Dao had even been defeated.

"He must be terrified of Crimsonjade Cang. That's why he's going to the group side, not that his friends will make a difference."

"Wow, you must be a mind reader, huh?"

"Just watch. My guess can't be far from the truth. Yanwu Dao wanted to take him down for the mysterians, and that's realistic. However, the other two helpers, even Weisheng Xi, wouldn't bat an eye at Tianming. And that girl from the Celestial Beings must be gone by now."

That was also what the people in the astralscape wondered. Tianming's challenge to the Celestial Beings had less chance of happening than him challenging Yanwu Dao. It wasn't realistic enough, so people began suspecting his intentions.

"I understand now. Even though he's capable, he must be the arrogant type."

"As expected of someone from a heliacal-class world. They lack class."

Shenwu Yin didn't know how to argue against that. As she hesitated, Tianming patted her shoulder and said, "How about this, Yin? Help me notify them that I'll be waiting at the group area. Tell them I won't fight until all of them gather. I already took down Long and Fen, so if the rest don't come, it's just their turn to be cowards."

"Alright! I don't need to say anything. They must've heard of it by now. Even so...."

"Anything wrong?"

"I think the other two won't bother even if Yanwu Dao comes," Shenwu Yin said. That was the difference between duels and group battles. The others weren't obliged to participate.

"If they ignore me, they're afraid. For them to call themselves Celestial Beings, they might as well give us that name if they're going to keep playing the coward. Well, if they never try, we'll never find out if

they're more powerful than the Violetglorian Celestial Beings." He cracked a loud laugh that was aimed straight at the collective psyche of the mysterians.

Many of them broke out into a commotion.

"How audacious!"

"Violetglorian Celestial Beings? With those four filler members?"

"Didn't those four struggle to make it to the fifth level? How can they possibly compete with the Celestial Beings? There's many more mysterians with more talent!"

"No need to get so agitated, he's merely making a fuss. I bet he'll leave for another half a year after saying all that. He must've turned shameless after chickening out for so long."

"I really want to laugh. Violetglorian Celestial Beings... the joke of the century...."

More and more people burst into joyous laughter. While they didn't doubt that Tianming was powerful enough to defeat Shenwu Fen and Long, they questioned his character and the strength of his friends.

They thought that Tianming would just ignore their mockery, but he looked up at them and said, "Not only do I dare to say it, I'll use this as our name. I won't waste words on you, as I'm sure the Celestial Beings are already listening. Listen up, I'm here for you. Find me here if you dare. It won't take much of your time, either. You'll have more than enough time to live in my shadow after I defeat you."

He said the craziest words with the calmest demeanor. Not only did his supporters like his response, his haters were only infuriated even more. There was no need to cater to haters; his goal would be achieved as long as the Violetglorians saw him favorably. The more the mysterians hated him, the more the Violetglorians would go wild once he defeated them.

"Tell the five of them that we returned after half a year of preparation to kick them off their high horses. If they want to cower away and pretend that we're not worth their time, we'll just claim the name Celestial Beings for our own use." The more arrogant he sounded, the more effective his words would be.

The people who heard his words seemed a little blank. The ninth-level Cang walked over from the crowd and said, "You lost to me, so what're you talking about? I didn't see you act so arrogantly when you were beaten half a year ago."

Everyone laughed.

"If you have the slightest shred of dignity left, you'd better move aside. I'll take care of you next. At my age, you wouldn't even qualify to be my dog," Tianming replied with a curt smile. The folks who were laughing froze. Tianming sounded too serious, and they realized he wasn't just joking.

"Interesting. If you hype it up so much and still lose, what do you think it'll feel like?"

"My legend will crumble and I'll never be able to raise my head up again."

"That's right. Talented geniuses deserve to be praised, but you should take a look at the class of your world. It seems that only retards like you are able to come from those worlds. What a shame."

Tianming had already raised the tension to a new high. He had to do that much, at least, or the other two from the Celestial Beings wouldn't come. The groundwork had already been laid.

"Yin, do you want to go watch it together?" Tianming said, no longer speaking with an arrogant tone.

"Alright... I'll support you." She was quite shocked by everything and was still recovering.

"Trust me, you're in for a show," Tianming said.

"Alright!"

Just like that, they went to the group area as people looked at them with contempt. "They're only unhappy because they were prejudiced against me from the beginning. There's no need for me to be courteous to them. I have limited mental energy, so I'll just focus it on the people that acknowledge me."

Moving the crowd was just a trick. At the end of the day, true power would be needed for actual recognition. Once he won, these people would be speechless and might even change their ways. But if he lost, he would have to bear the consequence of becoming a laughingstock for good.

Chapter 1723 - Skyway Imperial Star

The group area of the Bloodbath Arena seemed smaller at first sight. There were fewer battlezones there, but they were ten times the size of the duel zones, perfect for ten people. Team battles were far more varied and had far more possible outcomes. Sometimes, one person could be fighting against five enemies, and other times teams worked together to be greater than the sum of their members. Supporting fighters got a bigger role as well. It was just as exciting to watch as the duels.

Mysterians frequently carried their younger juniors to the next level using group battles, so non-mysterians seldom did so. It was almost like the sixth level was made for the exclusive use of the mysterians. It was set up by the divine wonderians to work like that from the beginning, and 'everyone' had agreed to it from the start. The mysterians made up the main faction of the Mysterium Cluster's Wondersky-Mysterium Alliance, so it was no surprise that they would be favored for resources.

"Let's call our group the Violetglorian Celestial Beings." They immediately formed their party upon the reminder by the wondersky realm. Tianming was made the leader as Ye Chen stood and watched. Even though he was usually the one who gave orders, this time he quietly watched Tianming perform without offering any thoughts.

"Team Violetglorian Celestial Beings?" Quite a lot of people grimaced at the sight of the labels above their names which included their party name. It was an outright challenge to the mysterians.

"Why don't you call yourselves knockoff Celestial Beings instead?" many mocked.

"We'll wait and watch the originals deal with you."

"Shameless bootlegs. What a laugh."

Most of them were mysterians who considered themselves to be from the core of the universe. They felt a sense of superiority toward outsiders, and it was something they were proud of most of the time.

The eyes of countless people in the astralscape were concentrated on Tianming and the rest as they silently awaited the arrival of the 'real' Celestial Beings.

"So they're really going to make the challenge, huh?"

"What do you know? They're betting that the Celestial Beings won't gather and are putting up a front! Even if Yanwu Dao, Shenwu Fen, and Long come, as long as the other two don't, Li Tianming won't buy it!"

"This trick... sigh...."

As many predicted, someone said, "Li Tianming, haven't you put up enough of an act? The four of us are enough to send you away from the Bloodbath Arena. You can take another half year off! Don't bother the real Celestial Beings. They're really busy people."

Tianming just ignored them.

"As expected, they're coming."

It seemed that Yanwu Dao and a few others were almost there, at least. Three lights flashed in the distance, attracting quite a few eyes. Tianming knew the two on the left and right. One was the fiery youth with the 'Shen' character on his face, and the other was a red faceless specter. They were Shenwu Fen and Long, respectively, the top young talents of Skyway Bistar and Skyway Tristar. The one in the center was Yanwu Dao, a faceless human beastmaster! He looked really similar to Yanwu Ming. As mysterians didn't have facial features, it was hard for non-mysterians to tell them apart.

However, Yanwu Dao did have some features that stood out. For instance, he had an imperial aura that Yanwu Ming couldn't hope to match. Even the 'Yan' character on his face seemed like it was formed from black and gold strokes. He was dressed in a robe of a similar color scheme and wore a necklace of head-sized prayer beads. His black hair looked explosively spiky, making him look almost like an ancient mummified corpse. He looked like the most powerful mysterian of the younger generation and stood out more than Long and Shenwu Fen.

"Interesting. His cultivation path seems similar to mine." Tianming had inherited the legacy of the Primordial God-Emperor, and Yanwu Dao seemed to be a natural ruler as well. He had the blood and ambition of one, and was someone who could inspire people with his charisma. Not to mention, his own family was one of the top factions of the Mysterium Cluster and was stronger than tens of thousands of worlds. Skyway Monostar was thus also known as the Skyway Imperial Star, and only they dared to claim to be imperials among the three worlds. The totemancers and specters had to relent on that, perhaps proving that beastmastery was the top cultivation system of the universe.

Yanwu Dao was the perfect model junior of the most orthodox imperial faction of the Mysterium Cluster, with a legacy stretching tens of millions of years back. Even in his twenties, he seemed really regal. "In other words, he's someone with a similar aura to mine." It was the closest match Tianming had ever seen. The 'Yan' character on his face seemed to mirror Tianming's black and gold eyes. Yanwu Dao appeared to be a natural-born tyrant, and Shenwu Fen and Long his loyal subjects. There was a synergy to their attitudes and wills.

Shenwu Fen was the brains, Long was the brawn, and Yanwu Dao had the best qualities of both, standing out from both of them. It was said that Skyway Monostar was two hundred times the size of a heliacal-class world, while the other two Skyway worlds were a hundred times larger. That meant that Skyway Monostar had the volume of Skyway Bistar and Skyway Tristar combined.

Chapter 1724 - Honored Guest from Afar

Yanwu Dao and Tianming standing face to face seemed to create an odd sense of contrast. Some people seemed to see Tianming as Yanwu Dao, but with a face. The only parts of them that were different were their hairstyles. Yanwu Dao's hair was spiky and black, while Tianming's was straight and white.

Yanwu Dao clearly saw Tianming's party name. To him, it was a provocation that couldn't be forgiven. Shenwu Fen and Long were already filled with anger, but Yanwu Dao kept his calm. He spoke with a deep voice, each word feeling like a mountain that pressed down on others, hammering his message into their hearts. "Li Tianming, can you stop messing around? Let's just fight one-on-one and consider this matter over. Our time is precious. Attention whoring in front of the universal audience like you is an evil vice, you know."

Tianming knew that fighting one-on-one was the better way of settling things with the mysterians. "That was what I planned to do, but you guys allowed bad-faith crooks like Crimsonjade Cang into the mix, so I don't see any hope for progressing. Since mysterians can simply stop people from going to the sixth level, I choose to not waste my time on him. I think my chances here are better. Over there, you only need one shameless person to stop me. But here, you'll need five shameless people in a party. It'll be a show to behold for sure," Tianming said, echoing the feelings of all non-mysterians. Tianming leveraged the conflict between mysterians and non-mysterians to his advantage and the drama only drew more attention.

The oppression of mysterians against others wasn't something that was often discussed. Yet there was nothing anybody could do about grifters like Crimsonjade Cang. But Tianming knew that even the mysterians themselves had qualms about using that tactic, while some merely thought that the powerful had the right to do whatever they wanted. Tianming intended to use it to mock the mysterians. It was a deep thorn embedded in their bodies, frustrating them to no end. No doubt, Yanwu Dao and Shenwu Fen didn't like such underhanded tactics either.

Yanwu Dao's forehead seemed to wrinkle when he heard those words. He turned to Crimsonjade Cang and said to Tianming, "Are you certain that you'll only fight in the group battles?" He didn't dare to comment on the mysterians that stopped non-mysterians from progressing.

"That's right. Let's fight and settle this once and for all. If you guys didn't go around sweeping the battlefield during the Astralium Seeking, I would've been the undisputed winner," Tianming said.

"Fine. We'll do as you wish. I'll pick two more opponents that you've fought before." Yanwu Dao turned back to the crowd and called out, "Yanwu Ming, Ying, come here."

The two of them should have been part of the top ten during the Astralium Seeking. In the year since their elimination in the fourth level, they had finally made it up to the fifth level. Whitejade Ying looked as shiny as before, and seemed completely tranquil in contrast to Long. Coupled with Yanwu Ming, they formed a group of five with Yanwu Dao and the rest.

Yanwu Dao said, "Fen and Long lost to you, and these two alone teamed up against you and failed. I'll fight with them, and it wouldn't be an unfair fight. Let's start. Continuing this farce is pointless." It was clear that Weisheng Xi and the mysterious girl weren't there. Not to mention, Yanwu Dao didn't need them to suppress Tianming, either. Perhaps, to him, this issue only ever concerned Tianming and the mysterians.

"If they're all inferior to me, there's no point. I said that I only want to fight the Celestial Beings," Tianming said. He emphasized his challenge once more.

"The Celestial Beings? We disbanded before joining the Astralium Seeking. It was only a temporary party, so we simply picked an epic-sounding name. It never really mattered in the first place. If you want the Celestial Beings, we'll name ourselves the Celestial Beings. After all, this is a true party representing mysterians. The other two were honored guests from afar. There's no need to trouble them over affairs in the Mysterium Cluster."

"No can do. During the Astralium Seeking, Weisheng Xi was the one who eliminated me. I told him to wait for me on the fifth level. What's wrong? Did he chicken out?"

There was no meaning in defeating the current 'Celestial Beings'. What was that half year of preparation for? Yanwu Dao alone wouldn't be able to move the hearts of the Violetglorians. Only when Tianming was recognized as the top genius of the known universe could he give rise to another wave of fervent believers. That was his ambition.

"Didn't I say he'd keep up the act? My guess was right! The other two will never come and he can keep pretending to be badass," Crimsonjade Cang said.

"Shameless!" cursed many faceless specters that made up most of the griefers on the fifth level. Tianming's every word was directed at them.

Yanwu Dao turned cold at Tianming's insistence. "Stop messing around. You're someone who'll eventually have to come to the Mysterium Cluster. Why insist on getting on our bad side? I told you that they were guests."

"So mere guests are allowed to do your dirty and shameless work of unfairly raising their hands against me? Spare me the excuses," Tianming said, stoking the flames of anger and intensifying the tension in the atmosphere.

"You'd better stop before crossing the line, Li Tianming," Shenwu Fen said.

"Let him keep up the act. Let's see how he ends up," Long said.

"You can fight us first. If you win, I'll invite the other two over," Yanwu Dao said. He was there to solve a problem. Tianming's public airing of his grievances about how the Astralium Seeking turned out indeed reflected badly on the top mysterian geniuses, so he had to put a stop to it so that public opinion no longer swayed in his favor.

"No. Eliminating you will stop you from coming back for another month. It's a waste of my time. I want to settle things today," Tianming said.

"Are you courting death?" Long snapped. "You think we'll bend our heads and do your bidding just because you're throwing a fuss?"

"Wow, your acting deserves a reward!" Crimsonjade Cang said.

Even so, there was nothing they could do about it. Tianming had defeated Long and Shenwu Fen back-to-back and swayed things in his favor. If this wasn't dealt with properly, the mysterians stood to lose a lot of face. Once their reputation tanked in the known universe, the juniors would bear quite some fault for it. However, Yanwu Dao himself had no way of summoning the other two.

Chapter 1725 - Comma Girl

Things entered a stalemate. Yanwu Dao couldn't do anything about it and only said, "Actually, as long as you don't make so much trouble, I don't bear any hate toward you. When you come to us, I'll treat you as a brother and a friend."

"This is only a friendly fight. I just want to reset our grievances, you see. If you're open-minded, this won't affect our friendship at all. You know what they say, you're never true friends until you've fought at least once, right?" Tianming said.

"The issue is that I'm unable to demand that those guests accept this senseless challenge."

"How would you know if you haven't tried asking?"

"That's because you aren't worth it, at least not until you take me down. We can settle this in a duel."

"Nope, I don't want to waste my energy fighting you only for a few old grandpas a few times my age to defeat me after I get the title of number-one genius. My time is limited, unlike those old folks'."

Those words infuriated Crimsonjade Cang and the others. All of them shot odd gazes at Tianming.

The matter was still in a stalemate. More and more onlookers came to look, making the situation harder and harder to control. Yanwu Dao knew that if he didn't appropriately handle this matter, the mysterians' reputation was at stake. His seniors would also change their view on him.

At that moment, two beams of light appeared in the fifth level, causing waves of shock. Weisheng Xi of the wonderians and the mysterious girl had appeared! Crimsonjade Cang and the other mysterians were shocked, then broke out laughing.

"Perfect! Now his act is up!"

"Li Tianming, let's see how you end up! Yanwu Dao, slay that insolent fool!"

"That idiot actually managed to get everyone from the Celestial Beings to deal with him. His life has been worth it. Now he has to pay the price."

"He deserves the title of King of the Knockoff Celestial Beings!"

"I'm going to die laughing.... Wasn't he so sure that the two honored guests wouldn't come? They definitely weren't able to stand your insolence any longer and came to deal with you."

Crimsonjade Cang laughed the hardest among them. "Looks like dealing with twitchy upstarts like them is everyone's duty. Even with how talented he is, his head's surprisingly empty. After crying wolf so many times, the wolves finally showed up, huh?"

The mysterians had been rendered speechless before, but the two guests would teach him a lesson. They looked forward to how everything would turn out. The two guests made it to Yanwu Dao's side as the mysterians worshipfully gazed at them.

Weisheng Xi was known as the most beautiful man in the universe, and Tianming had seen him before. No doubt he was stronger than Yanwu Dao, being a divine wonderian. Tianming turned to the girl and was quite shocked at what he saw. She was wearing a black veil that obscured her face, revealing only her black, spiritless eyes. The eyes almost seemed fake. Not to mention, she seemed a little too ordinary, like someone he wouldn't bat an eye at in the Vermillion Bird Kingdom. She wasn't tall, nor did she have a curvy figure. In fact, she was flat as a board and really slender. Her hair seemed dried out and her nose looked a little crooked beneath the veil. She even seemed a little hunched. She was someone who could instantly disappear into a crowd, and her apparent plainness was contrasted even more heavily as she stood next to Weisheng Xi.

She almost seemed pitifully plain, as if she was a puppet without her own will. She awkwardly stood there, almost like she couldn't blend in with the rest. It seemed as if a single slap would be enough to take her out with how helpless she appeared. She didn't even have a name label that denoted where she came from. There was only a single comma on her label, which was why many people just called her comma girl.

The fifth level was filled with grand and bombastic people of all kinds, and someone like her looked like a rat turd in a bowl of porridge. Tianming struggled to imagine how someone like her could be an honored guest who got first place in the Astralium Seeking. Most importantly, she was the one who had obtained the grade-nine Grand-Orient Sword. It was a shame he couldn't watch the fight among the top ten after he was eliminated. Otherwise, he would have a better understanding of her abilities. She was definitely going to be the biggest variable in today's fight. However, Tianming seemed relieved regardless of how it would turn out. He had gotten what he wanted: a chance to face off against the Celestial Beings.

The arrival of the two caused cheers to erupt. Weisheng Xi squinted at Tianming and smiled. Turning to Yanwu Dao, he said, "This fellow really knows how to mess around, for him to be able to give you so much trouble."

"Don't blame Brother Dao. We were the ones who lost to him in the first place and gave him that reputation," Shenwu Fen said.

"He's quite capable, but a little too ambitious. I'm sorry to trouble the two of you over this," Yanwu Dao said.

"It's a small matter. We divine wonderians and mysterians are as close as siblings. This is only a small issue. I'm just here to fill up space in the party and you can hardly call this a favor," Weisheng Xi said.

"You have my gratitude!" Yanwu Dao also thanked the comma girl. As expected, she didn't respond at all. There wasn't even a single change in her expression, as if she was completely isolated from this

world. "Since that's the case, I have to thank Li Tianming for giving the Celestial Beings a chance to reunite once more."

As he said that, their party name appeared in their name label.

"Now that's the original Celestial Beings!" Cang cried out. Countless other mysterians cheered, while the non-mysterians seemed worried for Tianming. They knew that if he lost, nobody would dare to side with him ever again and going to the sixth level would be a pipe dream. There was nothing anybody could do about the underhanded monopoly the mysterians and wonderians had over the way things worked. Even so, they silently supported Tianming in their hearts.

Yanwu Dao faced Tianming and said, "Li Tianming, you should be honored that these two precious guests have shown themselves for you. If it were me, I'd feel honored as well."

"I see. Then should I thank them for showing up?" Tianming gleefully said.

Chapter 1726 - Imperial Stars Clash

Yanwu Dao shook his head. "Do your best. Since you drummed up expectations so much, you have to show the seniors and the audience an astounding fight. Just make sure you don't lose too badly."

"Alright, I won't let you guys lose too badly," Tianming said. The mysterians watching almost puked blood at the words.

All Yanwu Dao felt was that Tianming's stupidity couldn't be fixed. He didn't want to waste words and had Tianming enter one of the battle formations. Tianming, having finally seen the opponents he wanted appear, didn't waste words either and entered it with the others. The flames began burning as the formation for ten sealed off. Smoke wafted all over the place within, but it didn't affect their vision at all. As long as the five of them weren't too far from each other, they would be able to cover each other quite well.

"Ling'er, Feng, Xiaoxiao." Tianming turned and nodded at them, signaling that they only had to do as they normally did, and didn't need to be nervous. Ye Chen also took a deep breath. If it weren't for Tianming, he wouldn't dare to do something so bold either.

By now, it wasn't just the Violetglory Star, but the whole known universe that was going wild with this epic fight between Team Celestial Beings and their copycats. The heartbeats of everyone seemed to resonate with each other.

The fighters appeared in the fog. Yanwu Dao, Weisheng Xi, Shenwu Fen, Long, and the terrifyingly plain comma girl. The five of them had really odd auras. They were all devilishly talented youths. Even Shenwu Fen and Long were quite impressive in their own right, being people that were destined to become sovereigns. What they didn't expect was that the ones that faced off against them also looked as if they would be able to hold their own in a fight. At the very least, they didn't seem to be pushovers. This was a group battle to the death between the Celestial Beings and the Violetglorian Celestial Beings! Even those watching from worlds away could feel the heat from the battle. For a heliacal-class world like the Violetglory Star to deserve such an honor was unthinkable, and with Ye Chen's participation, even the cultivators from the Divineglory Alliance felt good about the match. All the Violetglorians seemed united by their shared desire for fame and pride.

Both sides could see the other in the fog. Feiling, Lingfeng, Xiaoxiao, and the rest were no doubt nervous given the stakes. Even Ye Chen, who had a lot of combat experience, couldn't help but swallow a nervous gulp as he turned to Tianming for reassurance. "Can you really put out this huge fire you started?" he asked.

"You don't have to worry about that. You're confident in being able to take on Long, right? I'll leave the weakest one to you!" Tianming said.

"I can do it." He steeled his courage.

"Very good."

Ye Chen closed his eyes. When he opened them again, they were filled with his burning fighting spirit. "Actually, if you're really that much more ridiculously powerful than me, I'll submit to you. Following your orders isn't out of the question. I noticed today that your personality is truly twisted."

"Let's just see how well you do," Tianming said. In other words, he still didn't think Ye Chen was qualified. Everyone could hear their words, and even the faceless specters were unhappy to hear Ye Chen so confidently claim to be able to defeat their rising star.

"Who's that? He dares to be so arrogant, too!"

"Sheesh, everyone and their dogs are trying to pull off the badass act."

The provocation stoked the flames of battle even more. Long was all the more infuriated, having never been underestimated like this all his life. However, Yanwu Dao kept his cool and stepped forward alone. When he wasn't far away from Tianming, he landed and announced, "Li Tianming, even though the two honored guests did you a huge favor to come here, that doesn't mean you have the right to raise your hands against them. From the way it seems, apart from you, the others in your group haven't shown much promise. That means that you're most likely just trying to drum up hype for attention. To make sure people don't do the same thing ever again, I'll once more demand you to settle this with me in a duel despite this being a group battle. Let's spare the other four members of your team the embarrassment."

Tianming almost lost it. "You really won't let up, huh? Are you sure you want to give me the chance to take you on alone? If we fight one-on-one and I defeat you, the rest of the battle will go much easier for me. When all of you lose, I hope your side doesn't claim that I've taken advantage of your kind offer to win and come up with some other excuse why you didn't really lose."

Yanwu Dao smiled and shook his head. "Stop messing around. Apart from you, the other four really don't even deserve to fight. Don't worry. No matter the outcome, a loss is a loss. There's no sense in refusing to accept it."

At the end of the day, Yanwu Dao believed that even if he was eliminated first, his other team members would be more than enough to crush Tianming and the rest. As far as most people were concerned, Tianming only got teammates to fill up space in his party and wasn't actually counting on them to contribute, so as long as he was defeated, the other four would easily be taken care of. That was how confident the hegemony of the Mysterium Cluster felt about it. Feiling, Lingfeng, and Xiaoxiao's talent

seemed inconsequential to them. They did, however, find that Qingyu showed promise. It was too bad she was still in the third level of the Tranquil Battlefield.

People waited for Tianming to accept Yanwu Dao's challenge to a duel. Yanwu Dao didn't want to bother the two guests to fight, so he wanted to deal with Tianming before handling the rest. But to Tianming, this was a chance to lower the difficulty of the fight. As long as they wouldn't become sore losers, there was no reason for him to refuse.

Tianming turned to Feiling and the rest and said, "Wait for me for a bit. I'll give you all a tutorial on how to beat them up, so watch and learn, alright?"

"Got it!" Xiaoxiao yelled, almost a shriek, much to the shock of Lingfeng and Feiling. She immediately blushed. "I'm sorry, you sent me into a zealous trance." No wonder she was Tianming's number one believer. Despite her quiet appearance, she was quite a dedicated fangirl.

Tianming turned back toward his opponents and sensed that Yanwu Dao was on the verge of snapping from all the provocation. Both of them were followers of the imperial path. Wouldn't this epic duel show which one of them was superior? The two imperial stars slowly approached one another as people nervously watched on.

Chapter 1727 - Faceless Beast Hellking

Needless to say, this battle of the younger generation brought the atmosphere of the Violetglory Star and Mysterium Cluster to a new peak, way more than Tianming's second defeat of Long or his victory over Shenwu Fen. More than that, he gained quite a lot of people from the Mysterium Cluster who paid attention to him. They wanted to see how he would step off from the high horse he had mounted. Nobody could afford to miss it.

Normally, they would be able to test whether his words had weight through Yanwu Dao alone. They watched as the two 'young sovereigns' approached one another without saying a word, like two imperial stars drawn to each other by their respective gravitational pulls. As most people expected, Tianming chose to use his lifebound beasts while facing off against Yanwu Dao, opting not to use his totems for now. It was the same principle as the one that had prompted him to only use totems in his fight against Shenwu Fen. It could be construed as him underestimating his opponent, something that made the mysterians from Skyway Monostar really uncomfortable. They were far too different to acknowledge Tianming. He wasn't one of their own, and xenophobia was deeply rooted across the entire astralscape.

Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and the rest finally returned to the battlefield after a long absence. The flaming phoenix flew above Tianming's head. Beneath it was the shiny and colorful Primordial Terraqua Dragon, behind which stood the Radix World Tree, which immediately allowed Tianming to dominate the battlefield. Then many Yin Chens flew out from Tianming's body and turned into different metal insects, swarming half the battlefield. For this battle, Tianming had mustered fifteen million Yin Chens. The sheer number made the sea of metal insects noisy and nigh impossible to bear.

Finally, there was his new sovereign beast, the newly evolved Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend. Countless black and white lightning bolts gathered in the skies and on the ground, forming a gigantic feline beast. The fusion of primordial lightning and chaotic bolts had caused its attack power to skyrocket, and now it was far stronger than it had ever been. It was so fast that it couldn't be seen with the naked eye, and its

Regalfiend Wings allowed it to achieve air superiority. It could rain down lightning bombardments from above.

The battle started with a blast of lightning. As a 'genius totemancer', Tianming's lifebound beasts were often overlooked, no matter how capable they were. After all, his totems were far more eye-catching. That didn't change the fact that Ying Huo and the rest were still quite the show stealers. Even so, the mysterians wouldn't let themselves be outshone in that department, either!

Yanwu Dao's black gold robe fluttered as his lifebound beasts emerged. An ancient, desolate sensation filled the entire battlefield. As a faceless human, his lifebound beasts shared the same faceless characteristic, somewhat resembling the rakshasas. They seemed to have gigantic, semi-corporeal forms that could easily be mistaken for human-shaped clouds. Their bodies swiftly changed as a huge 'Yan' character appeared on their faces. The appearance of the character made their bodies somewhat more solid, allowing some yellow flesh to show. They looked humanoid, but each one had eight huge arms with sharp talons. They also had long, spiked tails that hinted at their amazing physical prowess. What was even more terrifying was that, despite being faceless, bestial heads sprouted from their abdomens, complete with eyes, noses, and a bloody mouth filled with ghastly teeth. They had gathered all the fiercest features of beasts in one body. The heads on their abdomens, especially, looked more like real faces than the one with the 'Yan' character on top.

They were among the top lifebound beasts in Skyway Monostar, a signature of the top rulers with absolutely indisputable talent. They were called hellkings. The five hellkings waved their arms around, their talons glinting. The characters on their faces glowed black and gold as the heads on their abdomens turned to Tianming's lifebound beasts, their eyes glowing a ghastly red. Yanwu Dao himself didn't idly sit back, either. He knew that Tianming was hard to deal with, so he used the best method at his disposal right from the start.

Tianming's facial features appeared on Yanwu Dao's face; he now looked almost identical to Tianming. His five lifebound beasts also manifested Tianming's face, giving them two in total and making them look even weirder. The eerie combination of Tianming's imperial aura and Yanwu Dao's savagery made them appear like a tyrant.

Being the number one mysterian youth, Yanwu Dao no doubt had a weapon to match his status. As he slowly scanned Tianming, he drew a dark yellow sword that seemed plain at first glance. But the next instant, the cries of countless lost and suffering souls rang out before their agony-torn faces manifested. Each of the thousands of faces was unique. It had a terrifying aura like the Godsin, a sign that it was a grade-nine divine artifact. While it wouldn't be able to match the grade-nine Grand-Orient Sword, it was a good match for the Godsin. Tianming had heard about Yanwu Dao's weapon before, but not this particular one. Perhaps this was a reward from his seniors after he finished the Astralium Seeking.

"What is it called?" Tianming asked.

"Exorcizer," Yanwu Dao replied with a deep voice. He wore a ring of human head prayer beads around his neck that appeared to be grade-eight divine artifacts as well.

"What is its artifact soul?"

"One billion vitae of cultivators." Sealing vitae inside an artifact to make them artifact souls was considered inhumane and evil. This was something that went against the natural order of the heavens.

"No wonder." Tianming furrowed his brows. His Imperial Will had a karmic component, so he was really sensitive to such atrocious crimes against humanity. Even in the wondersky realm, Exorcizer's true nature as a sword of great evil wasn't masked in the slightest. Tianming had seen a similar weapon, the battle standard wielded by Ghoul Kings Po Suo and Di Zang back at the Flameyellow Continent. "Don't you fear heavenly punishment? You're using the resentment of the souls of a billion cultivators."

Stunned, Yanwu Dao said, "What does that have to do with me? I wasn't the one who forged this sword. Not to mention, every single person I kill helps exorcize one soul. This is the only thing I can do to help them."

"You could also destroy the sword."

"That would be a waste of a grade-nine divine artifact. It also has a grade-nine divine ordered pattern called the Sea of Boundless Suffering." He paused, then chuckled, "Don't tell me you're feeling pity for them? I'll let you know that the vitae all came from countless sinners who committed all kinds of atrocities. They were given death sentences and we mysterians are only giving out the justice they deserve. Good and evil, crime and punishment, service and reward... those are all natural aspects of the universe. Who are you to preach sainthood?" The justice he espoused only represented what was right at Skyway Monostar.

"You might sound like you make sense, but crime and punishment aren't so clear cut. Nobody else knows whether the punishment is truly fit for a crime, and nobody can prove whether all the vitae there came from unforgivable sinners," Tianming said. He recalled the Autarch of the Theocracy of the Ancients. Even when it came to giving punishment, there was an acceptable range. A fair and just standard must be used. "However, nothing I say to you will have a point. We walk different paths."

Tianming couldn't do much about the sword, especially in the virtual wondersky realm. However, he started gaining some understanding of the imperial path of Skyway Monostar. In a single word, it was tyranny! Yanwu Dao was powerful, authoritative, and possessed the Exorcizer and hellking lifebound beasts.... However, like his name, he was without morals! Yanwu Dao felt that it was pointless to squabble over minor details like good and evil; he growled and charged in with his five lifebound beasts.
[1]

When his astralforce surged, Tianming could instantly tell that Yanwu Dao's level was higher than Shenwu Fen's. He was probably a sixth-level solarian, four levels above Tianming, but his abilities likely neared the seventh or eighth level. The hellkings were incredibly savage and adept at close combat, and had spread out to attack Tianming and his five beasts.

"Gather!" Tianming didn't let them have their way. They had the level advantage, after all. Ying Huo and the rest, however, were strong when they worked together. They gathered around with Xian Xian at the center. Sometimes, defense was the best offense. Proper tactics were necessary to secure victory.

After using face reveal, the hellkings were almost unkillable. In almost an instant, Ying Huo and Xian Xian rained down feathers and bloody swords. Xian Xian also made all five of its flowers bloom on top of

sending off vines and leaves to wrap around the bodies of the hellkings. Tianming's lifebound beasts had quite a bit of firepower to spare.

"Hold on! Big Bro here will use his ultimate move!" Ying Huo said. It hid amongst Xian Xian's flowers, leaving its other four siblings to fend for themselves. Fortunately, Yin Chen had fifteen million bodies to make up for Ying Huo's absence.

Then it was time for Meow Meow to show its power. Since it had awakened Genesis Bolt, it had never lost in battle. Chaotic lightning spread across Xian Xian's branches like a large net, then turned into a pool of black and white lightning. The myriad lightning bolts spread further and further, all the way from Xian Xian's body to the branches that bound the hellkings as Soulchasing Hellthunder. Coupled with the Genesis Bolt and a boost from Worldbolt Blast, even this early ability of Meow Meow's was terrifyingly powerful. It shot toward the five beasts, enveloping Yanwu Dao within it as well. Then, Meow Meow used Cosmic Lance, forming bloody lightning lances in its eyes before shooting them out toward the frontmost hellking.

The lances pierced the beast's abdomen-head in the mouth, causing it to explode. It shrieked in pain as it was sent smashing into the ground. Meow Meow had changed from a close combat beast into a heavy duty lightning bombardier, a role it was much more comfortable with. It quickly followed up with another ability, Triworld Afterlife Halls. Black and white lightning formed three great halls that pressed down on the heads of the hellkings. Right as they were about to break out, the halls smashed down again and exploded, dealing fatal damage.

Yanwu Dao and the hellkings felt horrid from the sheer strike. While their injuries quickly recovered, much like they were under the effects of the Greenspark Tower, even that would require time after being repeatedly blasted by Meow Meow's lightning. Its damage potential had risen far too much since it had become a sovereign beast.

All of that was layered with other attacks, like Lan Huang's Dragonprison Hell, Xian Xian's Bloodrain Swords and Demise Greenloti, and the many Yin Chens in the form of storm butterflies that continued grinding down on their flesh. All the lifebound beasts unleashed an endless stream of abilities.

Yanwu Dao had been greatly restricted by Meow Meow's lightning, allowing Tianming the chance to unleash Gods in its chain form. The chain stretched ten thousand meters into the lightning and unleashed the Goddess Flowerfall, which was fueled by multiple types of grade-eight divine hazard sword ki. Before one of the hellkings even spotted it, four of its arms had been bound by the chain. Then Tianming gave it a hard pull, severing its arms and causing it to let out a thundering roar of pain. Having lost half of its arms, it collapsed in a pool of blood. Even if the arms could grow back, Meow Meow would be able to blast it thousands of times in the time that would take.

"Man, it's really become quite the bolt monster. It looks like it can go on blasting for two hours, or even longer!" Alas, what kind of Primordial Chaos Beast wasn't a terrifying monster?

"Li Tianming!" Yanwu Dao furrowed his brows even deeper. None of that had stricken fear in him, but rather stoked his fighting spirit. His lifebound beasts finally reacted and unleashed their own volley of abilities, Omnihell! The mouths of their abdomen-heads opened up and let out a dense yellow fog that spread to Xian Xian, Lan Huang, and Meow Meow. Their flesh immediately began being corroded, and Xian Xian's leaves and branches quickly started wilting. The entire area, from ground to sky, was filled

with the yellow of twilight, spreading a paralyzing rust. That ability allowed them to hold off Tianming's lifebound beasts' bombardment.

Then the beasts roared, generating an odd sound that pierced everything, down to the organs deep within. Tianming felt like he was being torn apart from head to toe. As expected of apex lifebound beasts; they were able to turn the tables in close to an instant.

Yanwu Dao was also finally freed and he fiercely charged straight at Tianming with his lifebound beasts, forcing him to pull back his chain for close combat. But just then, the glowing Lan Huang appeared and pinned one of the hellkings to the ground! That was the very one that had lost four arms, and it still hadn't grown them back yet. Lan Huang used the Astralfiend's Sword on its tail to slash at the bestial head, almost cutting the abdomen apart in a gruesome manner. The hellking tried its best to get up, only for many black roots to sprout from the ground and tie it back down. Then a swarm of metal spiders came and bound it with even more silvery threads. Some scorpions began rapidly stinging the beast and injecting it with mercurial toxin, and there were also locusts that started directly biting into the beast. There were many roots and bugs, to the point that they could fill every corner of the battlefield.

Lan Huang had quite an easy time brutalizing the hellking with its siblings' help. Its claws and fangs made quick work of the hellking's belly, tearing flesh away. If it weren't for another hellking coming to help it, the pinned one would have already been defeated. Even so, it was wounded to the point that it would take quite some time to recover, even with face reveal's regenerative effects. Not to mention, Meow Meow's lightning was still coursing around in its body, wreaking havoc.

Eventually, the battlefield began to glow. The other hellkings leapt onto Xian Xian's tree, working to crush the Evernight Rose on top of destroying other parts. Harming Xian Xian's body could affect the entire battlefield, something that Yanwu Dao was all too aware of.

"Destroy that tree, quickly!" Yanwu Dao roared. His lifebound beasts struggled, but one eventually managed to stick while the others were held back by Yin Chen, Meow Meow, and Lan Huang. That hellking knew that Xian Xian's powers were based in its flowers.

It immediately turned toward the Radiant Daffodil, but to its surprise, the flower suddenly burned with flaming rage and rose like a sun. The silhouette of a phoenix could be seen within. It opened its eyes and roared, wildly swaying its tail.

"If you're in a rush to get yourself killed, I'll grant your wish!" Ying Huo said, sending the energy it had gathered in its body blasting away. It looked like a pillar of sunfire, piercing straight through that hellking and immediately vaporizing it.

Yanwu Dao clearly saw the sight. What was worse was that the phoenix immediately joined the battle and targeted the hellking that Lan Huang had mauled. It used its wings as swords and executed an intricate battle art, piercing its stomach proper after Lan Huang had failed.

Though Yanwu Dao tried to assist it, the chain came flying again! Tianming's Godsins contained the many sword ki strands in his body and they caused the prayer beads Yanwu Dao was wearing to shake. The shields of light they formed immediately crumbled, allowing Tianming to send him smashing into the ground before he could assist his beast. Tianming was incredibly hard to deal with. Yanwu Dao's

lifebound beasts were at a disadvantage, but he couldn't help them at all. His unit was about to crumble; only by taking down the leader could he stand a chance.

He gripped his Exorcizer tight and glared at Tianming. Black and gold aura surged around him as he charged and executed his eighth-realm divine art, Hadean Revenant. The billion vitae inside his divine artifact and the divine hazard, Sea of Endless Suffering, resonated together. Every flash of light coming from the sword echoed with endless screams, radiating a power that could target one's soul before their physical body! Even contained within the Soul Tower as it was, Tianming's soul still felt a prickling pain. If it were someone else, they would have died from the strike. Tianming furrowed his brow, but the fact that he hadn't had to use his totems yet showed how much stronger he was than Yanwu Dao.

"If you don't use your totems, you'll lose for sure!" Yanwu Dao coldly said. He came bearing down with boundless killing intent, his sword rampaging like a storm of a billion raving ghouls. The soul aspect of the attack had come from the souls that were trapped within this grade-nine divine artifact.

"Are you kidding me? I handicapped myself for you, yet you're barely able to keep up." Tianming nonchalantly laughed with his usual confidence, not the least bit affected by the Exorcizer, much to Yanwu Dao's shock. The next instant, Tianming struck with Godsins in a relaxed fashion. The strike was completely soundless. His strike only contained the Kilodragon Tree's sword ki. It was as if Tianming's thrust caused a sacred tree of white dragons to sprout. When the Godsins and Exorcizer clashed, Tianming's strike unleashed its full power. It was Saintdragon Annihilation! Tianming's sword seemed to melt into water, instantly enveloping Yanwu Dao and his evil sword art before slaughtering away in the form of a sacred tree.

Yanwu Dao seemed to blank out for a moment. Before he could even speak, the young tyrant was vaporized and eliminated. The power of Tianming's strike had far exceeded his wildest imagination—it was a manifestation of pure nothing, containing such power that would shake the known universe. The top mysterian in the Mysterium Cluster had been defeated by Tianming without even having to use his totems!

Yanwu Dao's lifebound beasts quickly died off as well. Tianming had defeated not just the leader, but also all the minions that remained! It was an utter act of domination that left the cultivators of Skyway Monostar at a complete loss for words. Never had they suffered such a devastating defeat.

By the time Tianming put Godsins away and picked up a sleeping black cat to his chest, with a proud little chick perched on his shoulder, he couldn't hear a single sound. The entire fifth level of the Tranquil Battlefield was deathly quiet. Surely, the Violetglory Star was as well.

"I bet my Omnisentient Threads are increasing by the second...." He felt like he had hit the jackpot.

1. The 'Wu' in Yanwu means 'lacking' and 'Dao' is the same dao from daoism, which can also be translated as morals. I.E. Yanwu Dao is 'without morals'. ?

Chapter 1728 - The Celestial Beings in Action

Tianming had struck fast and fiercely, dominating Yanwu Dao, the number-one young mysterian genius. His reputation soared once more in the Violetglory Star. He didn't even resort to using his totems, defeating the top young beastmaster on the merits of being a beastmaster alone, just as he had defeated the top totemancer with nothing but totemancy. It was a fully convincing and indisputable

victory. The countless mysterians couldn't even let themselves get mad at the loss. The ones they were most confident in had been utterly crushed by Tianming, who was putting his terrifying talent on full display.

"To be honest, Yanwu Dao's loss represents the mysterians' loss. The other two honored guests are just helpers. Even if Li Tianming isn't able to defeat them, he's already won today. He defeated the entire Mysterium Cluster!"

"That's right."

That was a fact that nobody disputed. Billions of people had watched Yanwu Dao's body fizzle out after he was defeated, petrified like stones. They seemed to have forgotten to breathe, and some even felt tears welling up in their eyes.

"We mysterians from all three stars lost?" It was one thing to lose to Weisheng Xi, but to lose to Li Tianming from the bumfuck nowhere that was the Violetglory Star was a concept that was difficult to comprehend. Even the mysterians led by Crimsonjade Cang who were watching from better seats cursed the loss. It felt like a slap on their... faceless... faces. They were flushed red with embarrassment and they lowered their heads to avoid the gazes of others.

Crimsonjade Cang tightly clenched his fists and awkwardly said, "Don't let him act so arrogantly. Weisheng Xi and the comma girl will make him lose horribly." He had thought that somebody would match his energy, but they all had their heads lowered in shame.

"We've already lost. The two honored guests winning have nothing to do with us. The mysterians have never needed outside help.... It's about time we straightened ourselves out and acknowledge someone as capable as him," Shenwu Yin said.

"Shut up!" Cang snapped.

"That's what my dad taught me! If we lose, we have to accept it! Only low-class people throw a tantrum over being defeated," she said, causing the mysterians' faces to wrinkle up even more. They couldn't even find the words to argue against it. Their shameless insults toward Tianming were grim reminders of their shame. No doubt, the countless young mysterians across the entire cluster felt as torn about this as those present did. All three mysterian deific-class worlds were shocked into silence.

The pinnacle talents of their kind, the Ninelives Crimsonjade, zhurong firegods, and faceless hellkings, had been defeated without question. The notion that mysterians were number one in the entire universe was now shaken. Yanwu Dao's defeat was the biggest blow to the mysterians out of the three. It had been witnessed by a hundred times the number of worlds as Tianming's previous wins. It was Tianming's revenge after being unfairly eliminated during the Astralium Seeking!

After Yanwu Dao had been eliminated, and the faceless hellkings vanished, Lan Huang, Xian Xian, and Yin Chen gathered around Tianming. He didn't stop for a moment and roared with his hands up. His bane-rings shone as he summoned nine of his totems, reaching his strongest form. Such a display seemed to be a statement on how Yanwu Dao, Shenwu Fen, and Long were all not a match for him. His white hair fluttered as he wielded the Gods in, surrounded by his domineering totems and lifebound beasts. He seemed to be a divinity incarnate. That was an intentional image he was playing up,

especially for his followers on the Violetglory Star. There were more women believers than men, so he didn't mind doing some fanservice to gain even more.

"Come!" Tianming called. Feiling, Lingfeng, Xiaoxiao, and Ye Chen assembled around him, basking in his limelight. Now they no longer looked like a ragtag group of five, but a proper party. Their opponents, including comma girl and Weisheng Xi, were completely speechless. The two honored guests didn't feel their prides hurt at all, but Shenwu Fen and Long felt quite torn about Yanwu Dao's defeat. The pride of their kind had been heavily wounded, much to their anger, and they had nothing but heavy killing intent in their eyes. Theirs would be a fight to reclaim their honor that they would have to give their all in.

"You four, I'll stress this once more. Yanwu Dao challenged me to a duel after he underestimated me, causing you to lose a member of your fighting force. I hope that when you lose, you'll accept it with grace. It was Yanwu Dao's own decision that led to the current circumstances, not mine," Tianming prefaced. Yanwu Dao had wanted to deal with everything himself without troubling the two honored guests, only to have done Tianming a huge favor. Had that not happened, it would be hard to say whether they could fight three people on Yanwu Dao's level at once and win. But now it would be four against five.

"Don't count your eggs before they hatch. We still don't know who'll win this," Shenwu Fen said, his hair burning bright like the rage he felt.

"Then show me what tricks you have left, Shenwu Fen," Tianming said.

Shenwu Fen and Long wanted to retort, but the beautiful Weisheng Xi stepped forward with a hand raised to silence them. Then he turned to Tianming, his lips fluttering as he said in a dreamlike voice, "Li Tianming, as you wish, we'll fight you four against five. Appreciate this opportunity."

"Many thanks to you, then," Tianming said.

"Hmph." Weisheng Xi merely smirked without the slightest change in expression. He didn't seem the slightest bit moved, showing the strong pride and confidence he felt as a divine wonderian. This was the wondersky realm, a creation of his people where he had both authority and confidence. The two sides stared each other down, ready to burst into a fight at any time.

As the tension grew, Tianming turned to Lingfeng and the rest and said, "Let's follow our plan. Feng, take care of Shenwu Fen. Ye Chen, hold Long back. It's okay if you don't win, but don't lose either. If you don't keep him held back, it'll cause a lot of trouble for the rest."

The two of them nodded, their breathing intensifying. Lingfeng's eyes were blood red.

"Xiaoxiao, support the battle from a distance with your Archaionfiend. Help out anyone that needs it the most."

"Alright!" She had been prepared long ago. With Yanwu Dao out of the picture, that freed up Xiaoxiao to support the rest for more strategic advantage.

"Ling'er." The two of them exchanged glances. From her clear eyes, he read what was in her mind. They understood each other so well that words weren't necessary. The two of them would fight with Tianming's nine totems and five beasts against Weisheng Xi and comma girl. Those two couldn't be allowed to affect the fights of the others. While Shenwu Fen and Long were easily Tianming's inferiors,

they weren't weak compared to Lingfeng and Ye Chen. Once their fight was interrupted, the two could well lose, freeing up the mysterians to join the other two and deal with Tianming.

Feiling and the rest hadn't shown their full powers yet, so the crowd believed that only Tianming alone was capable of anything. They waited with anticipation and tension for the battle to start, eyes peeled in fear of missing even a single moment. As they watched, the black-haired, black-eyed beauty beside Tianming transformed. Three pairs of bluish crystal wings covered in lightning and glowing white appeared, each pair formed from two diamond-shaped structures that were neatly arranged. The glow of sapphires suffused her skin as her blue skirt fluttered. She had instantly transformed into a goddess in the eyes of the audience.

"Isn't she far too beautiful?" Shenwu Yin mused. Girls like her liked sparkly and pretty things, and Feiling wasn't that just thanks to her wings. Her looks alone stunned the entirety of the Mysterium Cluster. It was an innate aura of raw grace that was incredibly rare. Tianming and she looked like a match made in heaven. With how 'qualified' she was to be with him, it made Tianming look even more amazing. Even the divine wonderians that were known for their beauty paled in comparison.

Feiling held a three-meter-long crystal spear, radiating a cold, killing aura that deterred others from approaching her. Tianming even pulled her closer by the waist until she was plastered against him, signaling their relationship to everyone. It also drew the attention of the strongest two among their opponents away from Lingfeng and the others.

Chapter 1729 - To Only Love One for Life

"Two-on-two's fair, right?" Tianming said. He figured that with their pride, they wouldn't ignore the direct challenge and go for Lingfeng and the rest. At the very least, Weisheng Xi wouldn't do so. As the one who had sent Tianming off from the Astralium Seeking, the two had an unsettled debt.

As for the comma girl, she was someone Tianming had no idea about. She hadn't moved at all from the very beginning, as if she wasn't even alive, so Tianming focused more of his attention on her. As he expected, Weisheng Xi and comma girl didn't move even after Lingfeng and Shenwu Fen began their fight. At the end of the day, despite this being a group battle, each of them basically fought one-on-one rather than allowing it to devolve into a chaotic melee, as they all had important statuses.

Weisheng Xi chuckled and shook his head. "Two-on-two? Are you sure it isn't two-on-three?"

Tianming turned to Xiaoxiao and said, "Don't worry, she won't interfere. It's not like her capabilities bother you anyway."

"Who said the three were from your side? I'm talking about ours!"

"Huh?" Tianming squinted for a closer look. Weisheng Xi's body was splitting as he wore an insidious smile. He shook more and more as the front and back of his body separated. After that, the separation wound quickly regenerated. The one behind him took a few steps back before regenerating into another complete person. The one in front was the same handsome Weisheng Xi that radiated grace and elegance, but the one behind him was a soft-looking beauty of seductive proportions. Temptation radiated from deep within her bones, and the divine wonderian aura made her even more alluring. Her body seemed soft and supple, almost like she didn't even have bones. She leaned on Weisheng Xi and

turned to the rest. "Nice to meet you. I'm Weisheng Xii." [ref] The two Weisheng Xis are pronounced the same and are nearly identical characters. I opted for an extra 'i' in the name for differentiation. [ref]

Tianming felt a lump in his throat that prevented him from spitting. How could a person split into two people of different sexes?

"There's many birds in the ever-expanding forest, I see," Ying Huo said. Weisheng Xi and Weisheng Xii looked practically identical, save for their gender.

"How are you two feeling? Isn't it horrible to live like that?" Tianming said.

"How could it be? We were born as a pair. Since birth, we were destined to be eternally linked. We've loved one another since the very beginning, and we can become one in soul and flesh. Our life and death are connected. Even our souls can fuse into one. We'll only ever love one person in our lives. Only divine wonderians like us possess such a beautiful form of love," Weisheng Xii said, looking firmly at the man beside her.

"We're also a natural-born couple," Weisheng Xi said.

"To us, your so-called love may look like it'll last until your death, but it still pales in comparison to ours. You're unable to enter each other's souls or bodies," Weisheng Xii said. It was something they were quite proud of. They sounded really intimate as well. After hearing about them, Tianming and Feiling looked at each other and laughed. Weisheng Xii was wrong about something. They had, in fact, entered each other's bodies—in more ways than just Spiritual Attachment.

Throughout the entire thing, comma girl looked like she was watching a show play out, especially when the wonderians suddenly started talking about love. The situation was almost surreal, though Tianming was actually paying attention to the other fights. It was crucial that they won and kept the others at bay. Since Weisheng Xi and the rest weren't in a rush to fight, they must be quite confident. They even seemed like they didn't want to work with the mysterians to take Tianming down, and he couldn't be happier about it.

"Does truly pure love really exist? What happens if you fall for someone else and betray each other?" Tianming said while looking at Lingfeng's fight.

"Simple. We'll both die," Weisheng Xii said.

"It almost sounds magical. Then, are you charmed by my handsome looks? Can I kill you off if I seduce you?"

Weisheng Xi simply laughed, while his partner silently chuckled as well. They seemed completely confident in their bond. For the divine wonderians to be so powerful, that definitely couldn't be a weakness.

"Enough. Let's stop messing around with him," Weisheng Xii said.

"Very well. We'll end his dream of winning right here and now," Weisheng Xi said.

"Comma, the other side wants to fight you, too. Are you joining?" Weisheng Xii asked.

Comma girl just stood there like a scarecrow. Weisheng Xii lost interest immediately and ignored her.

"This is too good to be true." Tianming didn't know what to expect. He had deliberated strategies day in and out, yet Yanwu Dao had challenged him to a duel, while Weisheng Xi and comma girl refused to work together to take him down. Yet that didn't mean they were stupid. Instead, their understanding of their own status and abilities made them think it was beneath them to fight Tianming and Feiling with comma girl's help. In fact, winning and losing didn't matter as much as them not having to fight alongside someone else.

The notion of a group battle was something that only Tianming had wanted. But since it had turned out better for him this way, he didn't really care what they decided. "Since you treat Ling'er and I as insignificant, don't blame us for not holding back."

The lovers wouldn't be suffering from a numerical disadvantage against the two wonderians, at least, though there was something worrying about how they chose to fight them without help despite being able to extrapolate Tianming's strength based on his fight with Yanwu Dao. No doubt, they would have to be far more powerful than Yanwu Dao to be that confident. It was yet another reminder for Tianming about how slim their odds were.

"Ling'er." The two wonderians were already approaching them. They didn't seem like beastmasters or totemancers. Perhaps they were similar to normal humans with the extra quirk of being able to split in two! Like beastmasters born with lifebound beasts, they were born with each other, and perhaps even shared their cultivation and broke through at the same time.

That was different from dreamless celestials, who, as far as Tianming was aware, had giant whale lifebound beasts like the Weishengs. Yet this special quirk of the wonderians seemed to be an important factor in how they came to rule much of the universe. They were said to be natural-born gurus in the arts of souls, formations, and tomes. The core of the wondersky realms was the Perpetual Wondersky Formation, after all. The moment their eyes met his, he felt something amiss. Their illusions had started taking effect.

Chapter 1730 - Soulcrush Slash

The illusion didn't just work on Tianming, but Feiling as well. It also spread out from their battle to Ye Chen, Lingfeng, and Xiaoxiao. Fortunately, Lingfeng had already made great progress against Shenwu Fen, causing another wave of shock after Yanwu Dao's defeat.

His fight was now the focal point, drawing attention away from Tianming and Feiling. As the person with the most powerful soul in the Violetglory Star, he was the perfect counter to totemancers. He had been known as the night demon in the Divine Moon Realm because of his ability to consume totems. Even now, his threat to totems was considerable.

Shenwu Fen's three-pronged halberd and his zhurong firegods seemed more powerful than they had been half a year ago. His nineday sacrosun also covered a larger area, and the divine flames his totems unleashed had turned into countless dragons of fire that spread throughout the battlefield. But Lingfeng was a specter without a particularly powerful body who wielded the nondescript Evil Suppression Pillar. Among Tianming's party, he stood out the least. But when he fought, people only heard Shenwu Fen's pained cries. Lingfeng was the soul killer!

His fingers were linked to countless bloody threads. Like a puppet master, he shot out large numbers of Heartpiercer Soulneedles to bind the zhurong firegods. While the threads were incredibly fine, compared to the totems, they cut like sharp swords against their ethereal bodies and were strong enough to slice them into chunks. His Skyfiend Soulcrush Curse activated, spreading black flames along the threads to engulf the entire totems. The zhurong firegods themselves were covered in flames, but all they could do was shriek in pain when the black flames burned them. It was so effective that Shenwu Fen's expression immediately changed. Unlike Tianming, who had ended his misery relatively quickly, Lingfeng wasn't as powerful. That said, he had managed to draw out Shenwu Fen's suffering even more. He didn't think that something like this could cause him so much pain.

"Die!" Shenwu Fen was filled with disbelief that all nine of his totems were entangled, but he could tell that Lingfeng's physical capabilities were quite subpar, unlike proper specters. Thus, he charged out of the flames towards Lingfeng, attacking with Heavenly Cosmic Order. His weapon burst with flames as it coursed toward Lingfeng's head.

Lingfeng had to use most of his soul energy to bind the nine totems, so Shenwu Fen proved quite troublesome. He decided to let go of the totems and defend himself. Just then, twangs could be heard from not far away. Nine black arrows covered in bloody lightning bolts came flying at Shenwu Fen before the strike connected. They were the arrows of the Dragonblood Desecration, part of a grade-eight divine artifact. While they weren't too threatening to Shenwu Fen himself, they contained a deep explosive power thanks to being layered with the Archaionfiend's ability. Xiaoxiao had used a new move, called Soulsscatter Shots. She wasn't far off from utilizing the Dragonblood Desecration to its maximum potential.

Shenwu Fen was frustrated to no end, having had his attack disrupted. He pulled back to deflect the arrows, only to be sent flying by their explosive force. One of the arrows pierced his thigh! He had already used face reveal, so he pulled out the arrow and recovered. However, the arrow had already absorbed quite a lot of his blood, making him lightheaded.

"Why're these people so annoying?!" He was quite shaken and could feel that Tianming's party was no joke. He'd had the chance to kill Lingfeng, but missed it, then Lingfeng had used the opportunity for an even more powerful move. The black vortex on his body manifested his primordium sacrosun, unleashing a terrifying gravity. Lingfeng, located at the center of his sacrosun, looked like a meat grinder for the soul.

The gravitational pull affected both Shenwu Fen and his totems. He felt like his arms and legs were bound as the sacrosun revolved faster and faster. Lingfeng leapt into the air, blood crystals materializing on his staff as he used his ability, Soulvisceration Thorns. The pull on Shenwu Fen almost instantly helped close the distance. Lingfeng then used a divine art, Firmament Godshaker. He had only recently learned that move. Despite the comprehension ability afforded by his fourth imperial soul and the legacy of the Primordial Demonlord, he had spared quite a bit of effort to learn this move. It was a soul attack that could bring his soul-shaking abilities to their full potential!

Shenwu Fen blocked using Eight Desolation Primordial Return. The two weapons clashed, creating a metallic grating noise. People watched as the Evil Suppression Pillar shattered immediately, sending Lingfeng smashing into the ground in the distance. However, they then noticed Shenwu Fen standing there with his face completely pale. Then he shrieked and grabbed his head, his eyes rolling white from

his soul being shaken. He looked like a dead fish as he was knocked out. His totems then randomly crashed around. Lingfeng, however, simply got back up and turned his sights back to Shenwu Fen. He pulled back his Heartpiercer Soulblades, causing flames to cover his body. Then he raised both of his hands in the air and looked at the sky, as if he was praying for something.

"What's he doing? Praying for rain?"

Powerful soul power wafted out of his body, almost like it was leaking out of a crack in his face. A bloody silhouette emerged from his body and charged toward Shenwu Fen.

"What is that?!"

"That's the vita as simulated by the wondersky realm! He's able to do astral projection in the real world!"

Lingfeng's vita turned into a bloody flash as it formed a sharp, humanoid dagger and was shot out, instantly piercing Shenwu Fen's head.

"Huh?" Shenwu Fen widened his eyes and slumped to the ground before fizzling away along with his helpless totems. The number one genius of Skyway Bistar had not only lost to Tianming, but also a nameless pseudospecter, marking another huge blow to their pride. Even though it was achieved with Xiaoxiao's assistance, Lingfeng's final strike was mind shaking.

"He instantly killed Shenwu Fen after using astral projection.... If this was the real world, Shenwu Fen's soul would've been crushed!"

"That move is rather cool."

First, he had used Soulvisceration Thorns on his staff to shake his enemy's vita. Then he used his ultimate move to ravage their soul! His vita immediately returned and his seemingly torn face recovered. The crack on his face was actually an illusion caused by his vita leaving his body. It was a new ability he got as a member of the infernal soul race, called Soulcrush Slash. It was a simple name, but easily the most fatal move in his arsenal. Lingfeng's existence alone would spark conversations on how people should properly define specters.

The infernal soul race had existed within the chaos skyjail, thus there might be more to Lingfeng's actual background. Perhaps his roots stretched even further back than those of the faceless specters. As it was the first time he had shown such prowess, the uproar it caused didn't pale in comparison to that of Yanwu Dao's defeat. The entire Bloodbath Arena was silent once more. Crimsonjade Cang and the rest had never considered Lingfeng to be a fellow specter like them. Their foolish expressions now showed that they didn't even know what to make of him. One could only wonder how the mysterians all felt at the sight.

Weisheng Xi and comma girl's victory or defeat didn't really matter to them. Their own champions—Long, Shenwu Fen and Yanwu Dao—were losing more and more. By now, it no longer seemed impossible for Ye Chen to defeat Long with Chaos Deity and Xiaoxiao's support. Her Ninestar Chainshot was an eighth-realm divine art that allowed her to support Ye Chen and the Archaionfiend, who were fighting in close quarters. The three mysterian geniuses seemed destined for defeat in this battle, removing any and all doubts about the talents of the Violetglorian geniuses.

Ye Chen had also managed to prove himself. After defeating Long, he felt a wave of release from all the stress and weight and teared up. Those in the Divineglory Alliance cheered for him. He never would have had this chance if he hadn't joined Tianming's party. No doubt, Tianming deserved all of the glory.

The attention of the crowd turned back to Tianming's side. For fairness, Tianming had Lingfeng, Xiaoxiao, and Ye Chen stand back. Winning or losing this group battle no longer mattered. It was almost like Tianming was challenging the members of the Celestial Beings one by one.