

The Ages 2001

Chapter 2001

For Tianming, Li Wudi's life and death was the subject of the irreconcilable conflict between him and the sun emperor. But for the sun emperor, the core of the Flameyellow Fusion Formation was the real battle of life and death. He had created such an enormous sun, so it was impossible for him to allow Tianming to enjoy the benefits. The clash between their two different wills seemed predestined. It was a contradiction that could only be solved by life and death, as well as the reason behind the sun emperor's crazed killing intent.

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"Looks like there's no way out." Qingyu lowered her head.

"Yes. Only one of us can live." There was no ordinary enmity. Who would this dazzling sun belong to? The conclusion to that drama was far greater than any personal grudge. Right now, the sun emperor had received the impetus of the sun and forced Tianming into a corner. Behind him, raging flames surged.

"Your Solar Majesty, why don't we work together to kill the three billion Skywolf specters first, give the people a chance to live. When everything is over, we'll have a fight to the death." Tianming turned around, his gold and black eyes meeting the sun emperor's fiery gaze like stars colliding.

"Don't worry! If you're so compassionate and want to save those people, then it's all the more reason not to waste time. With the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, I'll be able to slaughter the specters more easily. The more time you waste, the more people will die. That's on you!" The sun emperor stared him down.

"With your blatant disregard for human life and selfishness, even if the Flameyellow Imperial Star is controlled by you, it'll eventually come to an end." It was hard to imagine that the sun emperor was only concerned with killing Tianming despite the celestial orderians' dire straits. Not only had they suffered countless casualties, they were also being massacred by the specters. Not even their plight was enough to make him turn around.

"Human life? Are you joking? As long as the world is big and prosperous enough, there'll be several times the current population in a thousand years. And if that doesn't work, I'll make sure to encourage more births. I promise to make up as many as ten times the lives lost today," said the sun emperor.

"So, to you, even the lives of your celestial orderians are just a number," Tianming retorted.

"What else could it be? We're all divided into different classes. You and I belong to the highest class. One of us is comparable to trillions of the lowest class. You don't even understand that, yet you still want to be the ruler of the sun?"

Realization dawned upon Tianming. There was no point in talking to someone with different principles—he and the sun emperor were incompatible. Although they were both on the path of an emperor, he couldn't agree with anything the sun emperor preached.

Maybe it was because he had risen from nothing, so he understood that a young man from the Vermillion Bird kingdom had the same emotions and desires as a sovereign. There were ups and downs no matter how short one's life was. No one could decide where, or to whom they were born. Why was it

that some people belonged to the upper class from birth, and how did that give them the right to control the fate of the weak? Although ordinary people were weak, they still possessed the ability to think and strive for the better. Didn't that make them human?

Tianming had started on the path of an emperor with every belief. Through his Omniscient Threads, he could feel everyone's emotions, their joys and sufferings. But to the sun emperor, they were just a number so it didn't matter how many died today since new births could make up for the population loss. Did the sun emperor consider the celestial orderians as livestock under his rule?

Because Skywolf was the enemy, Tianming couldn't judge whether or not what the sun emperor did was right. But between the celestial orderians and the Myriad Solar Sects, as well as his actions on the sun, Tianming had begun seeing this man more and more clearly. And now that he did, he didn't have the slightest hope of coexistence.

"One last fight!" He no longer looked behind him, but kept his gaze straight ahead. They were in the place where the ashes of the Sky Palace Formation lay.

"Primordial God-Emperor, I doubted you before, but I hope this time, you can give me an answer!" The Ninedragon Imperial Tomb continued whizzing toward the formation. What was Tianming going to do? Amidst their despair, more than twenty billion people stared at the tomb.

"Myriad Solar Sects, hear my command!" From the loud rumble of the tomb came Tianming's firm and heroic voice, sweeping across the people.

"Yes!" His resolute voice gave them the hope they longed for at this moment.

"Leave here at once. Go south and listen to Yin Chen for the target location. Kill the specters and protect our people.... We must save every life!"

They could no longer stay there. Gathering together there only meant a quicker death. However, none of them expected Tianming to have them defend and protect every ordinary person's life while the real ruler of the sun, the sun emperor, was now chasing him, heedless of the life and death of his people. That was the difference in their beliefs.

Tianming wouldn't dare claim that he was right; he was merely following his heart and the principles his parents had taught him. Once an ordinary man, he couldn't give up on any ordinary person.

"Yes!"

What else could they do before death? Many of them didn't have an answer, but Tianming's words had enlightened them. No one wanted to wait to die in fear, even though death was everyone's eventual destiny. The most important thing was to contribute to this world while they were alive, to have a clear conscience, and to be fully deserving of their life. Now that they had a goal, a direction, their eyes filled with tears and they looked up at the sky. The Ninedragon Imperial Tomb flew above their heads, turned around, and soared into the sky.

"Leave the sun emperor to me!" Those were his last words for them.

As soon as the tomb made for the Flameyellow Guard Formation, the sun emperor went after it without even glancing at the people below. Tianming had lured him away so that they would have the

opportunity to leave the broken Sky Palace Formation and save the others. The Flameyellow Coffin sank into the fiery clouds and disappeared with a loud boom and light glimmered in the eyes of the twenty billion cultivators. Their belief had been reignited. At that moment, the Omnisentient Threads between Tianming and them resonated even stronger than before and their hearts beat as one.

"Let's go!"

"Hurry up! Let's save them!"

"Let's go!"

They knew that even if they killed the specters and saved everyone, the Myriad Solar Sects would still be destroyed if Tianming was defeated. But at least they would have tried. That was the only thing they could do now—try. Under the Flameyellow Guard Formation, there was nowhere to hide; no one could escape.

"Why not put whatever remains of this life to good use? Even if I die, I must die in my home."

There were people from all over—Azurecloud Continent, Land of Three Skies, Fushen Valley, etc....

"Let's go home!"

"Go back, back to our home...."

Fallen leaves returned to their roots. The three billion specters were like vermin of the new world. If they weren't wiped out as soon as possible, more people would die. Among the cultivators of the Myriad Solar Sects, many came from the mountains and fields and had eventually become gods. Their home was where their souls would return. No one would refuse Tianming's command to return and protect their homes regardless of life or death. In fact, he would gain more respect. As they left, the cultivators looked up at the sky and prayed for Tianming.

"You must live on. Only then will we have a future and a prosperous world that belongs to us."

"You must live!"

At that moment, an emperor and his countless believers flew in two different directions. They were risking their lives for a new world that truly belonged to them. The flames of the new sun burned brightly and, smoldering with the spirit of battle, they roared and rushed to the final battlefield. They were going home, a home that belonged to everyone. The new sun belonged to the people, not the sun emperor alone.

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The Ninedragon Imperial Tomb emerged from the thick fiery clouds and into the cosmos. Stars twinkled in front of the tomb. For the first time, Tianming looked down and saw the new sun which was five times its original size, overcome with shock. It was enormous and majestic. A new sun had been formed from the lives of Skywolf specters. Its expansion had taken too many lives, so it was impossible to conclude if it was right or wrong. Dazzling and vast, the sun was covered in a billowing sea of white and gold flames. It reminded Tianming of the Flameyellow Imperial Star in the painting.

"It's beautiful...." He couldn't hold back from speaking out his true thoughts.

It was the sun emperor who had forged the new world with the sun's spears. Tianming couldn't deny the beauty of this new sun. As for the deaths of the Skywolf specters, Tianming wasn't able to accuse the sun emperor of a crime either. He had also been a participant in the two destructions. If the sun emperor was guilty, then so was he. Therefore, the point of conflict between the two was never the destruction of Skywolf. It wasn't something he could prevent. There were countless unpredictable things under the heavens and he had yet to comprehend them. His believers were also limited to the Myriad Solar Sects; the specters weren't part of them. However, Tianming's thoughts were clearer than ever. At least he knew where the difference lay in his and the sun emperor's beliefs.

"Li Tianming!" As soon as he emerged from the fiery clouds, the sun emperor tried to subdue him with a loud roar. "If you dare to flee from the sun, I'll return at once and kill every last one of the beastmasters of the Myriad Solar Sects. None of the twenty billion you just left behind will survive." It seemed the sun emperor feared that he would leave like he had before.

Stopping above the sun, the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb turned around. Tianming appeared on the head of the dragon, face to face with the sun emperor. It never occurred to him to escape.

"Once you've fallen in love with this star, there's no escape." All he wanted was to change the battlefield to hurt as few innocent people as he possibly could. Although the universe was boundless, there was no way out. This time, Tianming chose to face him.

It was all fated. Above the scorching, white and gold sun, alone in the universe, a coffin and tomb stood on opposite sides.

Chapter 2002

The perfect star that was love at first sight for the mysterians was just beneath them, yet an invincible nemesis stood in their way! The Flameyellow Coffin, boosted by the Flameyellow Guard Formation, burned a golden red like a gigantic flaming pillar. The two pall bearers' hair magnificently burned, their visages radiating the divine. They seemed like stout devotees of the sacred flame.

The sun emperor in front, especially, looked like an incarnation of the sun itself. He was its representative and ruler! His laughter echoed through the astralscape, mocking Tianming for being tied down by the 'lower lifeforms' of the Myriad Solar Sects despite having such a bright future. He was doomed to die because of them. "You can't even tell the difference between which lives are worth more.... You make a mockery of the concept of hierarchy! Such sentimentality has no value to anyone but yourself! Someone like you can't possibly be a ruler. You're too kind, too naive. You don't have the ruling instinct."

The way the sun emperor saw it, people were ranked and valued differently. His own life was far more valuable than the lives of the twenty billion people of the Myriad Solar Sects. If it were him, he would immediately choose to abandon them and return a millennium later to avenge them. Tianming's decision to stay, however, couldn't make him more elated. He found it fortunate that the brat didn't think like him. If he did leave with the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, I wouldn't be able to have any peace.

That provided a chance for the sun emperor. All of his efforts had been building up toward this moment. He stopped laughing, but continued breathing heavily. The coffin flared with angry flames containing his murderous intent. "Tianming, my son, I'm a man of principle, you see. While you're indeed insolent, I

respect your bravery. As long as you're willing to give your life today for the rebirth of the Flameyellow Imperial Star, I hereby swear that the beastmasters of your sects will have equal standing with my celestial orderians in the new world I create. Everyone will have the right to cultivate and proliferate and totems and lifebound beasts shall coexist. The two sides may even intermarry so that we may find our way back to becoming flameyellow divinities!"

He wasn't just telling Tianming that, but had also broadcasted his words using the Flameyellow Guard Formation for all to witness. It was plain moral kidnapping that would serve to tie Tianming down for good.

"If you still insist on escaping, you'll be going against the core principle of your cultivation path. So even if you do manage to elude me, you may never reach the heights you need to be a threat to me. In fact, you'll have to pick a new cultivation path and start over. Perhaps your new path won't involve the compassion you have so that you won't be threatened like this ever again... hahaha...." There was a beaming smile on his bronze face. As far as he was concerned, Tianming was still a huge problem, so he had to crush his morale first before actually starting the fight in order to considerably soften him up.

Slowly, the sun emperor approached. The countless denizens of the sun looked up, having heard the announcement about the rebirth of their world. They were unable to see the two prospective rulers above, but they could definitely feel their stifling presence.

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"We aren't able to escape, but fighting also seems like a dead end. Xian Xian and Yin Chen haven't finished evolving. Should we buy time for them? We may not have totems right now, but we can still hold him back with all of us! Buying time isn't a humiliating thing, right?" Ying Huo said, wings on its hips.

"It's not, not that we should care." Tianming wasn't an inflexible person. Faced with the sun emperor who bore the impetus of the sun, it was more than likely that Tianming and only three lifebound beasts would be giving their lives away. But there was no way he would allow Ying Huo and the rest to die before he did. He was their beastmaster, and they were his responsibility.

"That's right. Just buy some time and let me sleep a little more to recharge. I'm the strongest when it comes to run—I mean fighting," Meow Meow said, then rolled over on its back and splayed its four legs in the air. It really did fall asleep!

Tianming checked on Xian Xian and Yin Chen. They were giving it their all, but the process of evolution required time. Once more, the Flameyellow Coffin and its carriers came charging. It was time to decide whether to run or to fight.

With a loud boom, the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb suddenly surged with power, avoiding a collision with the coffin.

"Are you really going to run?!" the sun emperor roared, stirring the flames of the Flameyellow Guard Formation. They shot toward the ship like a storm right away.

Tianming ignored the sun emperor and focused on piloting the ship, accelerating as much as he could. However, he wasn't trying to escape! The coffin could only travel fast near the Flameyellow Guard

Formation. Once Tianming entered the astralscape above, neither the coffin nor the Divine Sun Palace would be able to keep up.

To the sun emperor's relief, Tianming didn't leave the sun. Instead, he was flying loops around the star, a clear signal that he was going to stay. However, that didn't mean that he would be fighting the sun emperor head-on, either.

"Vying for time, is it? You may buy a few days, but you won't be able to run for your whole life." The sun emperor turned into a tornado and charged toward Tianming.

Given the astralship's mass, it wasn't able to engage its full speed while under the flaming cloud layer to prevent collisions, but right above the Flameyellow Guard Formation was the wide expanse of space. The coffin wouldn't be able to keep up there, much to Tianming's benefit. There was still a way to buy time.

The gigantic astralship rapidly orbited the sun, with the sun emperor and his coffin awkwardly giving chase. It was almost a joke to witness.

"Li Tianming, I'm not in the mood for your wasteful antics. Should you not wish to fight, keep wasting your time up here while the nightmare unfolds down there!" He was losing his wits, but Tianming merely ignored him; speed was the only advantage he had. At the same time, he took out the Grand-Orient Sword. Looking at the boundless stars outside, he started practicing his swordsmanship.

The universe was vast and majestic, yet, all the deadly threats he had faced in recent times, all of his pent-up feelings and struggles, and his will to resist... he channeled all of it into his sword.

"What do you think you can achieve at this point in time? Once that crazy fellow behind you can't catch up, he'll go around and abduct people to blackmail you. Perhaps he might even destroy the Flameyellow Continent if he's desperate. What is the point in practicing right now?" Ying Huo said, not being able to hold back. It thought that Tianming would lose his temper at its words, yet he simply feigned ignorance. His gaze was intensely focused on the sea of flames and the stars outside, as well as his sword.

The Flameyellow Continent... Countless stray thoughts floated about in Tianming's mind, blending in with the feelings of his fifty billion believers. Nothing but the universe, the sun, and the Grand-Orient Sword existed in his world. The sun emperor's threats, the destruction of the two Skywolf worlds, and the disaster faced by the innocents were all dead ends. When Ying Huo brought up the Flameyellow Continent, a human-shaped landmass surfaced in his mind's eye. That was the home he had grown up in. Like the imperial star, it was also called Flameyellow.

The sun emperor knows that I'm from the continent, so he definitely knows the people there are just as important to me as the Myriad Solar Sects. However, he's only ever threatened me using those on the sun, never those on the continent down below! I used to think that he would never threaten me with the people in the mortal world, but time has shown that he's someone who would stoop to any low to achieve his goals. So why isn't he attacking the Flameyellow Continent like Ying Huo said?

Chaos and confusion would only lead to death in a situation like theirs, so he did his best to keep his calm and tried to figure a way out of these dire straits. If he died, those that he cherished would perish as well. He would never be able to see Feiling again, not to mention his parents.

Chapter 2003

There were far too many tethers in Tianming's life. The more people he loved, the more people tied him down. The sun emperor probably chose to only love himself so as to be completely untethered. Someone like him was almost untouchable, while everyone else had countless weaknesses to be exploited.

Even with all that, Tianming still wouldn't choose to become someone like the sun emperor. "A life of solitude, filled with only the awe and respect of others, is utterly pointless." His tethers were the things that grounded him in these dark times, prompting him to use all three of his eyes to search for a path to survival.

As the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb orbited the sun, it eventually reached the bottom part. Tianming saw the mortal continent far down below. Why did the sun emperor not threaten the safety of the Flameyellow Continent? Tianming had already found out about the secrets of the experiments being carried out there, yet there were still doubts that had to be cleared. For instance, who was responsible for taking Qingyu to the Divine Moon Realm?

Flamehaven, Ignispolis, the Grand-Orient Sect, the Divine Capital, and Taiji Peak Lake were all locations Tianming had deep ties with, hallmarks of his growth. They were filled with countless aspects of nature, like the heavy rain of the Divine Capital and the snow at Taiji Peak Lake, which had all played roles in Tianming's cultivational development. Those sights didn't pale at all in comparison to those of nova source worlds.

Currently, he had no other way to delay but to continue orbiting the sun. Then, the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb took a dive. "If I'm fated to die today, let's take a look at it one last time! That's the place where I met all of you, and Feiling as well."

"Are you so desperate that you're losing your mind? What can that old place do at this point? Even passing birds don't want to shit there!" Ying Huo said, rolling its eyes.

"Chicken Bro, didn't you shit there countless times too? You loved to eat ores back then, and your droppings were all stiff and hard!" Lan Huang said.

Tianming turned and looked at the two-headed dragon; it didn't seem to be joking around, but he couldn't help but laugh. That lighthearted mood was nothing short of a luxury in straits as dire as theirs. He had the best lifebound beasts a beastmaster could ask for, not just because they were strong, but also because they were willing to stick with him no matter how bad things were. They were always jokesters, whether intentionally or not, such as the time when Ying Huo had become a tattoo near his crotch region in the wondersky realm.

"Wait!" Tianming had only wanted to hover around the Flameyellow Continent for one last look at his home, but the wondersky realm reminded him of something. "Comma girl said she'd be sending the grade-nine Grand-Orient Sword to the continent. Shouldn't it be arriving soon? Or is it there already?"

No doubt, that grade-nine artifact was an important component for his Grand-Orient Sword, which was a weapon that had once been wielded by the Primordial God-Emperor! Tianming was certain that the Primordial God-Emperor was an existence far above the Flameyellow Imperial Star. The sword he had

wielded was no doubt more powerful than the Flameyellow Coffin, and the sun emperor was only as powerful as he was because of that coffin and the Flameyellow Guard Formation!

"Let's take a gamble. I hope the Grand-Orient Sword won't be too hard to find." Had his thoughts not wandered around, he wouldn't have thought about locating the sword. The ship changed course and immediately shot down toward the Welkin plane.

"Li Tianming, this is your final chance!" The sun emperor was obviously enraged. He didn't think Tianming would be that shameless, choosing neither escape nor confrontation, merely avoidance. By now, those within the destroyed Sky Palace Formation had no doubt scattered. It would take at least a few years to wipe all of them out!

"What's this? Are you trying to go to the realm of chaos?" By then, the ship was already really far from him. "Very well. I'll play along with your game and go back to kill the Saintdragon Emperor, Northdipper Swordsage, and Long Wanying. Let's see which of us is more desperate."

All the fruits of the sun emperor's efforts were right before his eyes. His gaze showed that he couldn't be more desperate. He was so anxious about it that it felt like ants were crawling all over his body. While threatening Tianming had worked before, he was being plainly ignored this time around. Yin Chen had already informed Tianming that the key figures like the Saintdragon Emperor had already hidden themselves. With as large as the sun was after the expansion, finding them would be like trying to pinpoint a needle in a haystack. There was no way the sun emperor would be able to find them in the short term. The only way to deal with him was to not let him set the pace.

The Ninedragon Imperial Tomb soon reached a low enough altitude to see the Divine Moon Realm. Given how powerful Tianming's Imperial Will was, he was able to connect with the Omniscient Threads on the Flameyellow Continent from that height. From there, he was almost certain that the sun emperor seemed to have completely forgotten about the Flameyellow Continent, let alone threaten him with it.

Li Caiwei had sent him word through an Omniscient Thread. "What... what's going on with the sun?" She was so shocked she couldn't even speak properly.

"Ignore that for now. Has a sword shown up somewhere on the continent recently?" Tianming asked. He had informed her to pay attention to it the last time he was there. It was no different from the search for the chaos worldbangle.

"There is! It appeared near Tianming City! It looks incredibly similar to your Grand-Orient Sword. We weren't able to approach it at all," she said.

"That's it!" The words were like a shining ray of hope. While he didn't dare to be certain that the sword would be his salvation, it was still something to cling to, especially now that he had lost his totems. His grade-nine Godsins alone wouldn't be able to change much, but the grade-nine Grand-Orient Sword was a part of his own Grand-Orient Sword!

He no longer wasted words and directed the ship to charge toward the continent, blocking out the sun as it descended. Like the Divine Sun Palace, it was a shocking sight to witness. The sun emperor had returned to the sun to slaughter people, able to do nothing but vent. Yin Chen was monitoring him the entire time, and Tianming still had some time to work with.

"Over there!" Tianming came crashing down to the land. Marks had been left on the continent from the astral war, but even so, the sword pierced into the mountain was all too eye-catching. It was a gigantic black and gold sword of similar design to the one he already had, but there were nine black and gold stars on its blade that shone eye-piercingly bright. When Tianming arrived with his own sword, the grade-nine blade from the Astralium Seeking shuddered.

"Come!" he yelled, and the gigantic blade rumbled and pulled itself out. As it flew toward him, it shrank until it fit into his hand. Now that he had what he came for, he couldn't afford to stay on the continent any longer. He quickly returned to the ship and departed so rapidly that it caused storms to manifest across the land.

Tianming hurriedly flew back toward the sun. The sun emperor had thought that he'd escaped to the realm of chaos and was preparing to slaughter the Myriad Solar Sects. After all, Tianming hadn't gone far, so the sun emperor was certain that he would be able to enjoy the show! Him getting his hands on the core members of Tianming's faction was the outcome Tianming didn't want to see the most.

The sun emperor was the first to notice the return of the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, given that he was the controller of the Flameyellow Guard Formation. He wasn't surprised, since he had expected Tianming would be back soon. Having been messed around with, he felt his rage boil. The ship was simply too fast for his Divine Sun Palace to match.

Tianming had to deal with the new sword before the sun emperor showed himself. Invigorated with hope, he seemed more excited than ever before. "The Prime Tower fused with its shard inside the Kunlun Realm, and this shouldn't be too different either!"

Time was of the essence. As he watched, the main Grand-Orient Sword left his palm and hovered before him, slightly spinning. The other blade with nine black and gold stars also hovered away, rapidly flying within the ship before descending toward the first sword and circling around it. It moved faster and faster, leaving a trail of afterimages. Grand power radiated out of the sword, causing the ship to rumble and forcing Qingyu, Ying Huo, and the rest to distance themselves.

Then the afterimages of the sword turned into nine black and gold imperial stars. While they were small, they looked just like Tianming's pandemonium sacrosun, which had come from the primordial star within the five heavy doors inside the Grand-Orient Sword. The nine imperial stars spun faster and faster. When the black and gold light blended with Tianming's eyes, the entire ship was illuminated.

Right after that, the nine imperial stars slammed into the original Grand-Orient Sword, seemingly embedding themselves within it like jewels. The sword had completely transformed, having perfectly fused with its counterpart. The stars and the swords were one and unified. Tianming felt a terrifying power gathering within the sword. The nine imperial stars seemed like powerful energy sources for the blade, making it even more domineering, luminous, and threatening—he couldn't wait to wield the blade!

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Right then, the sea of flames beneath him shuddered and the sun emperor once more emerged from the Flameyellow Guard Formation, on the brink of losing it. "Tianming, my son, stop messing around. Either you die, or the Myriad Solar Sects die. Make a choice."

Tianming gripped his brand-new sword and felt his head ring!

Chapter 2004

The brand new Grand-Orient Sword had a black core surrounded by gold on the edges of its blade. One side was inscribed with the sun, moon, and stars that represented the sky, and the other side had mountains, rivers, and lakes, which represented the earth. Unlike before, the imperial stars that were embedded inside the blade made it brilliantly shine like the true sword of a ruler. The stars were black and gold, matching the color of the sword itself.

Holding the familiar hilt, Tianming felt a rush of new power surge into his body! His caelum had been sucked into the world inside the sword; he was quite familiar with the surroundings. The five great gates within looked as mysterious as ever, and they were the ones that started him on his path to rulership.

However, the internal space had considerably changed. Four of the great gates that were colored light gold, dark gold, light black, and dark black had all vanished. Each one had corresponded to one ability of the Grand-Orient Sword, namely the Grand-Orient Vortex, twin-sword configuration, Imperealm Sword Formation, and the Imperial Sword Prison. The gates had contained the power source for those abilities, so if they were now gone, did that mean that the abilities were gone as well?

That didn't seem to be the case, however, as Tianming could still feel the Grand-Orient Vortex's presence within his body. In fact, it was even stronger than before. More importantly, the gate at the center was still there. However, it was no longer colorless like before. It was a double-door configuration, and one of them was black while the other was gold. Divine celestial patterns swam all throughout its surface. It was as if the other four gates had fused together with this one.

The gate was completely shut and there was but a slim gap in it. Peeking inside still revealed the primordial star within. Naturally, it wasn't the Flameyellow Imperial Star, but they did share some similarities.

Apart from those changes, Tianming noticed that he had been illuminated by a thick, brilliant light the moment he entered. It kind of felt like a force that was bearing down on him like a waterfall. Looking up, he saw nine black and gold stars forming a ring and pouring light down like nine suns in the sky.

"What's that?" He widened his eyes as he flew closer. He had a feeling that it was something akin to a pagoda, like the Prime Tower. So far, Tianming had unlocked one layer of the tower and gained the Prime Mountain and Prime Tower Shield abilities in the form of his divine wonder. The Purple Tower, Soul Tower, and the Greenspark Tower were still present as well. No doubt, these nine stars were more than meets the eye.

He then noticed that one of the stars looked like it had been pierced through. Out of the hole poured a dark red strand of energy that coursed into his body through the sword. "What's this? Is it a divine hazard like the Galactic Godsins?"

He noticed that the energy was quite different from most divine hazards, which were normally twisted forms of nova source carrying divine ordered patterns. This energy also had divine ordered patterns, but it felt much heavier and more terrifying! He was almost certain that this new power had only manifested after he'd fused the sword with the grade-nine shard.

Soon, he arrived in front of the peculiar star. "Wait, that's...." The energy almost looked like magma. Through the hole, he could even see the core of the star. There was a black and gold figure within with its back facing Tianming, much like the shade he had seen within the Prime Tower long ago! Tianming tried to reach the other side of the star to no avail. The figure still had his back facing him.

"Is this some kind of trick? What could it be?" The other eight stars were completely sealed off; only the one before him now radiated that terrifying power. He backed off and closely looked at the dense patterns on the surface of the star. They didn't look like transformed and synthetic divine celestial patterns, but rather naturally occurring, more complex divine ordered patterns!

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"How could this be?!" It really came as a shock. Even though each of those nine stars was a powerful body of energy, like a miniaturized nova source, each of them were much larger in scale than in the Galactic Godsins. Only formations could possibly contain so much energy, and those were made using patterns that had been decoded and transformed—that is, divine celestial patterns. Yet this star before him was covered in divine ordered patterns, and more than one at that.

While he couldn't be certain, the patterns were at least grade seven and above, and there were more than ten thousand of them. While the Galactic Godsins was also a grade-nine divine hazard, it only had a single divine ordered pattern. Natural hazards and patterns formed a singular structure, and that should also mean that these nine stars were also naturally occurring.

"Over there!" He circled the surface of the star and saw another shocking thing. The natural, complex divine ordered patterns intersected with each other to form characters that read: "Flint Infernal". The other eight stars also had patterns that formed different words.

"What does 'Flint Infernal' mean?" He stretched his caelum hand out to touch the newfound power. While it looked like magma, his caelum couldn't actually feel its power. He stuck close to the surface of the star, trying to get a closer look.

All of a sudden, a voice rang out beside his ear. "Only deific-class worlds and above can produce a cosmic impulse within them. Cosmic impulses and divine hazards are both derived from nova sources, carrying divine ordered patterns. Yet cosmic impulses differ in that they're natural formations comprised of divine ordered patterns that contain the type of force that is known as a celestial impulse. The regulation of natural formations allows people to make use of the celestial impulse within. Cosmic impulses are therefore gifts from the universe to all sentient beings...."

"Who's that?" Tianming hurriedly turned around but saw nobody there. It could only be the person in that star. It seemed that the words had been left behind in the form of some kind of formation, much in the vein of the recordings of the Hexapath Sword God inside the Sword Insight Rock. It was a simple technique; even Tianming could leave a recording behind that lasted countless years. The fact that there was no reply from the voice proved as much.

Once more, he studied the nine stars before him. While they appeared like miniaturized nova sources, they were actually completely different. "So these star-like things are actually cosmic impulses! Basically, naturally occurring formations carrying divine ordered patterns, so stronger versions of divine hazards, right?"

A mere count of the number of divine patterns showed that it was stronger than Galactic Gods. While only 'Flint Infernal' was releasing energy, its power had completely changed the sword. The Grand-Orient Vortex, among the first of the sword abilities Tianming had gained, infused an additional layer of energy over his astral discs. The power he had gained was similar to one a lifebound beast gave him. When 'Flint Infernal' came surging out, the Grand-Orient Vortex itself changed. The natural energy flooded deep into his albi, gathering at the vortices within and transforming them into a blend of magma.

Normally, when he used divine hazard sword ki strands to forge his sword body, the strands only existed between his albi, not inside them. Yet the cosmic impulse seemed able to become one with his own energy through the Grand-Orient Sword. It also had an omnipresent quality; not only was it flowing on the sword itself, it also infused into its other two abilities, the Impereal Sword Formation and Imperial Sword Prison!

Those abilities had been great boons on the Flameyellow Continent, but they were far less instrumental now that he had left for the astralscape. Back then, the Grand-Orient Sword was basically an empty husk, having no powers except for the Grand-Orient Vortex. As such, the abilities of the sword had become far less effective on constelliers and above. But things had changed.

The sword-shaped symbol on the surface of the sword and the sword ki formation it carried were transformed by the infusion of the Flint Infernal Impulse. The former had been dyed a crimson red and the bloody symbol circled the Grand-Orient Sword nonstop. After the impulse had seeped into the sword formation, it'd split into small strands of sword ki and blended in with the rest. The black and gold sword ki strands were dyed red and seemed more powerful. They were now flint infernal sword ki. The only aspect of the sword that the cosmic impulse didn't change was the dual-sword aspect. All in all, the cosmic impulses that only deific-class worlds and above could produce had greatly boosted the powers of the Grand-Orient Sword.

"It looks like the Flint Infernal Impulse is only a small portion of the power of those nine stars. If I can use all of them, the Grand-Orient Sword would be even more mind-numbingly powerful." He believed that this powerup was similar to the prime wonder. It would take him time to properly explore the potential gains he could obtain from it.

"It'll take quite some time, but at least I'm still doing better than Lingfeng with his Evil Suppression Pillar. He still has no idea of what it can really do!" At least on that front, he was happy with his own progress.

Chapter 2005

"There's no artifact soul in here yet. Even the Flameyellow Coffin has one. That must mean that the Grand-Orient Sword still isn't in its complete form. There's still quite a bit to do before it gets restored to completion!"

While Tianming wasn't able to fully display the power of the sword, the manifestation of the Flint Infernal Impulse was satisfactory for him. He gave one last look at the figure within the cosmic impulse, who remained seated while giving off an impressive, invincible aura. He was none other than the Primordial God-Emperor!

"I wonder what other secrets the city of Perpetia holds? Who are the Primordial God-Emperor and Primordial Demonlord?" Those were questions to which he had no answers. He wasn't even sure who the white-robed person within the Prime Tower was, not that he was in the mood for solving mysteries while his life was still in danger.

The time his caelum spent inside the Grand-Orient Sword was only an instant in real life. When he opened his eyes, his consciousness was back in his body, which was greatly shaken by the power boost as the Flint Infernal Impulse surged into his Grand-Orient Vortices. Surprisingly, he noticed that the cosmic impulse detected the power coming from the Omniscient Threads!

The five-layered astral discs in his body now were all at the fourth solarian level. It was far from comparable to the sun emperor's. Tianming's true strength came from the fifty billion supporters he had. The power of their heavenly and divine wills were channeled to him through the Omniscient Threads in a stable fashion that didn't collapse his albi or body. Had the Flint Infernal Impulse only channeled enough energy for his fourth-level solarian albi to handle, it would be far from enough for him to take on the sun emperor. However, his boosted capacity for power was matched by the cosmic impulse. It was like being boosted by another fifth of the power he got from the Omniscient Threads. The unique aspect of that power made his body feel like it was burning hot. He was bursting with power.

The Grand-Orient Sword shone with the radiance of the cosmic impulse. The crimson patterns of the Imperial Sword Prison flowed nonstop and countless strands of flint infernal sword ki sparked explosions that greatly enhanced the Grand-Orient Sword's power! All of a sudden, Tianming had taken on the look of an enraged ruler. Before this, the Grand-Orient Sword was mostly only good for its durability, but the cosmic impulse had enhanced it by leaps and bounds until it even exceeded the Gods!

"The reason the sun emperor is that powerful is because of a divine artifact like the Flameyellow Coffin. But now the Grand-Orient Sword's might has returned!" When he opened his eyes, a deep red glow from the cosmic impulse could be seen within. The weapon had belonged to the Primordial God-Emperor and was the cornerstone of his path to rulership. Tianming, who already had the legitimacy of fifty billion supporters, was perfectly suited for it!

"Back then, all I could do was hide. But now I'm able to struggle and fight for a path to survival." The sun emperor would soon arrive at the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, not in the least expecting Tianming to have gained a precious treasure at the final moment. The Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower had returned to him, each of them more complete than before. Even though he was without his totems, if his lifebound beasts could get themselves together, there might yet be a chance.

Right after that, Xian Xian and Yin Chen both sent good news. They had finished evolving just as Tianming had obtained his enhanced sword. Xian Xian's tree had five flowers and a few flower buds. Throughout its past evolutions, its unlocked bloodline abilities would result in new flower buds showing up. After absorbing the Dew Clematis, the branches, leaves, and flowers of the Radix World Tree were covered in a snow-white radiance. The mana imperius contained a power similar to the Radiant Daffodil, like a pure and sacred spring. The aura of purity spread from its roots throughout its body. Its spiritform had returned into its flower and appeared to be sleeping as the new power seeped through the tree. Tianming had expected a new flower to bloom, but that wasn't the case. Even so, that didn't mean that Xian Xian hadn't changed at all.

"Looks like Xian Xian is shifting a lot," Tianming said.

"It eats so much all the time, so of course it's shitting a lot! It's a shit princess!" Ying Huo said, adding helpful commentary.

Tianming completely shrugged it off. He watched as the cute little spiritform entered the tree itself, completely fusing with it. The entire thing looked like a sacred tree. Then its leaves, branches, and roots began to shrink and change. The tree that was thousands of meters in height shrank to around a hundred meters thanks to the sacred light, taking the form of a white cocoon. While most evolutions came with size increases, Xian Xian had actually turned smaller as it filled the whole ship with a white radiance.

The sun emperor and his coffin came flying toward the ship! He had taken the initiative to attack in order to force Tianming out. Tianming quickly avoided the attack to give his lifebound beasts a little more time, but the sheer force of the near miss still shattered a number of dragon scales that were protecting the ship!

"Xian Xian!" Tianming turned and saw the cocoon turn incredibly colorful. Flowers bloomed all over its surface, spreading floral fragrance all over the ship. Then the cocoon burst open, out of which a colorful figure flew. Tianming had never seen Xian Xian so agile before. Back then, it was a defensive base with an incredible weakness. While it could greatly aid in battlefield control, its core body constantly needed to be protected. But now Xian Xian looked like a dryad, basically an enlarged version of its spiritform.

Unlike Xian Xian's former spiritform, it was covered in even more leaves, branches, and roots. Its five flowers, namely the Radiant Daffodil, Evernight rose, Fiendsong Mares, Scarlet Lily, and the Demise Greenlotus sprouted from its head and back. Colorful wings that resembled Feiling's Celestial Wings also hung from its back. The grand old tree had adopted a cute, alluring form. However, it felt much more powerful than Tianming, having become a sovereign beast.

Its newfound agility was but a part of the transformation. It had probably also inherited a bunch of other bloodline traits. The might radiating from the five types of flowers was utterly breathtaking.

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"Xian Xian, are you able to turn back to your former form?" Tianming asked.

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"I can turn back, of course. I'm in my dryad form right now. My usual tree form also has its advantages, but my dryad form has more agility and better abilities. I'll be stronger against individual foes in this form." Xian Xian's tree form was better suited for large battles. With two flexible forms, its former great weaknesses were gone. Xian Xian no longer needed to be protected and would be able to play pivotal roles at the front lines of battle. Having unlocked more of its bloodline chains after becoming a sovereign beast, it had become even more perfect.

"Very good!" Tianming gave an approving nod.

"Don't worry, Little Li, I'll give it my all and beat up that sun emperor with all of you." Xian Xian was quite confident. Her dryad form appeared as cute as ever.

Then it was Yin Chen's turn. Most of its bodies were still inside the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, devouring the Eight-starred Pearls. Not far from where Xian Xian was, a silvery light shone. One after another, the silver locusts suddenly turned into a new kind of insect that was much larger and more majestic than before. Still covered in a metallic sheen, the most eye-catching part was the eight distinct silver stars on each of its backs. Every single bug had eight stars that profusely shone. When tens of millions of them were together, they became a mass of boundless silver light. The strength of the glow looked like the light from a nova source world!

"Ladybugs?" Tianming recognized the insect type.

"Eight-starred Ladybug!" Yin Chen gleefully responded.

"What can this form do?" Tianming asked, always looking forward to Yin Chen's new forms.

"Watch and... learn well...." Even at this point, it still didn't miss the chance to feign an air of mystery.

"You're too bright! My and Chicken Bro's eyes are going blind!" Xian Xian said.

"Xian Xian... put on... low class... make up!" came the voice from the tens of millions of bugs at the same time as they rolled their eyes in unison.

"Stupid Yin Chen! You're a meanie! Wait until little sixth hatches! It'll deal with you!" Xian Xian had thought its glamorous makeover was something to be proud of, yet Yin Chen's comment had cut deep.

Finally, after circling around nonstop in the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb, the five sovereign beasts were finished assembling. Even on the brink of death, they didn't seem to flinch in the slightest, almost seeming childishly ignorant of that prospect. It was that precise quality that had brought much stability to Tianming's psyche. However, even he knew that there was no delaying the crucial moment for too long.

"I won't stay as the prey forever." He exchanged glances with the five of them. As long as they stayed within the ship, there was a chance that the coffin would damage it. The endless wild chase had no doubt made the sun emperor even more irritable.

"I wasn't able to finish practicing the ninth strike, so I hope this fight gives me some answers and insights!" Some sword techniques couldn't simply be mastered in the practice room alone. "Qingyu, take care of Feng. If I fall, I'll order the ship to leave right before I die."

He then left the ship with his brand-new sword and evolved lifebound beasts. A crimson and gold meteor came flying from the chaotic sun ahead, its course set to punch through the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb. But when the white-haired youth appeared and the ship flew away, the meteor suddenly stopped.

The sun emperor was burning all over his body. The flames of the coffin covered both him and his clone, forming a combat-ready whole. The beasts of the Flameyellow Guard Formation gathered around him like he was the true ruler of the sun. "You're finally willing to make the right choice."

Tianming's appearance had caused the sun emperor to stop, but that only served to further raise his killing intent. "I've never feared you. I was just waiting for a trump card that'll let me kill you."

"Oh, that's good! Ending it like this is much more meaningful, after all," the sun emperor chuckled.

"Enough nonsense. Let's not disappoint our audience on the sun. They've been waiting far too long! Come!" Tianming flew across the starry sky. He wasn't like the sun emperor, who had the impetus of the sun backing him, seemingly fused together with the world itself. Tianming, however, had the Omniscient Threads of fifty billion denizens of the sun. Everyone's hearts were thumping hard. Tianming's will guided their own, leading them to stand firm together with him. One side was supported by the world, while the other had the support of its people!

"You're an outright miracle. You deserve the right to at least die struggling." The coffin behind the sun emperor flared and his eyes mirrored the flames. The carvings that represented his totems manifested themselves before turning into nine three-legged golden crows that furiously glared at Tianming. "You don't even have totems. You've just lost your greatest asset, yet you came out of your ship to fight me? You and what army?!"

The sun emperor laughed heartily, his crows cawing in unison. They flew around the sky near the sun, almost seeming like the world's protectors. Li Wudi's nine blood-colored bestial totems also surfaced from the Flameyellow Coffin. In total, there were eighteen peak totems, all of them grand beasts covered in majestic flames as they roared at Tianming. He had never felt so insignificant before now. The starry sky just highlighted how terrifying the eighteen totems were.

"Did you always ramble this much?" As he spoke, Tianming's five lifebound beasts emerged by his side. Above him was the Aeternal Infernal Phoenix. To his left and right were the Primordial Terraqua Dragon and Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend. Xian Xian hovered behind him in its dryad form, and all of them were surrounded by masses of eight-starred ladybugs. Yin Chen shone so bright that it made the surroundings look like a dreamscape. It was a single lifebound beast, yet it looked like an entire galaxy.

Tianming's totems were usually so attention-grabbing that few noticed his lifebound beasts, who were the actual core of his combat capabilities. The totems couldn't compare to his five lifebound beasts in terms of might. When the pandemonium sacrosun appeared above them, the beasts' powers rose thanks to the Omniscient Will of fifty billion people.

"I'm a beastmaster, while you're a totemancer!" No matter what others said, Tianming would always identify as a beastmaster first, perhaps only as a beastmaster and nothing else!

The sun emperor nonchalantly chuckled, but when he saw Tianming draw his sword, his brows furrowed. He could clearly feel the power that came from it. "So that's your new trump card, eh?"

The only answer he got was Tianming's attack. "The Grand Dao, good and evil, good and bad karma, none of that has anything to do with our fight today! Sun emperor, the reason I'll be killing you is personal! One shall triumph, one shall fail, and let the whole sun bear witness!"

Though he said that, when both of Tianming's hands held the Grand-Orient Sword, he felt the struggle of two different paths of rulership from the power of faith he received. It was him, his sword, and five lifebound beasts against a coffin, two people, and eighteen totems! The numbers definitely weren't on his side. However, the sun emperor only had a singular will, while Tianming and his lifebound beasts had distinct, complete souls. They were fighting together, through life and death!

"Go!" The flames of the Flameyellow Guard Formation came flying toward them. Tianming and the five charged straight through! Wielding his sword in both hands, he allowed the full power of the Flint Infernal Impulse to surge. The two sides were like meteors crashing into each other.

Before they were even remotely close to each other, beast abilities and totemic calamities clashed! Purgatorial flames, chaotic lightning, and Xian Xian's agile blasts of abilities swarmed toward the calamities of the eighteen totems and seemingly had the edge! Tianming could see Bloodrain Swords and Demise Greenloti that were completely elevated to another level, capable of dealing substantial damage to the totems. The explosive reaction between the fire and lightning caused huge explosions. The three-legged crows weren't nearly as durable as the Flameyellow Coffin and lost their wings from the blast.

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Ying Huo and the others' abilities had greatly benefited from Tianming's fifty billion Omnisentient Threads, but even that wasn't enough. The strongest weapon in the sun emperor's arsenal was still the Flameyellow Coffin, and as long as it persisted, he wouldn't be defeated.

"Grand-Orient Sword, come!" Tianming raised the sword high with both hands. The star closest to the hilt glowed brightly. "Die!"

Boundless flint infernal sword ki came bursting out like a torrent, forming gigantic dark red swords that almost seemed corporeal. A large domain of swords formed around Tianming and the sun emperor, keeping them locked in. The sword ki strands ran wild within the formation, attacking the sun emperor from all directions. From the ground below, it looked like a bloody red ball had sealed off all routes of escape.

The Grand-Orient Sword was the core of the formation. As long as Tianming wielded the sword, the Imperealm Sword Formation moved with his will, sending countless sword ki strands flying toward the sun emperor. He displayed far more power than he did in their previous fight, backed by an even more resilient force of will.

Facing all that, the sun emperor shrugged and laughed in a relaxed manner. "That's your trump card? Is this the extent of what you have? Then it's my turn now!"

Chapter 2007 - One Wielding a Sword, Two Carrying a Coffin (1)

Flint infernal sword ki strands swam inside the Sword Imperealm Formation. Countless dark red swords appeared within a hundred-thousand-meter radius of the battlefield. The sun emperor had never seen a deific-class world before and didn't even know about the wondersky realms, so he had no idea about cosmic impulses, either. As such, Tianming knew that the sun emperor's comment was just a bluff.

He felt as assured as ever and wouldn't let the sun emperor's words sway him. Ying Huo and the rest were sending suppressive fire using their abilities, while he had managed to successfully deploy the Imperealm Sword Formation. Then he manifested the Prime Mountain, bringing a second formation to the battlefield. One formation came from the Grand-Orient Sword, while the other came from the Prime Tower.

The two formations could move around Tianming or his lifebound beasts. One of them had absorbed some Flint Infernal Impulse, making the swords far sharper, while the other absorbed power from the Omniscient Threads and gained incredible mass.

Between the two great formations was Tianming with his sword, activating the flint infernal sword ki, causing it to surge into a red vortex beside him. All of the swords were pointed toward the sun emperor and his coffin.

"Oh, that looks sinister and ominous. It doesn't quite seem like your style." The sun emperor didn't seem to take much notice, and even mocked it for looking dark and sinister like Ying Huo's Infernal Blaze, while his own power of the sun was bright and righteous!

Just as Tianming attacked, he snickered and gave the coffin behind him a smack. It was the core of the Flameyellow Guard Formation where they were fighting. All of a sudden, countless waves of fire drowned Tianming and his sword formation in flaming clouds. From a distance, it looked like a platinum-colored bump had formed on the Flameyellow Guard Formation.

"Is that little formation of yours all you've got? Let's see if my Flameyellow Guard Formation or your little formation is better." The sun emperor's laughter echoed through the flamescape filled with rampaging beasts of fire. More and more of them gathered, further sealing Tianming off. The Impereal Sword Formation and prime wonder were like nested formations, shielding Tianming and his beasts from the flaming beasts that roared and gnawed at them. As expected, the beasts were coming for him now that the formation was controlled by the sun emperor and he wasn't inside the Ninedragon Imperial Tomb. Their savage roars competed with the loud crackling of the flames around them.

"Brat, let's see how you escape my grasp now!" The sun emperor let out a lion-like bellow as the Flameyellow Coffin once more turned into a flaming meteor to attack Tianming alongside the flaming beasts. The sun emperor seemed like an avatar of fire; however, Tianming had never feared fire since the very beginning. The baptismal flame only made him, his swords, and his lifebound beasts look even more sinister.

"Die!" With a great swing of the sword, the countless blades of the Impereal Sword Formation struck in unison with the power of fifty billion Omniscient Threads, further enhanced by the Flint Infernal Impulse. The dark red sword ki pierced through the sea of flames, causing countless explosions that scattered the myriad flaming beasts of the formation. More than a billion of them were reduced to ash in one sweep by the ubiquitous sword ki, which also formed a protective cage around Tianming and the rest. Any that dared approach it would be reduced to nothing.

A single explosive strike from Tianming had given him an unbelievable edge, immediately neutralizing the pressure from the Flameyellow Guard Formation and forcing the sun emperor and his coffin back. He had to rely on his crows' totemic calamity to defend against the flint infernal sword ki-charged Impereal Sword Formation!

I really can't imagine the kind of power the Grand-Orient Sword will have after the power of all nine cosmic impulses is released.... A single strike alone was enough to recharge Tianming's confidence. He had a completely new impression of the sword he held. It was time for him to press the advantage for more follow-up attacks.

Despite being wiped out in a single sweep, even more flaming beasts came swarming toward Tianming. It seemed that the Flameyellow Guard Formation was boundless in power, given that it was supported by a sun that was five times its former size. The longer the fight dragged on, the less chance he had to win.

"Go!" He didn't want to waste a single word on the sun emperor. All that mattered was settling their fight for good.

"Charge!" Ying Huo cried in a hot-blooded manner. While Tianming's lifebound beasts were usually carefree and optimistic, even they were annoyed at being forced into a corner by the sun emperor so many times.

Meow Meow, especially, knew that it would never get any peaceful sleep so long as the sun emperor lived. "I'll kill you for an eternal nap!" It turned into a bolt of lightning then mixed its Genesis Bolt and Chaos Fiendbolt together to form an electric net that layered over the Imperealm Sword Formation.

"Me first!" What they didn't expect was that Yin Chen would be the one to lead the charge at the very front. Tens of millions of silver stars came swarming out from behind Tianming. While each one was miniscule compared to the fire around them, all of the ladybugs gathered together let out a blinding flash that drowned out everything.

Then a gigantic silver ball that was larger than Lan Huang's body appeared before Tianming. It was glowing far too brightly, so it was impossible to tell that it was made entirely out of eight-starred ladybugs. Every single bug had eight points of light, and all of them together made a glow so intense that even Tianming and the sun emperor had to shut their eyes! The light seemed to carve a path through the flaming clouds like the Ninedragon Apotheosis had. It even seeped through the Flameyellow Guard Formation, allowing the denizens of the sun to see it.

In an instant, the silver ball flew straight toward the sun emperor with overbearing might. He furrowed his brows and gathered all nine of his totems before him before turning them into nine suns that exploded with power. The balls of flame clashed with the silver ball of light, which exploded to generate even more radiance as the individual metal shards from the explosion continued their charge, tearing into three three-legged golden crows and smashing them apart. Only when they bumped into the fourth did Yin Chen's bodies crumble and scatter. Many silver eggs were burnt to a crisp, with some even being vaporized, but it didn't matter to a being with countless replaceable bodies. It was Yin Chen's strongest strike, and the eight-starred ladybug was its most offensive insect form. Their coordinated assault was basically akin to a lifebound beast's ability.

"It wiped out three totems by itself!" The sun emperor only had six left, while Li Wudi had nine.

"You're a badass, Yin Chen!" Seeing their youngest sibling open the battle with such flair, the other four beasts didn't want to hold back. All of them used their strongest abilities and charged toward the sun emperor alongside Tianming.

Ying Huo had quite an easy time absorbing nova source amidst the flaming clouds and turned into a flaming sun that was even larger than the three-legged golden crows. Comparatively, it looked even more like the bird that represented the sun!

Chapter 2007 - One Wielding a Sword, Two Carrying a Coffin (2)

There was no pattern to Meow Meow's attacks. It merely aimed at its target and fired off its lightning abilities from behind Lan Huang while the dragon attacked the coffin with its Primordial Sword. After awakening Genesis Bolt, Meow Meow could comfortably lay claim to having the most powerful ability on the sun.

Countless lightning bolts shot toward the sun emperor in wave after wave, from balls of chaos lightning and the Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape, to Myriad Thundernet, Soulchasing Hellthunder and the more powerful Cosmic Lance and Triworld Afterlife Halls. The abilities were varied and had multiple different functions, from pure attack to control and binding. The bolts from the Triworld Afterlife Halls also targeted the soul, which made them very effective against totems! The faith of fifty billion people fueled the cat, boosting its lightning bolts so much that they easily overwhelmed the flames.

The three-legged golden crows seemed ready to fiercely retaliate, yet countless white vines wrapped around their bodies. When they looked up, they saw a dryad hiding amidst the flames with countless vines stretching out from its arms. Xian Xian's abilities had become much more powerful after its evolution. The totems that were bound by the vines felt their energy being drained away and found it hard to struggle. The white, glowing vines felt like an executioner's noose around their necks. They even wrapped themselves around the sun emperor and his coffin to limit their movement.

Xian Xian and Yin Chen had grown leaps and bounds after becoming sovereign beasts. Even though it was a plant and was supposed to be weak against fire, it was still able to hold its ground in this battle. No doubt, Xian Xian would fare even better against lifebound beasts with flesh and blood, for that was its favorite snack.

All of that happened within a few short instants. Right after Yin Chen paved the way, Xian Xian had used its vines and rained down bloody swords and Demise Greenloti to hold back the coffin and totems. Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Lan Huang swiftly charged in. Another wave of lightning and fire clashed, creating even more explosions. All the while, Ying Huo and Lan Huang engaged in close combat with the totems, which in turn completely collapsed from the confrontation, the crows perishing one after another!

Even though I'm borrowing the power of the people and relying on the Grand-Orient Sword, the sun emperor is also relying on the Flameyellow Coffin himself. While the power of faith could make Tianming's lifebound beasts stronger, the coffin couldn't enhance the power of the sun emperor's totems. That was why they collapsed under the assault. Tianming made more and more progress, which was marked by the pained cries of perishing golden crows. Before the sun emperor could ram into Tianming with his coffin, Ying Huo's Skyscroch Featherblast left many bloody holes in his body. Using the sheer might of the coffin, he burst through Meow Meow's lightning bolts and the prime wonder and made his way toward Tianming!

"Meow Meow, move aside!" Tianming said. The two of them were the targets of the coffin's attack.

Meow Meow was still unleashing large abilities from the back and wasn't expecting the sun emperor to show up before it so suddenly. It widened its eyes as it reverted from its Regal Chaosfiend form, turning into a small cat that blasted away like a swift lightning bolt to reach Tianming's back.

The sun emperor now directly faced Tianming, intent on ending the battle by killing the leader. His expression was completely contorted from experiencing Tianming's sudden boost in power. Endless rage

filled his visage, causing his brows to stand almost vertical. The Flameyellow Coffin sped up and scattered Ying Huo and the rest, shooting toward Tianming like a sword thrust. It was the very same move that had ended Grand Emperor Starvore! The coffin's charge seemed completely unstoppable.

"I didn't think your lifebound beasts would be so hard to deal with, but once you're dead, they'll be nothing but an annoying rabble to clean up!" Perhaps he thought that was the weakness of beastmasters.

The might of the coffin did indeed shake Tianming. This was the most terrifying thing about fighting the sun emperor head-on—while the form of the two people carrying a coffin to a fight seemed a little silly, its power was undisputed. But now that he had the Grand-Orient Sword in hand, however, as well as the powerful protection of his lifebound beasts, Tianming was able to achieve a state of calm like never before. The power from the Flint Infernal Impulse was the thing that reliably stabilized him, while the power from the fifty billion people fueled his courage to stand up against the sun emperor.

"Let's see which is stronger, the Grand-Orient Sword or the Flameyellow Coffin! Come!" Would the black and gold imperial stars be able to triumph over the Flameyellow Imperial Star? Tianming suddenly fell as he slashed down at the flaming meteor with both hands.

The power of the cosmic impulse was finally unleashed, coloring the Grand-Orient Sword a dark red and scattering the flames around it! A wide open area devoid of flames appeared around Tianming. He used the Eightdragon Tribulation, unleashing all of the moves in a single instant. While he didn't have his totems, the Grand-Orient Sword was able to bring out a devastating power from the move within a small area! Eight dragons came bursting out, a blend of a silver flash, flaming roar, bloody sacrifice, transcendence, annihilation, apotheosis, and many more, forming a complete whole.

The flaming beasts ceased their attack, possibly because the technique had originated from the Flameyellow Imperial Star, which freed up Tianming's Imperealm Sword Formation for use on the sun emperor! The two people carrying the coffin had turned into a ball of flame. It was hard to tell which was which between the sun emperor, Li Wudi, and the coffin.

Tianming couldn't care less at that point, though, for if he didn't strike, he would experience a swift death. He chose to trust the Grand-Orient Sword. The eight-move fusion strike had been unleashed within the Flameyellow Guard Formation. Tianming was quite bewildered by his surroundings and the trepidation felt by the denizens of the sun. It felt like the sun had infused itself into the blood within his veins. He suddenly felt a strong yearning for what the flameyellow divinities stood for. By now, there was another force infused into his strike apart from the cosmic impulse, a newfound impetus.

The sword collided with the coffin, sending an ear-piercing clang across the entire world. The Flameyellow Guard Formation itself heavily shuddered and continuously rumbled. All of the denizens of the sun were paying attention to this battle and almost forgot to breathe. The aftershock from the battle alone persisted without end.

The violent clash between the cosmic impulse and the might of the Flameyellow Coffin triggered countless explosions in all directions, sending Tianming flying. His left arm was fine, but he lost quite a lot of albi in his right one! However, it would quickly heal thanks to the Greenspark Tower. He took a deep breath and grit his teeth before wearing an expression of joy. "I... I'm alive!"

That was the crucial point. Grand Emperor Starvore had been killed by the coffin's attack, but Tianming hadn't suffered much at all. His strike had even sent the coffin spinning out of control. When it finally came to a stop, he could see that the sun emperor in front was covered in wounds left by the flint infernal sword ki. Li Wudi was no better off. Most shocking was that the coffin's lid now had a huge gash left by the Grand-Orient Sword!"

"My coffin!" A never-before-seen gaze of shock surfaced on the sun emperor's face when he turned back and looked at it. It was as if his faith had shattered. He wasn't able to laugh like he had before, nor was he able to muster a fearsome look. Instead, his expression was one of pure awkwardness, with him stretching the corner of his mouth in disbelief. It was hard to imagine how wildly his emotions were fluctuating. Not even being invaded by the Primordial Demon back then and almost losing his life had make him feel this distraught. A bad omen slowly seeped into his heart like a sharp needle. Looking up, he saw that Tianming had seemingly also fused with the sun.

"Don't tell me...." Tianming seemed to have gained the impetus of the sun as well, making him look even more like its ruler. The sun emperor's own impetus, which he had gained from exterminating Skywolf Blaze, had also begun receding. While the amount of impetus differed, it was still a nightmare that the sun emperor simply couldn't accept.

"Even though I exterminated both Skywolf stars and multiplied our nova source fivefold, you're starting to doubt me over a single scratch?" His low growl contained a hint of the eruption he felt within as he addressed the sun beneath him. He had always thought that he'd conquered the world itself, but now he smelled betrayal in the air.

Chapter 2007 - One Wielding a Sword, Two Carrying a Coffin (3)

"Just watch closely!" The sun emperor took a deep breath, telling himself that complaining was pointless. The only thing he could do now was turn this around and make the star fall under his control once more! "How could that sword of yours be so powerful?! It isn't a divine artifact of the Flameyellow Imperial Star! Where did it come from?!" He looked at the Grand-Orient Sword in a new light. The impetus of the sun started gathering around him again, fueling his divine will and giving him a stark rise in power. The impetus wasn't just pure power, but the aura of a true ruler. It was a push of fate granted by the star itself. As long as he fought there, the sun emperor's might would be greatly boosted to the point that most would retreat before even engaging.

His killing intent toward Tianming kept rising. I only have one more chance to kill him. If I fail, it'll all be over! That's why.... The sun emperor seemed driven to perform a desperate final attempt.

The moment the sword had managed to block the coffin was when Tianming's faith had peaked. "Let's settle this once and for all! Let the world say who shall become its next ruler!" He didn't stop for a single moment. His lifebound beasts all assembled, surrounding the sun emperor and the eleven remaining totems. Tianming had already managed to eradicate seven of the three-legged golden crows.

"Kill them!" His war cry shook the heavens as the Imperealm Sword Formation manifested once more. Tianming charged at the front, flanked by his lifebound beasts that launched all kinds of abilities, battle arts, and physical attacks at the two figures and the coffin. The strongest of all those attacks was Tianming's, naturally, which had allowed him to neutralize the sun emperor's own strongest strike. The

sun emperor was no longer capable of hunting down Tianming with abandon; it was time for the counterattack.

No matter how powerful the sun emperor was within the Flameyellow Guard Formation, he wasn't able to stop the impetus of the sun around Tianming from growing. It had all started the moment he felt fear after seeing the sword collide against the coffin.

"Sun Emperor, you're done. I will be the one to take over everything." Tianming had waited for this moment for far too long. Without his prompting, his lifebound beasts continued the assault. Ying Huo's feathers seemingly covered the entire coffin; before the mighty phoenix, the legendary golden crows looked like little black birds.

"Hahahaha..." Facing Tianming's onslaught, the bronze-faced sun emperor was still able to laugh. "My son, the death toll of the extermination of both Skywolf stars numbers up to four trillion lives. I've been the one to bear the burden of extinguishing those worlds, yet you would take the glory of the victory from me? How dare you even consider doing something so ludicrous? Do you think you can be the saint and the hero without doing any dirty work?"

His expression was even more contorted than before. This was something he would not stand at all, and he wouldn't let Tianming get away with something so hypocritical. Yet Tianming didn't seem affected at all. Even if Skywolf's invasion hadn't started, this confrontation was eventually bound to happen. Their final fight to the death had never had anything to do with Skywolf.

"Only in your dreams! Even if I die, I won't let you do as you please! I worked hard to achieve all I have. I bore the burden of all those baleful souls. Even if I'm going to hell, I'll drag you down with me!" His raging wail made him sound like a baleful soul himself. His golden eyes were so filled with rage that they were about to pop out, yet the only reply he got was a merciless attack by Tianming. The more the sun emperor raged, the more desperate his situation became.

What Tianming didn't expect, however, was that the sun emperor's expression would suddenly shift after all that venting. All of a sudden, he seemed relaxed and even laughed, though Tianming wasn't sure at what. He had ignored the sun emperor while he was losing it, so the sudden levity in the sun emperor's behavior sent chills down his spine.

Why's he so hard to kill? What else can he do? All kinds of doubts filled Tianming's mind, yet they weren't unjustified, for the sun emperor's threat and cunning knew no bounds.

"Careful!" The reminder seemed too little too late. The Flameyellow Coffin suddenly expanded to around twenty thousand meters long in an instant. It looked like a gigantic island of gold and crimson, and right after that its lid began sliding open, something completely unprecedented! That alone showed Tianming how well the sun emperor hid his tricks like an absolute expert.

He quickly reacted, but the coffin didn't seem to be targeting him or anyone else. Instead, the remaining totems of the sun emperor and Li Wudi were sucked into the coffin and seemingly melted down into molten metal. The insides of the coffin resembled a forge, and the totems had been sucked back in as material to be refined. Then the quiet furnace suddenly burst to life, sending waves of power shooting up into the clouds.

"Do you think the likes of you can possibly wrestle away the dream of the imperial star I had for thousands of years?!" The sun emperor's face was once more bathed in flames that came from the flaming torrent bursting out of the coffin. It looked like a small Flameyellow Divine Pillar had sprouted from it, shooting toward Tianming and his lifebound beasts. The sun emperor had sacrificed his totems for that strike, much like Tianming's second totemic calamity!

It was a ruinous attack that would no doubt be fatal. Even if Tianming had been prepared to receive it, he didn't have enough time. The blinding light instantly filled the skies, permeating the entire Impereal Sword Formation. It was the critical moment!

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