

The Ages 591

Chapter 591 - Strongest Faction

It would have been a massive event if this had happened at the Divine Capital, but it was just another day at the Archaion Sect.

“Fast, but you’re still not my opponent.” Tianming waited for the disturbance to come to an end before going over.

In the cultivation room next door, peace returned.

Originally, Tianming thought that she would come out by herself. However, after a long wait, nothing happened. He pushed the door open and entered to see a shivering figure sprawled on the floor.

“What’s the matter?” Tianming went forward to get a closer look. Lin Xiaoxiao’s face was pale, and there was a trace of black blood at the corner of her lips. By then, a puddle of blood had already formed.

Although her aura was faint and her consciousness blurring, Lin Xiaoxiao turned away when Tianming appeared. “Go away.”

“You sure you just became an empyrean saint? Looks more like you took some poison,” Tianming said calmly. Back when Li Wudi had become an empyrean saint, he’d evolved as a lifeform. His longevity had increased by five hundred years and his saint ki had flourished. It was a far cry from Lin Xiaoxiao.

Lin Xiaoxiao grit her teeth and tried to crawl away. “Go away.”

Then, she fainted away.

“Is she pretending to be dead?”

Tianming kicked her with his foot, but there was no response. “Is she really dead?”

Tianming checked and found that she was still breathing.

“What’s going on?”

Tianming stood at the side, feeling like there was nothing he could do. “Whatever. Lying on the floor isn’t good, so I’ll move you. Don’t blame me if you die.”

Tianming picked up Lin Xiaoxiao, commenting, “How light.”

Looking around, he couldn’t see any furnishings, not even a place to lie down. Hence, he carried her back to his place. There were many rooms there, and some even had beds.

“So cold.” Lin Xiaoxiao seemed to be sleep talking. She curled up into a ball, still shaking.

“And that’s my problem because?” Tianming tossed her onto the bed, then walked away.

However, two steps later, Tianming felt sorry for her when he saw her still curled up with purplish lips. Ending up here like this after losing her whole family was rather saddening.

In the end, Tianming threw a blanket over her. However, he felt like it wasn’t enough. Going outside, he picked up the sunbathing Meow Meow.

“Tianming, what are you doing! I’m getting my tan in!” Meow Meow said with annoyance.

Tianming glared at it before tossing it to Lin Xiaoxiao. “Careful I don’t burn up your balls! Warm her up.”

“Nooo! This cat never sells his body!”

“You can sleep until she wakes up.”

“Yessir!”

Tianming felt like he had somehow lost when it readily agreed.

“Whatever.”

“Tianming, aren’t you afraid I have something to hold over you after you’re so fickle in love?” Meow Meow sniggered.

“Why should I be afraid when my conscience is clear?”

“Naive. Chicken Bro already drew that scene of you princess carrying her.”

Tianming was speechless.

“Haha, you’re finished!”

“One more word out of you and I’ll pluck out all your hair.”

.....

Lin Xiaoxiao lay there for half a day before leaving. Tianming was busy cultivating, so he didn’t register her exit. His current progress was quite smooth.

Xuanyuan Xixi didn’t bother him during this period of time, either.

Most of the Human Branch disciples were currently doing some last minute effort for the faction battles and were in seclusion.

It was in this manner that winter came.

Snow was crashing down on the day Tianming reached eighth-level sky saint.

Everything was blanketed in white, making it all look pure. This was when the Archaion Sect was at its most beautiful.

The Divine Capital was a city with rivers within, while this sect was a country of snow.

Supposedly, when snow fell in the sect, it would only end the next year. Chills would seep deep into the bones, and the snowflakes that fell could painfully nick flesh. Such a winter was something even saints might struggle against.

Today, Tianming’s courtyard was covered in white and Lan Huang was happily frolicking.

“Two more levels until I’m an empyrean saint,” Tianming predicted that day wasn’t too far off. “My strength now should give me a stable footing in the Human Branch. It’s time to increase the amount of time I can spend at the Deepstar Path.”

Tianming had a simple goal: he would join a faction and get a leadership position. He remembered Lin Xiaoxiao had also mentioned her desire to join a faction and join the battles. So he went to find her.

After knocking for a while, there was still no response, so Tianming invited himself in.

A girl was collapsed on the floor again.

“Pretending to be dead again?” Tianming was speechless.

Tianming checked her condition. She was even worse this time, and looked like she was on her deathbed. Fortunately, despite her suffering, her constitution gained from symbiotic cultivation with her lifebound beast would allow her to recover within two days.

Tianming could only summon Meow Meow out again to warm her up.

Two days later, she was mostly recovered.

“Are you at the second level now?” Tianming asked

“Yes.” Lin Xiaoxiao nodded. She finally had the powerful aura of an empyrean saint expert.

“You half dying each time is to break through?”

“Yes.”

“Cultivation rising should be a wonderful thing. This situation should only happen if you’re using an improper method. Risking it once or twice is fine, but it’s not practical in the long term.”

“I know.”

“Don’t be naive. You can’t catch up to me.” Tianming smiled.

Lin Xiaoxiao froze, biting her lips.

“Let’s go. Do you want to join the faction battles with me? There are seven or eight days left, right?”

“Yes. We won’t be able to participate if we don’t join soon.”

“Let’s go, boys,” Tianming hollered to his lifebound beasts.

“Why aren’t you bringing yours?” Tianming grinned.

“It’s cowardly.”

“That’s what happens when you play too much.”

They walked out into the snow, leaving a trail of footprints in their wake. The snowstorm was still raging, and every word they spoke was accompanied by misty breath.

“There’s over thirty factions in the Human Branch. Even the youngest has a history over ten thousand years old. Which do you want to join?” Lin Xiaoxiao asked.

“The Dragonmight Faction.”

“That faction is led by the Xuanyuan Clan, and their lord is even a core disciple of the clan. Joining them will make it easy for you to be bullied when you have conflict with Xuanyuan Xixi.”

“That’s no big deal. Mostly, I’m just looking at their high chance of winning. They’re the biggest faction and have extraordinary strength, right?” Tianming asked.

“Yes.”

“Then them it is.”

“Not afraid of trouble?”

“Of course not. My goal is to replace the faction lord and lead the faction into winning the faction battles. Do you believe me?”

“I do.”

“That’s surprising.” Tianming smiled. “I remember the Dragonmight Faction is divided into ten halls, which are further subdivided into chapters. Only these chapter chiefs can appoint people into positions of leadership, yes?”

Lin Xiaoxiao agreed.

“What’s the nearest chapter from us?”

“The Greenmaple Chapter.”

“We’ll go there then. I’m in the mood to become a deacon today. They can command over a hundred disciples, right?”

“Yes.”

Tianming had been a general before, in command of ten thousand men. However, the deacons of the Dragonmight Faction and their hundred disciples were even stronger.

Usually, the top five factions had over thirty thousand disciples. The Dragonmight Faction, with their reputation, had over a hundred thousand, a fifth of the entire branch’s population, making it an undisputed behemoth in the Human Branch.

Calling the lord of the Dragonmight Faction the lord of the Human Branch wasn’t too much of a stretch.

Most importantly, this was a place of young people without the meddling of seniors. Despite everyone being of the same age, there had still been an insistence to create a social pecking order. While it sounded childish, the weight of it going on for tens of thousands of years had made it no different from a true dynasty.

Chapter 592 - Senior Sister Is Pretty

The Dragonmight Faction had the strictest organizational structure amongst the factions. Every time a faction lord was chosen, two vice-faction lords would also be chosen.

Beneath the faction lord were ten halls, with hall lords leading them. Each hall lord had ten thousand disciples under them. Under each hall lord were around ten chiefs, who each ran a chapter of around a

thousand disciples. And each chief had ten or so deacons that helped command a hundred disciples each.

That was how things were roughly arranged. Chiefs and hall lords tended to lead respected lives, and it was the deacons who would be extremely busy. Still, having a hundred people to boss around wasn't too bad.

A deacon was part of the faction's leadership, and could increase their time in the Deepstar Path. This was how the sect both encouraged people to join factions and incited competition.

The higher you could climb up, the more likely you could reach the Earth Branch, or even Heaven Branch.

"Ordinary disciples just get an hour at the path, while deacons get two hours. Chiefs get three hours, and hall lords get four. With my efficiency, my limit is four hours a day. Beyond that would be useless."

However, these positions were just pit stops along the way. Becoming a faction lord was still his end goal. Faction lords could freely enter the path without time limits, even if they were the faction lord of the weakest faction.

If it wasn't for the fact that he wanted to be the number one faction lord, he could simply have chosen a minor faction.

Honestly, becoming Dragonmight Faction's lord during the faction battles would be difficult. The Human Branch had a deeply rooted system, and every faction lord's efforts would have made their subordinates loyal by now. It wasn't something that could be easily undone.

.....

The Greenmaple Chapter had a thousand and one hundred disciples. They would regularly congregate together to swap pointers and socialize.

The chief was Gu Qingyao, a beautiful woman. She liked poetry, and her abilities were known far and wide. Many disciples admired her, and some even joined the chapter for her sake. She was a goddess in their hearts.

There was a rather peculiar, but widespread phenomenon. Whenever a hall lord or a hall chief was a particularly beautiful woman, it almost went without saying that there would be many male disciples under her command. Likewise, chapters with handsome men in charge tended to have more female disciples.

"Greetings, senior sister Qingyao!"

"She's so pretty."

"She's absolutely gorgeous. I hope she'll pay attention to me!"

A beautiful woman garbed in a light blue dress covered in snow fox fur was walking through the long halls of the Greenmaple Chapter. As she passed by, all the men and women smiled at her.

"Hurry up, big sis! Xixi's been waiting forever for you!"

From the end of the hallway emerged a five or six-year-old youth. His eyes were bright and lively, and his smile was like the blossoming of a flower. In that way, he almost seemed like a girl.

"Xixi came? Is she better?" Gu Qingyao quickened her pace. As she walked, many light blue butterflies flitted about around her, almost as if she was a fragrant flower.

Her snow fox furs actually served as a cape. It dragged across the floor as she moved, making her seem all the more noble and elegant.

"Much better," the youth said.

As Gu Qingyao entered the main hall of the Greenmaple Chapter, she saw a young woman dressed in yellow seated inside. There were also several young men and women giving her massages, pouring tea for her, and carrying out other tasks.

"Leave us," Xuanyuan Xixi said lazily.

"Yes, senior sister." Only then did the young disciples depart, paying their respects to Gu Qingyao as they passed.

"Qingyao, I've missed you to death!" Xuanyuan Xixi said.

"How did the Fragrant Jade Cake I gave you work out? Did you get all of your teeth back?" Gu Qingyao asked.

"Enough of that already, alright? Geez. It's embarrassing!" Xuanyuan Xixi said.

"Senior sister Xixi!" The nearby youth suddenly revealed a look of ferocity. "Has your second brother finished investigating the background of this 'Lin Feng' character?"

"Not yet. This person is quite strange. I suspect he managed to somehow slip his way into the Archaion Sect. I didn't see any records of him in the sect manifest. However, Lin Xiaoxiao entered via the sect examinations." Xuanyuan Xixi grit her teeth.

"Screw all that. Way I see it, you should just let me go deliver some punishment on your behalf. I'll cripple him!" the youth said.

"Best to just forget it, Qingyin. You have incredible talent. At age fifteen, you were able to become a third-level empyrean saint. With your talent, you'll be able to enter the Heaven Branch in just a few years. It's best for you to focus your efforts on cultivation. I have great expectations of you," Xuanyuan Xixi praised.

"Senior sister Xixi, I do have some good news for you! Divine Mentor Ji Bei has already agreed to accept me as his disciple. He said that I should be able to get into the Heaven Branch by eighteen, and he'll personally take me under his wing then." Gu Qingyin said arrogantly.

"Really? I'm so happy for you!" Xuanyuan Xixi excitedly hugged the young man.

Her fragrance made him feel slightly intoxicated, and he blushed as he looked at Xuanyuan Xixi's face. "Senior sister Xixi is so pretty."

"You're quite the smooth talker, despite your young age," Xuanyuan Xixi said somewhat embarrassedly.

“Xixi, don’t act so inexperienced when you’re older than my brother by five or six years.” Gu Qingyao smiled from the side. She was aware that Xuanyuan Xixi’s talent was quite a poor match for Gu Qingyin.

However, the siblings were farsighted. Their parents didn’t have high status in the sect, but they would never have to worry about background again if they could attach themselves to the Xuanyuan Clan.

“Qingyin is quite a cutie. Make sure you keep a watch over him and don’t let him go astray,” Xuanyuan Xixi said.

Gu Qingyao smiled. She knew that this match was as good as sealed if her brother could get into the Heaven Branch. What was a five or six year age gap? Even hundreds of years would be nothing.

Didn’t those old monsters of the Samsara stage often come to the Human Branch and find young girls to be their concubines?

They were still happily chatting when a disciple came in to report. “Senior sister Qingyao, two disciples want to join the faction and even become deacons.

“Do they have the strength of deacons?” Gu Qingyao asked. All of the factions were currently aggressively recruiting for the faction battles; there was no reason to look a gift horse in the mouth. After all, large numbers of cannon fodder were needed for the faction battles.

“I’m not sure. One is a sky saint, though he does have quite a lot of arrogance.”

“Well, we have nothing to do anyway. Send them in. What’s their names?”

“One is Li Tianming and the other is Lin Xiaoxiao.”

Xuanyuan Xixi shot to her feet. “Lin Xiaoxiao? Did she come here to die?”

“She probably isn’t aware of our relationship, and especially doesn’t know that you’re here,” Gu Qingyao said. She signaled for the two to be let in.

“Wait!” The young man, Gu Qingyin clapped his hands. “Senior sister Xixi. Didn’t you say you couldn’t find out about Lin Feng? Might he have changed his name, and he’s actually called Li Tianming?”

“Possibly. We’ll know when they come in.” Xuanyuan Xixi’s expression was frosty.

It didn’t take long for a young man with black clothes and white hair to walk in, followed by a young girl.

Xuanyuan Xixi immediately felt her blood boiling. Weren’t they exactly Lin Feng and Lin Xiaoxiao?

Tianming immediately sensed some animosity and looked up to find Xuanyuan Xixi. Tianming turned around and asked Lin Xiaoxiao, “Why is she here?”

“She belongs to the Dragonmight Faction. I didn’t know she had links with the Greenmaple Chapter. Should we pick another?” Lin Xiaoxiao asked. It would be difficult to become a deacon here.

Tianming intended for a smooth admission, and wasn’t there to pick a fight. “Let’s go.”

There were over a hundred chapters; he was too lazy to get into a spat with Xuanyuan Xixi.

“Stop there!” Xuanyuan Xixi shouted. “Don’t let them go!”

It turned out that Xuanyuan Xixi had quite a lot of clout here. Over a hundred disciples rushed out on her command to surround the pair, and at least twenty empyrean saints were in their number.

“What, you want to get beaten up again?” Tianming looked around, annoyed.

“No. Didn’t you just say you wanted to be a deacon in our faction?” Xuanyuan Xixi narrowed her eyes. She exchanged a look with Gu Qingyao, a scheme already forming in her mind. They hadn’t yet determined his background, and her second brother had told her to endure a while longer. However, if Li Tianming served himself up on a silver platter, it wouldn’t be her fault if he got hurt trying to become a deacon, no?

“Yes,” Tianming said.

“Let me do this.” Gu Qingyao pushed Xuanyuan Xixi aside and came to Tianming.

Tianming’s eyes brightened. This girl really was quite the looker, with her beautiful smile and natural grace.

“Li Tianming and Lin Xiaoxiao, do you two wish to join the Dragonmight Faction and contribute?” Gu Qingyao asked.

“Yes.”

“I accept your application. Now, you are members of our faction,” Gu Qingyao said.

“That’s it?” Tianming had been expecting a rejection.

“I even heard that you want to become a deacon?” Gu Qingyao asked.

“Do I have the right?” Tianming asked.

“You have. However, no sky saint in history has become a deacon. Do you have that ability?”

“What’s the requirement?”

“Simple, just defeat a current deacon.”

“Who here is a deacon? Come and accept my challenge,” Tianming called out. He understood clearly now. The other side intended to use this opportunity to bully him. Anything that happened would be brushed off as standard procedure.

Whoever was behind Li Tianming that could scare Fu Yonghuan wouldn’t kick up a fuss over this.

“How arrogant!”

“Moron. He wants to act arrogant in our chapter?”

“How many deacons are here today? Go teach him a lesson!”

“Isn’t this the sky saint who injured senior sister Xixi?”

“He deserves what’s coming for laying a hand on a pretty woman!”

As discussion raged, a young man stepped out from behind Xuanyuan Xixi. Glaring at Tianming, he said, "I, Gu Qingyin, accept your challenge!"

Chapter 593 - Greenvoid Hall's Top Genius

The Greenmaple Chapter was part of Greenvoid Hall. Gu Qingyin wasn't just the top genius of Greenmaple Chapter, but one who stood at the top of all ten thousand plus members of Greenvoid Hall.

"Whoa!"

"Our top genius is here to fight!"

"He's only fifteen, too. It's said that he'll join the Heaven Branch three years from now and soar to become one of the pillars of the sect!"

Many disciples of the Greenmaple Chapter looked at him with fervent envy and respect. While the Gu Clan wasn't particularly powerful, Gu Qingyin was sure to propel them to prominence in the years to come. Tianming shot him a look and was reminded of Yuwen Shengcheng. He was about the same age as the ill-fated Yuwen scion, and just as proud. Someone like that acted without considering the consequences and was unpredictable in every sense of the word.

"Do you have someone who's weaned off their mother's milk instead?" Tianming asked. He wanted to deal with someone that wouldn't throw a tantrum and call their parents to come avenge them.

"You dare humiliate me? Are you sick of life? You're only a sky saint, even though you're in your twenties. Our sect's standard will be lowered by trash like you single-handedly!" Gu Qingyin said as he approached with a cold stare. He really wasn't mincing his words; even Tianming felt a little hurt by the comment.

It seemed that Gu Qingyin was really confident about himself. He was young and talented, after all, and would probably be at the Samsara stage once he reached Xuanyuan Xixi's age. Not to mention, all of the Greenmaple Chapter seemed confident in him too.

"Gu Qingyin is no doubt the most powerful deacon of the Greenmaple Chapter. He's only second to his elder sister in terms of power, and is only fifteen!"

As others praised him, Gu Qingyin charged in without warning to get revenge for Xuanyuan Xixi. All of a sudden, a sharp sound could be heard behind him. Tianming noted that it was a huge, green hornet. It was a broodmother-type lifebound beast with a hundred stars, making it among the finest specimens of saint beasts.

It was called the Sorrowgreen Hornet, and it was a dual-type beast of wind and poison. It also had a unique property of aural confusion; the flapping of its wings sounded like a sorrowful wail that could cause the soul to enter a state of depression. Even so, it was completely useless against Tianming. The more terrifying part of the hornet was the thousands of little green hornets that came out of its mouth. Each of them seemed armored and covered with blades. They bore their stingers as they soared toward Tianming.

"Die, trash!" Gu Qingyin smirked. Anyone that got poisoned by his lifebound beast would be paralyzed for good. As he spoke he took out his bestial weapon, the Greenvoid Bonespikes. There were two of

them, each as sharp as the other with ninety-nine saintly heavenly patterns. Any more than that and they would be tribulation artifacts rather than saint artifacts.

He executed his empyrean-ranked art, the Soulthrust Mantra. That attack caused the other disciples to back away out of fear of being caught up in that attack, yet Tianming didn't seem the least bit fazed upon seeing it. Two lifebound beasts, a bird and a cat, appeared beside him. Tianming let them deal with the hornets, rather than acting himself; roasting insects for food was Ying Huo's specialty, after all.

"Looks delicious." Ying Huo used Infernal Haze and charged in. With Invincible Sword Ki and flames blasting all over, the little hornets had nowhere to run. All of a sudden, the black cat charged the broodmother itself with Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape.

As the two covered for him, Tianming appeared before Gu Qingyin. "Look here."

"Look at your mom!" Gu Qingyin cursed. He hadn't seen someone so foolhardy in his life. His bonespike came thrusting in with the technique he had executed, resulting in an ear-piercing noise when it cut through the air, which also had a soul harming effect. It should cause Tianming to wince from pain and weaken.

Yet Tianming merely cracked a smile. He grabbed one of the spikes with his left hand, much to Gu Qingyin's shock. "You're too weak," he said, then summoned the Nine Yang Sword with his right hand and pierced the incoming bonespike with the power of the Myriad-Demise Sword.

"Aaaaagh!" Gu Qingyin cried as his arm started bleeding. As for his other hand, Tianming twisted it and pierced him with his own bonespike, playing another cacophonous note with his vocal chords as the instrument. He followed up with a stab on the other thigh from the Nine Yang Sword.

"Sister!" Gu Qingyin cried as his tears gushed out. His blood dripped from his kneeling body.

"Get up. I'm not your brother-in-law, so no need to be so polite," Tianming said.

Beside him, the hornet audibly collapsed and twitched as it suffered from the shocks it had sustained. What was more terrifying was how the swarm of green hornets had fallen to the ground, all charred up, and were being joyfully eaten up by the bird. Its pecking was so hard that it made holes in the ground. The sheer incongruence of the sight caused everyone to fall dead silent. How was it possible that a third-level empyrean saint was beaten by a sky saint without even being able to put up a fight?

"He defeated someone three levels above him, didn't he? Someone who could be a future disciple of the Heaven Branch!" "Is he a monster who's hiding his power?"

"There's no way he's hiding it! His sky saint body is plain to see!"

Nobody here knew about the Li Saint Clan nor the Primordial Chaos Beasts, so they were struggling to find an explanation for his strength. Even Gu Qingyin himself didn't seem to be able to buy his defeat. He found it hard to even get back up, as his legs were still bleeding out.

"Qingyin!" Gu Qingyao helped pull the spikes out of his leg. She seemed to be taking it far worse than Xuanyuan Xixi.

"Sister, I'm not convinced of my loss!" he said.

Gu Qingyao helped him up and glared at Tianming, causing him to feel a fatal chill.

"He'll recover from this in days. Did you need to glare at me like that?" Tianming asked.

"No, there isn't." Though she said that, she was still the chief of the Greenmaple Chapter, and far more powerful than Gu Qingyin.

"You look like you're about to kill me."

"You're overthinking it."

"I really can't stand people like you guys. After defeating the young one, the old ones come barking up my tree. Can't you guys be a little more creative? I didn't choose to fight him. I told you to get someone without a background to fight me, but no, you had to choose him." Tianming had wanted to keep a low profile. When he saw Xuanyuan Xixi here, he already wanted to leave, only to be stopped by them, then discover that Gu Qingyao was a helicopter sibling after defeating her younger brother. He could swear he saw the eyes of his would-be murderer.

"You speak too much," she said. "Fine, I'll stay quiet. Still, I get to join Dragonmight as promised, right?"

"Yes." She tossed him a golden emblem that read 'Dragonmight Faction'. Each stroke of the words was actually a divine dragon. On the opposite side of the emblem was the word 'deacon'. With this emblem, Tianming would be able to enter the Old Deepstar Path for two hours, double what he previously had.

"Can I trouble you to give her a disciple emblem too? She wants to join Dragonmight as well," Tianming said, pointing to Lin Xiaoxiao.

"I want to be a deacon too," Lin Xiaoxiao said out of nowhere.

"Are you sure?"

"I'll try."

"Chief, will you give her a chance?" Tianming ignored how she hated his guts.

"Sure. Who'll test her?" Gu Qingyao said. Everyone knew that she was unhappy and was seething about Tianming, like Xuanyuan Xixi.

"Let me!" said a male disciple who was also a third-level empyrean saint. He sounded really cold, as if he wanted to get back at Tianming using Lin Xiaoxiao to win Gu Qingyao's favor. Tianming knew it the moment he saw it. It was just a simple case of using someone as a stepping stone to ascend higher. Well, a beating would show him his place.

If I encountered Xuanyuan Xu as I am now, I wouldn't need my dad to help me, Tianming thought. Gu Qingyin was stronger than Xuanyuan Xu, after all. In other words, I came to the right place. There's no way I could've grown this strong if I'd remained in the Theocracy.

The key to that was the Old Deepstar Path. Tianming had to increase the time he could train there.

.....

Lin Xiaoxiao was a second-level empyrean saint, and it was Tianming's first time seeing her fight. This time around, the Bloodsoul Bolthell Fienddragon was there too. Her lifebound beast clashed quite a lot with her aesthetic; she looked like nothing more than a dark and brooding girl, while her lifebound beast was the most savage of beasts. Her opponent's lifebound beast, on the other hand, was a muscular goat a level above them, but it seemed dwarfed in comparison to the dragon.

Soon, the two sides clashed.

"How powerful!" Tianming said, watching closely. He wasn't referring to Lin Xiaoxiao, who fought using her halberd and bow. She fired her arrows away as she sat on the back of her beast like a fairy. The blood-colored arrows she shot out were as fast as lightning and seemed fatal. However, her beast really took the spotlight with its savage claws, fangs, wings, and dragon head. It was a machine built for carnage and it fought relentlessly, not to mention its powerful abilities.

It used a blood-colored lightning net to immobilize its enemies. The more their enemies struggled in the net, the more it tore at them, eventually ending in their defeat. Lin Xiaoxiao had won, though it wasn't as easy as Tianming had made his victory seem. She also wasn't fighting against someone as strong as Gu Qingyin, but the strength of her lifebound beast was plain to see.

Chapter 594 - One Who Returns in the Dark Snowy Night

The Greenmaple Chapter seemed to have embarrassed themselves this time around.

"What's going on? Isn't Lin Xiaoxiao a fresh empyrean saint? The last time I saw her, she was only a sky saint." Xuanyuan Xixi seemed a little confused and was wondering if she had remembered it wrongly. She agonized over it, feeling horrible over nobody being able to avenge her, to say nothing of the rest of the Greenmaple Chapter.

"Emblem," Lin Xiaoxiao said with her hand outstretched. She found herself enjoying this sensation more and more, finally understanding what kind of kick Tianming got out of dominating others. It was an addicting sensation indeed.

The rush of going against fate and seeing the results of using her fists to teach those that thought themselves better than her was intoxicating, to say the least. She fell in love with this feeling and wanted to become someone like Tianming. Turning back to shoot him a glance, she felt like she was reborn. No matter the price she had paid to come here, she now felt that it was worth it.

Soon, a deacon's emblem fell in her hands.

"It seems that we're rather lucky today. The Greenmaple Chapter now has two new capable deacons, bringing our total up to thirteen," Gu Qingyao said.

"Congratulations, Chief," Tianming said.

"Hmm." Though she nodded, her displeasure was plain to see.

"If that's all, I should take my leave now. I'll be participating in the faction battles eight days from now," Tianming said.

"Wait a moment," Gu Qingyao said, "Tonight, we'll be holding a meeting at Dragonmight Hall. All deacons have to participate in the planning for the faction battles. The faction lord will be making a trip here from the Earth Branch."

"Understood. I'll be there."

Once someone reached the sixth level of Empyrean Saint, they would be able to cultivate at the Earth Branch. The faction lord of the Dragonmight Faction was a core member of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan, so it was no surprise that he could cultivate there. Perhaps he would be moving onto the Heaven Branch in a few years; however, as long as he was in the Human Branch, he would be king.

.....

Two hours after Tianming left, a yellow-robed man came to the Greenmaple Chapter. Within the hall, Gu Qingyao was helping patch up her younger brother's injuries and tearing up over how hurt he had gotten.

"Brother," Xuanyuan Xixi greeted as she led him in.

"He's called Li Tianming, right?" Xuanyuan Ganggang asked.

"That's right."

"I looked into it, but the branch registry only stated that he became a disciple of the Human Branch ten days ago. Nothing else about his background has been revealed," he said as he took a seat and turned to Gu Qingyao.

"So?" Gu Qingyao asked, finally looking up.

"He isn't easy to deal with. At least, we can't do it openly. There must be someone backing him from the shadows, but it's still possible that he isn't backed by anyone."

"Look how badly my brother was beaten up."

"My sister too."

"I want him to pay the price."

"Fine. The faction lord has returned for the meeting. He'll be there too, right?"

"He should."

"Well, I happen to have a treasure here with me that I'll let him taste."

"What is it?"

"It's powder ground from the branches of the greenbanquet flower. It contains spirit hazards with tribulation patterns. I'm sure you've heard what it's capable of, right?"

Both Gu Qingyao and Xuanyuan Xixi shook their heads.

"There are many of those at the Samsara stage that use greenbanquet flower powder to increase their probability of conception so that they can give birth. However, the branch of the same plant that

produces that flower is something that'll make someone impotent. After being ground, it has no smell or taste. Men and women will have their genitals rot away and there is no chance it can be restored. They'll never be able to engage in intercourse ever again," he said. Ganggang and Xixi were funny-sounding names, but the siblings were nothing to joke about. [1]

"That's amazing! Let's do it!" Xuanyuan Xixi said, beaming with joy.

"Alright then," Gu Qingyao assented.

"Big Brother, you really are merciless. That's the Big Brother I know! You're far better than me at getting back at others. I'd never have been able to come up with something like this," she said before coming over to put her arm around his shoulder.

"It's child's play. If not for going all over the place to help the faction lord win the hearts of the people in the upcoming faction battles, I would've dealt with this long ago. However, you have to keep this matter secret. I'll get someone to sneak the poison into his food today without anyone noticing. We can just vehemently deny any and all involvement and we'll be fine. We are backed by our house, after all."

"Big Brother's right. That punk thinks he can prance around in the Human Branch without sucking up to others. I'll show him how cruel life is tonight," Xuanyuan Xixi said with a giggle.

"Are you satisfied with this, Qingyao?" he asked.

"If Qingyin is, I am."

"Qingyin?" Xuanyuan Ganggang turned to him and smiled.

"I am, but I still have to work hard after the faction battles to overcome him. That trash thinks he can bully me just because he's older... I'll catch up to him in no time," he snapped.

"Alright." Xuanyuan Ganggang shot him a thumbs up.

.....

Soon, night fell. There was a snowstorm going at full tilt, sending snowflakes streaking across the air like glinting blades. Lin Xiaoxiao missed a step and got her foot stuck. By the time she got it out, she found a human ear stuck to it.

"Damn, what kind of place is this? The Decimo Dao Palace is a greenhouse compared to this," Tianming said, rolling his eyes.

"The weak shall perish. Here, dignity is worth much more than life," she said, shivering. The blood had receded from her lips, leaving them rather pale. All she could do was put on a few extra layers and follow behind him. "Aren't you afraid of being messed with by going to Dragonmight Hall?"

"What's there to be afraid about? I came here to plunder, as is the way of cultivation. If you're afraid, you can go home. You don't need to stay here," he said.

"I'm not afraid, and I won't go back."

"Wonderful. We're deacons of the faction now, after all, and will no doubt be asked to serve them. Not to mention, capable people are always utilized, right?" He smiled as he continued on his way to Dragonmight Hall.

.....

The hall had a long history of presiding over countless generations of Human Branch disciples, all of whom had given their best effort, or even their lives there. Though there were many torches lit within, it was still a rather cold place, possibly due to its height of hundreds of meters. It stood like a gigantic palace.

Tonight, the faction lord, vice faction lord, hall lords, chiefs, and thousands of deacons would be assembling for a general meeting to discuss the faction battles that were to take place in eight days. It was said that even the faction lord, who hadn't been seen in public for a long time, would be making an appearance. The executives of the Dragonmight Faction eagerly awaited his arrival in their respective seats.

"Even though they're all young a.d.u.l.ts, they still like playing house with each other. I didn't think people would go so far," Tianming said. The moment they had arrived, they'd been received by some beautiful disciples at the entrance who checked their emblems before leading them to their seats.

When he arrived, he saw a plaque with the words 'Greenmaple Chapter Deacon Li Tianming' engraved on it. "It looks rather like a gravestone, if you ask me."

"Oh, Senior Brother, you really like to joke around, huh?" the girl who led him there said while grasping his arm, letting it brush against her chest whether intentionally or not.

"Hey, don't do that. I'm a serious man. I can't take it," he said solemnly.

"Oh, don't be like that, Senior Brother. Everyone likes to fake it at the start."

Tianming took his seat. A lot of food was being served on the table in front of him. There were all kinds of delicacies that had been painstakingly prepared. From his seat, he could see the tallest spot in the hall that was the most grandly decorated. The seats there also had plaques, and the one in the very middle was gilded and read: Faction Lord Xuanyuan Yufeng.

"Damn... He really thinks he's some kind of big shot, huh? Isn't he just the king among kids?" Tianming mocked.

The seat to the left of the faction lord was the vice faction lord's, followed by the five hall lords to the left and right sides. None of them had arrived yet. It was one thing for them to throw their weight around if it was a grand ceremony, but this was just a gathering of disciples from the same faction.

"Senior Brother, have a gr.a.p.e," the beautiful female disciple said. Tianming's left and right seats were taken by two female disciples. Despite the cold weather, they were rather lightly dressed, showing quite a lot of their fair skin.

"Senior Brother, I'm Xi Xia, and my sister is Dongdong. We come from the Stillorchid Realm. Girls from there are said to have a special aura to them. Can you see it on me, Senior Brother?" she said as she and her sister held one arm each.

"I really can't tell."

"Hmph! Senior Brother, you're so straightlaced," Dongdong said as she continued tugging.

"Me? I'm hardly that straight," Tianming said with a hint of annoyance.

"Oh, Senior Brother, you're so dirty... I wasn't talking about that kind of straight... You're making me blush."

Tianming couldn't take it anymore. Why hadn't the meeting started yet? It was already time, but the guests of honor hadn't even arrived yet. He looked around and saw that two female disciples would definitely be sandwiching every male deacon. They were also quite the lookers, too. Most of the male deacons were enjoying being waited upon by the girls, not caring about the noise they were making.

God, this is so degenerate! Tianming thought. He strongly hated things like this. This was not the right way to run a disciple faction. They really are enjoying their time here.

He couldn't quite take it when he saw some deacons taking advantage of the women. Wait, what about Xiaoxiao?

He looked to his left and his eyes almost popped out. Beside Lin Xiaoxiao were a pair of handsome young men. Fortunately, they seemed more well-behaved than the female disciples and maintained a respectful distance. If the female deacons didn't show the initiative to flirt, they wouldn't dare make an approach. What kind of atmosphere is this?

Even though they were just young disciples, they really seemed to be familiar with these kinds of things. After a long while, the top executives finally arrived, much to the cheers of the others in the hall.

"Silence! The faction lord is here! Everyone rise!" someone yelled loudly.

Tianming was about to doze off from all the waiting. Finally, the faction lord was here. But before he could get up, the two girls beside him pulled him up by his arms.

"Junior Sister, please refrain from doing that."

"Doing what?"

"Forget it." Tianming cleared his throat and freed his arms before looking up. "That looks really impressive. I want to be the faction lord one day, too."

"Senior Brother, you're really naughty, you know. Be careful not to let others hear you say something like that. You'll be in for a beating," Xiaxia said nervously.

"No worries, taking beatings is my forte."

"Can you stand having your tongue yanked out and taking nonstop beatings on your bottom?" Dongdong asked with genuine curiosity.

Stunned into silence, Tianming wondered how these twenty-year-olds knew of such crazy punishments even someone like him had never heard of.

He looked up and saw the executives of the Dragonmight Faction make their appearance. The first ones to come out was a group of female disciples; they slithered out like an agile snake in water. Among the beautiful women was a young man dressed all in white. He smiled as he walked out, escorted by the two most beautiful of the women, each holding one of his arms. Tianming noticed that he also had an eye between his brows, but it wasn't gold—it was black instead. He had heard that the most core bloodline of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan was known as the Trioptic True Dragon Branch. Only the members of that branch had third eyes. That meant Xuanyuan Yufeng was a rather huge figure.

"All hail the faction lord!"

Almost immediately, everyone in the hall bowed. Tianming almost thought they had to kneel.

"Rise," the youth in white said with a soothing voice. It was as if his face itself glowed. The moment he got into his seat, someone was there to serve him. Only after he waved his hand did the rest dare to be seated once more.

"The faction lord is so handsome!" Xiaxia said, almost glowing with infatuation.

"He's about average. Those eyes are just wide. Nothing to see there."

Xiaxia and Dongdong looked at each other with some confusion.

"Senior Brother, have you been drinking a lot of wine?" Dongdong asked.

"I haven't touched any."

"Then please be careful about what you say. If word gets out, corpses will line the streets," Xiaxia said fearfully.

"Understood." It seemed like they really valued their statuses.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I, Xuanyuan Yufeng, toast all of you. Those in our faction have come from all walks of life. It must be fate that we are able to assemble here in this hall today to dine with each other. This toast is for our hot-blooded youth that we will never regret," the faction lord said grandly as he stood up. Everyone stood up when he did, too, causing the two girls beside Tianming to drag him out of his seat moments after he had comfortably sat down.

"I can't take the pretentiousness anymore... I want to go to another faction. I'm already regretting this," Tianming said.

"Nah I think you're enjoying the company you have right here," Ying Huo chided.

"No way in hell."

Xuanyuan Yufeng still had lots of toasts to make; one would think that with the sheer number, there would be enough loaves to solve a famine. During each toast, everyone had to stand up and go along with it, much to Tianming's frustration.

"Can't I just sit?" he groaned.

"Don't be like that, Senior Brother. The last time someone tried that stunt, they returned home devoid of all three legs," Dongdong said.

"Don't people only have two legs?" Tianming asked naively.

"Senior Brother, that person was male."

It was hardcore indeed. It took quite a while for all of the pleasantries and ceremonies to conclude. The meeting appeared to be nothing but a glorified public relations campaign for the faction lord, Xuanyuan Yufeng. On top of that, there was a huge round of motivational speeches to pump up the crowd.

"The Dragonmight Faction will take first place in the faction battles! We are unmatched!"

"We are invincible! We will dominate first place!"

Tensions were high in Dragonmight Hall. Had Tianming known that it would be this kind of gathering, he wouldn't have chosen to participate. There was going to be a banquet afterward, too.

"Senior Brother," Dongdong said coquettishly as she suddenly embraced Tianming, looking up at him and blinking cutely.

Tianming lifted her up by the throat as he would a chicken. "Watch your step. I don't like women."

"Huh?" She was flabbergasted. At that moment, Tianming used his third eye on his left arm and saw Xiaxia putting some kind of powder into his drink. It appeared that Dongdong was trying to divert his attention. I knew it! That was why these two were prettier than the girls the other male deacons got! It's a honey trap! Thankfully, he was on his guard the whole time.

"Well, I don't like women... Because I like cute girls like you!" he ad-libbed.

"Haha! Senior Brother, you're a riot!" The two of them continued flirting with him nonstop. As they smiled, Tianming switched his drink with Xiaxia's so quickly that nobody spotted it.

"Senior Brother, let the two of us offer you a toast as well. Where do you live? Can we come over to play later tonight?" Xiaxia asked.

Tianming told them his address and added, "Bring a few more while you're at it."

"You meanie!"

Tianming broke out laughing as he thought, die, you retard.

The three of them then downed their drinks. It seemed that the poison didn't take effect that quickly.

Right then, a hall lord called Gu Shaoyu came over with Gu Qingyao and some ten other chiefs. Gu Shaoyu was the hall lord of Greenvoid Hall and Gu Qingyao's elder cousin brother. He was a rather chubby man with large ears that had come out with Xuanyuan Yufeng earlier.

"Qingyao, I want to toast the faction lord with some of our good-looking female deacons. Please get it done," Gu Shaoyu ordered.

"Understood." Gu Shaoyu approached Lin Xiaoxiao and said, "You, come out."

Lin Xiaoxiao followed along with eight other beautiful female deacons and stopped before Gu Shaoyu.

"I promised the faction lord that I'd send some of our girls from Greenvoid Hall to have some fun with him later tonight. I hope you don't have any disagreements with that. Spending a romantic night with the faction lord is a luxury that most people won't be able to afford no matter how badly they want it. What about you all?" Gu Shaoyu asked.

The female deacons exchanged glances.

"Hall Lord, I'm already married. It wouldn't be appropriate, will it?" said a female deacon with an amazing figure.

"Is your husband better than the faction lord? Not to mention, it's only a casual session. You won't lose anything from it. Just serve him wine and good food. This is an opportunity for Greenvoid Hall. Anyone that dares drag us down can forget about staying with us," he snapped.

"Understood!" The other female deacons could only lower their heads.

They were all pretty and had a wealth of good suitors, who, in fact, were looking at them not far away. However, this was the reality of the situation.

Lin Xiaoxiao turned back and looked at Tianming. Clutching her clothes tightly, she asked, "Can we leave?"

"By all means," he said.

If the hall didn't work for them, they could just leave. Tianming had thought he would join because Dragonmight Faction was powerful and was probably doing something right. But after what he had seen, it turned out to be wishful thinking.

"Stop!" Gu Shaoyu and Gu Qingyao yelled. The former squinted hard at the two of them.

"Qingyao, is she one of yours?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Is this how you discipline them? How irresponsible. If you weren't my cousin, I'd be caning you right now. Is this how you run things there?" he groaned, his cheeks flapping as he spoke.

"This is my fault."

"Have those two hand over their deacon emblems! They're excommunicated from the faction!" he yelled angrily. He would allow no one to slight his reputation at such a crucial time. At least, the other female deacons hadn't put up a fight.

"Oh, this trinket?" Tianming took it out and tossed it to Gu Shaoyu. The atmosphere grew so cold and tense that it froze over.

"Oh, a daring one, are you?" he said with a sly smile.

"Just about average. I'd say I'm the third most daring in the sect." Tianming took Lin Xiaoxiao's deacon emblem and slammed it to the ground before Gu Shaoyu's eyes. "You call this a faction? The number one faction, no less? What a joke."

He wasn't mincing his words.

"Go on. Vent your rage and keep them coming. Don't stop now," Gu Shaoyu said, smiling widely.

"I won't. It's a waste of my breath." Tianming tapped Lin Xiaoxiao on the shoulder and motioned for them to leave.

The hall was very busy, and few people saw what had transpired there. Gu Shaoyu, being the pragmatic person he was, wouldn't cause a commotion over a mere deacon. It simply wasn't the right occasion to break into a fight. He watched as Tianming and Lin Xiaoxiao left, smiling the whole time.

"Qingyao, this is your doing. I want you to deliver their heads to my residence tonight," Gu Shaoyu said.

"Yes! But Cousin Brother, Li Tianming is backed by someone...."

"Nonsense! How could anyone have a higher status than the faction lord in the Human Branch?" He turned to glare at her and said, "Go do your thing! I'll take all of the responsibility if anything goes wrong!"

"Yes!"

Those were the words Gu Qingyao had been waiting for. Now that he had said them, she was free to kill whoever she wanted. She had protected her younger brother for all her life and couldn't bear to give him a beating herself, yet Tianming had dared to stab him twice.

"Wait," Gu Shaoyu called out.

"What is wrong?"

"It seems like they're lovers."

"They could well be."

"Then just cripple their saint palaces and bring them to my residence. I'll teach them a life lesson tonight."

"Understood."

After Gu Qingyao left, a girl called Xi Xia collapsed in the hall all of a sudden, spazzing out and foaming from her mouth, much to the shock of those around her.

.....

The snowstorm was still raging at midnight.

"Sorry... Your plan was ruined because of me," Lin Xiaoxiao said with some difficulty when she stopped in her tracks.

"It's no big deal. We just have to look for another faction. If I want to be the top faction lord, I'll just have to defeat the Dragonmight Faction. It got harder, but more challenging and fun," Tianming said.

"Is it really fine?"

"Yes. We're fellow mates from the same town, after all. I can't just watch you go drink and sleep with someone else, can I?"

"Is the world really such a dark place? What do you think?" Lin Xiaoxiao said with resignation.

"Don't think too much about it. There's good people everywhere, you just had a little bit of bad luck and haven't run into them yet. However, your luck has taken a turn for good."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, because you've met me," Tianming said with a smile, pointing at himself.

"Save it, you murderous demon." She rolled her eyes.

"Hey, that's a baseless accusation!" Tianming snapped.

Right then, he saw a green-clad girl ahead of them, staring daggers at them. Despite the strong wind and snow, she stood there rooted and unmoving.

"Xiaoxiao."

"What is it?"

"You were right. I'm a murderous demon after all."

1. The author is referring to the names both having repeat sounds. It's like naming someone Suesue or Bobbob in English.

Chapter 595 - Empyrean Gold Body

Amidst the raging snowstorm, Gu Qingyao removed her mantle and tossed it to the ground without the slightest bit of emotion in her eyes. Her gaze was as cold as the snow.

"Chief, are you dealing with us yourself? It's a pretty weak showing, I must say," Tianming said as he motioned Lin Xiaoxiao to the side then stood in front of her.

"It's more convenient to kill you alone," Gu Qingyao said as she walked across the snowy ground. The wind sent her hair fluttering, allowing the moonlight to cast itself on her face. She seemed like a merciless ice queen. Archaion, on top of its heavy snow, didn't lack magnificent beauties like these.

"It's more convenient for you to die, too," Tianming said.

"Heh." She didn't say anything else, but disappeared into the snow. Her luscious figure swept about in the heavy snow as she slowly approached him like a cobra.

Lin Xiaoxiao seemed quite nervous. She knew how powerful Gu Qingyao was—a level above her younger brother at the fourth level of empyrean saint. Yet Tianming was only a sky saint. She seemed to have the upper hand.

"I'll join you," Lin Xiaoxiao said after gritting her teeth.

"Go build a snow castle or something nearby," he said, shooting her a glance.

"Okay...." How could someone be so stubborn at a time like this? She had no choice but to step far to the side, but she secretly took out her bow and arrow. By now, the other two's clash had begun.

"I'm rather curious about something, Gu Qingyao. Who ordered you to come and kill me? My joining and leaving Dragonmight didn't cause you any losses, right?"

"Anyone that hurts my younger brother dies."

Tianming was speechless. So it wasn't Gu Qingyin himself that wanted her to avenge him. "Did you b.r.e.a.s.tfeed him as he was growing up too?"

The only reply he got was her sharp sword. Tianming looked at it and noticed that it didn't have any saintly heavenly patterns. The most powerful saint bestial artifact had ninety-nine saintly heavenly patterns, and anything stronger than that was considered a tribulation bestial artifact.

Tribulation patterns were even more powerful than saintly heavenly patterns and related to the tribulations in the Samsara stage. They had different colors and were even more refined. Each of them were so complicated that they could be split up into a hundred individual saintly heavenly patterns, but the most important part of tribulation artifacts was that those patterns could be hidden inside the artifact. In other words, if the owner didn't want anyone else to know how many tribulation patterns there were on their artifact, nobody else would be able to tell.

For instance, the patterns on Gu Qingyao's sword were invisible, which meant it was a tribulation artifact. The only way to tell its quality would be by experience. Xuanyuan Xu from back then had believed the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower to be tribulation artifacts, as they also didn't have any saintly heavenly patterns on them. However, Tianming believed they were even more powerful. Even if they were tribulation artifacts, they were top-tier ones without a doubt.

"Then, let's test out how powerful your tribulation artifact and empyrean gold body are!"

Gu Qingyao was probably stronger because of her empyrean gold body, rather than her tribulation artifact. At her stage, her saint body was in its most mature state. Both the beastmaster and lifebound beast experienced explosive growth after the Sky Saint stage so that they would be able to endure the Samsara stage, and the Empyrean Saint stage was when that growth came to fruition.

In fact, the Empyrean Saint stage could be split into three parts wherein the saint body grew even stronger. The first part encompassed the first to third levels, enhancing the body as the amount of ki increased.

The second part was the fourth to sixth levels, which was called the empyrean gold body phase. Each level of the phase brought more changes than the first three levels. While the amount of ki wouldn't increase that much during that phase, the bodies of the beastmaster and lifebound beast would grow much stronger until they had what was called a gold body. That was normally best exemplified by the sudden growth in physical toughness of lifebound beasts. At that stage, the beasts would be able to take on beastmasters by virtue of their strong bodies making up for their lacking heavenly-ranked techniques.

However, beastmasters with empyrean gold bodies had experimented and created body refining arts to further enhance their empyrean gold bodies' strength. Not only would they be able to fight off lifebound

beasts, they would also be far stronger than empyrean saints in the three earlier levels. When in battle using battle arts, if both sides had the same amount of saint ki, the one with a stronger body would win out.

It was possible to refine one's body before the fourth level, with arts such as Tianming's Invincible Sword Body. However, it was far inferior to training the empyrean gold body. The second phase of an empyrean saint was meant to develop this body to take on the life and death tribulations in the next stage. In other words, beasts grew stronger physical bodies in the second phase, while beastmasters caught up using their techniques.

From the seventh level onward, there were two transformations before the Samsara stage, but that was still quite far off as far as Tianming was concerned. At the very least, he had studied up about the empyrean gold body after taking into account that he may have to fight someone with one.

If Gu Qingyao had started using a body refining art, she would be far stronger than her younger brother, who still wasn't in the second phase. As the thoughts flashed through his mind, he watched Gu Qingyao's Frost Yang Sword streak toward him, making a sharp sound as it slashed through the air.

"So cold!" He felt the frost coming from the sword, causing his body to chill and his brows to whiten. As expected of a tribulation weapon; not only was it powerful and sharp, it was also enhanced by spirit hazards and beast blood, giving it an extra edge in the manipulation of spiritual energy.

Tianming parried it with the Nine Yang Sword and felt another force coming from his opponent apart from saint ki; it was a distinct energy that was far more direct and savage. No doubt, it was due to his opponent's body refining art.

"Die!"

Gu Qingyao danced gracefully in the snow, but her sword was just as threatening and fatal as ever. She executed a top-grade empyrean-ranked battle art, the Thirteen Blizzard Sword. It had thirteen sword strikes and was a combo modeled after samsara-ranked arts. It was fast and merciless, and by using it, she conjured powerful snowstorms and sent them Tianming's way.

The sword strikes were fast as lightning. Tianming blocked five in a row before backing off, his hands numb from the strikes. While his opponent seemed like a frail girl, she was actually able to dominate him with her tribulation artifact and empyrean gold body.

"Guess I'm still a little lacking."

Then, a cracking sound was heard. There was a chip on the Nine Yang Sword, which soon spread out through its body, eventually causing it to shatter, leaving only the hilt in Tianming's hand. It was the first time he'd ever had a weapon break on him, both due to the sheer power of Gu Qingyao and the bad compatibility of the Nine Yang Sword with the ice element.

"To think that you dare prance around like you own the place even though you're not nearly strong enough. To be honest, I thought that you were the descendant of some famous house. Looks like you're nothing but a dumb fool," she said in a tone that wasn't the least bit mocking. It was as if she were stating a mere fact, though that didn't stop her gaze from looking utterly demeaning to him. "Oh well, enjoy. I bet my cousin brother would love to taste a petite girl like Lin Xiaoxiao."

"Who's your cousin? That fat pig from before?" Tianming asked.

Gu Qingyao sighed at how her pathetic opponent was still putting up a fight. He wasn't worth her time at all. She summoned her lifebound beasts, two gigantic and beautiful butterflies; one butterfly was green and caused windstorms to manifest with each flap of its wings, while the other was as white as snow and even looked a little sparkly, like a snowy gem. They both had a hundred stars, being at the peak of saint beast and one step away from becoming a tribulation beast. It appeared that she was a twin beastmaster. She stood between her two butterflies and her dress fluttered in the wind, adding to her dreamlike charm.

"Let's end this." She charged in with both of her butterflies.

"You're making yourself out to be quite the badass, Lady," Tianming said with a sudden smile.

However, Gu Qingyao didn't bother to respond. She didn't want to say even one more unnecessary word to him.

As for Tianming, three lifebound beasts appeared beside him alongside a new weapon in his hand. It was the Grand-Orient Sword. Gu Qingyao looked closely and didn't see any saintly heavenly patterns, so it had to be a tribulation artifact. The moment the sword appeared, an indomitable force like that of a mountain came pressing down on her.

"If others don't wrong me, I won't wrong them. If they do, I'll cut their heads off, man or woman be damned!" he said as he went on the offensive. The man and his three beasts engaged as the Imperealm Sword Formation went into full tilt.

Chapter 596 - Windshadow Butterfly, Frostsnow Butterfly

The black and gold sword ki filled the entire region, reaching a thousand meters and enveloping Gu Qingyao and her pair of butterflies. They were besieged by the Imperealm Sword Formation. Worst of all, for them, the icy snow beneath their feet suddenly transformed into a stretch of ocean.

The two butterflies were Windshadow and Frostsnow Butterflies. The moment the Azure Oceanic Purgatory appeared, the Frostsnow Butterfly froze the ocean in the blink of an eye.

But when Lan Huang collided with the ice, it turned into water once more. The ocean then began transforming between ice and water.

Lightning started gathering in the sky and flames swept across the horizon. When the Sixpath Infernal Lotus came out, Ying Huo disappeared with the Infernal Haze and became an assassin on the battlefield.

A strange howling noise came from the wind, and it seemed to be coming from the Windshadow Butterfly flapping its wings. The noise produced by the butterfly flapping its wings was weird, almost like a lullaby. That was its ability, Dream Enchantment.

Many opponents had fallen asleep under this ability and died to Gu Qingyao's sword. Gu Qingyao had a high position among the Dragonmight Faction, and she was one of the strongest chiefs who was proficient with illusions.

The ability had a limited effect on Ying Huo and the others. The Windshadow Butterfly wasn't just executing its ability, but another ability that required it to work together with the Frostsnow Butterfly, the Shadowless Aroma.

A sea of flowers suddenly appeared in the snow, emanating a refreshing fragrance that made Tianming and the rest think of the fourth egg. The flowery fragrance could also make people feel sleepy, and it combined with Dream Enchantment to form a two-pronged attack.

Ying Huo, Lan Huang, and Meow Meow were affected by it. But Tianming had the Soul Tower, so he was immune to it. He executed the Ninesilver Astral Art, Nine Stardust. While he was gathering the Imperealm Sword Formation to deal with Gu Qingyao, the Three-Thousand Starfield attacked the Windshadow Butterfly.

The Three-Thousand Starfield shot a few hundred meters out like countless meteors and descended onto the Windshadow Butterfly as it was in the middle of executing its ability. What made Tianming smile was that a crimson bolt of lightning also shot over along with an arrow, piercing the Windshadow Butterfly's eye.

A violent storm gathered before the Windshadow Butterfly and it blocked Tianming's Three-Thousand Starfield with its wings, but it neglected Lin Xiaoxiao's arrow!

The arrow drew blood. Gu Qingyao had never expected that it would be her lifebound beast shedding blood first. The Windshadow Butterfly cried out and began rolling around to remove the arrow. But it never thought that the lightning contained in the arrow would explode, destroying its compound eye.

"You're courting death!" Gu Qingyao was furious and wanted to kill Lin Xiaoxiao. After all, how annoying was it to allow Lin Xiaoxiao to launch sneak attacks from the side?

But just as her sword appeared before Lin Xiaoxiao, a silhouette appeared in the middle and knocked it away. It was naturally Tianming who blocked that attack. Condensing countless sword ki from the Imperealm Sword Formation and the Grand-Orient Vortex, Tianming had appeared before Gu Qingyao in a flash.

"A piece of trash!" Gu Qingyao executed the Thirteen Blizzard Sword, and the power behind her sword was growing stronger and stronger. Snow began gathering on her sword, forming a splendid flower.

"Hey beauty, pay attention to your perky... butt!" Ying Huo suddenly appeared and purposely dragged his words out.

"Get lost!" Gu Qingyao changed targets and turned around to charge Yin Huo. However, she was still underestimating Tianming. Right at that moment, Tianming roared and infused his sword ki into the Grand-Orient Sword.

He combined three sword techniques into one—the Myriad-Demise Sword, Imperealm Sword Formation, and Shenxiao Sword Art's fourth move. Gu Qingyao, who was going after Ying Huo, suddenly turned around with a sneer, "Bah... how wea—"

Her Frost Yang Sword was knocked out and plunged into the snow. The icy sword ki from the sword froze half of Tianming's body. He couldn't move, although he was still firmly holding the Grand-Orient Sword.

Then again, his Myriad-Demise Sword had also left half of Gu Qingyao's body covered in blood. Time seemed to have frozen right at that moment, and the two of them reacted swiftly. Gu Qingyao slammed her palm at Tianming's chest while Tianming executed the Ninenether Fiendgod Claw with his black arm.

The soul servant was in his left arm, and the eye in his palm opened up when the crimson claw image flashed past and shot into Gu Qingyao's soul.

"Arggggh!!" Gu Qingyao screamed out.

Using his claw, Tianming tore Gu Qingyao's arm from her body, which made her scream out in pain. She was dumbfounded, and couldn't figure out how she had lost when she was holding the upper hand in this battle.

But the most lethal attack had come from the claw, which caught her by surprise. The profundities of a samsara-ranked battle art had far surpassed her understanding.

"Li—!" Gu Qingyao lost it when her arm was torn off. But just as she was about to block Tianming's sword, a crimson bolt of lightning pierced her chest. An arrow exited through her back and plunged into the snow with lightning remnants flickering on it.

"Uhhh..." Gu Qingyao held her chest and looked at Tianming with a pale face. Lin Xiaoxiao was behind her, keeping her bow aimed at her. Gu Qingyao's hand was trembling as she pointed at Tianming, "Y-y-you!"

"Are you still going on with the pretense?" Tianming asked.

"You... die..."

"Are you thinking that we won't dare to kill you because we're weak?" Tianming picked up the Frost Yang Sword from the ground.

"Tianming, Lin Xiaoxiao, the two of you will die a terrible death!" Gu Qingyao said with all of her strength as tears rolled down her cheeks. Her two lifebound beasts ran away, looking for help.

"Gu Qingyao, everyone in the world needs to be psychologically prepared to be killed when deciding to kill. This has nothing to do with good or evil, it just means that you're incapable. The world is fair. Now, goodbye!" Tianming plunged the Frost Yang Sword into Gu Qingyao when he finished speaking.

Gu Qingyao widened her eyes before her head dropped down. She still remained in her kneeling posture on the ground. Her death brought Tianming's conflict with the Dragonmight Faction onto a path of no return.

This place was no paradise. Tianming reunited with his lifebound beasts and besieged the two butterflies. Butterflies were gorgeous, but not so much when they were decapitated.

"Let's go." Tianming wiped the blood off his body.

Lin Xiaoxiao shook the snow off her body and followed behind Tianming.

.....

The banquet in the Dragonmight Hall was already coming to an end. It was an extravagant night, and there was rubbish left everywhere on the ground. The wine brewed with spiritual herbs was strong, and many people were drunk with their cheeks flushed; they were strongly intoxicated.

Outside the hall where the snow and wind intersected, the singing and dancing resumed back in the hall.

"Come, let's continue!" Xuanyuan Yufeng smiled and placed his arm over a gorgeous female deacon's shoulder while his other hand was drinking with another stunning disciple.

"Haha, you'll belong to me after finishing this cup," Xuanyuan Yufeng smiled, which made everyone laugh together.

"Faction lord, you're drunk," the lady said anxiously.

"I'm not drunk. You're drunk." Xuanyuan Yufeng gave her a wink, and he asked, "My room tonight?"

"The sun will already be out soon," said the lady.

"How can there possibly be any sun when it's snowing?" Xuanyuan Yufeng said.

"Haha!" Everyone laughed when they heard what he said.

The lady felt helpless, and when she raised her head, she saw Gu Shaoyu standing behind Xuanyuan Yufeng, looking at her with a smile.

"It's fine. We're just here to recite poems tonight, and I'm a pure person. Don't overthink it. We're elegant people, and we'll only interact with poems," said Xuanyuan Yufeng.

"Yes, faction lord."

"Haha!" Another burst of laughter sounded out.

The few hall lords were also surrounded by beautiful female disciples. "Faction lord, leave some for us!"

"You already have eight women. Can you even manage it?" They were all feeling happy today. The girls had their heads lowered and were occasionally looking outside; their lovers and boyfriends were still waiting in the snow, pacing back and forth as their lips turned purple.

"Hall Lord Gu!" Right at that moment, someone came in looking anxious.

"Get lost!" Gu Shaoyu said in a drunken tone.

"Hall Lord Gu, there's a problem!"

"Wait here for me." Gu Shaoyu said to the girls in his arms and stood up. He might be fat, but he was tall. Anyone who knew him would know that his figure was due to a unique body refining battle art he practiced, and he had a body of a beast.

Lifting the person who came in to disturb him off the ground, Gu Shaoyu threw him toward the corner and asked, "Speak! What is it?!"

"Chief Gu Qingyao was killed!" the person reported. He had seen the corpse and saw how terrible Gu Qingyao died.

“What?” Gu Shaoyu let out a long breath.

“She died a terrible death, and you must take revenge for her!”

“Did you see who did it?” Gu Shaoyu asked.

“No. She was already dead when I found her, and the murderer was nowhere to be seen. Hall Lord Gu, do we need to report this matter to the Judgement Hall?”

“No need. We’ll deal with it ourselves. We’re the Judgement Hall of the Human Branch,” said Gu Shaoyu.

“Understood.”

“Get lost!”

“Yes!”

Chapter 597 - Brightnight, Darkdawn, and the Swordking Faction

After the person who came to report left, Xuanyuan Yufeng asked, “Shaoyu, everyone’s already leaving, so why are you leaving your chicks here?”

“Faction lord.” Gu Shaoyu turned around, and Xuanyuan Yufeng saw how ugly the expression on his face was.

“What is it? Why do you look so enraged?” Xuanyuan Yufeng’s tone became cold, causing the temperature in the entire Dragonmight Hall to drop. No one dared to utter a single word at that moment.

Gu Shaoyu explained what had just happened and continued, “Faction lord, I suspect that our competitor did this. They used a small fry to bait and ambush us.”

The Dragonmight Hall fell silent. A young man squeezed out of the cloud with his eyes dazing off. His body was trembling as he asked, “My sister is dead?”

The man was none other than Gu Qingyin.

“Yeah. We fell for it,” said Gu Shaoyu.

“No, that doesn’t make sense,” a cold voice sounded. When everyone turned around, they saw Xuanyuan Ganggang, the Vajra Hall’s Hall Lord of the Dragonmight Faction.

“What’s the matter?”

“This Li Tianming came to the Greenmaple Chapter to challenge during the day, and everyone saw how he defeated Gu Qingyin. He was also a Sky Saint. I believe there’s a possibility that he killed Qingyao by joining forces with Lin Xiaoxiao.” People noticed that Xuanyuan Ganggang’s complexion was dark, and his murderous aura was comparable to Gu Qingyin’s.

“Go into details,” said Xuanyuan Yufeng.

Xuanyuan Ganggang then shared everything about Fu Bo and Fu Yonghuan.

“Someone that Fu Yonghuan dares not to offend? Who the hell can Fu Yonghuan even offend with his identity? Xuanyuan Ganggang, wouldn’t it be fine if you’d killed him long ago?” Gu Shaoyu said.

“You’re the one who sent Qingyao to kill him, right? I’ve yet to settle this matter with you,” said Xuanyuan Ganggang.

“She’s my cousin, so who the hell are you to settle this matter with me? Based on what?” Gu Shaoyu questioned.

“Okay, that’s enough.” Xuanyuan Yufeng waved his hand and continued, “The two of you head to Li Tianming and Lin Xiaoxiao’s residences now and bring them to me. We’ll know if they killed Qingyao, or if someone else did it then. The two of you belong to the strongest faction in the Human Branch, so don’t mess this up.”

“Understood!” Gu Shaoyu and Xuanyuan Ganggang nodded. They were heading to the disciples’ residence, and not even disciples from the other factions would dare to start a fight there. But they headed toward Tianming’s residence without hesitation.

“Faction lord, what are we going to do with them after capturing them?” Gu Qingyin asked with tears streaming down his cheeks.

“They’re all yours.” It was just the death of a chief and it wouldn’t affect the Dragonmight Faction, so he wasn’t too bothered about it. However, the incident had ruined the mood of the banquet.

“Then I want to drink his blood and eat his flesh!” Gu Qingyin gnashed his teeth.

“Don’t boast,” Xuanyuan Yufeng smiled.

“I won’t!”

“Go ahead. Bring your elder sister’s corpse back. Don’t let it get frostbitten,” said Xuanyuan Yufeng.

His words left everyone stunned. How was the corpse going to get frostbitten when she was already dead?

.....

It was almost dawn, and Tianming was standing on a hill looking at Gu Shaoyu along with another man in yellow clothes that had rushed into his residence. They smashed around, but couldn’t find who they were looking for.

“Who’s that?” Tianming asked.

“Xuanyuan Xixi’s elder brother, Xuanyuan Ganggang,” said Lin Xiaoxiao.

“Is he trying to be cute with that name?” Tianming asked. He watched as the two hall lords smashed the residence before ultimately leaving empty-handed.

“It looks like we’re homeless now,” said Lin Xiaoxiao.

“Doesn’t matter. It’s more exciting in the wilderness,” Tianming smiled as he stood up.

“Where are you going now?” Lin Xiaoxiao asked.

“Oldwind Street. The Nine Yang Sword broke, so I need a replacement,” said Tianming.

“Don’t you already have a sword? Not to mention that it’s so powerful,” replied Lin Xiaoxiao.

“What do you think? I have no intention of revealing it yet. I’ll only reveal it in key moments, catching my opponents by surprise. Furthermore, I’m rich,” said Tianming.

“Where’d you get your money from?”

“What’s it got to do with you?” How could Tianming possibly tell Lin Xiaoxiao that his wife gave it to him for his monthly salary?

.....

The snow stopped when the sun rose into the sky, and Oldwind Street was filled with people.

“Brother, did you hear the news? The Dragonmight Faction’s goddess, Gu Qingyao, died last night. She was killed by a newcomer called Li Tianming, and it’s rumored that the newcomer is only a Sky Saint.” a grey-clothed man said. He even reached out to pat Tianming’s shoulder when he noticed that he wasn’t stopping.

“And based on what are you saying that Li Tianming did it? Do you have any evidence?” Tianming asked. He didn’t know the man, but he was being overly friendly.

“There isn’t, but it’s probably true since that’s what they said. It’s fine as long as they don’t blame it on the Swordking Faction,” said the grey-clothed man.

Tianming and Lin Xiaoxiao then arrived at a shop that was larger than the Steadfast Pavilion. It was called the Snowrites Sword Pavilion.

“That’s a weird name.” Tianming smiled.

“Don’t spout nonsense. The lord of the Swordking Faction is Jian Xueyi, and this shop was opened by them. This is the largest artifact shop in Oldwind Street, and I heard there were many tribulation artifacts here,” said Lin Xiaoxiao.

“The leader of the second strongest faction is a woman?” Tianming asked.

“Is that a problem?”

“That’s not it. I’m just not used to snatching things from a woman...” said Tianming.

“Then did you show tenderness for the fairer gender last night?”

“I don’t think so....” Tianming’s heart finally cleared up and he stepped into the Snowrites Sword Pavilion. Weapons were different from battle arts. Battle arts required the sect’s approval, while weapons could be freely circulated. That was why the Snowrites Sword Pavilion had such a large inventory, and the items were all placed right in the hall for selection.

“Hello, I’m here to buy tribulation artifacts. I’m just an errand boy, so please don’t look down on me,” Tianming directly said to the staff the moment he went in after learning his lesson previously.

“Who are you running errands for?” a black-clothed youth asked.

“Can you not ask about it?” Tianming felt a headache building. It seemed that he would be looked down on as long as he wasn’t in the Empyrean Saint stage.

“Sure, you can just call me Lu,” the black-clothed youth said. It appeared that his attitude was somewhat different from the Dragonmight Faction. Everyone from the Dragonmight Faction was used to being arrogant. It was just like Xuanyuan Xixi relying on her family and elder brother to become an overlord junior in the Oldwind Street.

“Bring me to look at the tribulation artifacts,” said Tianming.

“Come with me.” Lu led the way in. He brought Tianming deep into the Snowrites Sword Pavilion and opened a secret chamber to reveal a long passage filled with many other rooms.

“Every room here represents a tribulation artifact, and the prices are all marked. You can look at them yourself,” said Lu.

“According to this display, doesn’t it mean that the one at the end is the best tribulation artifact available?” Tianming asked.

“That’s right. That’s the best tribulation artifact available in the Human Branch,” replied Lu.

“Straightforward!” Tianming widened his steps and strode toward the last room.

“Do you have enough tribulation crystals?” Lu asked.

“Don’t worry about it. Just that you might have a tough time going through them,” Tianming smiled.

His words made Lu depressed. How hard could counting money be? Just as he was feeling depressed, Tianming had already arrived at the last room, which was overflowing with sword ki.

When Tianming took a closer look, he didn’t think that there would be a sword ki pool here, with a total of thirty thousand strands of sword ki! The grades weren’t high, but the quantity was much higher than the sword ki pool in the Decimo Dao Palace.

“What sword is it that requires a sword ki pool to nurture it?” Tianming took a step forth and looked at the bottom of the pool. It was a meter-long white sword that was as thin as a cicada’s wing. Just looking at it made Tianming feel a stinging pain in his eyes.

He then read the introduction, “Brightnight has one tribulation pattern and was forged with meteoric iron. Sharpness is its biggest feature, and it can cut through regular iron like mud. It also contains the ‘Solar Radiance,’ which can light up the night as if it was the day when used.” It cost six hundred and ninety-nine tribulation crystals and was the most expensive item on Oldwind Street.

Tribulation artifacts could have dozens of tribulation patterns at most, and empyreans could only use tribulation artifacts with one or two of them.

Tianming smiled when he read through the introduction. The introduction is really casual. But are they trying to empty my pockets with this price?

If he converted all of his saint crystals into tribulation crystals, he would only have about 700 tribulation crystals remaining, leaving him broke after buying the sword. Well, it’s okay. Money is my least concern,

with my wife around. I'll just go for it then! This sword is good enough. At the very least, it's stronger than the Frost Yang Sword and it should be enough for me to use in the Human Branch.

It wasn't that he didn't want to use the Grand-Orient Sword, but he wanted to keep it hidden away as his trump card to catch his opponents by surprise. After making his decision, he noticed another smaller note beneath the introduction, "Brightnight and Darkdawn are a pair. They're made with the same materials and were forged together. But they have different effects, and are inseparable. They're a match made in heaven."

Tianming called Lu over and said, "There's another sword that goes by the name of Darkdawn? I'll take it. But I have a condition."

"Please go ahead and say it!" Lu said emotionally. This was probably the biggest transaction on Oldwind Street.

"I want the sword ki pool and a voidspace stone that I can bring the sword ki away with," said Tianming.

"Deal!" Lu laughed.

"Holy shit, did I just suffer a loss?" Tianming suspected that he didn't have a talent for bargaining.

"Let me see your tribulation crystals. Please don't toy with me," said Lu.

"Sure. Open your eyes wide!" Ten breaths later, Lu was buried in seven hundred million saint crystals.

"Holy shit, isn't it just spending all my money? Why do I have the feeling I've been hollowed out?" Tianming muttered in a depressed tone.

Lu happily dealt with the sword ki pool and even threw in a scabbard.

"Boss, have a safe trip!" Lu chuckled. Just by looking at the smile on his face, anyone could tell that he would receive a high commission for the transaction.

"Don't call me that. I'm just an errand boy," Tianming said humbly while he observed the sword, Brightnight.

"Stop teasing me. I know you. Your name is Li Tianming, and you're the one who killed Gu Qingyao last night," Lu suddenly smiled.

Tianming turned around to look at Lu, and he asked, "You know me?"

"The Swordking Pavilion has a mature intelligence network," Lu smiled.

"And?"

"Senior Sister Xueyi wishes to meet you, and I'm responsible for leading you to the Swordking Hall. You coming?" Lu asked.

"Why not? The point is, why didn't you tell me before I bought the sword?" Tianming asked.

"Brother, I wanted to get a commission."

Tianming was left speechless by the reply. The scheming in the 'city' ran deep, and he wanted to return to the 'village' now.

Chapter 598 - Here Comes the Goddess

It felt different when Tianming held Brightnight in his hand. The sword was thin, but it wasn't flexible at all. On the contrary, it was hard like a razor blade. The heavenly pattern formation required him to claim ownership of the sword before he could use it; it was a small-sized formation, but it wouldn't be easily destroyed since the creator bound this tribulation weapon with the 'ownership formation.' So destroying the formation was the same as destroying the structure of this weapon.

Tianming dripped his blood on the formation to claim ownership of the sword. When his blood fused into it, he sensed a vague connection with the sword.

"The tribulation pattern...." Tianming looked at the pattern, which went from the sword's body to the tip. It looked like a white line, but if one were to look at it carefully, they would notice that there were over a hundred and eighty saintly patterns linked together to form a whole.

This was a tribulation weapon. It was utterly different from saintly artifacts with hundreds of saintly heavenly patterns. It was on a whole new level, which totally transformed the weapon.

It was said that the most complicated tribulation patterns were derived from thousands of saintly heavenly patterns. However, the power of a tribulation artifact didn't rely on the quantity of tribulation patterns, but the form and quality of the patterns.

For example, tribulation crystals also had a tribulation pattern, and contained a hundred saintly heavenly patterns. But seven hundred tribulation crystals could buy Brightnight.

Tribulation crystals were naturally formed, while tribulation artifacts were forged. They had to use the tribulation patterns on the spirit ores and spirit hazards to reconstruct a new tribulation pattern. That meant that patternscribing and blacksmithing were lucrative occupations.

Then again, Tianming felt he could earn more money in his occupation as a husband.

"Solar Radiance?" Tianming opened his senses to Brightnight's ability. The sword exploded with a blinding golden light that stung his eyes.

"It's truly worthy of being a tribulation artifact." Tianming waved his hand and felt that it was more comfortable than the Nine Yang Sword.

"This way, please." Lu brought Tianming out of the Snowrites Sword Pavilion and led the way to the Swordking Pavilion.

Swordking Hall was the Swordking Faction's headquarters, but Tianming ran into two people when he came out of the Snowrites Sword Pavilion: Xuanyuan Ganggang and Gu Shaoyu.

The moment both parties met, the commotion in Oldwind Street instantly died down. Many people were looking in this direction.

“The two of you, come with us.” Gu Shaoyu’s voice was filled with unquestionable authority. His words made the surrounding disciples tremble in fear, and many people walked out from the Snowrites Sword Pavilion and stood behind Tianming and Lu.

They had already sent someone to deliver the news. But since this was the Swordking Faction’s territory, they weren’t too afraid of Gu Shaoyu or Xuanyuan Ganggang.

“Who the hell are you? Are you the sect master of the Human Branch?” Tianming asked.

“It’s pointless whatever you say. An eye for an eye, a life for a life. Don’t pretend you’re ignorant,” said Xuanyuan Ganggang with a cold voice.

“Where’s the evidence then?” Tianming asked, to which Gu Shaoyu and Xuanyuan Ganggang did not reply. Tianming laughed. “What the hell are you saying since you don’t have any evidence?”

“Aren’t you an arrogant one? You’re just a pawn, so why are you so proud about it? You’re just a fool in everyone’s eyes, yet you’re taking pride in it?” Gu Shaoyu sneered.

“I do what I want. What can you do about it? Fatty, what can you do to me if I don’t want to leave with you?” Tianming asked. His words were equivalent to a bomb in the surrounding, leaving everyone silent. When everyone saw Gu Shaoyu’s plump body begin trembling, their faces turned pale and they distanced themselves.

“Gu Shaoyu is furious now.”

“Being in the Dragonmight Faction for so long, he’s like an overlord in the Human Branch. People are flattering him everywhere, and no one’s ever dared to provoke him this much.”

“Where the hell did this man come from? He’s either stupid, or he has no brains.”

“Enjoying for the moment and regretting later. It’s nothing out of the norm.” Everyone in the street was discussing amongst themselves. They looked at Gu Shaoyu, squinting his eyes with murderous intent flashing in them.

“Are you going to do it, or shall I have the honor?” Xuanyuan Ganggang asked.

“Let me do it. No one has dared to humiliate me this much in such a long time. Let me have some fun,” said Gu Shaoyu.

“Alright. You can have it then,” said Xuanyuan Ganggang.

Gu Shaoyu took a step forth, and his feet caused the entire street to tremble.

“Hall Lord Gu, you’re not allowed to fight in Oldwind Street according to the Human Branch’s regulations, let alone destroy public property. Don’t violate the rules,” Lu said with little confidence as he stood beside Tianming.

“Shut up. I’m the rule here.” Gu Shaoyu grinned.

Everyone was amazed by how overbearing Gu Shaoyu was being. When Gu Shaoyu was done speaking, he reached out to Tianming. The ground violently trembled, and Tianming could sense the pressure of an empyrean gold body coming from him.

“This fellow’s body refining battle art is much stronger than Gu Qingyao’s.” Gu Shaoyu was naturally capable, since he was a hall lord in the Dragonmight Faction. He could easily defeat Autarch Qian if he went to the Theocracy of the Ancients.

But there was no way he could bring Tianming down here. Right now, over thirty disciples from the Swordking Faction stood before Tianming and blocked Gu Shaoyu’s path.

“Is the Swordking Faction’s intention finally revealed? Were you the ones using Li Tianming as bait to kill Gu Qingyao last night?!” Gu Shaoyu roared, and his voice forced the disciples standing before Tianming to stumble back.

“Fatty Gu, you can eat shit all you want, but watch your words,” a female voice sounded out from a distance. The voice was domineering and suppressed the commotion in the surroundings. Her words were vulgar, but her voice was pleasant.

Tianming turned his head and saw a crowd coming over in his direction. Many of them had sharp gazes, and Tianming could tell with a glance that they were core members of the Swordking Faction.

There was a woman right in the middle of the group, and her figure seemed domineering despite being surrounded by a group of men. She wore a white robe and a black cloak made of bearskin. As a woman, her height wasn’t much different from the youths around her, and she had a voluptuous figure. Her legs were her best feature, powerful and beautifully curved.

She had a queen’s temperament, and her presence was eye-catching in the group of male disciples. Even without any introductions, Tianming knew that this woman was the faction lord of the Swordking Faction, Jian Xueyi.

“The goddess is here!” Her grace overwhelmed everyone present, and her presence made Gu Shaoyu and Xuanyuan Ganggang’s faces turn ugly.

“Jian Xueyi, do you dare to say that the death of my cousin has nothing to do with your Swordking Faction?” Gu Shaoyu growled.

“If I say it’s not, then it’s not. I’d admit it if I did it, but do you believe that I’ll stab you to death for slandering me?” Jian Xueyi said.

“Since that’s the case, it’s even better. I’ll be taking Li Tianming away. Tell your men not to stand in my way,” said Gu Shaoyu.

“No,” said Jian Xueyi.

“Why?”

“He wasn’t one of my men yesterday, so what he did last night has nothing to do with me.”

“And?”

“He’s one of my men today.” Jian Xueyi smiled. Her words immediately dropped a bomb in the surroundings. After all, who wouldn’t like having such an overbearing Senior Sister?

“That’s a superb mount! Not only does she have long legs, but she’s also around the same age as you. Tianming, you can consider taking her down!” Ying Huo commented.

“Shut up,” Tianming said.

“Didn’t she say that you’re hers? Go and immediately seek welfare for Meow Meow!” Ying Huo replied.

“You’re the one who wants it, right?”

“Don’t be so straightforward about it. Don’t you know that I’ll blush?” Ying Huo replied.

“Be careful, she might be just like Big Sister Bai and drain your kidney dry,” said Tianming.

“How can that be possible? Don’t you know that your Chicken Bro has gotten a lot stronger since then?”

Tianming chuckled in response. When he heard Jian Xueyi’s name, he imagined that she would be a lovely lady, and it wasn’t surprising that she could command the Swordking Faction.

After all, who wouldn’t be convinced by her overbearing character? He could tell that she was a gallant woman, and it wasn’t surprising that there were so many male disciples supporting her, just like the group standing around her right now.

But Tianming couldn’t figure out why she was trying to protect him. However, he said nothing, but just continued watching.

Xuanyuan Ganggang and Gu Shaoyu’s faces sank when they heard what Jian Xueyi said.

“What do you mean?” Xuanyuan Ganggang asked.

“Isn’t it clear enough? These two are part of my Swordking Faction starting today, and I intend on making Li Tianming a chief,” said Jian Xueyi.

“But he killed a chief of my Dragonmight Faction!”

“That was last night, and it has nothing to do with me,” Jian Xueyi said.

“Since you admitted that he was the one who killed my cousin, we’ll be taking him away with us!” Gu Shaoyu said.

“No can do. You guys think you can take away a chief of my Swordking Faction here?” Jian Xueyi asked.

Xuanyuan Ganggang and Gu Shaoyu exchanged a glance. In the end, Gu Shaoyu gnashed his teeth and said, “I get it now. Jian Xueyi, you’re insisting on protecting nameless people and going against the Dragonmight Faction, right?”

“Fatty Gu, why are you putting it that way? What do you mean by ‘going against?’ When have you guys not targeted the disciples of my Swordking Faction in every faction battle? So stop pretending. If we let you two take them away, would you be lenient on us during the faction battle?” Jian Xueyi sneered in disdain.

Gu Shaoyu merely replied with a cold chuckle.

“Get lost now.” Jian Xueyi waved her hand.

"We'll remember this enmity, and we'll ensure that you guys will suffer during this year's faction battle!" Gu Shaoyu threatened.

"Let's not talk about anything else right now. At the very least, I'll be taking your head," said Gu Xueyi.

"I hope that you won't cry at that time. Remember to wash your mouth well and prepare to blow our boss when the time comes," Gu Shaoyu smiled lecherously.

"Shut up!" A group of people immediately came up and surrounded Gu Shaoyu and Xuanyuan Ganggang.

"Don't move." Jian Xueyi didn't seem insulted by those words, and she sneered, "If Xuanyuan Yufeng dares to bring his little toothpick, I'll bite it off and crush his balls."

Tianming's face turned red when he heard that. It was too crude.

"I'm starting to like her!" Ying Huo's eyes shined.

Although all the male disciples present felt that what she had said was a little too crude, her beauty overshadowed everything.

Chapter 599: Piercing God

Gu Shaoyu and Xuanyuan Ganggang left with sour faces, unable to do anything in the Swordking Faction's territory. As they were leaving, Jian Xueyi looked around and said, "Disperse!"

"Yes, Senior Sister!" the surrounding disciples chorused and went on their way.

Jian Xueyi had come with her followers, which included hall lords and chiefs, who were all powerful in their own right. While they numbered fewer than the Dragonmight Faction, they had the power to match. Tianming stood directly in front of the woman who was equal to him in height. She smiled as she looked at him daringly, her eyes scanning him whole before settling on Brightnight.

"Can a sky saint like you even use that?" Jian Xueyi asked.

"Works well enough. Let me try," Tianming said.

"Better put it back. I, the big sister, left it here for the chosen one. I don't like little kids like you," she said.

"How old are you?"

"Fifteen."

"No way. How are you so huge?"

"So huge? What do you mean by that?"

"Nothing." He didn't dare bring up what 'top-grade mount' meant.

"Whatever. I was just joking, I'm actually twenty-two."

"Oh, you're younger than me. So, you can only be my little sister," Tianming said.

"Are you serious? You're in your twenties? With that face? I could've sworn you were seventeen."

"Can't help it, I just look fresh." His comment earned him a few more dirty looks.

"This sword is a pair with Darkdawn. You'd better put it back, lest others think I'm spoiling a so-called little brother," she said.

"That won't do. I bought this with my money, so it's mine. It's got nothing to do with you any longer."

Right that moment, a cold-looking youth clad in black snapped, "Li Tianming, don't forget who saved you today!"

"Zhao Yijue, what are you doing? I was just joking around with him," she said with a glare, then turned back to Tianming with a smile. Stretching her hand out, she said, "Let's shake hands. You're a member of the Swordking Faction now."

"Can I squeeze it a little?"

"You can try, but I'm sure you don't need any more bounties on your head from those around us right now," she said with a bright giggle.

"Forget it then." Tianming gave her hand a light pat. "Faction Lord, if you don't mind me asking, why'd you save me? I'm just a nobody who's offended the Dragonmight Faction. It's not worth it."

"Nonsense. I looked into you. Your cultivation's soared during the time you've been in the sect. I also happened to see how you fought from a distance. You're a ruthless one, aren't you? Normal men would drool over a beauty like her, yet you just stabbed her in the heart."

"So?"

"So, Big Sis thinks you have potential. You look like the illegitimate son of some huge figure in the sect who's superbly talented but didn't get enough resources to cultivate. You'll definitely shoot to the moon after joining the sect, so Big Sis has decided to bet on you. Come to think of it, how did you manage to defeat a fourth-level empyrean saint despite being only a sky saint?"

"Shhh, that's a secret. I can't reveal it."

"You're asking for a beating, you.... If you're not careful, I'll take you into my harem!" she joked.

"You have a harem?" Tianming's horizons were expanded.

"I don't, but I'm planning to make one. It's a shame that no man has caught my eye yet. And to think you even bought the Brightnight I left there to bait a gold mine...."

Tianming didn't know how to respond and could only shoot her a thumbs-up. "You're really something."

After that, she introduced him to the others as an official member of the Swordking Faction. The black-clad youth that chided Tianming was the vice faction lord, Zhao Yijue, who was said to be rather powerful. He was still quite cold to him, saying nothing but a few words. He was also introduced to the other five hall lords, all of whom were powerful in their own right.

"Here you go," Jian Xueyi said as she tossed him a chief's emblem. "The faction battles begin in a week, so we'll be getting busy. Once the battles are over, I'll help you form your own chapter. For now, you'll be representing your chapter on your own."

As the faction lacked manpower, they couldn't just give him subordinates to command, despite being a chief, for the rest were caught up in training. Reorganizing at this point in time would only cause chaos.

"Thank you, Faction Lord."

"No need, and stop calling me that. It's too formal."

"Then how should I address you?"

"Goddess."

While that didn't sound formal at all, it was flattery to the nth degree.

"If that's all, may I leave?" Tianming was still in a hurry to train. With the chief's emblem, he would be able to train for three hours a day in the Old Deepstar Path, which would greatly enhance his speed.

"Go ahead. Watch out when you go to public places. Don't get yourself killed before the faction battles begin."

"It'd take more than them to kill me," Tianming said.

"That just happens to be the last words of many bodies that found themselves buried in the snow the next day," Zhao Yijue said.

"Thank you for the warning, Vice Faction Lord."

"Expect a summons once the faction battles begin."

"Understood."

.....

At the Old Deepstar Path, Tianming could train three times as long thanks to his new position. Even Lin Xiaoxiao was able to get a deacon's emblem and train for two hours there. This time around, Tianming could go farther on the path and gain the Astral Will left behind by even stronger seniors. Naturally, it took time to walk along the path. That was the reason disciples from the Earth and Heaven Branches entered the path in the midsection rather than from the very start. Thankfully, Tianming was always surrounded by countless stars, something he'd become famous for there.

Now, he was observing the heavenly will of a senior named Xuanyuan Yin. His heavenly will was called the Domination Will and shared many commonalities with Tianming's Imperial Will. Once his time there was over, he left the path with Lin Xiaoxiao, feeling rather refreshed.

"If we can't return to our residences, where shall we go?" she asked.

"Just train wherever. We can just sit down and cultivate. Don't be so picky."

"Fine." She grit her teeth with dissatisfaction.

"However, once I make another breakthrough, we won't have to avoid Gu Shaoyu and Xuanyuan Ganggang any longer," he said, cracking a smile.

"Will it be soon?" She didn't dare to cultivate in front of him, so she had to go back.

"Yes."

.....

Taiji Peak Lake was shaped like a Yin-Yang diagram, being split into two with smaller dots in each one of them. One of the small dots was a 'mountain amidst a sea', and was called Tribulation Peak. Legend had it that the old monsters at the Samsara stage trained hard there to overcome their tribulations.

Its counterpart, the 'sea amidst mountains', was called Xuanyuan Lake. It was the only part of the sect that actually belonged to the Archaic House of Xuanyuan; no other clan actually owned land in the sect itself. It was so wide it could be called an ocean.

Right in the middle of the lake was a saintly palace that nobody dared to approach. It was entirely white and seemed to be made from some kind of precious stone, making it exude elegance. The palace was Soulburn Hall, a name the tenth goddess, Xuanyuan Xi, had picked. Now that the goddess had returned from the dead, she had moved back into Soulburn Hall and would come to shape the Flameyellow Continent from there.

Within the hall was a girl dressed in a blue dress sitting under a pavilion in an elegant garden. She shook her fair bare legs and got snowflakes to fall on them.

"Snow really is pretty," Feiling said as she stared blankly at the snowscape in her garden. She had been doing this for the better part of the day. "It's really boring. If only Big Brother were by my side on a day with such good weather like this.... We could warm each other up."

She stood up and walked barefoot toward the hall. She came to a pillar and counted the brush marks she had made there and scratched her head. "It's so annoying... There's so many days left! Why is time passing so slowly? I knew I should've asked him to come once every ten days, hmph! I wonder if he's doing well in the Human Branch... Should I summon him? Would that ruin everything?"

She wasn't daring enough to do it. Now that she didn't have enough information, there was a good chance that others in the sect would figure out that she wasn't Xuanyuan Xi herself.

"I'd better wait.... Cultivating every day without being able to talk to anyone really is frustrating."

She pouted as she exited the palace and sat on the snowy ground. When she looked up, she saw blood-colored lightning above. "Huh? What's that?"

The bolt of lightning came striking toward her. She felt the threat of death, thanks to her divine body's instinct, but she couldn't react to it in time as she was too weak.

"Protect Her Eminence!" someone cried.

The next moment, Feiling felt her eyes blur as a gigantic creature charged into the skies. It was a green phoenix. Piercing sounds rang out from above as the lightning bolts fired, instantly turning the sky into an endless sea of crimson.

With two loud rings, she saw a drop of red shooting toward her leg. She quickly withdrew it and saw a black arrow where she had stood. The arrow shook and pulsed with crimson lightning and some traces of blood, causing her to run. Who's trying to kill me?

She began panicking, now that Tianming wasn't by her side.

"Who dares do such a thing?" someone yelled in the sky. It took quite a while before the commotion died down.

With a loud bam, the green phoenix slammed into the garden before her. The lord of Godservant Hall, Fang Qingli, also fell with a pale look. It seemed that she was the one who had taken the brunt of the black arrow. The green phoenix seemed to have been pierced through.

"Your Eminence, it's fine now," she said as she knelt and shivered.

With another loud boom, a green-robed man fell to the ground. "Mother, are you alright?"

Feiling recalled that he was the sect master of the Heaven Branch, Fang Taiqing, who held the seniormost rank in the sect. To think that his mother was Fang Qingli...

Chapter 600 - Yinyang Demon Sect, Hexapath Sword God

"It's fine. Protect Her Eminence," Fang Qingli said with some difficulty.

"Someone take the Godservant Hall Lord to be treated," Fang Taiqing instructed.

A group of powerful elites had shown up at Soulburn Hall, including the sect master of the Earth Branch, Xuanyuan Dao. The two sect masters immediately knelt to her.

"Your Eminence, we deserve to die for allowing you to come to danger due to our carelessness!" Fang Taiqing said.

"I am just as much at fault. Xuanyuan Lake is the territory of our house, yet we allowed our enemies an opportunity for a surprise attack. Ancestor, this was my mistake!" Xuanyuan Dao said with a hoarse voice.

Feiling seemed a little shaken. Calming herself down, she asked in a deep voice, "Were you able to pursue them?"

"No. They managed to escape." The two sect masters humbly lowered their heads.

"Who could it be?" she asked. Who in the world would attempt to kill a god? Calm as she may seem, Feiling's mind was a mess.

"Your Eminence, the arrow looks like the work of the Biritual Demon Sect. However, it seems a little too obvious. Someone could be trying to frame them. They attacked from outside Xuanyuan Lake, but not too far away. The sect is protected by layers of defenses, so there's a chance that the attacker is someone from the sect! At the very least, they're able to move freely within it," Fang Taiqing said.

"Biritual Demon Sect?" Feiling had no idea why someone would go after her life. Wasn't she supposed to be a god? The Biritual Demon Sect was the hegemon of the Biritual Divine Realm where the second

god had ascended. It was also called the Yinyang Demon Sect, and it was just as powerful as the Archaion Sect.

"It still isn't something set in stone. Please rest assured that I'll do my best to hunt down any lead and bring the culprit to Your Eminence. As powerful as he is, there's little chance that he'll be able to evade me!" Fang Taiqing said as he kowtowed.

"Your Eminence, I'm going to summon all the elites of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan and station them around Soulburn Hall to take charge of Your Eminence's safety for the time being. I'll also remain on site the entire time until Your Eminence is able to defend yourself. I'll never forgive myself if I ever let this happen again!" Xuanyuan Dao said.

"Got it." Feiling was still shaken from the incident. Why would an insider be trying to kill her? Why were those present so agitated? It was as if protecting her was their mission. Just then, Fang Qingli had almost died by taking that arrow for her. Xuanyuan Dao was also the sect master of the Earth Branch and the current 'king' of the Xuanyuan house. As their ancestor, Feiling should be the one protecting them. But before she could say anything about it, he had already started making plans to protect her safety.

After leaving Soulburn Hall, Fang Taiqing and Xuanyuan Dao exchanged glances.

"These people are insane! How dare they try killing a god?" Fang Taiqing said with a troubled look.

"That's not the worst of it. What if the other eight gods are working together on this?"

"Would they really go that far?"

"They're afraid."

"Sigh, to think that our god returned as an earth saint... we can't do much because of it. If only we hadn't spread the word when Her Eminence returned...."

"Don't be naive. This isn't something that can be hidden. Over the years, the Nine Divine Realms have been plotting against each other. There's even spies we have yet to uncover in Godservant Hall. Not to mention, the Yinyang Demon Sect are experts at soulscouring and obtaining information. It's already rather impressive that they didn't find Her Eminence first," Xuanyuan Dao said.

"We still have to wait ten years! Biritual, Triflair, Quadform, Pentaphase, Hexapath, Heptastar, Octagram, and Nonahall.... Of those eight Divine Realms, which are conspiring together?" Fang Taiqing asked.

"I don't know. It depends on Her Eminence. She probably has a plan. It won't surprise me if all eight are trying to kill her. But still... I can't help but feel something is off."

"What is it?"

"Her Eminence seems a little too naive."

"She ascended to godhood at the age of twenty before the unfortunate incident. It's no surprise that she's behaving like a girl," Fang Taiqing said.

"Well, I hope that's all this is," Xuanyuan Dao said.

.....

Tianming sat under a pine tree on the snowy ground and recalled the insights he had gained on the Old Deepstar Path, using them to help his Imperial Will grow. When he opened his eyes, he saw Lin Xiaoxiao leaning against the tree huddled in her thick clothes, revealing nothing but her red eyes as she stared at him like a beast. "Why aren't you cultivating?"

"It's got nothing to do with you," she said.

"You're worried I'll see something special about it, right?"

She lowered her head to hide her eyes. Tianming looked toward his residence and saw a blue-robed person there. "You, stay here. Be careful and don't die," he said as he stood up.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm leaving for a bit. I'll be back soon." He rushed back to his residence and saw Jian Wuyi sitting in the pavilion of his courtyard, looking down on him.

"I heard you killed a fourth-level empyrean saint even though you're just a sky saint," he said.

"I had help and luck on my side."

"It seems that Her Eminence did have her reasons then. It's rare for a sky saint to have such amazing saint ki."

"Sect Master, how can I help you?"

"Her Eminence has summoned you. Come with me," he said as he stood up.

"What?" Tianming felt his heart skip a beat. A month hadn't passed yet. It appeared that she couldn't stand the loneliness. While it was risky, he was happy that she wanted to see him so badly.

"Why are you so agitated? You'd better act respectfully during the audience," Jian Wuyi said.

"Understood." Tianming turned back to look at Lin Xiaoxiao before following along. She was under the pine tree watching him leave. By this point, the snow had almost covered her entirely.

Jian Wuyi traveled quickly and Tianming was only barely able to keep up. "To think that you're as fast as an empyrean saint... Now this is interesting. Your saint ki is powerful, but it seems that your cultivation is a difficult one. No wonder you can't keep up with those your age."

"I see." Tianming merely nodded without saying too much.

Soon, they reached Xuanyuan Lake. The surface of the lake had frozen over, and the buildings on top of it looked like crystal palaces. There were many dragon lifebound beasts flying across the sky, making for a rather majestic sight.

"Why do I feel like there's a lot more elites here than before?" Tianming asked.

"To protect Her Eminence."

"Is all this really necessary?" Tianming noticed that as he approached, near a hundred powerful elites coldly glared at him. It was apparent that he would be killed if he showed the slightest bit of malice.

"Her Eminence has suffered an attack," Jian Wuyi calmly said.

"What?!" Tianming felt like a lightning bolt had struck him. He widened his bloodshot eyes and found it difficult to breathe. "Is... she alright?"

"Definitely. Why are you so nervous?" Jian Wuyi looked at him, thinking that he'd overreacted.

"What kind of vile demon would dare attack Her Eminence? Were they caught and killed? Were there accomplices?"

"What does it have to do with someone like you?" Jian Wuyi glared at him.

"Sect Master, I was only anxious."

"There's no need for you to worry. Her Eminence's affairs are ours to handle. All you have to do is cultivate like a normal disciple."

"Understood." Tianming didn't say anything else. His display of rage was already inappropriate for his station, but that didn't stop the flame in his heart from burning. It was one thing if leaving Feiling alone resulted in a bit of loneliness, but he couldn't take it if it meant she would be in danger.

"Once you enter, don't make any sudden movements, lest you be killed. Those of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan are very jumpy right now, understood?"

"Yes!"

Once Tianming entered, the old elites all glared at him. They were all samsarans and were staring holes into him, as if they were trying to inject venom into him with their gazes. It was a sign of their concern for Feiling's safety.

.....

Within Soulburn Hall, Tianming finally saw her. There were two others beside her, the first being a pale-faced Fang Qingli and the other the sect master of the Earth Branch, Xuanyuan Dao. He stood in the corner, unmoving. It seems there's no chance I'll be getting intimate with her now.

However, she was safe and that was all that mattered to him. While their reunion was different from what he had imagined, he understood it was necessary for her safety, which was paramount. All he had to do was endure his urge to hug her tight.

Facing everyone, all Feiling could do was put up a front as their god. She sat high up in her throne and looked down on Tianming.

"Salutations, Your Eminence," Tianming greeted.

"Li Tianming," she called out.

"This one is listening," he replied with his head lowered. Though speaking like that was really awkward, they had no other choice.

Even Xuanyuan Dao looked at him nervously, afraid that Tianming would mess around. Even though Tianming was the eminent's savior and shouldn't do her any harm, he wanted to be ready for even the most remote of possibilities. In other words, all Tianming and Feiling could do was talk. They couldn't even approach each other.

"Tianming, at the bottom of Xuanyuan Lake is the Hexapath Sword Insight Rock, a treasure left behind by the Hexapath Sword God. He infused his Lifetime Sword Intent into a meteorite from the cosmic aether. Recently, I have been trying to glean some of his insights from the stone. As you are also familiar in the way of the sword, you shall accompany me later. I will guide you," she said.

"Understood!" Tianming bowed respectfully.

The Hexapath Sword God was the sixth god of the Flameyellow Continent. His Hexapath Divine Realm was right next to Archaion, and the Hexapath Sect shook the world with their fame.

Tianming knew why she had summoned him; first, to see if he was doing fine and let him know about her situation, and second, to give him some benefits to help him. As long as he could come, they didn't need to hug or speak. Even exchanging glances was enough to convey their mutual longing.

"Li Tianming, I have praised you to no end, but the three sect masters do not believe me. You only have this one chance. If you benefit from it, you may come here to train your swordsmanship often. If not, you shall no longer be allowed to benefit from the number-one Sword Intent of the Flameyellow Continent," she said.

"I definitely won't disappoint Your Eminence!" Their eyes met for a fraction of a second. She seemed a little emotional, but suppressed it the next instant. Tianming's eyes, however, were burning with passion, but all he could do was lower his head. Love is an arduous path. But as long as we understand each other...