

The Ages 1881

Chapter 1881

At that moment, Tianming felt pain from his entire body, as if all of his albi had burst. It washed over him and swallowed up all his senses. The fact that he was even alive was fortunate in itself.

He heard cries of despair from those around him. He was the light in the darkness that had led them to hope, yet that light seemed to have been put out just like that, causing the world to fall back into a deep darkness filled with fear and dangers. The clearest of the voices he heard had come from Ying Huo and the rest. There was also someone crying, definitely Xian Xian. He could also vaguely make out Yin Chen's mechanical voice. It sounded as emotionless as usual, but he could feel the hurt from the voice. For him to be mourned by that little thing made him feel like his life had been worth it. There were many people who saw him as more important than themselves.

A sense of weakness permeated his entire body. He tried getting up, only to find that he couldn't even move a single finger. The blood all over his body dripped into his eyes, blocking his sight. Even so, he could feel his lifebound beasts defending him with their own bodies. The sun emperor was trying to end him for good, no doubt, but if this went on, they would die for sure.

Through his bloodied eyes, he saw their familiar forms. Ying Huo, Meow Meow, Lan Huang, Xian Xian, and Yin Chen. Death-defying bravery was radiant within their eyes. These siblings of his had banded together to protect him from danger. At the same time, Xian Xian's spiritform cried tears that dripped on him as it shook his body and muttered, "Wake up... wake up, please... I promise I'll eat less... I won't be a glutton anymore as long as you wake up!"

But that chance was long over. Tianming looked past her at the falling coffin. He had a feeling that it wasn't even a divine artifact. It was something far more ancient, something like Autarch Qian's Cyclic Mirror. A transcendental object, of sorts, which was why Tianming and Lingfeng had fallen to it. If not for it, they would've had a winning chance.

Tianming and Lingfeng both had similar items, but they were incomplete. The coffin, on the other hand, was the real deal. It was hard to imagine the limits of its power in the hands of the sun emperor. Perhaps no living person had seen him use an item like that until now.

One blow of it had been enough to completely overcome the Primordial God-Emperor's legacy. With the next blow, the sun emperor planned to not only kill Tianming, but destroy everything else along with him, including his lifebound beasts, totems, and divine wonders, and he seemed all too capable of it.

The coffin weighed far more than a hundred thousand mountains—it bore the weight of an entire world! The sun emperor seemed to have completely won. Tianming's death was almost a certainty, a truth etched in stone. The sun emperor was smiling with confidence, completely free of any pressure. Everything was under his control.

"You truly were a lucky child, but it's too bad for you that I, too, am favored by the heavens. I might not be as shocking as you, but I was already here for ages long before you were born. Too bad, I had a head start. I blocked off all of your paths." He delighted in saying words that completely crushed the ideals of others. He looked at the countless fighters around them with crushed expressions. It looked like something out of a painting. Laughing, he continued, "Be on your way."

The coffin grew larger and larger. The abilities of Tianming's lifebound beasts had completely no effect on him. At this rate, they would die before he did! The realization seemed to stun him awake. He had recovered somewhat, thanks to the Greenspark Tower, and struggled to get up. "Come back!"

Despite his urging, Ying Huo and the rest refused to run.

"You should run. There are eggs that haven't hatched yet. Bring them to avenge us," Ying Huo said without turning back. They had made their decision.

"Boss, run!"

"Run!"

"I have thick skin! I can hold on!" Lan Huang howled.

Tianming felt like the entire world was spinning. He grit his teeth and sobered up, instantly opening up his lifebound space. In beastmastery, the beastmaster was the dominant one in the relationship. While they couldn't casually kill their own beasts, they could control the lifebound space and take the initiative. Seeing them about to die, he forcefully sucked them back into his lifebound space. However, he would be the one to take the blow and die! The lifebound space would eventually fall apart and let them back out. While they would probably be killed all the same, he couldn't bear to see them die for him.

"You guys are great, but I can't let you die before me," he said with a hoarse voice. After taking them back in, he didn't just sit idly. He knew that survival was of the utmost importance. As long as he lived, things would still be possible. The question was how he could avoid the blow from the coffin.

All he could try was to send the Gods in shooting out in its chain form to loop around a mountain and pull himself away from the blow, but the coffin was already falling! It seemed that he would inevitably be crushed. Is this all there is? Will it all turn to nothing? He had thought that he would be able to peacefully accept his end, only to find that there were many things that kept him tethered to the world of the living. At that moment, he recalled the smiles of Feiling, his parents, and his lifebound beasts. They made him want to avoid death no matter what.

Ling'er.... She was still far away on Primary. How much suffering would she have to endure when she got news of his death? Death was all too common across the battlefield, but he had only learned of its true terror when it was about to come for him. Most others wouldn't even have time to contemplate their own deaths before they were killed. The sun emperor and his coffin were looming shadows that he would never be able to shake off for the rest of his life.

If only there was a chance for me to bring victory to the Myriad Solar Sects! The volcano within him bubbled and boiled.

"Brother!" All of a sudden, Lingfeng's familiar voice came from behind.

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Things had happened too quickly; Tianming suddenly recalled something and felt a jolt—somebody was pulling him from behind! He didn't resist it and let it draw him into the darkness. He heard a weird sound as the world before him oddly shifted. He was only stunned for an instant, then snapped awake.

He was still alive and he found himself in the xenomemory space. Right before his death, Lingfeng had pulled him into this world to escape.

Chapter 1882

The coffin came slamming down flush on the ground, sending shockwaves tens of thousands of meters away. Dust rose into the skies all over, upending the entire battlefield not long after a Divine Wrath hit. All of it was thanks to the sun emperor and his two ultimate blows, sending divine judgment to the ground below! The sun emperor was at the very prime of his life; all the celestial orderians audibly swallowed in a state of awe and delusional worship.

"Li Tianming is dead! The corpse has been completely eradicated! Myriad Solar Sects, why haven't you surrendered?"

"There's no point in surrendering! Just die!"

A wave of silence spread through the ranks of the defenders as word of Tianming's death spread. The warriors of the Myriad Solar Sect felt like a spike had been driven through their hearts. Tianming's death and the sun emperor's death would have the same effect on their respective sides. Once their pillar of moral support collapsed, the house would crumble around them. The morale of the defenders instantly evaporated into thin air as the celestial orderians rapidly swallowed up their ranks. This time around, it seemed like the celestial orderians were the ones who were making a comeback at the Myriadragon Mountains.

"Let's avenge our fallen comrades!"

"We'll sacrifice their blood ten times over for our fallen comrades!"

"Die!"

The celestial orderians' slaughter grew wilder and wilder. By that point, the battle was essentially over. Nothing could be changed and everything could only play out in the remaining time as if it were foreordained. The celestial orderians seemed able to draw power from the sun emperor merely by looking at his glorious figure in the sky; however, none of them could see the furrowed brow on his face.

The sun emperor knew that his coffin had struck nothing. Tianming, Lingfeng, and Weisheng Moran had all used incomprehensible ways to escape and disappear before his eyes. Not a single one of Tianming's lifebound beasts had died, which was something unthinkable moments before. The sun emperor had seen Lingfeng open some kind of gate, however. Though he couldn't be sure, he thought he saw something that reminded him of the xenomemory space.

"It's only fair. They didn't expect me to have the Flameyellow Coffin and I didn't expect that the brat could escape into the xenomemory space." Both sides had their own trump cards, but one was for offense while the other was for escaping. Either way, the difference had manifested as horrible losses for the Myriad Solar Sects. "Letting a tiger roam free in the mountains will have dire consequences, let alone two tiger cubs. Once they mature, they'll be thorns in my eyes!" He took a deep breath, trying to calm down. This was a great crack in his grand plan, one that could spread and prove to be fatal.

"There isn't anything I can do to counter it." He looked at the Divine Sun Palace, which was continuing to bombard the formation that seemed to be growing weaker by the moment. "Then again, as long as I

take the Myriad Dragon Mountains, it would be like taking down ninety-nine percent of the Myriad Solar Sects. I'll only need half a month to clear the remaining stragglers. That way, the Flameyellow Divine Pillars will be in place in short order. Once the astralguard formation is activated, I'll be able to hunt as I please, both inside and outside of the sun! It's a small setback, but overall it's still my victory."

A victory that came far too late was a victory nonetheless. According to his original predictions, he should have taken the Myriad Solar Sects the very day he used the backup core. "The voidheart worm is hiding within the Sky Palace Formation and controls half of the astralguard formation.... But don't think that just because I can't touch you that means I can't do anything about Skywolf. Skywolf doesn't even know what kind of star world they're trying to invade!" He heartily laughed, further boosting the confidence of his troops.

"My warriors!" He opened his arms wide as he brightly glowed. "The so-called heaven's fate, Tianming, has been crushed at my feet. I, Li Wudi, am the true incarnation of heaven's fate! I am the one that received heaven's mandate to rule! Orderia has been fractured for far too long. Only through unification can we establish an era of peace and prosperity! I labored hard for the day we face off against the Myriad Solar Sects, and victory is clearly ours! I'd wanted to spare them if they had surrendered and left their defensive formations, but they disobeyed me. The consequences that follow when their defensive formations fall will spell the deaths of billions of them!"

Everyone had seen Tianming being defeated. By then, whether he was still alive no longer mattered. The sun emperor merely said that he had crushed Tianming without saying that he had killed him, but that was enough for the celestial orderians to think that Tianming had been completely eradicated, prompting them to inch ever closer to the mountains.

However, thanks to the nine billion Omniscient Threads, many of the defenders could still feel the white-haired youth's presence, so they knew he was still alive. Even so, the celestial orderians had been driven mad with fervor and the defenders wouldn't be able to hold on regardless. The time to turn the tide of battle had already passed.

Once more, Divine Wrath came blasting down, drowning the area in golden light. Every shot cast a shadow of fear in everyone's hearts. They were going to lose and die! Nobody could hold against the pressure. The sun emperor and his rabid soldiers were corroding their morale at every moment and the world of golden fire had crept right up to them, burning their families and friends and even their hearts.

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"Endure!"

"Keep holding on!"

"He's still alive, everyone knows that! He isn't dead!"

They cried tears and blood as they struggled to turn the situation around, but mere words wouldn't help them accomplish that.

Chapter 1883

Everyone seemed like they'd had their souls sucked away by the sun emperor. The bodies that were left behind were nothing but empty husks, and that couldn't be blamed on anyone at all. The sun emperor

and the celestial orderians had simply won. The opposite would have happened if the Flameyellow Coffin didn't exist, but there was no point in pondering over hypotheticals at this point. The celestial orderians were the true rulers now, and only their victories and lives would matter from then on.

The Saintdragon Emperor and the rest were unable to change a single thing. Nobody could hold up and support a mountain that suddenly collapsed. In fact, those that tried would only risk being crushed. Such was the cold, hard truth, settled and unchangeable.

Despair surfaced on all of their faces. They were nothing but ants in the way of the wheel called history. Some tried climbing onto the wheel itself, but all would eventually be crushed in its tracks, and those left behind would never be able to catch up to it.

The territories that belonged to the Myriad Solar Sects had completely fallen. Tears, blood, dirtied faces, pained cries, and howls of agony were useless in the face of reality. No miracle would come to save them. Tianming's repeated defiance of the status quo had caused them to forget the true disparity in their might. Even though Tianming and Lingfeng had come so close, a small gap had made all the difference.

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Tianming started seeing some lights amidst the smoky fog. He seemed to be being dragged along through a world of shadows for a time before that. He heavily coughed, his body still dripping blood. Thankfully, his consciousness had recovered somewhat, thanks to the healing from the Greenspark Tower. His limbs seemed to have recovered some strength, but he was still far off from a full recovery. While the damage from the Flameyellow Coffin hadn't been fatal, it had caused heavy damage on his body down to all of his albi.

"Big Brother!" Someone tightly held his hand in the darkness. He could tell that it was Qingyu's voice. In other words, he had been taken somewhere near Great Saintdragon Peak. They were still in the Myriaddragon Mountains!

"Don't worry, I'm fine." He felt a chill and looked at the disfigured girl, feeling another flush of rage. "I'm alive!" He suddenly looked north where the main assault was occurring. "Meow Meow, take me there!" he howled, only to cough out more blood.

"It's useless," Lingfeng said, getting in his way. "The only thing we can do now is escape. Only then will we have a chance to return victorious. Going back now is suicide."

The reason was sound, but Tianming couldn't accept it. "They know I'm alive! As long as I show up, they'll feel hope again! We can still win with the formation—"

Right as he said that, another blast of Divine Wrath came crashing down with full force. The Aeonian Infinitdragon Formation had been breached by the time Tianming looked up. It had protected the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect for countless years, but now it was crumbling into many multicolored dragon scales that fell like snow. In a chain reaction, many mountains in the range proceeded to fall. It was like the entire world was being destroyed. From Great Saintdragon Peak, Tianming witnessed the end of the Myriad Solar Sects.

His eyes shook—there was no more time. He couldn't even go back to the battlefield now. All that remained was the celestial orderian victory march. The formation had been destroyed, marking the final fall of the top-ranking sect among the Myriad Solar Sects. The atrocities at Fushen Valley paled in comparison to those here, as the celestial orderians wouldn't stop their slaughter even after the formation fell. Many more of their ground troops had survived, allowing them to perpetuate even more suffering. Every single celestial orderian consumed the area around them like demons of flame.

"Tianming, let's go," Lingfeng said with a hoarse voice. He wanted to kill the sun emperor, but he knew there was no chance of that happening now. Only if they survived and grew stronger would they have a chance. They had the benefit of knowing the sun emperor's trump card now, after all. Staying and perishing with the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect was pointless and would only waste their chance at vengeance. "Vengeance can never come too late."

Lingfeng turned and looked at the bloodied Tianming, knowing how terrible he must feel. Given his imperial path, the worst thing he could endure was watching his people fall. It would be almost fatal. Even if he had done all he could, a loss was a loss, something that would brand him for the rest of his life.

"Let's leave with the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb," Lingfeng said. He didn't want to die there; he wasn't willing to die there. He dreamed of killing the sun emperor, and knew that the most rational move was to immediately flee.

"Feng, I know that there is no other way. You have to take her away. If I don't survive, avenge me," Tianming said. There were many more things that he wished to say, but he had no more time.

"No, don't do this, Big Brother! Don't!" Qingyu knew what he was going to do and immediately teared up.

"It's pointless," Lingfeng said, shaking his head."

"My cultivation path demands that I not turn my back on my people. Otherwise, I would be a pathetic wreck even if I survive! You have to understand!" Tianming felt much better after saying that. He got on Meow Meow's back and watched them one last time. Surprisingly, Weisheng Moran came with him.

"It's one thing if it's her! But you two had better not follow!" Tianming glared at Lingfeng and Qingyu, not giving them a chance to argue. He was about to leap right back into the embrace of death.

"Big Brother!" Qingyu's heart-rending shriek was enough to tear his heart to shreds, but he endured it. He turned and saw Weisheng Moran tugging at his clothes with a resolute expression.

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"Trust yourself. You're always right."

"Thank you."

Meow Meow charged back into the flaming battlefield.

Chapter 1884

"Lan Huang, help me!" Tianming snapped.

"Coming!" Lan Huang then repeated Tianming's words with its booming voice. "Troops of the Myriad Solar Sects, heed your orders! Get into defensive formations and congregate as much as possible! Evacuate our people as we mount a fighting retreat! Hold on to the end! We aren't dead yet! Any who survive will be the last hope of the Myriad Solar Sects! Don't give up!"

Had the Saintdragon Emperor said those words, they wouldn't have had much of an effect. However, when the people heard Tianming's call, hope sparked again in their hearts. They managed to get back their faith at their lowest point! Nobody doubted his performance that day—he had only lost because the enemy was far more powerful than they had imagined. The fact that Tianming had returned for them after escaping death showed that he hadn't abandoned them and wasn't afraid of death!

"He's still alive!"

Many people teared up as they picked their weapons back up.

"At the very least, we have to ensure that the young ones survive!"

"How can we stop resisting and let the ten billion people here die?!"

"Li Tianming has gone to the front! Follow him!"

A ruler that led his own troops into war would always earn their respect. Those that hid behind their subjects were the ones who always disappointed. Tianming had earned true respect after coming back despite the overwhelming odds.

When the Aeonian Inifidragon Formation crumbled, Tianming had lost many Omnisentient Threads and only had around five billion remaining, but his return allowed the lost ones to reconnect with him. That was the reason he couldn't escape. The Myriad Solar Sects needed him! As long as he didn't give up on his people, they wouldn't give up on him! The surge in the number of threads was so steep that it brought incredible knowledge and insight to him. He would probably never have another burst of understanding like this another time in his life.

He turned to the sun emperor and had Meow Meow charge in that direction. The scathing gaze once more fell on him. He had never disappointed anyone! They all knew that returning meant death; Tianming knew it, too. But his logic was elementary. His death would mean earning his people another moment to escape. He could draw the enemy's ire and save many lives.

"It will be worth it!"

He felt like his body was on fire, as if this was going to be his destiny. All rulers burned for their subjects. If they didn't, they wouldn't be able to obtain more power and rise to the peak. When he reappeared before the sun emperor, he stood straight with his chest puffed out. Pointing the Grand-Orient Sword at the sun emperor, he declared, "Sun Emperor, you haven't seen the last of me yet!"

The Myriad Solar Sects started cheering once more. They knew this last stand probably wouldn't last that long and that things would probably end the same as before. However, they only had one life to live, so they cherished every moment that they were able to feel alive.

Everyone knew what Tianming was trying to do. He was trying to hold the sun emperor back as long as possible so that as many people could escape as possible, trading his life for thousands of others. Even

though he was afraid of dying when he faced the coffin, at first, things had completely changed this time.

"Everyone dies, eventually. Some deaths are as heavy as mountains, while others are as light as feathers. I don't wish for a significant death, only one that I won't regret. All I want is for my name to be remembered!" he shouted with all he had, mustering all his courage. His words seemed to give those listening an insight about the nature of life and death.

Last time, Tianming didn't know how he would face Feiling and his parents if he died. He was afraid that they would suffer as a result. However, he imagined that they wouldn't feel too bad about it if they heard that he burned up the last of his life for the sake of others so that they could escape hell. Surely, they would be proud of him and retain the courage to live their best lives. After realizing that, he was no longer afraid.

He stood before the sun emperor, heavily breathing as he glared at him. He intentionally drew the attention of the celestial orderians so that they would stop their attack. The entire battlefield seemed to quiet down at that moment. The celestial orderians that thought Tianming had been killed blindly stared at him, completely stupefied at his suicidal return.

They simply didn't understand him! If he ran, he would be betraying who he was and negating his entire life, his purpose! Only by coming back did he prove that he was fit to be their ruler! The way he returned was the same way he had to walk to grow. Back then, he was just blindly tracing the steps on the path of rulership, but now he chose to walk against the grain the hard way, finding his own path, one that transcended life and death. Even if his future came to an end here, he had already succeeded.

The Greenspark Tower was so powerful that Tianming's basic body structure had been completely restored at this point. Once more, he was fueled by the power of nine billion threads of faith. Choosing the hard path had made his Imperial Will rapidly grow. The Grand-Orient Sword above his five-layered astral discs glowed even brighter, and his power rose in tandem. A wave of even more volatile energy washed over him before being drawn to his sword. His life and death had been irreversibly tangled with those of countless others. The people that were connected to him were once more moved by his shocking decision and resonated with him in their souls.

That was how Tianming differed from Lingfeng. Lingfeng was a lone wolf, while Tianming walked his path with countless others, sharing their fates. No matter the danger, he would forge ahead thanks to the sheer weight of the faith of those following behind him. He wasn't alone—there were nine billion others following him and struggling to survive.

Being beaten down and rising up again, he endured the pain of the wounds that remained in him as he charged toward the sun emperor, his sword reverberating in his hand from the sheer power. The ancient weapon exuded a bloody, destructive power.

Never had Tianming been so close to the Primordial God-Emperor; perhaps not in power, but in will and intent. He was perfectly aligned on that very same path. The giant he had seen in the illusory realm within the sword he held seemed to be guiding him, just like he was guiding the countless others that followed him.

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Chapter 1885

Boundless faith power infused the Grand-Orient Sword. There seemed to be an illusory manifestation of rulership within.

"Carrying the will and intent of all, this sword shall exterminate all evils! The ruler lives up to his subjects' expectations, and the subjects reciprocate the favor!" This time around, Tianming had played his role as the ruler, so it would be up to the subjects now. As it turned out, when he did the complete opposite of what they expected and got a surge of faith, countless people followed his countercurrent path. As the force congregated in his sword, he began to have an epiphany. While he couldn't immediately grow stronger as a result, it was significant for his future growth.

"A ruler!" Tianming roared as he looked at the figure. His lifebound beasts, totems, divine wonders, and Grand-Orient Sword were ready, all of them at full power. The sun emperor's gigantic crimson and gold coffin appeared in response, seemingly about to crush Tianming's head with the weight of the whole world.

Yet another ultimate clash was about to happen. Nobody would have expected that Tianming, who had been on the brink of death, would be able to reappear much stronger than before. Lightning, fire, totems, and drowning sounds were unleashed once more. The Grand-Orient Sword seemed transformed, having taken on the ancient power of the Primordial God-Emperor as it slashed against the coffin. Every ounce of his and his lifebound beasts' power was used to resist that gigantic coffin. They were quite unhappy about having lost against it the last time! Even so, the humongous pressure on Tianming could not be understated.

"Move aside!" He flicked his sword as his totems, beasts, divine wonders, and Omnisentient Will gave their all to send the gigantic coffin flying. Tianming suddenly landed on the ground. Though he was heavily shaken, he was still standing, whereas the coffin slammed into the sun emperor and pushed him back.

The sight shocked the entire battlefield into stunned silence. What followed were endless cheers. The rabid celestial orderians suddenly began angrily backing off, while the despairing defenders mustered their courage to a whole new peak.

Everyone wondered what had happened to Tianming after he slammed into the ground, but the mere sight of him sending the gigantic coffin flying seemed to completely wipe away his defeat from before. It showed that even against a crazy artifact of the sun emperor, he could still resist it to some extent! The defenders were once more dragged up from rock bottom. In fact, they were in even higher spirits than before.

The scary thing wasn't Tianming's strength, but rather his incredible, almost transformative adaptability. When he finally managed to resist the coffin and nail his landing, even the sun emperor furrowed his brow, speechless. He immediately controlled the coffin again, a sign that he was now wary of Tianming. Nobody wanted to kill the young scourge before him more than he did. Once more, the coffin came falling down, but the defenders weren't the slightest bit nervous this time. They watched their ruler, mentally willing their energy to be of help to him.

"Ruler..." Tianming looked up once more. He had more than ten billion Omnisentient Threads, marking the birth of a new miracle. Everyone in the Myriadragon Mountains, without exception, had accepted him as their ruler. They now walked with him on the same path. Once his influence spanned half the sun, the normal mortals that lived within the factions' territories began seeing him as the true ruler of the sun.

The sheer amount of energy made him forget his injuries. In fact, there was far more than he could have imagined. His Imperial Will was able to absorb even more energy than formation spirit threads could! Each person seemed able to provide up to ten times more energy than they did before as long as they were on the same path as he was, effectively multiplying the Omnisentient Threads' effectiveness by a few times, hence how he was able to resist the coffin.

The sun emperor remained silent, while the celestial orderians were at a loss as to what was happening. How could their foes that had been on the brink of collapse come back fighting just like that? The battle once more entered a stalemate.

"The sun emperor is panicking!"

"He isn't able to kill Li Tianming!"

Even with the fall of the Aeonidragon Formation, the faith of the defenders was stronger than before. The Saintdragon Emperor quickly organized a regroup and started evacuating the Myriadragon Mountains.

Yet another slam came from the coffin, but Tianming survived it and remained standing, further strengthening the faith of his believers. They all watched with bloodshot eyes as the youth stood up against the sun emperor, infusing power into his albi.

"Looks like quantity is only one factor. Their power and the depth of their faith also affect my strength!" Tianming was growing to be more and more like the Primordial God-Emperor, seeming like an even more fit ruler than the sun emperor. The only shame was that he had awoken a little too late, after the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's formation was lost.

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"You really are stubborn. This isn't the first time you stunned me speechless," the sun emperor said. He had used his coffin three times, but failed to kill Tianming each time. The look he shot Tianming was quite weird.

"Since you already know, you'd better take your men and leave," Tianming said. For the first time, he was putting up actual resistance against the sun emperor, seemingly standing on equal ground, which awed the celestial orderians even more. However, Tianming knew that it would be impossible for him to kill the sun emperor. The best he could do now was survive, so he hoped that they would retreat.

"You want me to leave? You can't be thinking that you've won, right?" The sun emperor broke into a laugh. As he laughed, the Divine Sun Palace loomed behind him. It was still charging up thanks to the other 'sun emperor' within. "Foolish child, just because the Flameyellow Coffin and I can't deal with you doesn't mean you're invincible."

With the defensive formation breached, the other sun emperor within the palace no longer had to operate it. In other words, Tianming would be facing off against two sun emperors! Those were even worse odds!

Chapter 1886

Tianming already knew what to expect with the other sun emperor. He knew that the best he could do there was to minimize the damage; he couldn't entirely remove it. The only thing he should focus on now wasn't killing the sun emperor, but helping the others evacuate. Thus, he was ready to give it his all no matter the opponent.

"Tianming," a cold voice said from behind.

Tianming smiled and turned back and saw Lingfeng resolutely looking at him. "Why didn't you leave?"

"You won't leave your subjects behind, and I can't leave you behind," Lingfeng said. That was why he had also stepped on the path of no return. One look at his eyes was enough to convey his intentions.

If things went as expected, they would be fighting for their lives as the people evacuated. Many were fated to enter their last slumber here. The celestial orderians continued their assault, per their leader's orders, though they were far from as spirited as before when Tianming had been assumed dead. At the same time, the Divine Sun Palace continued its approach and aimed itself at Tianming, as well as Myriadragon Mountains. In other words, if Tianming escaped, the blast would vaporize the evacuating folks. It was a move that targeted Tianming's weakness—underhanded, but effective. Tianming had armed the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, but he lacked the power source to properly use it, hence the disparity in their strength.

"You're far too immature to be going against me," the sun emperor arrogantly said. He seemed to have a counter for every one of Tianming's moves. In fact, the Divine Sun Palace was even more terrifying than the sun emperor now, with the formation gone. Its gigantic mouth hung open as it charged up the destructive blast. "You better not evade it, or those behind you will die! You wouldn't be fit to be their ruler if you have them die for you, would you?"

"Shameless!" Countless people cursed the underhandedness of the sun emperor, especially given how he was the strongest person on the sun. His thick skin simply made him incredibly hard to deal with.

The people behind Tianming hastily moved aside. Divine Wrath blasts were no joke, and at that moment, a pillar of gold shot toward Tianming. The sky itself changed color from the sheer glow. Fortunately, the people behind Tianming had moved aside quickly enough, giving him a chance to evade. Even so, Tianming was sent flying from the sheer might of the blast, his back scalded red. The blast had brushed past him and slammed into Great Saintdragon Peak, leaving a gigantic, smoking crater in the landscape. The great peak had stood for countless years, only to fall this very day, dealing a blow to the morale of the troops. Luckily, they hadn't suffered many casualties from that blast. However, it was only a matter of time before the Divine Sun Palace charged up another blast.

The Saintdragon Emperor quickly reacted. "Retreat, quick!"

The Myriadragon Mountains was their final stronghold. They wouldn't know where to go after leaving it, but staying meant certain death so they kept on moving.

"The Imperialdragon Princeps is buying us time!"

"We have to retreat, quick!"

"He can only leave if we retreat! We have to hurry up so he can survive!"

Thankfully, the Myriad Solar Sects knew Tianming's intentions well. He was thankful for that, and felt like what he was doing was meaningful. Once more feeling a fighting spirit, he charged straight for the Divine Sun Palace like a moth to fire. He only had a small window of time to disrupt it, but it was merely a laughable effort to the sun emperor.

Everything seemed like it had been fated to happen. Something utterly breathtaking occurred, and Tianming was the first one to see it. As he charged toward the Divine Sun Palace, he suddenly felt a terrifying source of power beyond the flaming clouds! It was definitely a divine astralships, and it seemed more powerful than the sun emperor's own! But how could that be possible?

A gaping hole in the flaming clouds suddenly opened up thanks to a greenish vortex. A green object appeared from within before shooting out two green pillars of light! Unlike the Divine Sun Palace's Divine Wrath, these blasts were even faster. Ice crystals formed in the air where the beams passed. Half of the flames on the battlefield were immediately extinguished by the frost.

"What the hell are those?!" The blasts had been too fast and gave nobody the time to react. Tianming looked at the target of the blasts: the sun emperor and the Divine Sun Palace! The Myriad Solar Sects and Tianming himself weren't their targets. He didn't know who the newcomers were, but was relieved that they weren't after him.

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However, that only lasted a moment. It didn't take much to infer that the divine astralship was Skywolf's! Just because their stars hadn't arrived yet didn't mean their divine astralships couldn't come there ahead of them. Still in shock, Tianming saw a wolf-like apparition beyond the green vortex in the sky. It was definitely from Skywolf and it had determined that the strongest side on the battlefield was the sun emperor's, hence why it chose to attack while the Divine Sun Palace was charging up.

Each of the blasts was just as powerful as Divine Wrath! They were just as swift as they were powerful! Tianming couldn't even react to the speed of the blast, while he could still get out of the way of the Divine Wrath. Had he been the target of the green beams, he would be completely vaporized. Those beam attacks were far more merciless than a strike from the crimson-gold coffin.

The sun emperor and his palace seemed unable to react and were swallowed up by the green beams of light. The Divine Sun Palace, especially, was only slightly able to swerve aside before a beam squarely struck it.

Chapter 1887

Tianming charged toward the Divine Sun Palace and saw a golden barrier around it. Even then, the blast had sent it flying straight to the ground, sending shockwaves out from the impact area. Green ice also appeared for tens of thousands of meters around it. Nobody knew the extent of the damage done to the palace apart from the sun emperor himself.

Tianming blankly watched the whole scene with the others on the battlefield. Even the most elite celestial orderian commanders didn't know about Skywolf's imminent arrival and thought that the blasts had come from the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb instead.

As for the sun emperor, he had been unable to avoid the blast as it was a surprise attack. The enemy had used the flaming clouds as cover while they aimed. Perhaps he had managed to hide in the Flameyellow Coffin in the nick of time, but he was still squarely struck nevertheless. The green pillar that swallowed him up pierced all the way to the ground, hitting the many celestial orderian troops below. Then the light spread out like waves, leaving behind more than twenty million frozen green statues. They were no doubt dead from the attack. Not to mention, the slightest breeze was enough to cause them to shatter. The wave of green frost managed to drown out the golden flames around the battlefield. Seeing the Divine Sun Palace fall and more than twenty million of their comrades turn into ice, the remaining celestial orderians fell into a deathly silence, their faces pale.

"Li Tianming..." He was the only one left above in the sky. Gradually, the vortex grew brighter and brighter, casting light on his body. The celestial orderians thought that he had taken out the sun emperor with a mighty show of force.

"Where's the sun emperor?"

"I don't know! Don't tell me he was vaporized—I can't see anything!"

"Nonsense! That's impossible!"

It was the celestial orderians' turn to fall into panic. Their morale had kept tanking since Tianming returned, and now they were at rock bottom. The flames around their bodies crackled as the cold frost loomed over them.

"It's got nothing to do with me." Tianming wouldn't claim credit for anything he didn't do. In fact, he believed that Skywolf was a much bigger threat than the celestial orderians. There was no doubt in his mind that they would prove harder to deal with than the sun emperor.

Tianming hurried the Saintdragon Emperor to speed up the evacuation using this opportunity. "Escape to wherever! Just try to survive!"

With Skywolf's sudden arrival, all Tianming could do was avoid the limelight. He blended into the crowd with Lingfeng. One thing was on his mind, however: how were the sun emperor and his palace doing? He didn't have the time to stay to find out.

After that, a gigantic green mechanical wolf descended from the flaming clouds. It looked about as large as the Divine Sun Palace. While it was in the form of a beast, it was clear that it was a divine astralship constructed using divine ores and impressive formations. It was a superweapon in the form of a wolf! Its huge, greenish-gray form was countless times larger than normal lifebound beasts, and it was just as fierce as them, if not more.

It took a while before the others reacted.

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"Skywolf!"

They had been their nemesis long ago. The Orderians, whether they be the celestial orderians or part of the Myriad Solar Sects, would never forget that astral war from long ago, nor would they forget the nightmare Skywolf had brought to the sun. Even though they had managed to survive, that didn't mean Skywolf hadn't left any wounds. The arrival of their old nemesis was even more shocking than the fall of the Aeonic Infinidragon Formation. The defenders immediately forgot the threat of the celestial orderians and were able to do nothing but stare dumbly at the mechanical wolf as they struggled to breathe.

Most of the people there were speechless, and the others didn't have anything other to say than mumbling 'Skywolf' over and over again, more fearfully with each repetition. The entire battlefield had frozen over after the divine astralship appeared, which was what Tianming had expected.

Then the mechanical wolf began moving; it sounded like metal grating against metal. Like specters, this divine astralship that had been constructed entirely out of divine ores was incredibly tough. The frost it emanated also froze the wills of those that beheld it, even the celestial orderians.

Only Tianming was still alert and hurrying the evacuation. There was no use saying anything else. If the sun emperor was still alive, he would be the one fighting Skywolf. Tianming only worried that the wolf-shaped divine astralship was charging up for the next blast to attack the others on the battlefield. It would be all too easy to kill the millions that were gathered tightly in a single area.

Fortunately, they were different from the sun emperor. The mechanical wolf approached the crowd as it would ants. It breathed out some cold smoke, giving rise to boundless fog as its mouth opened up and revealed a doorway of sorts.

The next instant, many specters from Skywolf emerged from the ship. Tianming clearly saw them from his place in the crowd. There were around ten thousand of them, all around ten meters tall. They had wolf heads and greenish-gray bodies and emanated cold auras, all shrouded in the cold fog. Their killing intent washed over the people there. Among them was a man in a cape standing at the very front, radiating the coldest aura of them all. His face seemed covered in long, green eyes.

Chapter 1888

The group of specters looked at everyone else like they were ants. They descended from their ship like true rulers, scanning the ranks of the alliance and celestial orderians. The leader pointed at himself and said with a hoarse, cold voice, "I am Sovereign Greenvoid of Skywolf."

The mention of his place of origin cemented the fact that Skywolf had arrived. Both the alliance and celestial orderians couldn't help but back away in fear. The trauma from the countless atrocities committed by Skywolf in the previous war had yet to completely heal.

Coincidentally, it just so happened that Tianming had killed a specter ghoulish king called Qing Ming back at the Flameyellow Continent, whose name meant 'green' and 'void' respectively, though that specter was on a completely different level.

This sovereign seemed quite satisfied with the reaction he sparked. He pointed at his mechanical wolf and continued, "This is our divine astralship, the Greenvoid Abyss."

The celestial orderians finally realized that the one that shot the sun emperor down wasn't Tianming, but the invaders from Skywolf instead. After the introduction, Sovereign Greenvoid opened his arms and looked ahead. "Our home world will descend here in five months! We'll commandeer your nova source and take it as a greeting gift. But before that, I'll personally teach you sheeple obedience. If there's anyone that doesn't comply, stand in line. My Greenvoid Skywolves will send you to hell."

His tone was serious and it didn't seem like he was joking. The celestial orderians and the alliance were shrouded in plain shock. They blankly looked at the new invaders that had shown up out of the blue. The two sides hated each other with a passion, only for a third party to spontaneously burst in and threaten to exterminate all of them. Many people didn't know what reaction they should have to their sudden change in circumstances.

"Do you understand?" Sovereign Greenvoid asked, but nobody answered him. "If you don't, then die."

He made a casual wave and prepared to return to the Greenvoid Abyss. At that moment, the ground beneath him suddenly cracked open! Two figures, one gold and one red, charged toward Sovereign Greenvoid. The celestial orderians relished in delight when they realized that the sun emperor had survived.

"Sun Emperor!" The celestial orderians had finally regained their pillar of mental support.

"Die!" No matter what the enemy said, they had only brought some ten thousand troops with them. Now that the sun emperor had shown up once more, the celestial orderians quickly reacted and turned their troops against the specters, much to the shock of quite a few Greenvoid Skywolves.

"He isn't dead after all that?" According to the skywolves' experience roaming the astralscape, no sovereign-level figure could take even a single blast from the Greenvoid Abyss! Even if they didn't die, they would be brought to the brink of death. Yet the sun emperor seemed completely fine, and even had an odd red-haired figure fighting with him. The two of them rapidly charged toward Sovereign Greenvoid rapidly, intent on stopping him from reentering his ship.

In fact, Sovereign Greenvoid wouldn't have come out of his ship if he hadn't been quite certain that the sun emperor was heavily injured or dead. Even so, he wasn't one to shirk away from a fight, especially as the sovereign of Skywolf. Though, part of it was probably due to his ignorance of how terrifying the sun emperor was.

"Let me take him on. You guys take on the other one," Sovereign Greenvoid said.

"Understood!"

The remaining Greenvoid Skywolves turned their attention to the red-haired figure and swarmed him. On the other side, the sun emperor clashed with Sovereign Greenvoid.

When the sovereign finally got a good look, he realized that the sun emperor was completely unharmed. How can that be possible? It was the first time his heart had ever skipped a beat. When he looked at the sun emperor's eyes, his heart skipped another beat. The sun emperor's body was completely covered in flames, the heat of which applied more and more pressure on Sovereign Greenvoid.

"And there I was teaching my lessers a lesson when you animals just had to show up and start barking, eh?" The sun emperor's booming voice rang in the ears of Sovereign Greenvoid.

"That's quite some arrogance! If I didn't know better, I'd think you were the ruler of a skypiercer-class world!" Sovereign Greenvoid said, snickering.

"Heh." The sun emperor merely chuckled before focusing on the fight. Nine totems and a green wolfman clashed. One side represented the sun, while the other represented a cold green moon. Fire and frost blended together in complete disharmony. There was no sophistication or elegance in their fight, only crude, unadulterated brute force.

"This is a good chance." The appearance of a divine astralship from Skywolf was a great help to the alliance. The celestial orderians had turned their fury toward the Greenvoid Skywolves, while the sun emperor was engaged with Sovereign Greenvoid. The alliance was completely neglected.

"Let's go!" Tianming made his decision and immediately turned tail. He didn't know where he would go, but all he wanted to do was to ensure that his followers survived.

"The Myriadragon Mountains have been breached, so the Myriad Solar Sects will have much less of a chance of taking it back now. Not even the Emphyrean Sword Sect or Divinemight Dynasty would be able to hold off against an invasion of such a scale."

That was the reality of the situation, unless the sun emperor died there and then, but that didn't seem likely. Tianming knew better than Sovereign Greenvoid just how terrifying the sun emperor truly was. "The only thing we can be thankful of is that I didn't completely fail and lose the faith of all these people. In fact, I grew stronger and can use even more power now. Once I'm completely healed, not even the Flameyellow Coffin will be able to kill me!"

If it weren't for Tianming coming back for his believers, he would probably only have a billion Omniscient Threads remaining after the fall of the Myriadragon Mountains. After all, a ruler of a fallen dynasty had nothing left to rule over. Yet he was lucky enough to be given another chance. Even as he retreated, the flames of struggle in his heart still burned bright.

"Even though I failed today and am turning tail to run, all of them still trust me and have entrusted their hopes to me. The heavens have given me another chance, and I won't disappoint them this time! Perhaps this will be the last chance I'm given." Tianming felt much more awake as a strong breeze blew from behind him. "The arrival of a divine astralship from Skywolf turned the sun emperor's attention away. Maybe this is an opportunity. As long as we retreat and survive, we'll still have a chance!"

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The problem was what he should start working on. He wracked his mind trying to figure it out. Eventually, he saw the Voidsky Flame Pillar and piloted the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb toward it.

"Let's take care of the voidheart worm inside the Sky Palace Formation! Currently, I'm still unsure why the sun emperor went through all that trouble to break through the defensive formations of the many factions, as well as the purpose of the pillar formations. But if I can defeat the voidheart worm and control half of the fusion formation, I'll be able to turn the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb into a full-fledged divine astralship!" Despite the dire straits, there was still a silver lining. Tianming grabbed it like a lifeline and headed toward the Voidsky Realm.

"Aunt Ying, I need you all to handle settling everyone down. Try to hide yourselves in the wilderness. I will stay in contact with you using Yin Chen," Tianming said.

"Why should we hide? What can we still do?" Long Wanying lamented.

"Wait for me to come back."

"Where are you going?"

"The Sky Palace."

Long Wanying pondered in silence. Eventually, she pursed her lips and forced a smile. "Alright, we'll wait for you."

"Very well."

Tianming hadn't forgotten to leave some Yin Chens behind to observe the battle between the sun emperor and Sovereign Greenvoid as they fled. The fight only lasted fifteen minutes, and Tianming was so astounded by the result that he was stunned for a long time. Yin Chen said that Sovereign Greenvoid had been decapitated and his head was left hanging on the Greenvoid Abyss. The ten thousand or so Greenvoid Skywolves all perished as well, leaving nobody to pilot the giant mechanical wolf, and all of that had only taken fifteen minutes.

Even though Sovereign Greenvoid might not be the strongest Skywolf had to offer, seeing as he was sent as a scout, the fact that he had been killed so quickly was a sign. It wasn't that he was weak, but that the sun emperor was far stronger than the realms of common sense. One could only imagine the sight when the sun emperor dealt the killing blow. No doubt his troops would be jubilant with joy. For them to have such a powerful ruler, they could die happy!

It seemed that the remaining factions were still in grave danger. The three hundred million celestial orderian troops had mostly survived and were more motivated than ever before. Yin Chen said that the sun emperor didn't continue the assault and instead took fifty million troops with him into the Divine Sun Palace before urgently flying back to their territory. The reason for that was that another divine astralship from Skywolf had attacked the home base of the celestial orderians and caused seas of casualties.

"The death of Sovereign Greenvoid isn't the end. Instead, it's a harbinger of more to come. Skywolf won't relent just like that. They're saving their strength for later. However, the sun emperor might just be capable enough to mount some resistance. Looks like I've been severely underestimating him. Either way, the Myriad Solar Sects and I are the weakest side in all this, and the ones with the least hope. Now, we don't even have a home to return to!"

He felt the burdens stack upon his shoulders, but endured it as he headed toward the Sky Palace.

Chapter 1889

The two divine astralships of Skywolf had come at the perfect time. The first, the Greenvoid Abyss, had taken on the brunt of the celestial orderians on behalf of the alliance, giving them a chance to retreat, while the second ship went straight for the celestial orderian homeland. Both of them had come at the same time, but their paths had diverged toward the two poles of the sun.

The Greenvoid Abyss was at the south pole of the sun. It would still be good if Sovereign Greenvoid and his subordinates hadn't left the ship, but they had, and they'd paid for their mistake with their lives; not that it could really be blamed on them. Tianming had gone to Violetglory, a similar heliacal-class world, and even he felt that Orderia's sun emperor was far more than one would expect from this world.

As for the second divine astralship, its crew was far more careful. Perhaps they had managed to learn about Greenvoid Abyss' fate through some means before the Divine Sun Palace returned. Though they found it hard to believe, the crew quickly returned to the ship and used it for bombardment. This ship was even more powerful than the Divine Sun Palace and Greenvoid Abyss and it took a mere four hours for it to render hundreds of millions of casualties among the celestial orderians.

Though they were the strongest faction on the sun, a large portion of their populace was still made up of mortals with no astral physiques, who weren't able to endure the astralship's bombardment at all. Too many people were vaporized before they even knew what was going on.

As most of the troops had been sent to the south pole of the sun, the troops that remained in the celestial orderian base could only defend against Tianming's Ninedragon Imperial Tomb at best. Faced with a complete divine astralship that was even more powerful than the Divine Sun Palace, their defensive formations crumbled in almost no time, exposing the weak and the old to danger. They could do naught but evacuate like the Myriad Solar Sects.

At that time, word of the sun emperor killing Sovereign Greenvoid hadn't reached them yet, so Skywolf believed they had achieved their strategic objective of scaring the celestial orderians. Rivers of blood flowed through the north of the sun. That was the true goal of Skywolf's divine astralships.

Unfortunately for Sovereign Greenvoid, however, he'd run into the sun emperor, who was fighting Tianming, and had crashed the party, only to end up decapitated. As such, Skywolf had only managed to fulfill half of their objectives. When they finally got wind of what happened, the second divine astralship switched to careful bombardment before ascending beyond the flaming clouds after wreaking enough havoc.

Before they left, they announced to the tired celestial orderian defenders, "Skywolf will descend upon you in due time! You'll give everything you have to us as a tribute and protection fee. If you do, Skywolf will protect this world for a million years and nobody will dare to invade it while you're under our guardianship!"

Their cold laughter reverberated throughout. The celestial orderians knew what that 'protection' really meant. Once their nova source was taken away, Orderia would become a dead world, and people naturally wouldn't want to invade it. The celestial orderians didn't expect they would turn from the hunters to the hunted while they were waging war against others.

Before the sun emperor returned, everyone there suffered from an oppressive mood. Yin Chen reported everything that had happened, including the myriad disasters that befell the celestial orderians. No matter what, the normal folk living in celestial orderian territory were innocent. However, guilt and innocence would no longer matter once Skywolf truly exterminated the sun. The casualties wouldn't just be a paltry hundred million. There was no sense talking about morality to hunters from the cosmic aether. Morality and ethics tended to lose relevance on cosmic scales. Might made right, and only the

groups that possessed the most nova sources would reign eternal. Like many factions that roamed the cosmic jungle, that kind of behavior was baked into the genetic essence of Skywolf.

"The death of Sovereign Greenvoid might be funny, but it doesn't change the fact that Skywolf is much more powerful than the celestial orderians. They probably won't make a mistake like this a second time." It would be understandable if it was just the first, since even Tianming had done the same.

"The second divine astralship should be under the control of another sovereign-class figure. Skywolf is a binary star system with one large and one small star. The smaller star is about equal to Violetglory, while the larger one is three times larger than the sun. I wonder how many sovereigns they have...." Violetglory alone had two sovereigns and two divine astralships. Based on that, Tianming estimated Skywolf to have five or more sovereigns, which was far from a small number. "We still have a few more months."

The chaos caused by the second divine astralship forced the three hundred million celestial orderian troops to retreat, allowing most of the ten billion folks at the Myriaddragon Mountains to retreat. Without anywhere to go, all they could do was scatter and hide. Thankfully, the celestial orderians didn't have any other elites apart from their three hundred million, so they would be far from enough to hunt down the scattered remnants of the Myriad Solar Sects. Unless the totemancers could afford to send tens of billions of troops down, there was relatively little risk for the surviving members of the Myriad Solar Sects.

Before going to the Sky Palace, Tianming had another issue to deal with. The Northdipper Swordsage, Ninesun Martial Lord, Frost Empress, and the others stood before him, speechless at seeing the green light that rapidly healed his body.

"Tianming, tell us! What should our sects do? Where should we go? Should we fight to our deaths, buy time, or surrender?" the Northdipper Swordsage asked.

"Will you listen to me?" Tianming asked after some thought.

"I'll do everything you say, no matter what. You've proven yourself time and again in this war. If it weren't for the sun emperor having too many tricks up his sleeves, we would've won," the Frost Empress decisively said.

"Are you joking? Who would we listen to apart from you? You're our only hope, young man," the Northdipper Swordsage said with a shrug.

"We'll do what you say. You're the core of the Myriad Solar Sects," the Ninesun Martial Lord said.

"Alright." Tianming was quite grateful that they still had so much faith in him despite the loss. From now on, he would have to bear the responsibility for all his decisions. If he won, he would deserve the credit, but if he made a mistake, the lives lost would be on his hands.

Chapter 1890

Even though the pressure was immense, Tianming no longer feared walking his path since he himself had chosen to come back for his believers. "Ever since I became the leader of the alliance, my decisions have led to retreating and giving up on our defensive formations in favor of staying alive. I still think we should do the same."

"Are you saying we should abandon the Emyrean Sword Sect to them?" the Northdipper Swordsage asked with a pained expression.

"That's right. The Myriaddragon Mountains are lost to us. If the celestial orderians attack you now, the best you can do is to shave off some of their numbers, but once your defensive formation falls, you'll no longer have a chance to retreat like you do now."

"I understand. Sigh! Our loss today truly is huge. It's such a shame...."

"Our lives are more important."

"But the question is what the sun emperor wants with our territories after we abandon them."

"No matter what he plans to do, we have no way of stopping it even if we pay with our lives. The best we can do is to stall for time. Additionally, we can be quite certain that one of the main reasons he's doing this is to resist Skywolf, not to use them against us. Since the war's now been more or less settled, we should just decisively abandon our homes. Once the truth is revealed, we might yet have a chance to reclaim what's ours, especially after the other two sides wear each other down."

If it were possible to keep the few remaining defensive formations, Tianming wouldn't want to give up on them either. However, the Emyrean Sword Sect's combat capabilities were less than a third of the Xuanyuan Dragon Sect's, so how could they afford to resist the celestial orderians? Even if they chose to hold their ground, they would still lose when their defensive formation was breached. The celestial orderians had managed to breach the Myriaddragon Mountains, after all, but hadn't been able to kill many alliance soldiers before Skywolf's ships arrived, so they might be eager to claim that debt from the Emyrean Sword Sect.

"Even though constantly retreating like this is disappointing, what happened today shows that struggling is futile. It's better to bet on a chance of rising up from the ashes. We're the weaker side, after all, so let's hide and wait. The Frostsoul Imperium supports Tianming's decision," said the Frost Empress.

"I support it too, as bad as it feels. Dammit! The sect that I spent so much effort to build will be stolen from me!" the Northdipper Swordsage said. He understood the logic, but he needed someone with real power to make that order to be able to properly convince his subordinates.

"We'll evacuate the weaker ones first, and leave some people behind as guards. So far, the sun emperor is still dealing with that other divine astralship, so we'll guard them for as long as we can. I'll go to the Sky Palace and see if there's anything that can be done there," Tianming said.

"Alright. We'll handle things here, so rest assured. No matter what the future has in store for us, at least most of us are still alive. Instead, the celestial orderians lost countless people to invade us, and they're suffering even more from Skywolf's invasion. I suppose we'll have time for a breather while the celestial orderians' anger is directed at Skywolf, especially after the sun emperor killed Sovereign Greenvoid," the Saintdragon Emperor said.

"That's right. However, Skywolf is our enemy as well. It isn't wrong to want to fight the celestial orderians, but we must prioritize the people of our world. Nobody can afford to kill the sun emperor and betray Orderia for alien invaders," Tianming said. Everyone else agreed. He didn't think they would do that, but the warning was for himself as much as it was for the rest. No matter the grudges he had

against the sun emperor, this wasn't the time to settle them. If the celestial orderians ever had the odds against them while fighting Skywolf, he would definitely take action.

"Are you going to go to the Sky Palace alone?" the Saintdragon Emperor asked.

Tianming nodded. "For now, have all solarians stand by near the Sky Palace and wait for my signal. Perhaps there's a chance we can make it our base of operations. It may not be a large piece of land, but it's definitely safe.

"Can that really work?!" the Northdipper Swordsage agitatedly asked.

"It's just an empty thought! We may have lost today, but we can still dream," Tianming said.

"How optimistic of you." The Northdipper Swordsage clicked his tongue.

Tianming's attitude had completely changed. The Myriad Solar Sects was at rock bottom, yet he still felt secure for some reason. Perhaps it was because the faith that the ten billion people placed in him was stable and cemented in him now.

.....

Though the Voidsky Flame Pillar was called a pillar, it felt more like a wall to anyone standing in front of it. Tianming recalled that his journey on the sun had truly started there. He took the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb into the pillar, braving the flaming storms until the ship reached where he had found it, then landed it there.

He forged through the storms with a small group of people. The stigma on his head shone as it helped locate the Sky Palace for him. His stigma looked more like the character for 'void' than it did for 'sky'. Orderia had a faction called the Voidword Shrine, while Violetglory had one called the Skyword Shrine. Not to mention, recently, some Voidsky Organization had appeared out of nowhere. Perhaps they were all related in some way.

Tianming brought Yu Ziqian with him, who looked around curiously as he followed.

"We'll be there soon."

Not long later, they reached a quiet area where the flames and winds were still. It was as if time had stopped flowing. As they proceeded, they came upon a translucent barrier covered in flowing divine celestial patterns. That was the Sky Palace Formation, and it stretched tens of thousands of meters up to the sky. Beyond it was the Sky Palace, where the voidheart worm lay in hiding. The Saintdragon Emperor, Long Wanying, the Northdipper Swordsage, and the rest followed behind.

"Can you really enter? Not even the sun emperor was able to make his way in. It's as tough as an airtight fortress," the Northdipper Swordsage said.

Tianming wasn't sure whether he could enter, either. He touched the formation with his left arm as he pondered, "Gan Gangan, give it a try."

"Me?" Yu Ziqian awkwardly laughed. "I'd better not embarrass myself here. This barrier is really thick. There's no way I can break through it. That's why we need you, brother."

"Just do what I tell you. Here, put your head against the formation." Tianming pushed Yu Ziqian's head against the formation and slammed it into the barrier.

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Yu Ziqian cried out in pain as he dizzily spun around, but that had done nothing to the formation at all.