

The Ages 611

Chapter 611 - They Sink With Us

So far, the Azureriver Faction hadn't engaged in any combat yet but was ranked first. It seemed they were having it rather easy.

"There's eight factions ahead of them, yet we're their targets. Let's just lay low and wait. As long as they can't find us, we can come out on the last day to settle who the winner is," Jian Xueyi said magnanimously.

"Deal. It'd be ideal if Dragonmight loses even more people in the coming days," Fang Bihan said. "Come to think of it, who's the person that's made them lose a tenth of their troops?"

"I don't know."

At that moment, a rumbling was heard. Scouts immediately came to make their report.

"Faction Lord, some eighty thousand members of Dragonmight are heading toward Silverriver Valley!"

"They're coming after us directly? How'd they know we were here?" Jian Xueyi asked.

"Let's not overthink it. Hold them back as best you can! Retreat!" Zhao Yijue said.

There were five days left and Dragonmight's ranking was far lower than expected. While Swordking had allied with Azureriver for now, it wouldn't last beyond a few days. They would have to fight all the same.

"Retreat!" Jian Xueyi ordered.

"Apologies, you won't be able to escape. We were the ones who gave your position to Dragonmight," Fang Hongxuan said with a sudden smirk.

"Are you insane? You don't want the chance to take first place?" Jian Xueyi was flabbergasted. They had been conspiring on this for so long that they had talked about all sorts of contingencies even before the faction battles had begun.

"You were too foolish. Last time, we got second place and this time we stand a good chance for second again. With Dragonmight being so powerful and Xuanyuan Yufeng promising us so many things, why would I side with you to fight him?" Fang Hongxuan said.

"Jian Xueyi, you were too foolish. So what if you defeat Dragonmight here? After the faction battles, you'll still be oppressed by them all the same. Since you're so naive, the Azureriver Faction shall teach you this valuable lesson. We never stood a chance to take first place, so we'll take second and make sure you remain beneath us. That's a far better alternative," Fang Bihan said.

"Who's the foolish one? Do you think you'll really be able to keep second place once we fall? How can someone with so little foresight as you become a faction lord? To think that I actually bothered to conspire with you.... Dammit, if anything, I'm the fool for siding with you!" Jian Xueyi was fuming.

"Say what you want. Either way, Xuanyuan Yufeng's offer was far better than yours. Jian Xueyi, I personally can't stand you. Just wait, the Swordking Faction will be taking last place!" Fang Bihan said with a laugh.

"Oh, the vice faction lord is jealous that I look better than her, I see," Jian Xueyi said mercilessly. If only she had known their true character, she wouldn't have worked with them and ended up caught up in a pincer attack.

As they were speaking, Azureriver had already begun attacking Silverriver Valley. Only Fang Hongxuan and Fang Bihan had come to negotiate, so it would be easier for them to leave later. As expected, they immediately ran away.

"Don't bother chasing them down. Let's head back!" Jian Xueyi said as she led her troops back to Silverriver Valley.

"Faction Lord, we can't leave. Azureriver is attacking from the north and Dragonmight is coming from the south. Since we can't use the north entrance, we must head south, and we'll inevitably run into Dragonmight."

"What if we go from the skies?"

"We can't easily fly there either. They prepared in advance and climbed up the mountains on both sides. Up there, there's nothing to cover us. We'll lose even faster if we fly," Zhao Yijue said.

"Then we have no choice but to hide," she decided. She felt rather bad, for this was her mistake. However, she was thick-skinned and open-minded enough to put that aside and do what she needed to right now.

"Heed my orders. We shall withdraw into a small formation and take hold of the river. We'll hold off against their attacks by using the terrain to our advantage. This was my mistake. I overestimated the Azureriver traitors' integrity, and I'll take responsibility for it after the faction battles. However, we can't give up now. We must hold on! Even if Swordking loses, we'll make sure to skin them first! Neither Azureriver nor Dragonmight can win!" she announced in a voice filled with agitation.

"Yeeehaaaah!" Everyone cheered as they pointed their swords at the sky.

"If we sink, they sink with us!"

The faction battles defined much of their future. None of them would be tricked like this and take it lying down. They would make sure that nobody could get what they wanted.

"Dragonmight is ranked at ninth place anyway. They'll lose even more if they fight! There's no way Azureriver will remain unscathed either! If we fight fiercely enough, we'll take all three of our factions off the ranking!"

Usually, Dragonmight had a huge advantage in faction battles. In past battles, they would have already wiped out most of the small and intermediate factions by now and been ranked number one before they confronted Swordking and Azureriver.

"If Azureriver retreats instead of holding us here, a few of us can slip out, but they'll still be firmly in first place!"

"I never would've thought that Azureriver would do something so traitorous. Fang Hongxuan and Fang Bihan really are trash!"

The rest of the Swordking disciples were trying to console their bitter faction lord. They knew her ambitions and motivations well. Swordking had only really managed to take off because of her charisma and charm. There were many male disciples in the faction that wouldn't really be able to find it in themselves to blame her. Instead, they would only fight more fiercely and recklessly now that their situation was dire.

"We'll fight for Sister Xueyi!"

"That's right! We'll skin them for tricking us!"

"Nobody will get first place!"

As long as they used their Scarletflame Tomes in time, the risk of death was pretty low. Now that they had little left to worry about, their fighting spirits soared.

The fighters of Azureriver flooded into the valley while the disciples of Dragonmight to the south finally spotted their prey. They knew that Azureriver would betray Swordking and work with them to destroy Swordking, and were mad with fervor.

"All hail the faction lord!"

"Xuanyuan Yufeng is ruthless indeed!"

"I was wondering why the faction lord didn't execute any plans. Turns out it was here all along! He dealt with Azureriver beforehand and entrapped Swordking!"

"Jian Xueyi is truly a stubborn fool! To think that she fell for it..."

"Brothers and sisters of Dragonmight, let's crush Swordking so hard they won't be able to lift their heads for the rest of the decade!"

"They should've worked with us like Azureriver did, yet they came to provoke us instead."

Countless self-important and proud folk came flooding into the valley from the south entrance. Soon, a chaotic battle ensued.

Chapter 612 - Strongest Grand-Orient Sword

A battle on the scale of two hundred thousand people could already be considered a war. Abilities exploded, giant beasts flew around, and river water flooded all at the same time as sword ki surged. All kinds of roars and pained cries rang out across the battlefield.

Fortunately, the Swordking Faction was hidden rather deep in Silverriver Valley. There were only a few disciples from Dragonmight and Azureriver who could surround them at the same time, allowing them to barely hold on. Had they been on a flat field, they would have been easily crushed by the enemy that had three times their number. Even so, Swordking was in a really bad situation. If this went on, the longest they could last was two hours. They had nowhere else to run and could well be wiped out by the other two factions.

Usually the three years after the faction battles were when the factions changed the most. There was no doubt that Swordking would lose all their disciples. Xuanyuan Yufeng's methods were really ruthless; Jian Xueyi was far too honorable and couldn't compare to him when it came to insidious plots.

The whole battlefield shook as Dragonmight and Azureriver surrounded them without giving them a chance to escape or to take a breather. Tianming could see all that very clearly from the hill he stood on.

"Looks like Swordking is going to collapse," Lin Xiaoxiao said.

"There's still a chance, isn't there?" Tianming said plainly.

"What are you going to do? Fight thousands of them on your own?"

"Isn't that what a real hero would do?"

"Your mental fortitude is amazing. To think that you can even smile at a time like this, not to mention boast."

"Just watch," Tianming said as he gave her head a pat. "Just watch me give it my all to save Swordking from danger!"

"Just keep boasting!" Lin Xiaoxiao rubbed her head and grit her teeth. What kind of person pats someone's head for no reason?

The moment she said that, Tianming disappeared before her eyes.

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"Friend, who are you? Why haven't I seen you before?" asked a burly man.

"There's forty thousand disciples in Azureriver. Do you know all of them?" Tianming had jumped into the fray; there were people all around him, all of whom were trying to squeeze into Silverriver Valley. There were still at least twenty thousand people outside.

"That's not what I meant," the red armed man said as he looked him over. "You look rather young and fresh. Why don't we be friends? I'll look after you."

"Huh?"

"Very intimate friends, if you catch my drift," the man said as he hinted with his eyes.

"What the hell?!" Tianming suddenly felt a huge wave of humiliation. He didn't think that there would be a day when a man would l.u.s.t after him. "To hell with you!"

He sent the man flying with his black left arm.

"Why did you hit one of us?" asked a thin man nearby.

Tianming lashed out with the Three-Thousand Starfield and pulled the man over, then choked him with his black arm. "Where is your faction lord? Fang Hongxuan, where is he?"

"You're not from Azureriver?"

"That wasn't the question!" Tianming gave his stomach a punch, causing him to spit out some bile.

"Over there! They were talking there!" he hastily said.

Tianming smashed his face into the ground before disappearing. The battle was too chaotic, allowing him to slip in and out without others noticing.

"I finally found those two!"

The battlefield was huge, and there were too many people. It was really hard to find the leader under such circumstances. Fang Hongxuan and Fang Bihan were right in the middle of tens of thousands of other Azure River Faction disciples, giving orders and directing the battle. Tianming was unable to approach them at all.

"Watch the flank. Snowclear Hall, advance from there. Seal off the skies and stop them from leaving!" Fang Hongxuan ordered.

"They won't be able to hold. Swordking will be gone in an hour," Fang Bihan said with her arms crossed.

"Jian Xueyi always loves to steal the limelight, but I'm sure her confidence will tank after this mistake. This will be the end of her," Fang Hongxuan said.

"She really is naive. I didn't think she'd ask for my help after she beat me up years ago."

At the end of the day, they were simply too different. Jian Xueyi had wanted to work for a better future for all of the disciples in her faction, while all Fang Bihan cared about was her grudge. Either way, it didn't matter, because Tianming's targets were the faction lords of Dragonmight and Azure River. He stood behind them without being noticed, perfectly blending in with the crowd of people.

These two are sixth-level empyrean saints, and it won't be easy to deal with them. I guess I should bring it out, he thought as he took Grand-Orient Sword out of his spatial ring. It was the first time he had used it in this battle.

With the gold sword in his right hand and the black one in his left, he would be even faster and fiercer, allowing him to better channel the sword ki of the Hexapath Samsara Sword. He swiftly charged toward his targets. Amidst so many people, not even Xuanyuan Yufeng would dare target the faction lord for fear of ending up completely surrounded.

He sped up more and more until he became a blurry black figure with trailing white hair as he approached the siblings. His first target was Fang Bihan.

"Careful, Faction Lord!""Surprise attack!"

Some others nearby had noticed what was going on.

"What?" The two turned back in wonder. They were in their main camp, so who would be daring enough to come attack two sixth-level empyrean saints? Not to mention, if it were the other two faction lords, they would've been recognized long before making their approach.

They saw a white-haired youth blazing toward them with two swords. The moment the gold sword struck, its sword intent seemed to be an aggregate of billions of people as he executed the Mortal Dao Sword.

The two managed to react, with Fang Hongxuan taking out his sword and his sister her fine blade that was as thin as an insect's wing. They were both tribulation artifacts. However, Tianming was even faster, giving them no chance to summon their lifebound beasts back from the battlefield.

All of a sudden, he summoned all three of his lifebound beasts, sending Ying Huo and Meow Meow toward Fang Hongxuan like a bolt of lightning and a burst of flame, forcing him back.

The moment Tianming's strike connected with Fang Bihan, she was beaten back incessantly, not being able to hold her ground at all. When he attacked with his black sword, Omniscient Sword Will was converted into rage and fury. All of a sudden, a hand was lopped off.

"Aaaaaaagh!" Fang Bihan cried, startling those around her.

The hand fell into Tianming's hand, along with the spatial ring on its finger. He took the Scarletflame Tome out of the ring and tore it before tossing the hand back to her.

"Who are you?!" Fang Hongxuan snapped. He felt rage, shock, and doubt. How could someone so powerful and daring be participating in the faction battles?

However, the only answer he got was a sword.

"Kill him! Surround him and kill him!" Fang Bihan cried with a deep grimace.

Almost immediately, thousands surrounded them and chaos broke out. Even the siblings' lifebound beasts, both phoenixes, returned from the battlefield. The Sterling House of Fang was the most famous of all phoenix users across the continent, being the house of Fang Qingli and Fang Taiqing.

The two phoenixes each had a hundred and fifty stars in their eyes; they were powerful tribulation beasts. The first was black and surrounded by thunderclouds, called a Blacksky Thundercloud Phoenix, while the other was green and covered in flames, called a Greensky Blazewind Phoenix.

Though Tianming was surrounded, he was so quick that he didn't give Fang Bihan any time to take a breather. The moment she got her hand back, he was already charging at her again.

The Grand-Orient Sword unleashed the Imperealm Sword Formation, covering an area with a diameter of two kilometers around it. When Tianming had become an empyrean saint, the power of this formation soared. Terrifying gold and black sword ki automatically attacked the other disciples and lifebound beasts the moment they came in range. Tianming was basically a tank with a portable formation he could use to control the crowd.

Within the formation, Fang Hongxuan and Fang Bihan stared blankly at Tianming with his lifebound beasts. They finally knew who he was.

"It's him! The one who killed Gu Qingyao, Li Tianming!"

"How could he be so strong?!"

"Enough nonsense. Let's call more people over, break his formation, and take his weapon!" Fang Bihan said.

"Alright!" Seeing the Grand-Orient Sword made Fang Hongxuan salivate a little. A weapon with a portable formation must have at least seven or eight tribulation patterns. Where could it have come from?

More and more people charged toward him. At that instant, Lan Huang turned the terrain into an ocean. Tianming burst out of the water behind Fang Bihan. "Without your tome, you can't surrender. Now, you can only be a slave."

Chapter 613 - She's a Girl

According to the rules of the faction battles, no one was allowed to use anyone else's Scarletflame Tome. Fang Bihan's Scarletflame Tome had already been torn up by Tianming, depriving her of a chance to surrender. The rules were drafted like this in order to make the faction battles even more savage, greatly increasing the intensity of the fights.

Tianming had to end this fight as quickly as he could. So far he had managed to stop the attacks from other disciples with Impereal Sword Formation, so he only mainly had to deal with Fang Hongxuan and Fang Bihan's lifebound beasts. He chose to leave Fang Bihan to Ying Huo after cutting her hand off.

"You should try practicing the Hexapath Samara Sword as well," Tianming said.

"You don't have to tell me twice. I'll master it immediately!" Ying Huo said confidently.

"Haha oh you're so naïve. Don't come crying to me later." Tianming then tossed it toward Fang Bihan.

"What the hell!" Ying Huo said, flailing in mid air. What kind of person treated their lifebound beast like this?!

Communicating telepathically, Lan Huang and Meow Meow were cooperating together. The moment the green and black phoenix came towards Tianming, they intercepted them. Lan Huang used its Azure Oceanic Purgatory to block the flames and winds from the two phoenixes as black lightning bolts came blasting out from the thunder clouds conjured by the phoenix. Meow Meow turned into a Regal Chaosfiend and used Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape, blocking all the bolts before being slammed to the ground.

"Trying to play with my lightning?" the black phoenix said with a chuckle, looking down from high above the feline beast.

The next moment, the Regal Chaosfiend suddenly got up with Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape even stronger than before, blasting black lightning bolts all over it. "That was a rather comfortable massage! Give me more!" Meow Meow said, stretching lazily, much to the shock of the Blacksky Thundercloud Phoenix. Did the cat just absorb its ability?

"If you're not going to, then it will be my turn! Go to hell, Chicken Bro!" Meow Meow snickered sadistically, sending out the eighty-one layers of Chaos Disaster the thunderscape had gathered toward the black phoenix. It vented its frustration toward Ying Huo all at once; they were both phoenixes after all. "I want to see you try disturbing me in my sleep again! Flicking my balls? Try that now, won't you?! You can't, can you?!"

Ying Huo felt a chill from behind, only to turn back and sigh in relief that it wasn't the target of the outburst. Was Meow Meow trying to make an example of that phoenix?

The lightning bolts exploded and a charred-black bird fell from the sky. Despite having the advantage of an empyrean gold body, it couldn't compete when it came to abilities—Chaos Disaster in particular.

Meanwhile, Tianming noted that his time was running out, seeing thousands of people trying to breach his Imperealm Sword Formation.

"Right now, Ying Huo and the rest have fewer stars. Even though they're at the Empyrean Saint stage, they aren't at the fourth level yet and don't have empyrean gold bodies, which puts them at a disadvantage. I have to get them samsara manna after the faction battles. Otherwise my foes will have a huge edge over me!"

It could even be said that, compared to his power without Feiling's boost, Ying Huo and the rest were the most weaker than him they have ever been. Tianming had to solve that problem soon, for they were Primordial Chaos Beasts.

But right now he didn't have the luxury to consider such problems; he was engaged in battle against the raging Fang Hongxuan. His Thousand-Thunder Sword looked like a purple lightning bolt with thousands of small dark purple gems embedded in it, allowing electricity to spark in an arc all across it. However, it couldn't do much damage to a unique body like Tianming's.

"I see that you're so daring that you even look down on us siblings. Since you're that Jian Xueyi's new pet, I'll wipe you out to make a path for Azureriver!" As he approached, his sword formed nets of lightning around him, and with a single strike, thunder roared. Darkbolt Trifecta Slash! When the top grade empyrean-ranked battle art struck out, three black bolts of lightning jumped out like wild beasts toward Tianming.

"You really talk a lot. Don't you have other less cliché lines to say?" Tianming remained unmoving amidst the field of lightning. When his foe came charging in, he flipped the finger with his left arm and executed the Hexapath Samsara Sword.

A stream of rainbow-colored sword ki zipped toward Fang Hongxuan at blinding speeds. Right after that, Tianming demonstrated the might of billions. It was as if he ruled all over them. His mastery over the move was growing more and more, becoming closer to the original. Even now, he was still perfecting the sword intent of the Mortal Dao Sword. Back then, he could only achieve really minute mastery, but now he was a tenth of the way there. There was no way the strongest sword art on the continent was only this powerful.

The intricacy of the strike caused a turmoil across the Dimensional Battlefield's audience, though Tianming couldn't hear any of it. He was entirely focused on channeling the sword intent, trying to embody life in one sword and death in the other. It was just one move, yet there were countless variations.

The gold Grand-Orient Sword struck the Thousand-Lightning Sword countless times in a fraction of a second. Fang Hongxuan couldn't harm Tianming at all, but he slowly gave ground from the intense attacks, much to his shock.

"How could you—" Before he could finish, the black Grand-Orient Sword struck like a cobra, embedding itself in his clavicle. His bone was pierced straight through. He cried out in pain, sweat forming on his forehead as an expression of fear surfaced. Instantly, his left arm slumped down.

Tianming's next strike was even more ferocious. With a simple flick of the wrist, the Grand-Orient Sword's tip cut the finger off from his left hand, allowing him to take the spatial ring and completely eradicating the finger at the same time.

Once more, Fang Hongxuan cried out in abject pain as his face paled. The sword in his right hand was still thrusting, only to be blocked by Tianming's gold Grand-Orient Sword. Somehow, he felt like he was fighting two people at once. That was the main advantage of splitting the Grand-Orient Sword; it was like each one had a mind of its own.

"My Scarletflame Tome!" he cried. Tianming had immediately tossed the ring into the ocean, so it was practically impossible to recover.

"It's no more." Tianming cracked a smile as he spun the Grand-Orient Sword around before tapping Fang Hongxuan's head as he would a vegetable on the chopping block. It caused him to bleed and almost made him faint.

"How could you be so strong?! What are you going to do?!"

"Don't worry, as long as you're obedient, I'll spare you." The smile on Tianming's face gave him a bad feeling.

Tianming bound him tightly with the Three-Thousand Starfield and claimed his sword for himself. Now, Fang Hongxuan was his to play with as he pleased.

Now that that was done, Tianming's eyes darted around the battlefield. He saw that Meow Meow and Lan Huang were at their limits—their opponents were much stronger than them, so they could only buy time. Ying Huo, however, was doing much better against the handless Fang Bihan.

She was trying to ignore Ying Huo and work with her brother to stop Tianming, but she was too late. Ying Huo took the chance to attack her from behind in a pincer attack with Tianming from the front, using Ninenether Fiendgod Claw. She was just a helpless girl.

"I surrender!" she said, casting her sword away and lifting both arms in the air.

"Now that's more like it!" Given that he was about to be overwhelmed by the disciples of the Azureriver Faction, he would have had to kill them if they didn't surrender. Fortunately, he changed his claw to a normal slap on her head, causing her to spit up blood. She was about to curse about being hit after surrendering, but had no chance when Three-Thousand Starfield wrapped around her.

"If you move, I'll tear them to shreds!" His voice rang throughout the battlefield. The siblings, having experienced his ruthlessness, didn't dare to even twitch. Tianming had his lifebound beasts come back and took Lan Huang back into his lifebound space for convenience, leaving Ying Huo and Meow Meow behind, each perching on one sibling's head respectively.

They smiled as they watched the other disciples still being shredded by the Imperealm Sword Formation. Most of them were sky saints, and unable to deal with the sword ki at all. Quite a few

experienced ones knew to stay behind without charging in. By the time they arrived, Tianming had taken their lords captive.

"Have your subordinates stand down or you'll lose your remaining fingers!" Tianming grabbed his left hand that only had four fingers remaining.

"Forget it!" he cried.

"Oh? You want to do this the hard way, do you?" Tianming immediately squashed his pinky finger flat.

His cry of agony was so loud that it echoed across the entire battlefield. "Li Tianming, do you ever consider the consequences of your actions? This is the Archaion Sect!" he said, his face pale.

Chapter 614 - Turning the Tables Around

"Don't try scaring me. Everyone exaggerated to me and said that this place is purgatory after I came to the Human Branch. They told me there were all kinds of people here, murderers and whatnot. You think I'm here for charity?" Tianming refuted.

"Stop right there! Everyone stop!" Fang Hongxuan had beads of sweat on his forehead. He immediately admitted defeat, seeing that Tianming was about to continue. His yell made the disciples of the Azureriver Faction realize that this was trouble. All of them stopped as they looked at this scene, dumbstruck.

"The faction lord and deputy faction lord have been captured by him...."

"Who is he?"

"I think he's Li Tianming from the Swordking Faction. He was previously a deacon in the Dragonmight Faction, but they expelled him."

"A deacon with that strength? He just took down our faction lord and deputy faction lord while surrounded by an army of tens of thousands!"

"Isn't he a little too powerful?" Despite the Azureriver Faction having the advantage in quantity, they had no idea what to do with their leaders captured. Their five hall lords were still fighting in the Silverriver Valley.

"Tianming, I can get them to leave you alone and let you leave here unharmed. Our Azureriver Faction can even withdraw our troops as long as you let us go!" Fang Hongxuan guessed what was going through Tianming's mind. Two of his fingers were broken, and it had a significant impact on his future.

"Withdraw?" Tianming smiled. "Your sister's hand is severed, but she can still reconnect it. Although it might affect her in the future, at least her hands are still intact. But if I crush all your fingers, you can only fight with your mouth in the future."

"What do you want?! Isn't it enough for us to withdraw? The Swordking Faction didn't suffer any losses. Don't take it too far!" Fang Bihan raged. Everyone from the Azureriver Faction surrounded Tianming, and there were thousands of them with their lifebound beasts.

"I'm not taking it too far. I want you guys to keep your promises!" Tianming said.

“What do you mean?”

“Command the forty thousand from the Azureriver Faction to head south and attack the Dragonmight Faction with the Swordking Faction,” Tianming said, his voice filled with oppression.

“Dream on! Do you think you can get the entire Azureriver Faction to die for you by capturing the two of us? The Azureriver Faction doesn’t belong to us exclusively! We’d be in trouble in the future if we attacked the Dragonmight Faction. So do you think that everyone’s a fool?” Fang Bihan stretched her neck and looked at Tianming ferociously.

“Dream on! I won’t sacrifice the prospects of my brothers in the Azureriver Faction even if you crush all my fingers!” Fang Hongxuan refuted.

“Big Brother, you’re right!” Fang Bihan said. “Li Tianming, we’re geniuses from the Sterling House of Fang, and you’ll die if you dare to touch us! We’re not from the Human Branch, but Earth Branch!”

“You guys are pretty tough, aren’t you?” Tianming smiled.

The Fang siblings sneered when they saw that their threat was effective.

“Li Tianming, the disciples of my Sterling House of Fang will kill you for breaking my big brother’s fingers. You have no roots here, so who do you think you are? People like you will disappear and die without anyone knowing!” Fang Bihan continued.

“That’s something to talk about after we’re out. But don’t blame me for being ruthless, since you guys are being disobedient now.” Tianming’s face sank, and he said, “Ying Huo, castrate the man and strip the woman. Let disciples of the Azureriver Faction enjoy the body of their gorgeous deputy faction lord.”

His words immediately made Fang Hongxuan and Fang Bihan’s countenances change. Their faces turned purple and they began trembling. Fang Bihan screamed, “Li Tianming, You’re Despicable!!”

“Thank you for the compliment,” Tianming smiled. “But your body will only be enjoyed by disciples of the Azureriver Faction. I have no interest in it, because I don’t want to have sore eyes.”

“I like that! It’s exciting!” Ying Huo’s eyes lit up and it flew three inches below Fang Hongxuan’s navel. “I’ll burn your little ding dong off. In the future, you’ll be known as Eunuch Fang. Life is long, but you’ll only be able to look at beautiful women with tears streaming down your cheeks from now on. How pitiful...” it said with a smile.

Fang Hongxuan was dumbfounded.

“Chicken Bro, strip her first! My friend wants to see it!” Meow Meow pointed at Fang Bihan.

“Your friend? You’re just saying that for yourself!” Ying Huo let out a lecherous smile that sent a chill down Fang Bihan’s spine.

“Hurry up. Stop wasting time,” Tianming urged.

“Alrighty!”

But just when the greatest show of the year was about to unfold, Fang Hongxuan finally cried, “I admit defeat! I surrender! Please don’t do this. Li Tianming, I beg you!”

Even Fang Bihan shrank back. She knew it would feel worse than death if she was stripped here for tens of thousands to see.

“Haha, wouldn’t it be fine if you’d said that earlier? I was still under the impression that you would rather die than yield.” Tianming smiled, and his words made the Fang siblings lower their heads in shame.

“That thing is more important than your fingers?” Tianming asked, looking at Fang Hongxuan.

“I’m the only male in three generations of my lineage!” Fang Hongxuan said with his face blushed.

“Alright, that’s enough. You’re sensible today, and I pray that you’ll have plenty of kids in the future.” Tianming wasn’t thinking of humiliating them, he just wanted to scare them a little. He continued, “It’s up to you now.”

Fang Hongxuan was so humiliated that he could die, but for the sake of having his lineage passed down, he still put up with it. The so-called ‘prospects’ of his brothers were all rubbish. After he submitted, he immediately gave an order, “Brothers of the Azureriver Faction, withdraw from the Silverriver Valley!”

“Withdraw!” Fang Bihan yelled as well. Their voices were easily recognizable, not to mention that there were also two phoenixes passing the orders through their abilities as well. In the end, the Azureriver Faction’s disciples, who were ferociously fighting in the Silverriver Valley, had no choice but to withdraw.

“What’s going on?”

“Who knows.”

“Let me ask around.”

“What?! The faction lord and deputy faction lord were captured?”

“By who?!”

“Swordking Faction’s Li Tianming!”

“Who the hell is that?”

“Beats me!”

“You can tell it’s an idiot from the name.”

But just when they withdrew, another order came. Fang Hongxuan’s voice echoed out, “Disciples of the Azureriver Faction, the plan has changed. The Swordking Faction is our real ally, and the time has come to take down the Dragonmight Faction in one swoop! Kill!”

“Does the faction lord have a screw loose somewhere? He first told us to work with the Swordking Faction, then the Dragonmight Faction. Now we’re going to work with the Swordking Faction again? Just who the hell am I supposed to fight?”

“Carry out the order. How can you guess the faction lord’s wisdom with your intelligence? How would it be a strategy if you’ve guessed it?”

“But why’d I hear that the faction lord was captured?”

“No idea, but don’t believe these false rumors on the battlefield. Maybe it came from an enemy to affect our morale!”

Fang Hongxuan and Fang Bihan first got the Azureriver Faction to pull out, then turned around and attacked the Dragonmight Faction in the south.

Everyone carried out the order despite being confused. They were, after all, a well-trained army. The transmission of orders was purely relying on the faction lord’s yell, and the disciples could only roughly hear it. But that didn’t matter, because they just had to listen to orders.

“Brothers! It’s time for us to take down the Dragonmight Faction!”

“Brothers and sisters of the Azureriver Faction! Topple history together with me and win glory for our Azureriver Faction! Let the entire sect look upon us with admiration!” Fang Hongxuan’s voice echoed out on the battlefield once more.

“You’re proficient in boosting morale?” Tianming asked.

“It’s a skill that every faction lord has to possess,” Fang Hongxuan declared.

“Alright, alright. Good job, and I can tell that you’ll have plenty of kids in the future,” Tianming smiled.

Just like that, everyone from the Azureriver Faction was confused as they went around the surrounding peaks under Fang Hongxuan’s orders and charged at the Dragonmight Faction.

.....

It was a defensive battle for the Swordking Faction, and their disciples were fighting with their blood boiling. They were still young and ignorant, and they didn’t have to care about death or their prospects. Everything would be fine as long as they could fight with their companions. People would always pursue something beyond life and prospects.

The Swordking disciples brandished their swords. This battle today taught them perseverance and bravery. It was a precious life experience, and would affect their entire life.

“Hold! Don’t admit defeat!”

“Let them take a look at who we are!”

“Even if the Dragonmight Faction is a dragon today, we’ll still pry their teeth out!”

“Killing one is plenty, killing two is a profit!”

This was the southern battlefield, and the disciples still had no idea that the northern battlefield had been emptied.

“What’s going on?” Jian Xueyi was fighting in the southern battlefield, and Zhao Yijue joined up with them along with the troops from the northern battlefield right at that moment.

“Faction lord, there’s been a change in the situation,” Zhao Yijue said with an odd expression. There was a mixture of joy, sorrow, relief, and depression on his face.

“What is it?” Jian Xueyi immediately pulled out from the battlefield.

“The Azureriver Faction suddenly retreated!” said Zhao Yijue.

“You’re not joking with me, are you?” Jian Xueyi’s eyes lit up.

“I’m not,” replied Zhao Yijue.

They still had several hall lords and ten-odd chiefs. The situation was so much better now, and it would be easier for them.

“The Azureriver Faction isn’t afraid that the Dragonmight Faction will cause trouble for them after the faction battle is over? The two of them are so timid, so how can they possibly make such a bold decision?” Jian Xueyi couldn’t believe it.

“I heard from the informants that there’s actually a reason why they retreated.” Zhao Yijue lowered his head.

“What’s the reason?” Everyone came up and surrounded him.

“They said that the Swordking Faction’s Li Tianming defeated the Fang siblings and captured them, using them as hostages to force them to withdraw.”

Chapter 615 - Heart Beating

“Li Tianming?” Jian Xueyi was briefly stunned before she shook her head with a smile, “Stop bullshitting. How could he possibly accomplish something like this?”

“Yeah. How can it possibly be him?”

“Aside from Xuanyuan Yufeng, no one can defeat the Fang siblings teaming up. Moreover, there’s no way Xuanyuan Yufeng could do it in the enemy’s base. The Fang siblings probably want to withdraw for us to fight it out with the Dragonmight Faction so that they can obtain first place in the faction battles,” said Jian Xueyi.

“Faction lord, that’s what I thought at first. But at least twenty informants said that, and two of them even claimed to have seen it with their own eyes. Furthermore, we captured a dozen disciples from the Azureriver Faction and all of them heard of it as well. Furthermore....”

“Furthermore what?” Jian Xueyi was dumbfounded. Everyone else also looked at each other with disbelief. After all, a feat like this was simply too difficult.

“Li Tianming captured the Fang siblings, and he’s now controlling the entire Azureriver Faction to head south and attack the Dragonmight Faction’s rear!” Zhao Yijue said in a hoarse voice. He couldn’t see through Tianming previously, and now he felt awkward when he had to explain his accomplishments to Jian Xueyi.

This was the Swordking Faction’s dawn of hope in this desperate situation. Zhao Yijue wasn’t jealous. He was happy, but also very embarrassed.

“That’s easy. Fly up and see where the Azureriver Faction is going!” Jian Xueyi could no longer be bothered to say more. She rushed to the top of Silverriver Valley and looked down the mountain. She

could see the forty thousand people from the Azureriver Faction, and none of them ran. Rather, they were heading toward the Dragonmight Faction.

“Holy shit, it’s true?” Jian Xueyi cursed out. “This was really done by Li Tianming? Why is my heart beating so quickly?”

She fell into a daze when she recovered from her shock. She had seen the battle between Tianming and Gu Qingyao. Tianming had obviously been going all out at that time, and he still couldn’t do something like this even if he went all out.

When she returned to the crowd, everyone began asking her about the current situation. Jian Xueyi excitedly said, “The Azureriver Faction is really heading south, and they’ll encounter the Dragonmight Faction in fifteen minutes. It’ll be our best opportunity to fight back when they attack the Dragonmight Faction.”

“Faction lord, are you serious? Li Tianming really did it?” everyone asked in surprise. This was a nirvana for them.

“I don’t know. I can’t be sure for now, but my blood is already boiling,” Jian Xueyi laughed and started capering around.

“Faction lord, please pay attention to your image.”

“Cough, cough! Oh, yeah.”

She naturally had to make arrangements for this great opportunity. Simultaneously, a hall lord with the name Qian Feng returned from the battlefield with the Dragonmight Faction. The Swordking Faction was blocking the south, and the Dragonmight Faction could only squeeze in a portion of people. So the southern battlefield was well-fortified.

“What’s the matter?” Jian Xueyi asked.

“Faction lord, I just captured a deacon from the Dragonmight Faction and I found some odd intelligence from him,” said Qian Feng.

“What is it?”

“He said that since the beginning of the faction battle, Li Tianming has been specially targeting their scouts and even killed two hall lords, Gu Shaoyu and Xuanyuan Ganggang. He alone took down 10% of the Dragonmight Faction’s forces. If he hadn’t been targeting the scouts to disrupt the Dragonmight Faction’s rhythm, they would’ve already gotten first by now,” said Qian Feng. His words dropped a bomb in the surroundings and everyone fell into silence.

“Wow, a hero has appeared!” Jian Xueyi’s eyes widened with hearts reflected in her pupils.

“Are they sure it was him?”

“Isn’t that a little overpowered? He alone did this to the Dragonmight Faction? Not to mention that he even charged into the Azureriver Faction’s army and captured their faction lord and deputy faction lord, holding them hostage to attack the Dragonmight Faction.”

“Holy shit, he’s simply godly!” Everyone had admiration written on their faces.

“Quick, go and investigate!” Jian Xueyi said.

“Investigate what?”

“Li Tianming and Lin Xiaoxiao! Find out if they’re a couple!”

“Why?”

“I’m gonna snatch him over for myself!” Jian Xueyi smiled.

“Wow, Faction Lord. That’s shrewd. Do you know how many hearts you’ll break if disciples of the Swordking Faction hear that?” Qian Feng replied.

“Haha! I’m just joking with you, but all of you listen up. Don’t waste the opportunity that he’s given us! Go make preparations immediately to besiege the Dragonmight Faction with the Azureriver Faction!” Jian Xueyi ordered.

“Faction Lord, we can actually choose to retreat and let them kill each other. This way, we can sit firmly on first place,” Zhao Yijue suggested.

“No, we can’t do that,” Jian Xueyi said.

“Why not? The Dragonmight Faction isn’t weak, and we’ll also suffer a great loss. It’s unsure if we’ll even make it out. But we can firmly sit on first if we leave and let them fight among themselves,” Zhao Yijue analyzed.

“No means no,” Jian Xueyi said solemnly.

“Why?”

“I have a feeling that Li Tianming wants to get rid of the Dragonmight Faction.”

“Faction Lord, isn’t the prospects of our disciples more important here?” Zhao Yijue said in a strange tone. While they argued, everyone in the surroundings fell into silence.

“Prospects are equally as important as courage, passion, and loyalty. We won’t have an opportunity to turn the tables around if it weren’t for Li Tianming. We’ve held our tails between our legs long enough before the Dragonmight Faction, and I don’t want to be a coward anymore. Are you satisfied with that reason?!” Jian Xueyi said solemnly.

“Yeah, what you said makes sense,” replied Zhao Yijue.

“Deputy Faction Lord, I support the Faction Lord,” said Qian Feng.

“I support the Faction Lord as well. I don’t want to be a coward,” said another chief.

“I concur!”

“Me too!”

Zhao Yijue gritted his teeth and inwardly felt uncomfortable. Right at that moment, a figure descended from above dragging a chain. It was Tianming. He brought the Fang siblings before everyone and asked, "What are you guys doing here? This is a great opportunity to retaliate!"

Everyone was dumbstruck looking at him.

"What's the matter? You guys have never seen someone as handsome as me?" Tianming asked.

"Handsome? You're simply an animal!" Jian Xueyi said.

"Are you praising or cursing me?" Tianming smiled bitterly.

"I'm naturally praising you. I would've made a huge mistake this time if it wasn't for you. I'll definitely cry my eyes out when I go back," Jian Xueyi said with red eyes.

"Then let me discuss something with you," Tianming smiled.

"What is it?"

"I want to become the Faction Lord. It's fine just briefly. You can be the Deputy Faction Lord for now, and I'll return the position later," said Tianming.

The crowd fell into silence once again. It was a little too fierce for Tianming to come and demand to be the Faction Lord. The Swordking Faction was brought up by Jian Xueyi alone, and everyone was accustomed to her leadership.

"No way! You've finally exposed your ambitions!" Zhao Yijue sneered.

"Shut up. There's no place for you to talk here," said Tianming.

Jian Xueyi stopped Zhao Yijue from speaking any further, and she looked at Tianming, "Tell me. What's your motive?"

"My goal is the Heaven Cauldron. So I have to make the Swordking Faction take first place. But you don't have to worry about it. You're still the one in charge here, and I'm only here for the title. I'll return the Faction Lord position after I go to the Heaven Cauldron," Tianming smiled.

"Sure, we'll go with that then, Faction Lord!" Jian Xueyi waved her hand and made her decision. She continued, "I actually hesitated a moment earlier because I was afraid that the brothers and sisters wouldn't be able to accept you. But since you're only here for the title, you can have it."

"Big Sister, you're a straightforward person," Tianming smiled.

Jian Xueyi blushed and asked, "Tianming, can I ask you a question?"

"Go ahead."

"Do you want to be buried with me?"

"What the hell?" Wasn't that a cheesy pick-up line? Wasn't that a little too straightforward?

"Big Sister, I already have someone I love," Tianming replied with his face blushed.

“Okay, get lost then. Don’t come and show how handsome you are in front of me again since you’re already someone’s husband!” Jian Xueyi gnashed her teeth.

“Alrighty. I’ll leave these two to you, and I’ll make a trip first. Remember to fight back, and don’t pick the wrong time.” Tianming handed the Fang siblings over to Jian Xueyi.

“Faction Lord, where are you going?”

“Well, since I’m the Faction Lord now, I naturally have to go and crush the enemy Faction Lord!”

“You’re addicted to acting cool? Be careful lest Xuanyuan Yufeng knocks your teeth out.”

“Then I’ll crush his balls!” Tianming grabbed in the air with a ferocious expression.

“Haha!” everyone laughed at Tianming’s words. They still remembered that those were Jian Xueyi’s words when they had first met Tianming.

.....

In an elegant room in the Dimensional Battlefield.

“Fang Xingque, you see that?!”

This room had the best view of the faction battle, and there were about thirty youngsters from the Sterling House of Fang gathered here. They were all elites, and there was a young man dressed in a gorgeous robe with long, rainbow-colored hair. He sat on the main seat with his legs hanging on the armrest, tapping a tiny black bean with his hand.

His eyes were small and sharp under his rainbow hair and he was staring at the white-haired youth in the Illusory Battlefield. Fang Xingque took a bite and spat out the fragments of the black beans on the back of another disciple from the Sterling House of Fang. But that person lowered his head and didn’t say anything. Fang Xingque said, “I’m not blind.”

All thirty youngsters from the Sterling House of Fang had ugly faces.

“This person dared to humiliate members of our Sterling House of Fang in public. He’s clearly not giving us any face! The faction battle might be the Human Branch’s matter, but you should give face when needed. After all, we’re all here to watch a performance, not to feel depressed and unhappy. Why don’t we look into this fellow and—”

“Look into what?” Fang Xingque glared at that person.

“His information.”

“Look into your mother!” Fang Xingque smashed the black bean on his face and continued, “Get rid of this person for me within three days after the faction battle. I want him to die as terribly as he can. If he’s still alive after three days, you’ll be the one to die! Screw that! Who the hell does he think he is to humiliate someone from the Sterling House of Fang? Does he think that I, Fang Xingque, am invisible?”

“Xingque, we should look into him just to be safe.” a woman said out beside him.

“Look into him? Then let me ask you. Who’s my grandmother?” Fang Xingque hung his legs up on the chair.

“The Godservant Hall’s Palace Lord.”

“Who’s my father?”

“Sect master of the Heaven Branch.”

“Hear that? I, Fang Xingque, am the king in the Archaion Sect. So why would I need to look into someone?”

“Understood!”

Chapter 616 - Battle of the Three Factions

Within the shadows of the battlefield stood a pair of figures. Xuanyuan Muxue asked, “Big Brother Yuheng, what did you say earlier?”

“He’s somewhat capable. Continue watching.”

“Why do I feel that despite his low cultivation when he came here, he’s been rapidly improving. Her Eminence has good eyesight indeed,” said Xuanyuan Muxue.

“Let’s just continue watching.”

“Big Brother Yuheng, I suggest you not be enemies with him. He’s someone the eminent greatly values, and the eminent is your conviction.”

“You said that you were born for the eminent, and you’re even willing to die for the eminent. So why are you targeting someone around her? Aren’t you crossing a boundary?” Xuanyuan Muxue asked.

“Muxue, you’re still young. Stop talking nonsense,” Xuanyuan Yuheng said solemnly.

“Okay.”

“Furthermore, can you still maintain that kind of mood if he defeats me?” Xuanyuan Yuheng sneered, which made Xuanyuan Muxue fall into silence.

“The Archaion Divine Realm ultimately belongs to the Archaic House of Xuanyuan. It’s the first god and Her Eminence who created the glory in the Archaion Sect, not the Sterling House of Fang, Draconis House of Jian, or someone with the surname Li! Her Eminence belongs to our clan, so why does she have to bring up an outsider?” Xuanyuan Yuheng’s eyes grew dark.

“Can’t you treat it with a normal mindset?”

“Not possible, because we’re the Archaic House of Xuanyuan and we were once the overlord of the Flameyellow continent! We once ruled everything! The eminent’s return will allow our clan to rule this world once more. So what’s it got to do with an outsider?” Xuanyuan Yuheng gritted his teeth.

“Big Brother Yuheng, I’ve actually seen the eminent once.” Xuanyuan Muxue lowered her head.

“What do you mean?”

“I think that Her Eminence is a little childish.”

“And how did you manage to tell?”

“From her words and actions. It’s just a feeling. I felt that she was someone at the same age as me when I saw her, the kind I can play together with. She’s not a god that I can only look up to,” said Xuanyuan Muxue.

“Muxue.”

“Yes?”

“I’ll kill you if you ever dare to say such words again.” Xuanyuan Yuheng turned around and glared at Xuanyuan Muxue.

“I got it.”

.....

In the First Sword Pavilion located at the Human Branch’s Sacred Grounds, a middle-aged man stood outside the pavilion and reported, “Sect Master, Jian Binghe requests to meet you.”

The door opened, and Jian Wuyi came out. He asked, “Aren’t you presiding over the Faction Battle? Why are you here?”

“Sect Master, there’s a disciple by the name of Li Tianming, and I find that there’s something unusual about his sword art. I once researched the Hexapath Sword God’s Hexapath Samsara Sword. The sword art used by this Li Tianming shares an uncanny resemblance with the Hexapath Samsara Sword, and I think it’s necessary for you to take a look,” Jian Binghe lowered his head.

“H-He used it?” Jian Wuyi asked in a hoarse voice.

“I personally think that he’s already reached lesser mastery in it.”

A loud explosion rang out, and when Jian Binghe raised his head he saw Jian Wuyi crushing a stone pillar beside the door with a gloomy expression.

.....

In the Illusory Battlefield.

Jian Xueyi’s sharp voice echoed throughout the battlefield, “Fight back!!”

“Faction Lord, you seem a little too excited today.” Qian Feng smiled. Everyone knew that Tianming was only the Faction Lord in name, and their loyalty would always be with Jian Xueyi.

“I’m heartbroken... I want to beat up someone right now!” Jian Xueyi said furiously.

“Faction Lord, stop talking about it. You haven’t even gotten started with it, so how did you fall out of love? If we’re going according to what you said, then the disciples in the Swordking Faction fall out of love every day.” Qian Feng smiled.

“Shut up!”

“Why don’t you consider me? I have land back at home. Not only is it enough for us to be buried together, but our lifebound beasts as well,” Qian Feng laughed.

“Try saying one more word and see what I’ll do to your balls!”

“Holy shit! Faction Lord, please spare me!” Qian Feng immediately ran off.

Under Jian Xueyi’s orders, the Swordking Faction already knew that Tianming had come out of nowhere and ignited the battlefield. All of them had anger pent up in their chests after so long, and no one would be happy to withdraw right now just to preserve their position in the ranking. Then they wouldn’t think that they deserve the ranking righteously.

“Everyone from the Swordking Faction, this is the time for us to fight back, topple history, and forge miracles with our own hands! I only hope that when we become old, we’ll still have this memory of us fighting for our dreams fearlessly!” Jian Xueyi made her declaration, and was also touched by her own words.

The Swordking Faction’s disciples wore a strange expression when they heard that, but they didn’t react to her words much. “Hey, the cutie got touched by her own words again.”

Right at this moment, Qian Feng yelled out, “Anyone who defeats a hundred from the Dragonmight Faction will be rewarded with the Faction Lord’s personal undergarment!”

“Holy shit!” The Swordking Faction exploded, and Jian Xueyi was left dumbstruck.

“Faction Lord, just take out one undergarment next time. We’ll definitely go berserk and beat up anyone who stands in our way!” Qian Feng laughed.

“QIAN FENG! ARGFFFFHHHH! STOP RIGHT THERE!” Jian Xueyi yelled with her face turning red.

.....

The three factions clashed outside the Silverriver Valley. The Dragonmight Faction was trying to squeeze out the Swordking Faction, but they never expected that the Swordking Faction’s retaliation would suddenly grow stronger.

Not only was the Swordking Faction still standing strong, but they were charging out of the valley like madmen. They attacked everyone they saw, and they had a blissful expression on their faces whenever they counted to a hundred. The sudden outburst of the Swordking Faction’s fighting strength toppled the Dragonmight Faction’s imagination.

“What the hell did they eat? Why are they so ferocious?” The Dragonmight Faction was dumbfounded. Worst of all, there were still many people queuing to enter Silverriver Valley, and they were caught by surprise by this bunch who suddenly charged out.

“Reporting! The Azureriver Faction has betrayed us!”

The Dragonmight Faction had already detected the Azureriver Faction’s objective. More importantly, they couldn’t find Xuanyuan Yufeng with how chaotic the battlefield had become. Just like that, the Dragonmight Faction plunged into chaos when they faced the Swordking Faction’s retaliation and Azureriver Faction’s assault.

“Brothers of the Azureriver Faction, what are you trying to do?” a Dragonmight Faction’s disciple roared out furiously.

“I have no idea. We were instructed by the faction lord to hit you guys!”

“Is your faction lord insane? He’ll be beaten to death by our faction lord when we get out!” the Dragonmight Faction’s disciple refuted.

“Let’s just get this done and finished with. They’re all a bunch of lunatics, and I have no idea what they’re trying to do.”

“Forget it, let’s not fight anymore. I surrender! I have no idea what’s going on.”

That was just a small example, but it was what everyone from the Azureriver and Dragonmight Faction’s disciples felt. After all, the factions weren’t an official army; many disciples only joined to obtain cultivation resources and facilitate sect missions. There was no way they would give their lives for their faction.

There were many people who surrendered, and no one would realize anything even if they surrendered. With that, the Swordking Faction’s fierce retaliation badly startled the Dragonmight Faction.

Up in the sky, the Azureriver Faction and half of the Dragonmight Faction’s disciples were fighting. When forty thousand from the Swordking Faction charged out of the valley, they tore a hole in the Dragonmight Faction’s formation.

“We’re besieged?”

“Run!”

“What the hell is going on? Who are our allies here?”

“Has the Swordking Faction gone insane? Beat them to death!”

“I’m leaving. I’m not playing anymore!”

The Dragonmight Faction’s morale began collapsing. The Swordking Faction was like a sword stabbing into their formation, and the Azureriver Faction’s assault also threw the Dragonmight Faction into chaos. All of this was seen by Xuanyuan Yufeng.

“Faction Lord, what’s going on?” Xuanyuan Xiong, the Deputy Faction Lord, was dumbfounded.

Xuanyuan Yufeng’s eyes were dark and he was clenching his fists. He’d once boasted in the Earth Branch that he would give the brothers of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan a great show. But he lost the rhythm right from the beginning due to a flea. Not to mention that when he had just revealed his trump card, the Azureriver Faction, he got hit in his own foot by it.

He still had no idea why the Azureriver Faction betrayed him. Didn’t he make threats and promises before the faction battle?

“Report!” A scout came right at that moment. “Faction Lord, the Swordking Faction’s Li Tianming charged into the Azureriver Faction and defeated the Fang siblings. He then held them hostage and forced the Azureriver Faction to change sides!”

For a moment, everyone fell into silence. Xuanyuan Xiong raged, "It's that Li Tianming again!"

"How the hell did he even do it? The Fang siblings aren't weak!"

"I really have nothing to say now. One person led the Azure River Faction by the nose?"

Everyone looked at Xuanyuan Yufeng blankly. Xuanyuan Yufeng was shocked, and his eyes were bloodshot.

"Faction Lord, please calm down. We haven't lost yet, and we can intimidate the Azure River Faction with our strength and get rid of the Swordking Faction," said Xuanyuan Xiong.

"I'm not angry." Xuanyuan Yufeng smiled coldly. "But this person managed to force my murderous intent out. Go out and find him immediately! I'll personally send him on the road!"

"Yes!"

The order spread. Everyone knew that Xuanyuan Yufeng was genuinely furious right now. All along, he had thought that everything was within his grasp, but it was entirely ruined by Tianming. He was indeed talented when it came to making a strategy, and he was also proficient at grasping people's hearts. But an individual's strength was nothing on the battlefield.

Suddenly, a burst of loud laughter rang out, "You're looking for I, your father? I'm right here. Xuanyuan Yufeng, come out and fight!"

When everyone turned around, they saw a white-haired youth standing there with a sword plunged into the ground. He was stepping on a Dragonmight Faction's Hall Lord, and a little bird stood on his shoulder. He looked at Xuanyuan Yufeng with a smirk.

"I'm calling out to you, that three-eyed fugly over there. Stop looking at me and fight. Don't waste my time," said Tianming.

The entire hierarchy of the Dragonmight Faction was enveloped in rage, and this place became the center of focus on this battlefield.

In the next second, Xuanyuan Yufeng dashed out and tore his own Scarletflame Tome to pieces.

Chapter 617 - The Eternal Clan

The duel was growing faster and more furious. Many others who still weren't able to react could only choose to dodge aside. They all now knew that Xuanyuan Yufeng found Tianming a huge pain in the neck. Based on the cold expression he shot at Tianming, he was definitely planning to kill him.

All of a sudden, a spear appeared in Xuanyuan Yufeng's hands and he made his charge toward Tianming. With a loud clang, the Grand-Orient Sword clashed with the spear, Dragonking. From the outset, it looked like Tianming was having a rough time, being forced back tens of meters while the ground he stood on crumbled.

"A tribulation artifact with two tribulation patterns?" Tianming noted as he gave the white spear a glance. The spear's body was covered in dense white dragon scales, its tip peerlessly sharp. There was a slight curve to it, making it look a little like a dragon's fang and allowing it to be used for thrusting and

slashing attacks alike. It seemed really fearsome, given its terrifying piercing potential, as was apparent from the first clash that caused quite a few bloody spots to manifest on Tianming's arm.

"I finally see you, little flea," Xuanyuan Yufeng said, squinting hard at him. As he spoke, black dragon scales surfaced from the spot between his eyes and spread out over his body within three short breaths of time. It also adorned him with some draconic bone spikes, not to mention the dragon tail that sprouted from his back. It was as if everything on his body was turning into a dragon—including his head, which now had many draconic features. He was now a dragon-man hybrid. Xuanyuan Ganggang had also had a similar change when Tianming fought him, but it wasn't as drastic as he had been killed by Tianming with one strike.

Is this the power of the bloodline of the Trioptic True Dragon Branch? When Tianming was investigating Xuanyuan Yufeng, he learned that the Trioptic True Dragon Branch of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan had a terrifying bloodline ability called Dragonforming. As long as they reached the fourth level of the Empyrean Saint stage and awakened their empyrean gold body, they would be able to start dragonforming with their third eye and cultivating special battle arts suited to their physique. That allowed them to rank among the top of the whole Flameyellow Continent in terms of combat power.

Xuanyuan Yufeng's third eye was black, so the special body-refining technique he cultivated was probably the Onyx Draconian Art. In his current powered up form, he was known as an Onyx Draconian.

Now, Xuanyuan Yufeng looked far more terrifying and domineering. More frighteningly, the three gigantic black dragons flying across the battlefield each had a hundred and eighty stars in their eyes, marking them as peak-tier tribulation beasts. Xuanyuan Yufeng was also a triple beastmaster. There was no doubt that he was far more powerful than Fang Bihan and Fang Hongxuan combined with all three purple-eyed truefiend dragons of his.

"Our faction lord is invincible!"

Many Dragonmight disciples were cheering at the sight of Xuanyuan Yufeng. Nobody had ever dared to fight an enraged Xuanyuan Yufeng. Many of them stopped fighting in anticipation of the epic battle that was to come.

Xuanyuan Yufeng was no doubt among the strongest fighters in the faction battles, but the fact that Tianming was able to take the faction lord of Azureriver Faction hostage amidst tens of thousands of troops was a sign of his impressive ability. Nowadays, Tianming's status as a triple beastmaster was far from secret. Lan Huang, a two-headed dragon itself, was far too weird compared to a true dragon like Xuanyuan Yufeng's, but it was just a beast with some eighty stars. The weird part was how it was even larger than the purple-eyed truefiend dragons, despite having so much fewer stars in comparison. As for Meow Meow and Ying Huo, they could barely be spotted.

Tianming's white hair fluttered as he held the split Grand-Orient Sword, one in each hand. One was a heavy, intense greatsword while the other was a fine, vicious longsword.

"Li Tianming, you nameless cur, you've ruined many of my plans. For that, you shall pay with your life," Xuanyuan Yufeng announced.

"Since that's the case, I don't mind sending you on your way to the afterlife!" Tianming said.

"Come on then!"

"Happy to oblige!"

The fight involved two beastmasters and six lifebound beasts. Since it seemed like Ying Huo and the rest were at a disadvantage, Tianming planned to remain close to their side. His foe was a darkness type, after all.

Lan Huang unleashed the Azure Oceanic Purgatory once more. It was a really versatile ability that could cause the ocean beneath their feet to continue expanding. With its huge body as a firm grounding, it was as if Tianming was fighting with a mountain at his back. However, his foe's lifebound beasts weren't easy to deal with in the least.

Right at the start of the battle, they kept unleashing purple dragon breaths that turned into a toxic miasma that covered the entire battlefield. Upon closer inspection, it wasn't just a fog of poison, but rather drops of purple blood. The blood could turn into many little dragons that could gnaw at their bodies.

It went without question that the most eye-catching part of battles was the abilities. In an instant, flame, lightning, water, earth, and poison flashed across the battlefield. Ying Huo manifested Infernal Armor on Tianming, giving him the ability to temporarily hold his own against the toxic cloud's attacks and burning any of the droplets that reached him. He and his lifebound beasts were going to defend against the dragon's ability, rather than counter it, but that wasn't the end. The dragons were even better at fighting in melee.

"Get down!"

Ying Huo aside, all of the rest dove into the water and engaged in underwater combat. The three dragons immediately blasted the ocean with even more toxic miasma, turning it purple and toxic. Fortunately, Lan Huang was still able to maintain its Azure Oceanic Purgatory. Thanks to its huge body, however, it became an easy target for the three other dragons. When all of them dove into the water, they made Lan Huang their priority. However, Lan Huang had never feared other dragons before. All it did was roll in the water and cause the nine kui mountains on its back to rapidly spin, whipping up lots of chaos. Water was its home turf, after all.

Countless instances of the Sixpath Samsara Lotus and Chaos Disaster had been unleashed. Ying Huo and Meow Meow had taken the opportunity to unleash as much as they could. Meow Meow's forte was its speed. Like a flash of lightning, it zipped about so quickly that it was almost impossible to follow with the n.a.k.e.d eye. Meanwhile, Ying Huo's Infernal Haze was really convenient for evading enemy attacks.

The two of them harassed the enemy nonstop while avoiding any and all retaliation. Tianming also aided their efforts with the Three-Thousand Starfield, completely blocking off Xuanyuan Yufeng's way into the ocean. He also managed to grab one of the three dragons with his long chain from hundreds of meters away. Tianming found that lifebound beasts with empyrean gold bodies had really tough hides. He felt like a normal person trying to wrestle a rabid bull, so all he could do was lacerate the beast as much as he could with the chain's sharp spikes.

"It's far too hard!" He understood all too well how Ying Huo and the rest were feeling right now. Even though they were Primordial Chaos Beasts, they were five levels and a hundred stars or so inferior to

their enemies, not to mention the lack of a bloodline advantage. The fact that they hadn't completely been dominated by the three purple-eyed truefiend dragons was already a miracle of sorts.

"Thankfully, they can protect themselves well. Lan Huang can use the ocean, while Ying Huo has Infernal Haze and Meow Meow's so fast that the enemy can't even keep up. They're more than capable of holding them back."

Tianming wanted to pull the dragon out with his chain, but he knew that Xuanyuan Yufeng wouldn't give him that chance. So instead, he opted for something even more direct.

"Imperealm Sword Formation!" The power from the third door in the Grand-Orient Sword burst forth, sending torrents of sword ki strands out into the battlefield, and even the ocean. He then shot out a stream of Invincible Sword Ki and pulled the dragon into its trajectory, causing it to pierce through. The dragon cried in agony underwater, its struggling even managing to pull Tianming down, causing him to have no choice but to loosen the chain.

This time around, an even more terrifying ability was unleashed from the dragons toward Tianming. It was likely that Xuanyuan Yufeng had asked them all to target him at once with Truefiend's Eye. All of a sudden, six purple eyes widened in Tianming's vision, each of them expanding to a hundred meters in length and completely blocking off his view, sending him endless amounts of chills. It went without question that Xuanyuan Yufeng was trying to bind his soul with that ability for an instant kill. Shame the ability had completely no effect thanks to the Soul Tower, however. It was far from enough to send Tianming into a stupor.

Right then, Xuanyuan Yufeng's eyes grew cold as his purple eye stared at Tianming's saint palace, ready to pierce it with Dragonking. "Now, turn into a useless cripple," he said with a smirk.

Tianming had wanted to motion for a block, only to smirk at the last second and counter with an attack instead. His Invincible Sword Ki just so happened to return to him on time. So, Tianming used the black sword to execute the fourth strike of the Shenxiao Sword Art mixed with strands of Invincible Sword Ki, sending sparks flying all over.

The audience watched as the sparks flew when the spear struck Tianming's saint palace without being able to pierce through the skin at all. The next moment, Tianming's gold sword thrust toward Xuanyuan Yufeng's neck. But he was fast enough to react and knock the sword away with his bare hands, a testament to his impressively strong body. Even so, a bloody mark was left on his hand. Meanwhile, Tianming had taken his attacks with the Soul and Purple Towers.

"How could this be?! It's impossible!" Xuanyuan Yufeng hurriedly drew his spear back, only to see that it had not, in fact, pierced through. It was completely ludicrous.

"Oh, it certainly is," Tianming scoffed as a white tower came descending from the skies. It was none other than the Prime Tower.

As it descended like a mountain, Xuanyuan Yufeng raised his hands to block it, only for them to crack and break. The huge white tower slammed onto his head and caused him to bleed.

His cry reverberated all over the battlefield, much to Tianming's amusement. They all thought that he only had one divine artifact. Little did they know that he had Prime Tower too, something even more

potent than the Grand-Orient Sword. Thanks to the soul servant, he could use it for offense as well. The slam almost made Xuanyuan Yufeng's dragon-like skull crack. However, he seemed more fearsome than ever with his killing intent surging.

"Aren't you afraid of dying?" Tianming asked.

"You think you, of all people, can kill one of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan? Your two treasures may be amazing, but your lifebound beasts are too weak!" The white of Xuanyuan Yufeng's third eye was covered in bloody veins. He immediately resumed his barrage of attacks after finishing what he had to say. Now, he used a supreme empyrean-ranked battle art, Spear of the Grand Heaven's Path. It was a move so impressive that it fit his status as the leader of a hundred thousand people.

"I don't have a grudge with you to the point I'd be willing to die for it. Why don't you just surrender?" Tianming said plainly.

"Are you joking? I want nothing more than I want your life!"

"Sigh, guess I have no choice."

Tianming willed the soul servant to bring the Prime Tower into the ocean. At the same time, Meow Meow's Soulchasing Hellthunder came blasting out of the water and struck Xuanyuan Yufeng's neck before entering his bloodstream. The blood-colored thunderbolt surged through his body and caused even his spear-wielding hand to shake. Blood continued flowing from his head into his bloodshot third eye.

"I'm a member of the number one clan on the entire continent! We're the Trioptic True Dragons! There is no such thing as death in my eyes. An insignificant speck like you can just perish!" he said with manic laughter as he thrust his spear nonstop. However, he was already injured, making it a fool's errand.

Tianming dove into the water; the battle there was just as fierce, but thanks to the Prime Tower, Lan Huang was able to hold on much better.

Xuanyuan Yufeng burst out of the sea, sending a blast of ki from his spear past Tianming to strike Lan Huang, causing it to groan in pain.

"Xuanyuan Yufeng!" The majesty of emperors blasted out of Tianming's eyes as the swords in his hands went out of control. "Let me show you that there is no such thing as an eternal clan!"

He charged out of the ocean and sent out a boundless amount of sword ki as he used the Hexapath Samsara Sword. In each of his deathly battles, he had kept pondering over the move, and now he was getting more and more familiar with it.

"If even gods can die, how can you be so proud?!"

The dao of all sentient life is ruled by the ultimate sovereign! The one who inherits the legacy of the sovereign and walks the path of the Primordial God-Emperor understands his subjects through the Grand-Orient Swords, one symbolizing the boundless life of all, and the other symbolizing death that reclaims all. The gold sword surged with life sword ki and lashed out with nine strikes, each embodying the same sword intent, while the black sword struck with fatal sword ki of death from the darkness, striking like a stealthy cobra.

"Who do you think you are, Li Tianming?" Xuanyuan Yufeng spat, his spear lashing out as quick as lightning bolts as he used his Onyx Draconian body and saint ki to block Tianming's indomitable sword intent.

"I may not be much, but I can kill you!" When he struck, the rage of all life gathered in each strike. Though Tianming's understanding of the move was elementary, given his paltry life experience, he could at least observe the tip of the iceberg, which, in itself, was already enough for him to execute the legacy of the Hexapath Sword God.

Both swords struck at the same time, one knocking Dragonking away and the other piercing Xuanyuan Yufeng in the chest. Tianming drew the sword out and quickly backed off. Meanwhile, Xuanyuan Yufeng clutched his chest and his eyes widened, struggling to stand by supporting himself with Dragonking as he stared at Tianming in a stupor.

"If others don't mess with me, I won't mess with them. But when they do, I'll take the initiative to kill them! Xuanyuan Yufeng, you've lost."

"Huff... Huff...." Xuanyuan Yufeng glared at him with the same unrelenting killing intent.

"Li Tianming...."

"Go on."

"From now on, the Archaic House of Xuanyuan will ensure that your body is torn to shreds...."

"If that's all you have to say, you'd better hurry along," Tianming said.

Xuanyuan Yufeng's head slowly slumped toward the ground, but he remained standing with his hands clutching his spear. That was the last bit of dignity the one from the Archaic House of Xuanyuan showed in the history of the Flameyellow Continent.

Chapter 618 - Rising to the Top

"Xuanyuan Yufeng is dead! Li Tianming killed him!"

The whole battlefield was shocked when Xuanyuan Yufeng drew his last breath. Even those who watched the battle merely looked blankly at Tianming, already on the verge of collapse. Soon after, many sharp cries of terror sounded out, cementing the gravity of the situation instantly.

"Impossible! It must be an illusion!"

"Stop fighting already. Let's get closer and take a look!"

"There's no need. He's really dead!"

The many others who were fighting nearby had completely stopped amidst the chaos. Every one of them knew that Xuanyuan Yufeng had come from the core of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan: the Trioptic True Dragon Branch. His death would no doubt be felt throughout the entire Human Branch. At the very least, the disciples of the Dragonmight Faction didn't fight even more desperately to try to avenge their dead faction lord, but merely despaired instead.

"This Li Tianming must be a monster. Did he really grow that quickly or has he been hiding his power from the beginning?"

"How can someone be so daring to even kill one of the Trioptic True Dragon Branch?"

"I bet that he's committed a grave mistake. If he survives more than a single day after the end of the faction battles, I'll spell my name in reverse!"

"He must've completely antagonized the Sterling House of Fang and the Archaic House of Xuanyuan, right? Those are the two most powerful forces in the Archaion Sect."

Many people looked at Tianming begrudgingly, being able to do nothing else.

"The faction lord is dead. I quit. I'll be leaving now."

"Let's go. There's no more point in fighting. Without the lord, Dragonmight won't be able to catch up. We already dropped to eleventh place."

"It's our bad luck for meeting someone as crazy as him. I accept the loss!"

From that day onward, Tianming's fame exploded throughout the entire Human Branch to the point that even some disciples from the Heaven and Earth Branches knew about him. He was no longer just some nobody in the Archaion Sect.

Amidst the dead silence on the chaotic battlefield, Tianming was still fighting Xuanyuan Yufeng's three dragons. Despite having lost their beastmaster, they didn't escape, but rather doubled down, roaring in search of vengeance, indiscriminately targeting Tianming and his three lifebound beasts. It didn't matter which as long as one of them was there to be their target. Perhaps only those from a clan with more than two hundred thousand years of history could have such fighting spirit, much more than the Nineshades Clan had ever shown.

The battle intensified. Tianming gave himself some simple first aid before charging in with the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower to aid Ying Huo and the rest. The three purple-eyed truefiend dragons were all really powerful, with a number of incredible abilities. The whole battle lasted half an hour. The dragons were ready to fight to their deaths, while Tianming and the others took their suicidal attacks just as fearlessly.

Relying on the Prime Tower's suppression to take out one of the dragons made it much easier. What really inspired respect in others, however, was how the two dragons didn't stop and continued fighting to the bitter end, until the last drop of blood was shed.

Tianming and his lifebound beasts were injured throughout the battle; Tianming himself suffered the least and was still able to fight. As for Lan Huang and Meow Meow, they were completely covered in bloody injuries, and darkness corrupted much of their innards. Ying Huo, on the other hand, almost had a wing snapped off. It was likely that they wouldn't be able to fight in the coming ten days at all.

Without delay, Tianming had them enter his lifebound space to quickly heal with the aid of the Prime Tower, leaving him alone on the battlefield with a pair of bloodied Grand-Orient Swords. Both the audience and the participants were dead silent.

Jian Xueyi had witnessed the entire scene clearly. "I didn't think he would be that powerful," she muttered.

"It truly is amazing, I'll give him that. However, if he doesn't have any backing, it'll be the end of him after the faction battles," Zhao Yijue said.

"I'll have my parents back him!" she said.

"Stop fooling around. Your clan is but a small one within the Draconis House of Jian. How can you compare with Xuanyuan Yufeng's clan? Any single one of them can make your parents kneel."

Jian Xueyi grit her teeth in frustration. As impressive as this fight was, it was impossible to predict the consequences down the line. "Sigh, this brat was far too stubborn. It would've been enough if he'd defeated his opponent, yet he insisted on killing him," she helplessly said.

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"I can't keep up with him anymore," Lin Xiaoxiao said. She was able to see everything clearly from the top of the hill she stood on.

"That might not be the case. Go down and take a look. Even if he manages to enter the Heaven Cauldron, he still won't be able to get my eye. It's a part of my body after all. I'll have a much easier time taking it than he does," the Archaionfiend said.

"I see."

"Xiaoxiao, whether you'll lose is not set in stone."

"Alright. Guess we'll see."

"If you don't kill him, someone from the Sky Plunderer Clan, he'll pose a grave threat to us in the future. Don't you get it?"

"That's enough."

"Hehe, you'll eventually know," the Archaionfiend said, cracking a smile. "They're fierce savages. If he doesn't get my eye, or he finds out that you took it first, you will be the one he kills."

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The disciples participating in the faction battles within the illusory battlefield were unaware that chaos had broken out outside the formation. Xuanyuan Yufeng was actually a disciple of the Earth Branch. Many of the seniors and juniors who witnessed the battle were completely enraged.

In the corner, Xuanyuan Muxue's third eye turned completely cold. She tightly clenched her fist as she shook, her eyes bloodshot, seemingly causing her surroundings to cool down considerably.

"How is it?" Xuanyuan Yuheng asked.

"You were right. An enemy is an enemy. This is something that is set in stone and cannot be changed," she said.

"Your brother was quite nice to you. You should avenge him if you have the chance."

"Are you planning to use me to kill him?" she asked coldly.

"You shouldn't put it that way. Li Tianming was the one who stretched his neck out, and I'll merely use you, a blade, to slice it. It's got nothing to do with me," he said with a shrug, though there was one implication that remained unsaid: he was satisfied with how things turned out.

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Within the private room...

"That was too cruel...."

Around thirty disciples of the Sterling House of Fang were completely flabbergasted by the turn of events.

"So he killed Xuanyuan Yufeng just like that? He was one of the Trioptic True Dragon Branch. Fresh as he may be, only being able to mingle around in the Human Branch and planning to join the Archaion Army, he was still someone of status. How can the Archaic House of Xuanyuan accept this?" Fang Xingque spat.

"Xingque, does this mean we don't have to make a move?" Fang Xingying asked respectfully. He was a slender young man, with the main eye-catching part of him being gray l.u.s.trous hair that made him look much older than he was. Even though he was Fang Xingque's elder cousin, he obediently did his bidding.

"No, it's the opposite. We have to act," Fang Xingque said with a smile.

"Why is that so?"

"The Archaic House of Xuanyuan will definitely try to kill him. If we act first and make the kill, depriving them of their catharsis, won't it make things even more exciting? We'll get to vent and they won't!"

"That's right. Xuanyuan Muxue in particular loves to put on a dignified act, always glaring at our Xingque. She'll definitely be livid if we kill him first. I wonder what her expression would look like?"

"Understood!" Fang Xingying said, nodding.

"All you have to do now is stand guard at the exit of the battlefield. Once it ends, act immediately. Don't even wait three days," Fang Xingque said.

"Yes," Fang Xingying said before he left.

"Do your best, cousin, I'm counting on you," Fang Xingque said with a chuckle, causing the others to join him in laughter.

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Meanwhile, at the tallest point of Dimensional Battlefield, Jian Wuyi stood with his hands behind his back, taking everything in.

"Sect Master, can you tell?" Jian Binghe asked.

"Yes, I can."

"Is it the Hexapath Samara Sword?"

Jian Wuyi intentionally dodged the question. "Binghe, you seem to have quite an understanding of that sword art. Normal people can't even tell. The move has been lost to time."

"I only did some digging because I respected it too much," Jian Binghe said, humbly.

"You shouldn't try it in your next life," Jian Wuyi said.

"Huh?"

With the flick of his finger, Jian Wuyi pierced his head.

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A change of unprecedented magnitude had occurred in the illusory battlefield. Now that the Dragonmight Faction was leaderless, there was nobody who could bring them back to first place. Knowing that victory was hopeless without Xuanyuan Yufeng, many of them just chose to surrender.

Having lost all morale, they scattered like sand in the wind. Many more chose to flee the battlefield to avoid the Swordking Faction. Dragonmight was officially no more.

Anyone who looked up into the skies could see that their ranking was now at twelfth place. Having suffered twenty percent casualties, it was over for them.

The Swordking Faction, on the other hand, dropped to fourth rank, while Azureriver had dropped from first to sixth. It went without saying that Swordking ranked the top among the three great factions.

However, the top three factions were minor ones that had hidden themselves away and weren't discovered yet, hence their low casualties. Though, Tianming and the Swordking Faction still had five days. It was enough time for Tianming to lead them on a hunt for the top three factions and completely obliterate them.

Every single day, Swordking's rank rose. By the time there were only two days remaining, they had risen to the top. Tianming planned to give the faction in second place another heavy beating to ensure that Swordking stayed in first place before retreating to Silverriver Valley to wait it out.

Soon, that day arrived.

Chapter 619 - Feiling's Gift

The nine star heavenly pattern formation finally vanished, dispelling the illusory battlefield. All the participants reappeared in the Dimensional Battlefield. Before the battles had ended, everyone got a look at the rankings and more or less knew how it would turn out. However, there was only one name that stood out: Li Tianming.

"Next, I shall announce the rankings!" said a middle aged man standing at the very top.

"Who's that guy?" Tianming asked.

"My uncle, Jian Binghe," Jian Xueyi said proudly.

"He looks a little weird." Tianming squinted harder, somehow feeling that something was amiss about the man. He just couldn't quite tell what.

Right as he was thinking about it, the man began his announcement. "Rank one: Swordking Faction!"

The Swordking Faction disciples cheered loudly.

"Top ranking faction lord: Jian Xueyi!"

"Uncle, the lord of our faction has changed to Li Tianming!" Jian Xueyi yelled.

"Oh, alright! Top ranking faction lord: Li Tianming. Given your ability, you qualify to be a disciple of the Earth Branch. Report there after all this."

"Understood!" Tianming respectfully said. That meant he would get to cultivate in the Heaven Cauldron.

Jian Binghe continued announcing the rest of the rankings, including Dragonmight's at the twelfth place. Many of the Dragonmight Faction's disciples hated Tianming with a passion for singlehandedly causing them to drop so far from first place. However, there was little they could do. After the ranking announcement, the audience left, followed by the disciples.

"Tianming, we're going to hold a celebration. Are you joining?" Jian Xueyi asked excitedly.

"When is it?"

"Right away, of course"

"Then I'm afraid I can't join."

"What're you going to do?"

"A date."

"I begrudgingly wish you all the best! Now scam!"

Begrudgingly? It sounded rather salty of her.

Tianming left the Dimensional Battlefield. After half a month, it was finally over. He hadn't seen Feiling for far too long. He hurried his way to Xuanyuan Lake, really anxious to meet her.

"I should head to the Sword Insight Rock first and try to comprehend more of the Hexapath Samara Sword before reporting to the Earth Branch and going to the Heaven Cauldron." He already had his next steps planned.

"Why don't you go to Heaven Cauldron immediately?" Ying Huo asked.

"It's more urgent to solidify my understanding of the sword art while my battlefield experience is still fresh."

"Nonsense. You're just hurrying to see Ling'er. You don't care about our little colorful egg at all!" Ying Huo mocked.

"Come on, do I look like the kind that favors my girl before my bros?"

"Yes," all three of them unanimously said. Even the little colorful egg seemed to nod.

"Dammit!" He decided he would ignore them and what they wanted.

He happened to run into someone at that point. It was none other than the sect master of the Human Branch, Jian Wuyi.

"Sect Master," Tianming greeted.

"You did well in the fight. I saw it all. The two weapons Her Eminence granted you are amazing indeed. They must have at least seven or eight tribulation patterns, right?"

"Thank you for the praise, Sect Master." Tianming dodged the question about the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower.

"However, you were a little too hasty. Her Eminence is someone of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan. It isn't too appropriate that you killed one of her descendants."

"Got it. I'll be more careful next time."

"Where are you heading now?"

"The Sword Insight Rock at Xuanyuan Lake."

"To practice the Hexapath Samara Sword, I presume."

"Yes."

"I also happen to be going there. Let's go together."

"Sure." Tianming nodded and tagged along.

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The way to the Sword Insight Rock was right in front of Soulburn Hall, so Tianming had to pass through.

"Do I need to go in to greet Her Eminence?" Tianming asked.

"No need. Just go straight down, nobody will stop you. You don't need to disturb Her Eminence's cultivation."

"Understood." However, Tianming knew that she would definitely come to him upon knowing that he was there.

Jian Wuyi soon left, and Tianming went down by himself. There was nobody there. It seemed that after the previous disturbance, the Archaic Sect no longer allowed anyone to meditate there. While he waited for Feiling to come, he pondered the intricacies of the sword art using the Sword Insight Rock.

As expected, she showed up a day later. Having been rather busy as of late, it took her a while, but she knew he was there as they knew that that was where they were supposed to meet. However, she was accompanied by many other elites, like Xuanyuan Dao and Fang Qingli. Soon, she took a seat opposite him and began pondering the sword art like he was.

"Why haven't you come since your breakthrough half a month ago?" she asked.

"I participated in the faction battles that were held in the Human Branch. I successfully elevated myself to the Earth Branch."

"Work hard and go to the Heaven Branch quickly."

"Understood, Your Eminence."

They couldn't say anything else; this was the only means of communication they could use. They felt rather frustrated meeting like this, having no privacy at all and being strictly observed at all times. Fang Qingli in particular didn't take her eyes off Feiling, even for an instant.

"Let us continue pondering the sword art," she said.

"Understood."

Tianming started comprehending from the first formation without using his black arm. That might be helpful to guide his understanding of the Hexapath Samara Sword. The two spent the following three days like that. Even without being able to speak, they knew what each other were thinking by the look in their eye alone.

"Your Eminence, I'll be taking my leave now."

"Alright." She kept her eyes closed as Tianming rose. "By the way, do you need anything for your cultivation?"

Tianming scratched his head and said, "Your Eminence, my lifebound beasts' levels are a little low, with the highest only having eighty-seven stars. It's quite a far cry from the others."

"I see. Xuanyuan Dao, give him three third grade tribulation manna."

There were nine grades of tribulation manna, and all of them were far superior to empyrean manna. They were the reason the Nine Divine Realms were so prosperous. Third grade tribulation manna was already really good. If the evolution succeeded, lifebound beasts would be able to have more than three hundred stars, which was a complete and utter change for Ying Huo and the others. There were few lifebound beasts in the Archaion Sect that had so many stars.

"Your Eminence, an empyrean saint can usually only refine up to second grade tribulation manna. I worry that the lifebound beasts won't be able to take it..." Xuanyuan Dao hesitantly said, wondering why the goddess seemed to lack common knowledge.

"Just do as I say. If he can't use it, then it's his problem." Feiling said.

"Understood!"

"Li Tianming, you should tell the Earth Branch's sect master what types you need."

"Thank you, Your Eminence!" Tianming was overjoyed at the 'allowance' he received. He then told Xuanyuan Dao about what he needed.

"Your Eminence, it will take quite some time to get the types he needs. I'll send for someone to retrieve them and have them sent to him," Xuanyuan Dao said.

"Okay." She turned to Tianming and continued, "After your lifebound beasts evolve, focus on advancing through the Empyrean Saint stage. Make up for lost time."

"I'll do my best, Your Eminence!"

He was overjoyed and could tell that Fang Qingli and Xuanyuan Dao weren't too happy at the gift he had received. Had he gotten something like that from Feiling the moment they arrived, it would be even worse and they might do something about it. Now that he had proven himself, however, their reaction wasn't so drastic. They could see that Feiling saw something in him that they couldn't.

It'll get better. I'll grow stronger until I can truly reunite with her.

Tianming hated the fact that he couldn't take advantage of flirting more with her. Now he could barely talk to her, to say nothing of inappropriately flirting. He couldn't wait to change everything.

"Sect Master, I'll be transferring to the Earth Branch soon. Will you be able to find me after gathering the manna?" he asked Xuanyuan Dao.

"Don't worry. He'll be able to find you even if you turn to ash, as long as you're within the Archaion Sect," Fang Qingli said.

"Understood." Even though she sounded rather annoyed, it didn't matter. He got tribulation manna and that was what counted.

Next, he left the place, only to meet with two people who blocked his way. The one on the left had a golden third eye and seemed rather resentful of him. He was Xuanyuan Yuheng. The one on the right was a girl in a white dress. She seemed superbly beautiful, like a lotus flower, making her easily the prettiest woman Tianming had seen to date since coming to the Archaion Sect. Though she seemed much younger than him, she gave others a pleasant feeling. It was as if her icy blue third eye could see through one's soul.

Chapter 620 - Rainbow Phoenix Bloodline

"Li Tianming!" the girl called out to him.

"You know me?" Tianming looked at her standing beside Xuanyuan Yuheng, and considered the fact that he had truly offended some people from the Archaic House of Xuanyuan. So he guessed that this girl wasn't here with good intentions.

"Of course I do. You're the disciple brought back by Her Eminence, and Her Eminence has decided to take you as her disciple. So how can I possibly not know about you?" The girl smiled, but the smile didn't seem friendly.

"Oh." Tianming nodded with a similar smile.

The girl came over to Tianming and continued, "Let me introduce myself. My name is Xuanyuan Muxue."

She stretched her hand out as she spoke. Her fingers were beautiful, with icy blue nails that looked like blue crystals. Every single one of them looked like a piece of art.

“Hello, nice to meet you.” Tianming reached out and gently shook hands with her. She was using her left hand, so Tianming naturally used his left hand as well. When his black arm came in contact with her slender hand, it was a huge impact that looked like the beauty and the beast.

“Muxue, time to go,” Xuanyuan Yuheng said.

“Okay, Big Brother Yuheng.” Xuanyuan Muxue released her hand from Tianming’s and smiled. “See you later.”

“See you later,” Tianming replied. Then, he watched as Xuanyuan Muxue and Xuanyuan Yuheng disappeared from his sight.

“Love tribulation again?” Ying Huo’s eyes were wide open.

“This is no love tribulation.” Tianming raised his left hand and saw a layer of ice covering his black arm. If he were an ordinary first-level empyrean saint, his fingers would be frozen by now.

“Then what is it?”

“A threat,” said Tianming.

“Why do you say that?”

“Can’t you tell that she looks like Xuanyuan Yufeng?” Tianming replied.

“I can’t remember faces. You humans look the same to me. Everyone has been saying that you’re handsome, but you don’t look much different from Gu Shaoyu to me,” Ying Huo replied.

“That’s not facial blindness. You’re just blind!” Tianming snapped.

“Speaking of which, wouldn’t you make fewer enemies if you let Xuanyuan Yuheng off?” Ying Huo asked.

“You can’t put it that way.” Tianming turned around and looked at Xuanyuan Lake. “I’ll be useless without any enemies. I can only force myself to improve with pressure. Everyone’s fighting to improve, and you’ll only be pushed aside if you let someone go ahead. In the end, you won’t have any path to follow.”

“That makes sense. Your society is filled with thrills, and you’ll be finished if you make a mistake somewhere. It’s not easy competing with wits and courage,” Ying Huo said in an emotional tone.

“It’s alright. It’s necessary. When it’s time to attack, attack. When it’s time to stop, stop. I’ll stop for a bit after the faction battle and place my focus on cultivating to reach the fourth level of the Empyrean Saint stage as soon as possible. I want to see how powerful you guys become with empyrean gold bodies and third-grade tribulation manna.”

“Well, I’m sure I can easily crush your balls!” Ying Huo said with a ferocious expression.

“Get lost!” Tianming smiled wryly. It looked like this joke wasn’t going away anytime soon.

“Speaking of which, Ling’er is really awesome!” Meow Meow was still immersed in happiness.

“She can only give me gifts if I perform well. The key is that we have to convince others with our strength,” said Tianming. He knew that the Archaion Sect wasn’t so peaceful, and there were many people paying attention to him. They would definitely know of his performance in the faction battle.

“Let’s go report to the Earth Branch. We’ll take a look at the Heaven Cauldron after I’m an Earth Branch disciple!” Tianming headed to the Earth Branch after leaving Xuanyuan Lake.

But as he was walking through the snow plains, Tianming knit his brows when he felt something locking on to him. He immediately started running.

When he glanced at his rear with his third eye, he saw a figure clad in black armor chasing after him. He could sense that whoever it was was in the peak Empyrean Saint stage. And since they were coming after him, this meant they were confident of killing him.

“Let me guess, you must be someone from the Sterling House of Fang,” Tianming said as he ran for his life.

The other party narrowed his eyes into slits. He had no idea how Tianming had guessed his identity. But it was simple; he had just met Xuanyuan Muxue and Xuanyuan Yuheng from the Trioptic True Dragon Branch. They knew that he was someone the eminent had brought back, and that they couldn’t rush things. So aside from them, Tianming only had a grudge with the Fang siblings in the faction battle.

“Die!” The assassin sped up and swiftly closed on Tianming. Tianming came to a stop as he turned around and looked at the assassin. His action made the other party briefly stunned.

“Sect Master Jian, why didn’t you give me something that I can use to protect my life with?” Tianming said to his surroundings, which left the assassin dumbfounded. The assassin first panicked, then immediately started to run away. But when he turned around, he bumped into a man in blue.

“Sect master of the Human Branch!” The assassin quickly knelt and started trembling.

“State your identity,” said Jian Wuyi.

“Sect Master, I’m the Sterling House of Fang’s Fang Xingying.” The assassin immediately removed his disguise and revealed his face. His face was drained, and his teeth were trembling when he spoke. He turned around and looked back at Tianming several times. He had no idea why Jian Wuyi would appear around Tianming.

“Who instructed you to assassinate him?” Jian Wuyi asked.

“N-no one...”

“Mhm?”

“Fang Xingque! It’s because Li Tianming humiliated someone from the Sterling House of Fang...” Fang Xingying stammered.

“Got it. You can get lost now,” said Jian Wuyi.

“Yes!” Fang Xingying was overjoyed. He didn’t expect that he would be released. Although he couldn’t figure out anything, he still immediately fled. On the other hand, Tianming imprinted the name ‘Fang Xingque’ into his mind.

“How did you know that I was following you?” Jian Wuyi held his hands behind him and looked at Tianming with a smile.

“Her Eminence said to let you ensure my safety. So you’d be placed in a tough spot if I got killed,” Tianming replied.

“It looks like you’re becoming full of yourself,” said Jian Wuyi.

“I dare not!” Tianming replied.

“It’s fine. With the eminent protecting you, it’s reasonable for you to become full of yourself. We’re all curious what Her Eminence sees in you. You’re not stupid, and you know your situation well. Don’t worry about it. You won’t suddenly die with me around,” said Jian Wuyi.

“Yes!” Tianming knew that there must be someone beside him. It didn’t necessarily have to be Jian Wuyi, but he was certain that someone would be around him. After all, Feiling had said that Jian Wuyi would be held responsible if anything happened to him.

Tianming had been under great stress ever since coming to the Archaion Sect. The upper hierarchy here might seem amicable, but who knew what was going through their minds. At the very least, Jian Wuyi would alternately seem harsh and friendly at times. Tianming was curious what Jian Wuyi really felt about him.

“Then I’ll be taking my leave now?” Tianming asked.

“Go ahead,” Jian Wuyi waved his hand.

Tianming nodded and turned to leave. However, the eye on his black arm was slightly open and looking at Jian Wuyi, who was behind him. The latter was looking at him with a smile on his face.

But when he walked hundreds of meters away, he saw the smile on Jian Wuyi’s face disappear, replaced with indifference. His smile was creepy, which sent a chill down Tianming’s spine.

“There’s something in his mind aside from protecting me! Could it be the Hexapath Samsara Sword?” Tianming frowned. Although that meant that no one ordinary would come after him, his path in the Archaion Sect was still perilous.

“I can only protect myself by becoming strong.” Tianming looked in the direction of the Heaven Branch. This time, he was finally close to the Archaionfiend Eye.

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Fang Xingying was shuttling through the forest in the Sterling House of Fang. A group of youngsters had fun in the forest, and they were bolting around in the snow with enormous snowballs in their hands.

“Xingque!” Fang Xingying yelled. The next second, a gigantic snowball crashed onto him and made him feel dizzy.

When he got back to his feet with great difficulty, Fang Xingying saw Fang Xingque looking at him with a smile and stretched his hand out, "Where's the head? Give it to me."

"Xingque, something happened, and I failed." Fang Xingying lowered his head.

"This is the fourth day, and you've exceeded the time given to you. Is that all you have to say to me? Don't you believe that I'll tear your head off?" Fang Xingying replied.

"Fang Xingying, you're really useless. Who else can believe that your talent was even higher than Xingque when you were young?" someone sneered.

"His Rainbow Phoenix bloodline is crippled, while Xingque awakened his Rainbow Phoenix bloodline. How can they be compared to each other?" another person said.

While they were mocking, Fang Xingying immediately explained, "Please calm down. The reason I failed is that the sect master of the Human Branch interfered and protected Li Tianming!" He was so nervous when he tried to explain that he sounded like he was speaking gibberish.

"Haha!" everyone laughed.

"And you fought with the sect master of the Human Branch and got defeated?" Fang Xingque smiled.

"No, that's not the case. I swear what I said is true!" Fang Xingying said.

"Are you treating me as a fool?" Fang Xingque jumped down and slapped Fang Xingying, causing half of his face to swell.

"It really was the sect master of the Human Branch...."

"Do you think you could survive if the sect master of the Human Branch is protecting him? Jian Wuyi can kill you with a single blow. Fang Xingying, your parents are dead and you're just a vermin in the Sterling House of Fang. For Jian Wuyi to kill you would be as easy as squashing a bug. Do you think I'm you? Lying without coming up with any sense of logic?" Fang Xingque patted his head.

"I'm not lying," Fang Xingying refuted.

"Oh? Are you arguing back to me? Did you manage to let that brat escape somehow?" Fang Xingque smiled.

Fang Xingying lowered his head, furious. He didn't want to say anymore.

"Are you still considering yourself to be the Rainbow Phoenix Bloodline's heir? Someone come over here and pluck his teeth out. This coward! Someone like you shares the same grandmother as me?" Fang Xingque jumped off the pile of snow.

Someone came up to Fang Xingyin and started pulling out all his teeth. Fang Xingying's mouth was soon filled with blood and he was struggling in the snow with tears streaming down his cheeks.

Father, mother, my bloodline caused you guys to die. My birth itself was your death penalty. I'm really sorry. I want to live on and take revenge, but I'm scared. The world is too cruel....