

The Ages 671

Chapter 671 - Radix World Tree

The astralsources in the Deepstar Pool were larger than human heads. So far, Tianming had absorbed more than two hundred of them into his body. The sheer volume of them was akin to a large house, strengthening his Ancient Deepstar Godbody to a frightening degree. Perhaps most saint beastial or tribulation artifacts wouldn't be able to pierce his skin, not to mention the increased power, agility, speed, and defense that came with it.

"The Ancient Deepstar Godbody with two hundred astralsources and Tribulation Sword Body with more than five hundred strands of tribulation sword ki has made me really powerful, even without using saint ki." His physical body was his foundation, after all. By absorbing astralsources, even his innards shone with the power of stars, changing his aura considerably.

"Xuanyuan Yuheng has an Aurum Draconian Physique and more than three hundred astralsources, but the toughness of my body is probably only equal to his if I include the Tribulation Sword Body."

Tianming wondered if he could reach the bottom of Heaven Cauldron. He had already gone past the flames, lightning, ice, and wind spirit hazards. What used to hurt him greatly no longer affected him with his Ancient Deepstar Godbody, including even the toxic mists. Upon close inspection, his skin resembled Lan Huang's Infinite Stardragon Diagram. Now, tribulation sword ki even permeated his long hair and could be fired at will to pierce his enemies, its power also boosted by astralsources.

"To think that absorbing astralsources could help me absorb tribulation sword ki even faster...." Training the two body refining techniques at the same time had resulted in an interesting synergy. Now, he was confident he would be able to hatch the fourth egg.

After passing through layers of tribulation hazards and reaching the bottom of the Heaven Cauldron, he saw a strip of green ahead of him. It was made of spirit hazards with four tribulation patterns, called lifewood essences. Green and inviting though they looked, they could rapidly suck out life force. Most living things that got close to them would end up as a shriveled husk. Tianming would never be able to resist, were he not prepared.

"Are you ready?" Tianming asked the colorful egg that bobbed in response. "Alright, let's do it."

The egg bumped him on the head, as if it was complaining that he was too naggy.

"Haha, great. Now go on and hatch. Nobody will be able to see you at the bottom of the Heaven Cauldron."

He took a deep breath and walked toward the green strip with the egg in hand. "Even though we're basically stealing this lifewood essence, I'm a member of the sky plunderer race, so I'm just living up to my clan's namesake. As they say, honor among thieves!"

Lifewood essence was so dangerous that anyone who was the slightest bit physically weaker than him would be vaporized. Tianming steeled his resolve and stepped inside. All of a sudden, he felt like he had been swallowed by the essence.

Within his lifebound space, Ying Huo jumped up and down excitedly. "Tianming, keep pushing! I can already see the head! Push!"

"Don't give up! My little sister is almost out!" Meow Meow lazily said, awakened from its sleep by the commotion.

"Pop it out! I'm going to be a big brother!" Lan Huang yelled as it spun around in excitement.

"Shut up!" It was getting too noisy for Tianming to bear.

Even though he didn't feel anything particularly different when he entered, the lifewood essence soon attached itself to his body. "Damn!"

He watched with wide eyes as he felt like leeches were climbing into his body, sucking up his life instead of his blood. There was no way he would be able to endure something so torturous if he wasn't powerful enough. The starlight on his skin temporarily held the essence back, allowing him to catch a breather, but the pain from it invading his body was still there.

"I need to hold on!" He grit his teeth as he reached the deepest part of the lifewood essence.

"A bit more! It's starting to crack!" Ying Huo and the others cried.

Tianming soldiered on; the egg was his last hope. It had been absorbing the lifewood essence since the moment of their entry. He recalled that Ying Huo hadn't needed any spirit hazards for its hatching. Meow Meow, on the other hand, had only needed lightning with red heavenly patterns to hatch when he was at the Spiritsource stage. Then when Lan Huang had hatched, it needed spirit hazards with saintly heavenly patterns from the two great formations in Grand-Orient Realm. And now, the fourth egg needed more than a few tribulation spirit hazards with four tribulation patterns.

"When it hatches, it must cultivate with me to reach the seventh level of the Empyrean Saint stage for its power to remain in my body." The Empyrean Saint stage was much more powerful than the Heavenly Will stage, so the spirit hazards required were completely different too.

Much to his relief, the egg's appetite grew more and more as it started absorbing the essence faster and faster.

"I also need to endure the lifewood essence and convert its energy into my own for symbiotic cultivation!" Converting spirit hazards to energy during the hatching was one of the natural talents of Primordial Chaos Beasts. Tianming needed to engage in symbiotic cultivation to be able to achieve true parity with that talent. The more the egg absorbed, the easier it would be for him.

"Give it more!" Tianming said.

"Okay!" it replied telepathically.

The familiar sound of cracking sounded out as Tianming saw the egg's shell begin fracturing. Bright white light leaked out of the cracks, then the shell shattered and Tianming felt himself tearing up. The little fellow was finally born! Right after that, the essence around them got sucked in even faster than before, engulfing it before he could even get a good look at the beast, though he believed he vaguely saw a colorful seed.

"I guess I should've expected that." At that moment, he felt a numb sensation in his right hand. It felt like something pricked into his palm and rooted itself into his flesh, like it was sprouting. Tianming's arm was part of the Ancient Deepstar Godbody, yet that little sprout was powerful enough to pierce his skin.

Soon, his whole arm was engulfed in roots, but he didn't feel any pain. It was like the roots were part of him. The black roots seemed to enter and emerge from his arm, but there wasn't a single sign of blood. It was dazzling to look at.

"It smells good!" The fragrance was even stronger now that it had hatched. It smelled like a sea of flowers. "What are you called?"

"Waaaah..." it cried in a girly voice that urged his fatherly instincts.

"Why are you crying?" he gently asked.

"Xian Xian is hungry!" it said in a cute voice.

Tianming was shocked. He recalled hearing that name in his dream. That was what the person in Perpetia had called the spirit body of the Radix World Tree. However, Ying Huo and the rest didn't have names before they were born.

"That's right, I'm hungry!" Xian Xian complained.

"What do we do? Why don't you eat that green stuff?" Tianming said as he pointed at the lifewood essence.

"I want meaty meat!" it cried.

"Meat? What meat?"

"I'll just take a bite, okay?" it gingerly asked.

"Huh? Agh! Dammit!"

It had taken a bite out of his arm.

"Stop, stop! I don't want to lose weight! If you're a good girl, I'll feed you a large wildbeast outside!"

It was too terrifying. Even his Ancient Deepstar Godbody was useless against its roots.

"Okay! I'm full for now!"

It was still absorbing lifewood essence. They were about to engage in symbiotic cultivation.

"What's your main body?" Tianming asked.

"I'm the Radix World Tree!"

"Radix World Tree?" It was the tree that had its roots pierced through countless worlds with nine brilliant flowers. Tianming could still remember how it looked. Infernal, chaos, primordial, and radix. All of them sounded ancient and foreboding. The radix was the root of all things!

"Is there a cultivation technique in your memory?" Tianming asked.

"Yes. It's called Radix World Codex."

"Alright, let's start."

Now, he had the Aeternal Infernal Codex, Genesis Chaos Codex, Primordial Terraqua Codex, and Radix World Codex. During symbiotic cultivation, the bloodline of the newborn Primordial Chaos Beast entered his body, making him feel completely different than before. This time, his lifebound beast was a plant!

"This won't turn me into a vegetable, will it?"

Chapter 672: Radiant Daffodil, Scarlet Lily

Tianming was thinking too much. Even if the Radix World Tree was a plant, it could still move, so he wouldn't be rooted to the ground even if he gained a Radix World Body. But that didn't mean it didn't differ from the other three bodies he already had. Thanks to the Radix World Body, his vitality and life force was like that of a plant, which changed how his metabolism and energy conversion worked. Most importantly, he felt like he could regenerate himself like plants regenerated their broken branches. It was a slew of information that overwhelmed him; there was still much more to it than what lay on the surface.

So I'm basically a plant-animal hybrid now, he thought. He had the best of both worlds of animals and plants. Most importantly, a fourth energy core was forming within his saint palace when he cultivated using the Radix World Codex. Initially, he had thought it would be rainbow colored, but what he saw was pure white and filled with sacred life force instead. It was really pleasant to behold. This new spiritsource was called a radixsource.

Even though it was wood-type, it was much more complicated than that. He felt the power of life, cleansing, killing, control, and other plant-like powers within. However, he couldn't adequately compare it to the other spiritsources yet, as it was still too tiny.

Tianming and Xian Xian were still rapidly absorbing lifewood essence to fuel the growth of their spiritsource. They blazed through the stages and reached the Saint stage, during which the radixsource changed into a white saint spring before continuing to widen. Eventually, it reached the Empyrean Saint stage and turned into a beast saint spring. When all of the lifewood essence at the bottom of Heaven Cauldron had been absorbed, the new saint spring took its place among the other three great saint springs.

The Grand-Orient Vortex and Imperealm Sword Formation didn't have any conflicts with those four at all. The four saint springs were his foundations. The infernalspring burned like a blazing fire, the chaosspring surged with chaotic lightning, the primordialspring boasted the impressive power of mountains and seas, and the radixspring was old and ancient, shrouded in a mystical white mist.

It was a whole new power, though he didn't know why the radixspring's power was different from what he had imagined. Even so, his first symbiotic cultivation with Xian Xian was complete. The hatching had succeeded, and it was now at the seventh level like its elder brothers. As expected, this lifebound beast was a cute little girl waiting to be spoiled.

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After the cultivation ended, a brand new Radix World Tree appeared before his eyes. He looked at it and didn't know how to react.

"Is this... a potted daffodil?" The plant that was rooted on his arm wasn't a tree, but a single white daffodil. It was fresh, fragrant and pure.

"Hmm... the Radiant Daffodil?" Tianming recalled in that dream that there were nine flowers growing on the Radix World Tree. Among the two flowers that caught his attention, the snow-white sacred flower was one of them. He hurriedly took a closer look and did indeed see eight different-colored buds on him, each one giving off a different kind of power. However, only the white daffodil had bloomed. The others were all shut tight, colored black, blue, green, purple, orange, and so on. However, a bright red bud seemed to be close to blooming.

"So this is the Scarlet Lily then." Was it the same flower growing along the banks of the Yellow Springs that he had seen in that dreamscape? He knew that the Radix World Tree had its roots stretched through tens of thousands of worlds, so it definitely wasn't as simple as a wood-type plant beast. What he was more curious about was how a mere flower could speak to him.

Then a thumb-sized girl revealed herself in the middle of the blooming daffodil. It was a spiritual body that slightly resembled Feiling in her Spiritual Attachment, but was less ethereal and capable of being touched. It had two white, petal-like wings that it used to fly to Tianming's nose.

The spiritform had leaves as its head, large eyes and a small mouth on its round face, and fair limbs. It was dressed in a colorful dress made of leaves and petals that made it look immeasurably cute and dainty, to the point he was worried it would melt if he ever put it into his mouth. Not to mention, the 'dress' and 'hair' were all part of its body too.

He was aware that the flower was the true body of the Radix World Tree, while the spiritform was akin to its soul. No doubt, its main combat capabilities resided within the flower while its mind and personality were within the soul. The Radix World Tree he had seen in his vision also had a spiritform that looked just as cute and had the same name, so it was likely to be the same individual. However, the one before him was much smaller, as it hadn't evolved yet. Tianming only saw a single star in its eyes.

"How cute," he said. It was a flower spirit, pure and innocent. Even looking into its eyes made him feel refreshed.

"Daddy, Xian Xian likes you a lot!" it said as it flew toward his nose and gave it a hug, rubbing its face against it.

"Hey, I'm not your dad. We're more like siblings," he said with a chuckle.

"No, Xian Xian wants a daddy," it said, pouting.

"Fine, a big brother isn't too different from a father anyway. I'll be your half dad then," he said.

"Alright, Half-daddy!"

He felt like he was on the top of the world. From today onward, he would be a quad beastmaster. Even though Xian Xian looked puny and weak, he knew from his experience with Ying Huo that her cuteness belied the true savagery that lay underneath.

"Tianming! Bring our little sister inside now! I can't wait! Quick!" Ying Huo was so impatient he was spitting fire in the lifebound space. Meow Meow and Lan Huang also excitedly got in line.

"Alright, go meet your big brothers!" Tianming said as he stroked its little head like a gentle father would.

"Right away!" It finally withdrew its roots from Tianming and entered the lifebound space, drawing its spiritform along with it.

"Haha! I'm a big brother now!" Ying Huo said, its heart melting from the cuteness.

"Chicken Bro, aren't you forgetting somebody? Are we invisible or something?" Meow Meow said, glaring.

"Sorry, I was so excited that it got to my head."

The two of them circled the little flower while Lan Huang waited outside, too big to budge in between them. When it finally got to see Xian Xian, it bellowed, "Haha! I'm finally a big brother!"

The voice was so loud that the leaves of the flower shook from the sheer volume. "It's so noisy!" Xian Xian said as its spiritform clutched its ears.

"Tortoise Bro, shut up! You're bothering my sister!" Ying Huo snapped.

"Fine!" Lan Huang stopped talking, but it still jumped about excitedly, causing the whole area to shake, much to the others' dismay.

"Flower Sis, do you remember me? I'm your Chicken Bro! I played with you all the time!"

"Of course I remember! You're the meanie that used me as a pillow every day!" it snapped. Its true colors were showing, and they didn't quite match her innocent exterior.

"What? No way that could be true!" Ying Huo tried to cover it up.

"It is too! Xian Xian shall take a bite out of you!" All of a sudden, it stretched its roots around Ying Huo's head.

"Huh? Flower Sis, let me down quick! Having a flower on my head makes me look too girly! Aaah!" It felt like crying all of a sudden. "Sis, it's my fault, alright? I don't have much meat for you! That tortoise over there is big and meaty and almost stomped you flat a few times! Go after it!"

"Hmph, I remember it too! The noisy one!" As Xian Xian's spiritform spoke, it took root in Lan Huang.

"What? Its skin is too thick! I can't catch a bite!"

"Hmm? My back feels a little itchy. Is it a mosquito?" Lan Huang swiped its tail toward its back.

"Spare the girl!" Ying Huo hurriedly stepped in like a hero saving a damsel in distress. "Flower Sis, let's forget about this tortoise. What do you think about cat meat?"

Meow Meow immediately ran off.

"Don't run!" Ying Huo charged with the flower still attached to it. It felt like it was losing weight by the moment! "What in the world? Is this a new diet plan?"

It turned around and teared up the instant it saw even more roots on its head. "Dammit, Tianming! Stuff this thing back into its egg!"

Tianming was laughing so hard he found it hard to breathe. "It's getting late, so try to get along, you three!"

Chapter 673 - I'll Bite You Dead

Even though Xian Xian had reached the seventh level, it still needed to evolve and unlock its bloodline chains to catch up to the rest in terms of combat power. It only had a single star right now, though star counts were quite inadequate for determining the actual level of a lifebound beast. Otherwise, it wouldn't even be able to reach the Spiritsource stage. The stars of Primordial Chaos Beasts represented the level of how much of their bloodline chains had been unlocked instead.

"Ling'er gave me a grade four tribulation manna already, but it definitely won't be able to take it right after hatching. I might have to get other kinds of manna to test first."

Tianming had already prepared that long ago. He had quite a lot of spoils from the faction battles and the Deepstar Battle and had sold off quite a few tribulation artifacts with Jian Xueyi's help to get some tribulation crystals, with which he obtained many manna of different levels up to the Empyrean Saint stage. Xian Xian would be able to evolve to become an empyrean saint beast, at least. It was a simple step-by-step procedure.

"Alright, stop messing around and let Xian Xian evolve," Tianming said. The beasts were still causing a huge ruckus within the lifebound space.

"Take it away! My flesh is falling off!" Ying Huo said, slumped to the ground crying with the white flower on his head.

"Chicken Bro, give Xian Xian one more bite. A really teenie weenie one!"

"No... please.... Manna definitely tastes better. Quick, give it a taste!"

"But meat tastes wonderful too."

After that, Xian Xian used one manna after another to evolve. It didn't take long before it had assimilated the empyrean manna. "These are delicious too. Daddy, I want more."

It stretched its roots out of the lifebound space and pierced into Tianming's flesh, as if it was threatening him with its palm on his shoulder.

"Just be a good girl and evolve and I'll feed you some wildbeasts." It seemed like he would need to prepare a supply of food for it, or all of them would start losing weight.

"This is wonderful! I like it!" It wrapped its roots around the tribulation manna Tianming had given it. It was called Gory Hell. When Tianming undid the heavenly pattern formation around the manna, it jumped out like a blood-colored poisonous dragon, filling the entirety of the Heaven Cauldron with killing intent. However, Xian Xian easily wrapped its roots around it and sucked it all up.

So Xian Xian is unable to hurt me when bursting out of my body because I have the same body as it has now. I wonder how much more powerful it'll be after it evolves?

They were all waiting curiously to see what changes the evolution would bring. Eventually, Xian Xian managed to evolve much faster than the other three had.

"Tianming, Flower Sis's second flower bloomed," Ying Huo said.

Tianming hurriedly looked into the lifebound space and saw a gigantic plant about three hundred meters in height. It was even longer than Lan Huang, covered in dense vines, leaves, and roots, with the longest ones reaching up to five hundred meters long. Even the singular leaves were larger than Ying Huo.

Then there were the horrifying flowers. Two of the nine flowers had bloomed so far and they looked like the tree's eyes. The first was the original white daffodil that was fragrant and shrouded in white mist. Each petal looked ethereal and dreamy, as if they could lull somebody to sleep.

The other flower had bloomed after Gory Hell was absorbed. It was a brilliant crimson spider lily with tens of thousands of petals, each one sharp like a sword. From a distance, when the petals were grouped together, they looked like an open, bloody mouth. It was the Scarlet Lily, the flower of hell!

The world tree seemed a little terrifying, now that two of its flowers had bloomed. Its spiritform could move about freely in and out of the lifebound space. When it appeared before Tianming, it no longer looked like a baby, but a four-year-old child. It seemed to have grown somewhat, and had longer legs, wider wings, and an even more beautiful dress. The only things unchanged were its wide, googly eyes and cute smile.

"Half-daddy, do I look good?" It twirled in front of him, causing its skirt to flutter.

"Let me see...." He pinched its face and said, "About average."

"Average?!" It was completely flabbergasted. In an instant, the flowers on its body all turned into red spider lilies and it radiated a threatening aura. Its spiritform had completely changed from the former pure white state to the bloody Scarlet Lily state. "I will bite you dead!"

"No, stop! You're great looking! Far too beautiful! As expected of my half-daughter!" Tianming hurriedly said.

"Hmph, better watch your words. Xian Xian doesn't bark, Xian Xian bites!" It turned back into its former white form as if nothing had happened.

"We have a feisty one," Tianming said in a fatherly manner.

The Radix World Tree had a main body and a spiritform body, but Tianming found it easier to identify it by its spiritform. He couldn't really talk to a plant, after all, though it didn't make much of a difference

since both were intrinsic parts of Xian Xian. The delineation between its body and soul was just more obvious than most. In combat, its main body with the two flowers would be the one that fought.

"After the Scarlet Lily bloomed, my radixspring turned white-red. Now, it also has a plant's damaging properties!"

He cultivated a little more and realized that the Radix World Tree's elemental type wasn't so simple. "I wonder how powerful it'll be once all nine flowers have bloomed...."

The evolution had brought quite a lot of growth to his heavenly will, but he was still quite some ways from a breakthrough.

"Xian Xian, let's go to the Abyssal Battlefield and show your big brothers what you're made of."

"I'm not going. Xian Xian is hungry. Xian Xian wants meat," it said pitifully.

Its vines were slowly circling around Lan Huang, as if it wanted to give it another try.

"What's going on?" Lan Huang cried as it was lifted into the air.

"Stop!" Tianming felt cold sweat on his forehead; this little fellow was easily the most terrifying of all of them. It would even try eating its own brother to abate its hunger. "There's many wildbeasts in the Abyssal Battlefield! You can eat your fill there!"

"Then let's go, quick! I'm hungry!" Its spiritform hung around his neck as it shook and tugged at him.

"Fine, I'm going now."

"Quick! Xian Xian is hungry! Xian Xian wants meat!"

"Coming right up!"

"Aah, the hunger!"

Lan Huang fell back to the ground in the lifebound space, then fearfully huddled with the other two. The whole place was covered in branches, vines, leaves and flowers.

"Dammit.... Even I'm shivering in fear!" Ying Huo said.

"Why does it feel like we're on the bottom of the food chain now? Since when were we the servants? Little Sis just hatched, right?" Meow Meow said.

"Haha..." Lan Huang chuckled suddenly.

"What's so funny, Tortoise Bro?"

"I think Little Sis wants to eat the other six eggs," Lan Huang said as it pointed.

"Dammit!" Ying Huo charged and cried, "Flower Sis, spare the eggs!"

Meow Meow stretched its claws out to scratch its head. Sighing, it said, "Little Sis is messing everything up, but it's got nothing to do with me! Time for a nap!"

It stretched and immediately fell asleep, only to dream about flying. Opening its eyes, it saw itself wrapped in vines that were pulling it toward the bloody spider lily.

"What are you doing, Flower Sis?!"

"Chicken Bro didn't let me eat the eggs and told me that your little eggs are tastier. Hehe!"

"Dammit!" Meow Meow despaired. "Li Tianming! I demand a new residence!"

"Dream on. There's only one lifebound space," Tianming said.

"Whoaaa!"

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An hour later, Tianming returned from the Abyssal Battlefield. He seemed so exhausted he couldn't even walk properly. "It just ate eight ninth-order demon beasts! How can I afford to feed it?!"

Within the lifebound space, Xian Xian stroked its round tummy and burped.

"If it's eating so much now, won't it devour even more in the future?"

Thankfully, he didn't have much to complain about after witnessing its abilities in the Abyssal Battlefield. Having the Radix World Tree on the battlefield could elevate his combat ability to another level. It was so powerful it could control the whole battlefield and could quickly send help to whoever needed it.

"With Xian Xian, I can take on a whole group of people. Back then, I was the core of the battle formation, but Lan Huang later took that role in group battles. It seems that my future strategies will have to revolve around Xian Xian for maximum combat effectiveness. Lan Huang isn't just large, it's also a water type and can be used to nourish Xian Xian. These Primordial Chaos Beasts are getting more ridiculous one after the other."

In the coming days, he, the chicken, cat, dragon, and flower would take on the world.

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When night fell, Tianming returned to his newly named Number One Pavilion, only to find a white-robed man waiting for him in the snow. "Is something up? I thought you'd be in the Fiend Palace."

He had been waiting for a chance for Xuanyuan Yuheng to leave so he could get a look for himself. Since he was here, Tianming decided to turn back and take a look.

"Do you know what this is?" Xuanyuan Yuheng asked as he took out a blue dragon scale from his spatial ring and tossed it to Tianming. "Enlighten me."

"It's a scale from the oceansoul fatedragon. I also have its eyes and heart. Want to take a look? he asked, snickering.

Chapter 674 - Nine, Five, and Emperor

“Xuanyuan Yuheng, are you still human? You killed Muxue’s lifebound beast?” Tianming’s face sank. Although Xuanyuan Muxue might not be Xuanyuan Yuheng’s biological sister, they had still grown up together. Not to mention that Xuanyuan Muxue respected Xuanyuan Yuheng like an elder brother.

Was Xuanyuan Yuheng possessed to attack Xuanyuan Muxue? Tianming was long unhappy with him, and there was no way Tianming could endure something like this.

“She deserved it. So who can she blame?” Xuanyuan Yuheng replied.

“How does she deserve it?”

“You’re not qualified to ask that. Li Tianming, listen up: I also have three lifebound beasts. They’re three dragons.”

“And?”

“One of them is hiding with Muxue right now. So it’ll kill Muxue if I don’t return at midnight.”

“What do you want.”

“Follow me. One of you will die, either you or Muxue. Pick one,” said Xuanyuan Yuheng.

“Why would I die?” Tianming sneered.

“As long as you don’t hide. Leave Taiji Peak Lake with me. I’ll release her after I kill you,” said Xuanyuan Yuheng.

“What about the Tribulation Artifact Hall’s palace lord, Jian Wufeng?” Tianming asked.

“That’s simple. Follow me into the Old Deepstar Path from the Heaven Branch and we’ll exit at the Earth Branch. He won’t follow us in. Tianming, you should listen to me. Otherwise, no one will be able to save Muxue once it hits midnight. I heard that you treat your friends well? I don’t believe that, and this is your opportunity to perform,” Xuanyuan Yuheng said indifferently.

Tianming merely looked at him coldly without replying.

Xuanyuan Yuheng turned around and narrowed his eyes into slits. “Follow me now. Don’t disappoint Muxue.”

Tianming noticed that Xuanyuan Yuheng’s eyes were red. When he turned around, he saw Jian Wufeng standing in the distance, and there was no way he could hear what they were talking about from so far away.

Xuanyuan Yuheng headed to the Old Deepstar Path with Tianming following behind him. Judging from Jian Wufeng’s attitude, the latter must be thinking that they were discussing their cultivation.

Meanwhile, Tianming was conversing with his lifebound beasts in the lifebound space. Tianming was boiling with rage. “He even went as far as killing Muxue’s lifebound beast. Is he insane?”

“I already guessed that he wouldn’t give up since he failed his previous assassination attempt,” said Ying Huo.

"It's my fault for being too confident and dragging Muxue down. You don't have to go through this without me," said Tianming.

"There's nothing we can do about it. I didn't expect that he would be so deranged," replied Ying Huo.

"Why do I feel like he's got a screw loose? Do you think there's another reason why his mind is so twisted?" Meow Meow rolled its eyes.

"That's a possibility," said Tianming.

"What do you plan to do now?" Ying Huo asked.

"Xuanyuan Yuheng wants me to fight him in a deathmatch, and we can only get through this if I defeat him. Otherwise he won't let Muxue off," replied Tianming.

"I guess he hasn't placed Muxue somewhere nearby then," said Ying Huo.

"That's right. So we have to put him under control!"

"This asshole is ruthless. Honestly speaking, it's time for us to resolve this grudge with him," replied Ying Huo.

"But it's a pity that he's keeping his eyes on me right now. There's no way I can find anyone for help," said Tianming.

Xuanyuan Yuheng had planned well just to bring Tianming along with him. Just when Tianming was thinking about seeking help, Xuanyuan Yuheng said, "Don't think about trying to get help. I'll kill myself if you enrage me, and Muxue will die with me! Li Tianming, I'm giving you a chance to prove that you're stronger than me. Don't disappoint me. I have no grudge with Muxue, and I don't want her to die."

"Looks like you know what you're doing," Tianming said.

"That's for sure. I only want you dead," replied Xuanyuan Yuheng.

"That's the confusing part. When did I offend you?"

"Haha."

It didn't take long for them to arrive at the Old Deepstar Path. The three branches were linked together by the Old Deepstar Path, and one could head to the Earth Branch through it by going backward. When they entered the Old Deepstar Path, Jian Wufeng didn't follow.

Jiang Wufeng had been staying outside all this time while Tianming was in the Old Deepstar Path. Passing through the Old Deepstar Path, Tianming and Xuanyuan Yuheng arrived at the Earth Branch.

"It looks like your head is clear since you can think of using this method to get rid of Jian Wufeng. It looks like you're just sick in the head," commented Tianming.

Xuanyuan Yuheng didn't say a word, only looked at Tianming coldly. He quickened his steps and Tianming followed him. They took remote paths, and they rarely encountered anyone along the way. Tianming didn't have a choice, since Muxue was in Xuanyuan Yuheng's hands. So Tianming could only leave the Taiji Peak Lake and head south.

This late at night, the surroundings were covered in snow and darkness. When they arrived at a cliff, Xuanyuan Yuheng abruptly turned around. Only the two of them were there by themselves.

“Li Tianming, don’t even think of using that pagoda again. If there’s no result before midnight, Muxue will still die. You don’t have much time left,” Xuanyuan Yuheng’s indifferent voice sounded out. The golden eye on his forehead was bloodshot and looked like the eye of a demon.

“Release Muxue if I defeat you. She’s innocent. Come at me if you have a thing with me. You’re a piece of garbage for getting the innocent involved. Xuanyuan Yuheng, I’ll be honest with you—I’m looking down on you right now. When we first met, I felt that you were majestic. But right now, you’re just a fool to me,” said Tianming with his eyes narrowed into slits.

“So realistic?” Xuanyuan Yuheng laughed. The baleful aura around him became even colder, and a murderous aura grew in his eyes. Xuanyuan Yuheng looked utterly different right now. The baleful aura around him suddenly grew even more robust and he said, “Everyone’s a fool, revolving around you and treating you like a genius in the divine realm. Sorry, but I refuse to accept it. All you have right now was given to you by Her Eminence, and you don’t deserve it!

“Why don’t I deserve it?” Tianming sneered.

“Her Eminence is the goddess of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan. She’s my goddess!” Xuanyuan Yuheng roared, causing an avalanche. Snow rolled down like a landslide, but none of the snow managed to get near them.

“Your goddess?” Tianming laughed.

“That’s right. I attended her for twenty years, and I’ve devoted everything to her. I’ll even ignite my soul for her! She’s my everything. And you, you’re a stain in her life! Today, I’ll cleanse this stain for her!” But the avalanche was too loud for Tianming to hear anything. He only knew that Xuanyuan Yuheng had gone insane.

“Die!!” Xuanyuan Yuheng roared like a maniac. Two dragons suddenly appeared beside him. Xuanyuan Yuheng had three dragons as his lifebound beasts, and they were famous in the Archaion Sect. They were known as the Nine-Five Emperor. The Nine, Five, and Emperor each represented a dragon.

‘Nine’ was the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon. It had three hundred and ninety-nine stars, roughly on the same level as Lan Huang and Meow Meow. It was a dragon covered in silver scales, each of which was shaped like a crescent moon. The most distinct feature about it was its nine blade-like wings. It had four wings on each side and one giant one standing vertically on its back like a shark.

‘Five’ referred to the five-headed goldperion dragon. It was a golden dragon with three hundred and ninety-two stars, five gigantic golden heads, and a colossal body. It had a similar style as Lan Huang.

As for ‘Emperor,’ it referred to the emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon, but it wasn’t there with them. It was clear that the emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon was holding Muxue’s life in its claws.

Xuanyuan Yuheng stood among the avalanche with his two dragons. The dragons looked ferocious, which made Xuanyuan Yuheng look even more majestic. He had the temperament of one of the best disciples in the Archaion Sect. But it was a pity that the eerie aura coming from his vertical eye ruined his disposition, making it cold and sinister.

Xuanyuan Yuheng's weapon was a Draconic Swordbreaker, an artifact with five tribulation patterns. The weapon was a king among weapons. But in Xuanyuan Yuheng's hand, it seemed to have changed into a demonic weapon. When Xuanyuan Yuheng poured his death tribulation energy into it, it only seemed even more sinister.

"Li Tianming, come and fight me. Only the winner is fit to become Her Eminence's disciple!" His aura shot into the sky. Tianming could no longer tell if Xuanyuan Yuheng still retained his sanity. Even his lifebound beasts looked more clear-headed than him.

"Her Eminence?" Tianming realized that Xuanyuan Yuheng had only been mentioning Feiling, which gave him a rough idea. It meant that he was one of her fanatic believers. Someone like him was terrifying, but the one he believed in was Xuanyuan Xi, not Feiling.

"It doesn't matter what banner you're wearing. You deserve to die for trying to threaten me with Muxue's life!" Tianming wouldn't change his mind. Tonight, only one person could leave this place alive.

Chapter 675 - She's Terrifying

There was too much snow accumulated around the combatants, and the appearance of a gigantic beast could easily cause an avalanche. When the snow came crashing down, the shadows devoured everything, including Xuanyuan Yuheng.

The two dragons moved in the blizzard, and it wasn't hard to guess that Xuanyuan Yuheng was somewhere near them. At the same time, Tianming could sense a murderous aura locking on to him.

"He's not in his best form without his emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon."

Tianming was already in the seventh level of the Emyrean Saint stage, six levels away from the second death phase of the Samsara Stage. Furthermore, his opponent was a veteran of the Heaven Branch, like Xuanyuan Yu, so it was tough for him to gain any advantage. But fortunately, Xuanyuan Yuheng was one lifebound beast short, while Tianming had the Radix World Tree.

"Xian Xian!" Tianming yelled with his gaze locked on to Xuanyuan Yuheng.

A terrifying scene occurred in the next second. Tree branches burrowed out from his body and drilled into the snow, spreading a few hundred meters out. A massive flower a few hundred meters wide appeared beside Tianming, instantly covering the entire battlefield. Be it under or aboveground, it was the Radix World Tree's territory.

The Radix World Tree's roots, vines, and branches could extend out to five hundred meters, and they were thicker than Tianming's waist. In terms of size, the two dragons paled in comparison.

The flower blossomed like a white sun and a dense aroma spread out. There was also a Crimson Lily that multiplied into tens of thousands of flowers growing on the branches and vines. The petals were as sharp as blades, and a crimson light flickered on them. A crimson mist was released from the flowers, covering the entire battlefield and transforming it into hell.

Ying Huo stood on a vine and Meow Meow lay comfortably on the Radiant Daffodil. The Radiant Daffodil's aroma had a hypnotic effect, and Meow Meow was in love with it. Last, but not least, Lan Huang stood beside Xian Xian, looking all mighty.

It was a majestic scene with a dragon and a tree standing beside Tianming. Compared to them, Ying Huo and Meow Meow were lacking in presence. There was no question that Tianming's strongest lifebound beast formation was formed.

Xian Xian might not be powerful in terms of fighting. It might have a flaw, such as its inability to properly play with its three elder brothers. But when combined with Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Lan Huang, the group's fighting strength was through the roof. They were a perfect match.

Tianming split the Grand-Orient Sword into two. He wielded the black sword, which represented an emperor's rage on his left, and the gold sword that represented an emperor's prestige on his right. He stood beside the Radix World Tree like a firm mountain.

Xuanyuan Yuheng was clearly surprised when he saw Xian Xian for the first time. He exclaimed, "You have a wood-type lifebound beast?!"

He now knew why Xuanyuan Xiao had given Tianming another fourth-grade tribulation manna. He saw a three-year-old lass flying above Tianming's head like a little fairy, fiercely looking at him. Shortly after, the white flower on it turned red and eerie.

This was Xian Xian's fighting form. All the vines, branches, and even roots began waving around in the sky. The roots were like swords stabbed into the snow. Nothing could stop it, not even the toughest rock underground.

"Four lifebound beasts with four different types and species. No wonder Her Eminence says you're a genius!" Xuanyuan Yuheng's eyes were red, almost the same shade as the Crimson Lily.

"You're convinced now? But it's too late for you to realize that." Tianming was shrouded in branches, which released fragrance into the surroundings. Holding the two Grand-Orient Swords, Tianming charged at Xuanyuan Yuheng.

"Haha!" Xuanyuan Yuheng's face was distorted. He had probably lost his mind. He used to be a normal person, but he was only left with madness now. There was no return for him from the moment he killed Xuanyuan Muxue's lifebound beast.

When he and the two dragons stepped into Xian Xian's domain, battle instantly broke out. Lan Huang charged forth, unleashing its Primordial Wheel. Snow mixed with mud instantly formed a wheel and soared into the sky, separating the two dragons apart.

At the same time, Lan Huang swung its tail at the five-headed goldperion dragon, slamming it into the ground. When the two colossal beasts landed on the ground, countless black roots stretched out and coiled themselves around the dragon.

The dragon's physique was powerful, and its scales were tougher than tribulation artifacts. Xian Xian's roots failed to stab into the dragon, but there were simply too many of them spreading around. Since the roots couldn't pierce through the dragon's defenses, they started drilling into the dragon's mouths.

The pain of having so many roots entering its mouths made the five-headed goldperion dragon tremble in agony. The black roots penetrated the tongue in one of its heads, and it didn't take long for the tongue to be devoured by Xian Xian. Then the roots proceeded down the dragon's throat into its stomach.

"Get lost!" the five-headed goldperion dragon roared. It twisted its body around and released a golden mist from its body to shred the roots in its mouths into pieces. Shortly after, it closed its mouths and eyes. But even so, its noses were still open. The dragon was on the verge of going insane; this was the first time it encountered such a fearsome opponent.

"Golddevouring Aura!" The five heads breathed out a golden miasma. The miasma was filled with tiny sharp particles, which successfully shredded the black roots into pieces and pushed Lan Huang away. But even so, it still took a claw from Lan Huang and suffered many wounds. Many of its scales were ripped off, making it vulnerable to the roots. When the roots were damaged, they could easily grow back.

"Wow, she's terrifying!" Lan Huang's eyes were wide open. When it raised its head, it saw an even more shocking scene. Xian Xian had covered the entire battlefield, which meant it was simultaneously facing three opponents.

The nine-winged silverblade saintdragon was busy fighting with Meow Meow in its Regal Chaosfiend form. Lightning flashed as Meow Meow used Myriad Thundernet to hold up the dragon while unleashing Chaos Disaster on it.

The nine-winged silverblade saintdragon was powerful and tore the Myriad Thundernet apart. The dragon's scales had two layers, and it could unleash them like Ying Huo's Skyscorch Featherblast. It was its ability, Myriad Silverblade. The crescent-shaped scales were like blades as they descended upon Meow Meow from all directions.

Meow Meow shrank its body and perfectly avoided the scales. Most importantly, it had Xian Xian supporting it. The vines radiated and turned into white whips. It was Xian Xian's ability, Radiant Vines. Under its manipulation, the vines interlocked and formed a glowing white shield.

"It hurts." Xian Xian was enraged and swung its whips out at the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon much like how Tianming used his Three-Thousand Starfield.

"What's going on?" The saintdragon discovered that the whips left no injuries on its body; however, it was beginning to feel exhausted and helpless. When the white whips landed on its body, it actually felt sleepy.

When it suffered two more lashes from the whips, the dragon was so exhausted that it fell asleep. It had no idea that this was the true effect of the Radiant Whip—energy draining.

It could inflict exhaustion and sleepiness on its opponent. And if Xian Xian was allowed to continue, it was only a matter of time before its opponent would fall asleep. At that time, it would be devoured.

Tianming had never thought that the Radix World Tree was benevolent. It was an existence that could devour everything in the world. As a Primordial Chaos Beast, not only did it devour beasts, but humans as well. Tianming recalled what he had seen in his vision: the roots devouring hundreds of millions of lifeforms.

Among the four Primordial Chaos Beasts, three of them were monsters, aside from Lan Huang as a Primordial Mountains and Seas World. One devoured the sun, and the other was a lightning fiend that refined everything.

That was in the past, however, but the symbiotic cultivation system had given them another chance at life. Tianming was confident that they could live without guilt if they grew together with him, regardless of good and evil.

“Dammit, this tree is annoying!” The nine-winged silverblade saintdragon was on the verge of going insane. It was fighting Meow Meow, but the vines were everywhere. The dragon tried destroying them, but new ones soon grew. It was an endless process.

The dragon wanted to deal with the tree, but it couldn’t do anything with Meow Meow around. Annoyed, it let out a roar and unleashed its ability, Milky Way Descent.

It shot a silver sphere into the clouds, absorbing the starlight and expanding in size. The globe was like a descending silver sun targeting Xian Xian’s Radiant Daffodil.

“You dare touch my younger sister? Have you asked this cat over here?” Meow Meow roared furiously and started gathering lightning from its Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape. After achieving its current cultivation level, its abilities were greatly boosted. When it unleashed the Misty Hellthunder, a terrifying black lightning vortex soared into the sky and devoured the silver sun.

Chapter 676 - Battle in the Blizzard

Two energies clashed in the sky, creating a massive explosion that devoured all the snow within a thousand meters of its epicenter.

Xian Xian’s power lay in its multiple means and control over the battlefield. For example, the Radiant Vines were terrifying to many lifebound beasts. That didn’t mean that Ying Huo, Meow Meow, or Lan Huang were any weaker than Xian Xian. When they were fighting together, their fighting power would soar through the roof.

With someone controlling the battlefield, it allowed it to form a system. That system benefited everyone, including Tianming. For example, the five-headed goldperion dragon was tough for Xian Xian’s black roots to penetrate and it had to be hammered by Lan Huang. It was confident in defeating Lan Huang, but Xian Xian didn’t give it any opportunity.

Another example would be the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon, which was starting to doubt its life. Not only was Meow Meow as fast as lightning, but the dragon was still whipped by the vines, causing it to feel increasingly exhausted.

Although Xian Xian’s roots and vines had decreased in number, compared to the beginning of the fight, Xian Xian hadn’t suffered any injuries. After all, it wouldn’t be hurt with so many big brothers protecting it. Its only weakness was its ability to take a beating. In a fair duel, it probably wouldn’t be able to beat its three elder brothers.

The lethality of Meow Meow, Lan Huang, and Xian Xian was horrifying. Most importantly, there was still an assassin hiding among the tree branches, waiting for an opportunity. That assassin was naturally Ying Huo.

“Dumbfuck, take this sword!” While the five-headed goldperion dragon fought Lan Huang and Xian Xian, it suddenly felt a chill in its lower body. Ying Huo executed the Hexapath Samsara Sword, empowered by three hundred and fifty strands of tribulation sword ki and the skypiercer ki from its Skypiercing Diablos Feather.

All five of the dragon’s heads let out a miserable cry. There was a bloody hole in its abdomen and its internal organs had been damaged. The three hundred and fifty strands of tribulation sword ki were wreaking havoc in its body.

In the next second, Lan Huang bit down on one of its heads and tore it apart. “Younger Sister, it tastes great!”

Another head flew out and was caught by Xian Xian’s black roots. It disappeared in just three breaths. After Xian Xian was done eating, more roots grew out. Xian Xian could regrow its roots, vines, and flowers, but it had to replenish itself through eating meat.

That was Xian Xian’s weakness. Its appetite wasn’t because she was a glutton, but an innate ability. To Xian Xian, feeling hunger was torture, just like how Meow Meow would feel if it couldn’t sleep. Meow Meow slept to stabilize the violent lightning in its body.

Each of the Primordial Chaos Beasts had characteristics related to their physique. Ying Huo’s flames determined that it would be lively, and it was easy for it to become furious. On the other hand, Lan Huang needed to exercise or its body would start to rot.

Tianming understood them, but he also felt the need to set ground rules for them as well.

They might be Primordial Chaos Beasts, but they’re also my lifebound beasts. They need to learn how to control their energy and temper as they grow. Let’s hope that I can guide them well. Tianming had no idea what had happened to them in the past, but it must have something to do with their personality. Fortunately, Tianming was still satisfied with their current growth.

“Xian Xian, you’re not allowed to consume intelligent lifeforms in the future. If you’re hungry, I’ll get a larger spatial ring and store prepared food for you inside. Understand?” Tianming asked.

That was a simple rule in human society. Lifebound beasts weren’t the same as wild beasts. They were intelligent, and had their own thoughts and souls. Eating them was a taboo in human society, and Xian Xian had to comply with it as a lifebound beast. As for wild beasts, they were violent creatures without any intelligence.

“Xian Xian knows. Xian Xian will behave myself.” Xian Xian lowered its head. It was fond of Tianming. When it was still an egg, it liked to stay beside him, unlike Ying Huo, who only teased her.

“Don’t worry about it. I know that you’ll be hungry every fight, and I’ll prepare a reward for you. What do you think of roasted pig? It’s too primitive for you to eat in this manner. I’ll show you what true delicacy is,” smiled Tianming.

“Yippy yay!”

“Also, spirit herbs can also be turned into delicacies—”

“No! Xian Xian doesn’t eat vegetables!” Xian Xian shook her head violently.

Tianming was struck speechless by the response. He had already seen how powerful Xian Xian could be in a team fight. So Tianming wasn’t surprised that his lifebound beasts could suppress Xuanyuan Yuheng’s lifebound beasts.

Tianming was fighting with Xuanyuan Yuheng, and his conversation with Xian Xian was through their minds, lasting only an instant.

“Four lifebound beasts of four different types. Whew, it feels great!” That was Tianming’s greatest exclamation at this moment. Honestly speaking, Xian Xian’s appearance gave him the confidence to fight in the Number One Summit.

But before the Number One Summit, Xuanyuan Yuheng would be his last, strongest opponent. Tianming’s Grand-Orient Sword clashed with Xuanyuan Yuheng’s Draconic Swordbreaker.

Xuanyuan Yuheng wore a grim expression. He could tell that his lifebound beasts were going to lose. It was something he feared, and happening before his eyes. He could no longer easily claim Tianming’s life, like he could in the past.

His heart was distorted with pain. Others wouldn’t understand, and it was due to the baleful bloodsea in his head. Even at this moment, the Archaionfiend’s words were still repeating in his mind. Xuanyuan Yuheng was no longer himself; he only had hatred in his heart.

Wielding the Draconic Swordbreaker, Xuanyuan Yuheng also had the air of an emperor around him. Even his Heavenly Will was similar to Tianming’s. It was a predestined battle—after all, there couldn’t be two tigers in one mountain.

The battle art Xuanyuan Yuheng used was a top-tier death tribulation battle art, the Imperial Art. The Draconic Swordbearer radiated as Xuanyuan Yuheng swung it down, executing the Imperial Art, Pendragon Hellsuppression. Five dragons manifested from his attack and dove down.

Tianming felt his anger build up as he thought of Xuanyuan Muxue. He charged with his dual swords, filling them with five hundred strands of tribulation sword ki.

His opponent was covered in golden scales. He had transformed into a draconian, and in addition to the fact that he had refined over three hundred astralsources, his physique was on a whole new level.

Meanwhile, Tianming had only refined two hundred astralsources. But he wasn’t at any disadvantage. The tribulation sword ki clashed with the Draconic Swordbreaker and fell on Xuanyuan Yuheng. The clash between the swords and swordbreaker only lasted for a brief moment before they broke apart.

“Xuanyuan Yuheng, isn’t it sad that you can’t even push me now?” Tianming charged back with his swords.

“It isn’t, because I’ll soon shred you into pieces!” Xuanyuan Yuheng launched another move from the Imperial Art, Nine Dragons Balance. Nine dragons dashed out from the Draconic Swordbreaker and

soared into the sky. The violent energy sent Tianming flying away; he was no match for this attack. Xian Xian's vines caught him and negated the force behind the attack in the process.

"People like you are sad. Everything you've done so far just proves your inferiority and incapability. You claim it's for the Archaic House of Xuanyuan, but you're unfit for the surname! Muxue is ten times as worthy as you!" Tianming used the vines as a board and dashed through the blizzard.

"I'm unfit? Don't worry, I'll be at the pinnacle of my life once I kill you. I'll become the strongest beneath Her Eminence. Only I am worthy of standing before Her Eminence! Only I am worthy of the goddess!" Xuanyuan Yuheng roared, venting all of the negative emotions in his heart.

"Oh my. You revealed your true thoughts. You want to possess the goddess?" Tianming laughed. Xuanyuan Yuheng must be sick in the head after offering his faith to Xuanyuan Xi for a long time. It didn't matter what was affecting him, but it had amplified the twisted emotions within him.

"The goddess is mine! I'm willing to annihilate the world for her, and no one can do something like that for her but me! She should only look at me! She should be grateful to me! She's just committing a mistake now, and I'll prove it by killing you! You have to die! You have to die!!" Xuanyuan Yuheng's hair parted as his vertical eye began charging with golden light. It was the Vajra Extinguishing Eye, his strongest attack.

A fatal golden beam soon shot out from his eye. At the same time, he swung his weapon and caught up with the golden beam. This time, he was using the strongest move from the Imperial Art, Eternal Sovereign. This attack required the user not to be afraid of dying and give his all.

"Haha." Tianming snickered. The eye on his left hand suddenly opened and he used the Soulshaker Eye!

Xuanyuan Yuheng suddenly found himself in darkness. There was only a gigantic crimson eye hanging in the sky like a bloody sun. When Xuanyuan Yuheng looked at it, it felt like he was being stared at by the eye of heaven, which pierced into his heart.

Xuanyuan Yuheng could only scream out his frustration as he had lost Tianming's location while directing the Vajra Extermination Eye at the crimson eye in the sky.

"Xuanyuan Yuheng," Tianming's devilish voice sounded out.

"You!" Xuanyuan Yuheng blasted his attacks all around, trying to find Tianming's location. But in the next second, he suddenly felt a series of densely packed attacks bombard his body.

Xuanyuan Yuheng screamed out in pain. When the Vajra Extermination Eye shot at the eye in the sky, his surroundings finally returned to normal.

He looked down when he sensed the pain on his body. He didn't know when, but he had been covered with sword-shaped petals. It was the Crimson Lily's ability, Bloodrain Sword.

The petals weren't only on his body, but also the five-headed goldperion dragon and nine-winged silverblade saintdragons' bodies as well. This was due to Xian Xian's ability to control the entire battlefield. The Crimson Lily's petals could even pierce through Xuanyuan Yuheng's defenses, and they immediately started draining his blood.

As Xuanyuan Yuheng sensed his blood being drained, he also felt his vitality seep from his body. Furthermore, Tianming had arrived before him.

“Trash, let me reveal the truth to you. The goddess is mine!”

Tianming swung his swords, executing the Hexapath Samsara Sword, Mortal Dao Sword. He was the true emperor on this battlefield.

The clash between the Grand-Orient Swords and the Draconic Swordbreaker created bright sparks. Xuanyuan Yuheng had lost a large amount of blood, and his vision had also started to blur. But under Tianming’s attacks, he could only grit his teeth as bloody tears rolled down his cheeks.

“You disgraceful piece of shit! You dare profane the goddess?! YOU DESERVE TO DIE!” Xuanyuan Yuheng’s eyes turned red.

“That’s where you’re wrong. I’m not guilty of anything—Her Eminence is the one who makes the final call.”

The swords and swordbreaker clashed once more. This time, the swordbreaker was blown away from Xuanyuan Yuheng’s grip while the black Grand-Orient Sword pierced into Xuanyuan Yuheng’s saint palace.

When his saint palace exploded, it left a huge bloody hole in his body. At the same time, the Imperial Sword Prison poured into Xuanyuan Yuheng’s body and sealed him.

“Urghh....” Xuanyuan Yuheng’s blood gushed out when Tianming withdrew his sword. Falling to his knees, Xuanyuan Yuheng’s face was drained of blood and his eyes were wide open. His hands grabbed at the empty air.

“W-what have I done?” Xuanyuan Yuheng raised his head and blankly looked at Tianming with his crimson eyes.

“You courted death.” Tianming placed the black Grand-Orient Sword on Xuanyuan Yuheng’s head. The sword was cold, even more so than the blizzard in the surroundings.

Xuanyuan Yuheng turned his head and saw the five-headed goldperion dragon lying on the ground. It had died on the spot after having its heart destroyed by Ying Huo’s Infernal Blaze.

Xian Xian’s black roots only started leaving the dragon’s corpse at that moment. It lay on the ground as it looked at Xuanyuan Yuheng with tears rolling down its face.

“Yuheng, let’s meet again in the future. But when we do, I won’t be able to act with such insanity with you anymore....”

Xuanyuan Yuheng wailed; his head was finally clear at this moment. But he could only powerlessly stare at Tianming. “Y-you....”

“What’s the matter with me? I already gave you your chance. Do you think you can still push me now?” Tianming said indifferently as he stood before Xuanyuan Yuheng.

Was Xuanyuan Yuheng pitiful? Wasn't Xuanyuan Muxue, who suffered the loss of one of her lifebound beasts, pitiful then? Xuanyuan Yuheng naturally had to pay the price for his mistake, and Tianming would never pity him.

"Ahahaha. You also like the goddess. Ahahaha!" Xuanyuan Yuheng held onto his forehead and started laughing.

"What do you mean by 'also?' Are you even qualified?" Tianming retorted.

"I'm not, but neither are you!" Xuanyuan Yuheng's smile became distorted. "Since I've ruined myself, I'll ruin you too!"

As Xuanyuan Yuheng spoke, a thick heavenly pattern tome appeared in his hand. He had no intention of using it before, because he had wanted to kill Tianming with his strength. "Anyone who profanes the goddess has to die! Come with me to hell! I'm guilty, and so are you!"

Just as Xuanyuan Yuheng was about to drip his blood on the tome, petals stabbed into his body, instantly piercing his heart and throwing the heavenly pattern tome out. It was probably a nine stars heavenly pattern tome. It was already dyed with blood, but Xian Xian had thrown it into the sky.

The heavenly pattern tome exploded. The explosion created a blazing sun in the night sky that pushed all the snow within a few thousand meters away.

Tianming stood beneath the sun and lowered his head, looking at Xuanyuan Yuheng, who was on his knees with his head drooped down. The snow on the ground was dyed red, and a blizzard blew in the surroundings. He brought the injured nine-winged silverblade saintdragon and rushed to look for Xuanyuan Muxue.

Chapter 677 - No Regrets, Beastmaster And Beast, A Lifetime Of Symbiosis

In the cold wind, Tianming sat on Lan Huang's head, heading southwest. Radiant Vines extended from his lifebound space, binding the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon to Lan Huang's body. The dragon looked dull and lethargic, its body covered in blood. The lightning that had charred most of its silver body had also caused heavy injuries.

"May I ask you a question?" Tianming turned to the saintdragon, his robes fluttering in the wind and snow.

"Go ahead." Entangled by the Radiant Vines, it couldn't move. Its murky eyes appeared bleak and dismal.

"Has Xuanyuan Yuheng recently been affected by external forces? For example, did someone use some special technique to influence his mind?" asked Tianming.

In fact, he hadn't planned on killing Xuanyuan Yuheng. At most, he wanted to clarify the doubts in his mind. However, Xuanyuan Yuheng actually pulled out a nine star heavenly pattern tome. If it weren't for Xian Xian's quick response, Tianming would have been killed.

"I don't know..." sighed the dragon.

"You're his lifebound beast. How can you not know?"

"Recently, he often closed off his lifebound space to prevent us from finding out what he was doing," said the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon.

"Then why were you guys still messing around with him?" asked Tianming.

"To be honest, we never thought he would kill the oceansoul fatedragon," it said.

"Is that how you got along with your beastmaster?" Tianming shook his head.

"No, we've always been brothers and the closest confidants. However, in recent years as the divine blood gradually awakened, he was on guard day and night and didn't say much to us. After the return of Her Eminence, his emotions have grown more and more out of control. If we said anything, he closed off his lifebound space."

In truth, beastmasters occupied dominant positions in their symbiotic relationships. For example, the lifebound space is controlled by the beastmaster.

"Why didn't you immediately inform the elders when he kidnapped Xuanyuan Muxue?!" asked Tianming.

"What do you know? We're brothers. Since he wanted to do it, then we'd go crazy with him just this once! Li Tianming, Yuheng failed and we have lost, but don't forget, we're enemies. I can't kill you in this life, but you'd better make sure I don't find an opportunity in my next." Although the dragon was exhausted, its eyes were fiery-red.

"If you'd acted in the nick of time and chosen not to go along with his insane plan, he might still be alive," Tianming snickered.

"We didn't expect you to have such a strong plant type lifebound beast. That's why we failed. But if we'd succeeded, Yuheng would've had the opportunity to approach Her Eminence without you getting in the way!"

"Why did he want to approach Her Eminence? Don't you know that's wishful thinking?"

"It doesn't matter. We're brothers in life and death. Anything he wants to do, we'll do too."

"What about Muxue then? What did she do wrong?" asked Tianming.

"She didn't do anything wrong. If anything, it's her fault for being too close to an outsider like you!"

"Stop lying to yourself, pal. His heart was all twisted. He was even willing to sacrifice his own people. Don't try to wave the so-called flag of brotherhood. I have lifebound beasts as well, but I wouldn't deal with my sister like that in front of them. Don't you understand that you must have a moral bottom line?"

After Xian Xian was born, Tianming knew that this was something he had to hold fast to. If he descended into evil ways and allowed his Primordial Chaos Beasts to learn from him, their destructive power would be more terrifying than anyone else's could ever be. He was very careful to maintain his symbiotic

relationship so beastmaster and lifebound beast would be of the same heart. What a failure of a man he would be if beastmaster and lifebound beast had different beliefs.

"Li Tianming, I admit that you're excellent and I envy your relationship with your lifebound beasts. But isn't it because they're stupid that you can control them?" the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon sneered.

"Stupid? Tianming laughed, " First of all, I've never controlled them. Their lives are more important than my own. They're my family. Secondly, you don't get to say if they're stupid or not. Haven't you heard, the wise may appear stupid?"

The dragon laughed.

"Forget it, I've no reason to argue with you. At least you didn't make things difficult for Muxue, so you still have a conscience," said Tianming.

"Well, you're right. Muxue didn't do anything wrong. I've failed Muxue and Lan Ling. After all, we also grew up with them...."

Since Xuanyuan Yuheng died, everything was over. Venting their anger on Xuanyuan Muxue would be a failure on their part. From the very start, they were more clear-headed than Xuanyuan Yuheng, but they had chosen to fight with him anyway.

As tribulation beasts, they would no longer be able to improve their tribulation force, which would slowly dissipate after having lost their beastmaster. However, they would still retain their physical strength and would have no problem surviving in the Abyssal Battlefield. Unfortunately, they were in the death phase so their flesh would decline quickly.

That was symbiotic cultivation. They shared life and death together, and neither party would be able to escape the consequences. Creating a lifebound spirit was already considered fighting for a better end.

All of these encounters made Tianming even more aware of how lucky he was to have been able to embark on this path of symbiosis with his lifebound beasts. He loved them from the bottom of his heart. What they shared was a sort of blood connection, a resonance of the soul.

Therefore, it wasn't at all surprising that the saintdragon had chosen to accompany Xuanyuan Yuheng in committing such a crazy act. Beastmaster and lifebound beast were bound to each other in life and death from birth, grew together, and learned about the world together. Sharing the same fate undoubtedly meant that they were close to each other, and perhaps on certain levels, closer than family.

Ying Huo and the others were straightforward and reckless; they didn't speak affectionate words, but Tianming was an affectionate man. Thus, he was more sensitive than anyone else. Every time they fought side by side, each time they teased and joked was seared into his memory. He was with Midas for sixteen years, and its death had taught him to cherish the opportunity and feelings. If the Primordial Chaos Beasts needed a guide to help them renew their understanding of this world, then Tianming was willing to play that role; it was his mission.

On this snowy night, Tianming was lost in thought.

"Xian Xian." He touched the little girl's head. Its spiritform was obediently nestled in Tianming's arms, curiously looking at the outside world and listening to their conversation.

"What's wrong, half-daddy?" asked Xianxian.

"Welcome to our big family. I'm very honored to be your partner, and I'll teach you to love this world. Although it's cold and cruel, it signifies life and is the hope of countless living beings. Life is filled with ups and downs; it's very exciting. When you grow up, you'll have an opportunity to experience it all. Do you understand?"

"I do. I'll only eat half of what half-daddy gives me in the future. I won't even eat if my belly is grumbling." Tilting its head, Xian Xian lay on Tianming's arm, eyes wide as she swore her solemn vow.

"Do you know what the most important thing is?"

"No."

"What's most important is to not let our friends and partners down. Be worthy of those who live and die with you, alright?"

"Mhmm, I got it. It's all up here in my head." It looked at Tianming with adoration.

"Good girl. Don't worry, as long as I'm alive, you won't go hungry. You must savor the delicacies of the world, not swallow them in one gulp."

"Yay! I'm so happy. I'm going in to play with Big Brother Meow Meow!"

Ying Huo hung from Lan Huang's head. Upon listening to their conversation, it remained motionless, fixing its feathers in the wind.

"Chicken Bro," said Tianming.

"Yeah? Is there anything you'd like to say? Like beastmaster and beast, together forever without regrets?" Tianming teased.

"Fuck, you're giving me goosebumps!" Ying Huo said in disgust.

...

In the abyss to the south of the Taiji Peak Lake, a black dragon was coiled around a girl dressed in pale blue, waiting in the darkness.

"Big Brother Yuheng can't win," the girl said hoarsely.

"I know." The black dragon let out a mournful cry and lowered its head.

"What's wrong? Why didn't you refute me?" the girl asked.

"He's gone," said the black dragon.

It slowly loosened its body, releasing Xuanyuan Muxue.

"He's gone?!" Xuanyuan Muxue fell to the ground, her frosty eyes trembling. Xuanyuan Yuheng was dead? Was he defeated and killed, or....

Staring blankly at the black dragon at the entrance of the cave, she said, "So, will you vent your anger and kill me?"

"There's no point in that. Muxue, you've suffered. Let's go."

The black dragon flew out.

"Where are you going?" shouted Xuanyuan Muxue.

"To die with them," it replied.

"Don't do this. Take me with you," Xuanyuan Muxue said anxiously.

"Let's go then." The black dragon left with her.

...

The stormy winds whistled amid the endless snowfall. Under the night sky, Tianming met up with the black dragon and the young girl on its back.

The emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon stared at Tianming. His appearance signified Xuanyuan Yuheng's defeat. After placing Xuanyuan Muxue on the ground, the black dragon swept into the cold sky and rushed toward Tianming with no regard or fear of death.

"It's useless Hei Tu. Don't waste your effort." Raising its head, the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon looked at the black dragon, its eyes dim.

The black dragon stopped.

"Where are they?"

"They're all gone. I came back so Muxue could live," it said.

"You were so badly defeated?"

"Yes, everything's gone. We were wrong," it said.

"You should kill yourself. But don't stop me, I'll die for Yuheng!" said the black dragon, its gaze fiery.

"Live."

"No, I don't want to live out a hopeless life," said the emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon.

Staring down Tianming, it charged forth with the determination to kill its enemy.

Chapter 678 - It's All Fated

Tianming asked Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Xian Xian to deal with the emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon. Since the other party came to heroically seek death, there was nothing Tianming could do to persuade it except hold it down.

Tianming quickly approached Xuanyuan Muxue. The seventeen-year-old girl was ashen and had bloodstains all over her clothes. Due to her severe injuries and the frosty snow, her lips were so cold they had turned blue.

"How are you?" Tianming asked.

"I'm fine. I'll be better once I see a doctor and use some spirit herbs, so don't worry." Staring at Xian Xian's Radix World Tree physique, Xuanyuan Muxue was able to figure out how Tianming had defeated Xuanyuan Yuheng.

"Congratulations, you got your revenge." She smiled bitterly.

In this battle, neither winning nor losing would make him happy.

"Where's the oceansoul fatedragon?" Tianming asked.

"It's now a lifebound spirit. At least he had the conscience to help me with a Lifespirit Formation."

"Did he have to go so far? Even if he wanted to lure me out, why kill your lifebound beast?"

"He only had one chance, so he was afraid that we weren't close enough. He had to be cruel to lure you out." Xuanyuan Muxue lowered her head, her eyes dim.

"I'm sorry. I hurt you because of my overconfidence." said Tianming.

Losing a lifebound beast meant that, although Xuanyuan Muxue was still a beastmaster who had retained her cultivation level and could continue cultivating, her future achievements would be nowhere as brilliant as before. In truth, the dispute between Tianming and Xuanyuan Yuheng had nothing to do with her.

"There's no need to apologize. You didn't do anything. I'm happy he's dead, but it's a pity that I can't personally avenge Lan Ling." As Xuanyuan Muxue spoke, her tears couldn't stop falling.

"I'm sorry." Tianming couldn't bear to watch, because he understood how it felt to lose a lifebound beast

Xuanyuan Muxue sobbed uncontrollably. Amidst the wind and snow, Tianming gently embraced her so she could vent her emotions.

"Muxue, if there's ever a chance in the future, I'll do my very best to make it up to you. I know that nothing can replace the death of a loved one. I can only try to help you in terms of cultivation...."

"It's alright. I'll feel better after shedding a few tears." As she spoke, Xuanyuan Muxue gripped Tianming's arm before letting go.

"Alright."

"I'm fine." She smiled, wiping away her tears.

"Let's go back," said Tianming.

"You say you want to make it up to me?" Xuanyuan Muxue asked.

"That's right."

"I need a favor."

"Tell me."

"I have no hope of participating in the Number One Summit. Take my place, help me safeguard the dignity of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan, fight for the Archaion Sect and protect Her Eminence!" she said.

"I will."

"One wrong step led Big Brother Yuheng down the wrong path. During this period of time, he practiced hard day and night without rest, just to prepare for the summit. Go with his dream as well. If you can defend our home, he would certainly acknowledge you even in the underworld. Although he hasn't treated either of us well, he never did anything evil. He's always been a most respectable brother!"

Xuanyuan Muxue bit her lip and clenched her fists to prevent the tears from falling.

"Alright." Tianming nodded.

His words were spoken softly, but it was a promise.

"Take my brother's place as well."

"Alright."

"This is our home. I don't want others to step on the bones of our family, bully, and mock us. I'm sorry to have to trouble you." Though she resisted, tears streamed down her cheeks.

"No trouble at all. After all, I'm also a disciple of the Archaion Sect. I belong here. Thank you, Muxue."

"Why thank me?"

"You allowed me to witness a different side to the Archaic House of Xuanyuan."

Just as the words left his lips, the battle over there ended.

The emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon had failed both in seeking revenge and seeking death. It was bound with Radiant Vines, together with the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon. Its eyes dimmed.

"Kill me. Let me die!" It struggled.

"Don't even think about it. I don't want the Archaion Sect to think that all I do is kill. This stops at Xuanyuan Yuheng. In the future, I won't deal with our own people unless someone betrays and rebels against the sect," said Tianming.

The black dragon laughed coldly.

There was no point in arguing. With that, Tianming escorted Xuanyuan Muxue back to the sect.

The explosion from the nine star heavenly pattern tome might have caused a great disturbance. Thus, people from the north region of the Archaion Sect had come out to search, but still missed Tianming, who had traveled through the Old Deepstar Path. Among these disciples was Jian Wufeng. Tianming had

to explain the matter regarding Xuanyuan Yuheng to the entire sect. When he returned, Tianming met up with the elders. Jian Wufeng was present as well.

"What happened?!" Jian Wufeng walked up to him with an irascible temper. However, upon realizing Tianming was fine, he let out a sigh of relief.

"I'll talk about it at Xuanyuan Lake," Tianming replied.

"Alright."

By the time Tianming arrived at Xuanyuan Lake, they had already noticed the disturbance. The two palace lords of the Nine Divine Hall, Xuanyuan Xiao and Xuanyuan Yu, were waiting for them. They were the parents of Xuanyuan Yuheng and Xuanyuan Muxue, respectively. Behind them was Xuanyuan Dao, the sect master of the Earth Branch.

"What happened?"

Tianming placed the corpses of Xuanyuan Yuheng and the five-headed goldperion dragon on the ground, then explained the matter.

Xuanyuan Xiao stood rooted to the spot, face ashen and bereft of speech.

"How can this be? I've spoken to Yuheng. How could this happen...." Conflicted, he looked at Tianming.

If it had been anyone else, he wouldn't be able to bear it. Worried about this happening, Xuanyuan Xiao had deliberately spoken to Xuanyuan Yuheng many times.

"Uncle Xiao, he's right. My oceansoul fatedragon is dead." Xuanyuan Muxue grit her teeth.

She lay badly injured in Xuanyuan Yu's arms. The latter's expression was filled with pain.

Xuanyuan Xiao turned completely pale.

"That is what happened. There's nothing to say. Yuheng set a trap, but was killed instead. We failed. No one else is to blame," said the nine-winged silverblade saintdragon.

"Have you all gone mad? If Yuheng wasn't thinking clearly, why didn't you advise otherwise?" grieved Xuanyuan Xiao.

This son of his had always made him very proud. He was waiting for Xuanyuan Yuheng to take over the Archaic House of Xuanyuan in the future. Such an incident was simply a bolt from the blue.

"There was no persuading him," the dragon replied.

"No, Yuheng didn't have to go so far." Xuanyuan Dao frowned.

Xuanyuan Dao had had a conversation with Xuanyuan Yuheng regarding the grudge between him and Tianming. Xuanyuan Yuheng had also assured Xuanyuan Dao that he would let it go. How did things become so crazy?

"Do you suspect external forces at play?" Tianming asked.

"It's possible, but for now I don't have proof."

"He pulled out a nine star heavenly pattern tome. I had no choice," said Tianming.

"I know."

Silence pervaded the air.

"There's something I'd like to say," the emperor abyssalfiend saintdragon interjected.

"Speak."

"He was recently cultivating in the Fiend Palace. I sensed a change in his third eye. Perhaps he was affected by the Archaionfiend Eye. In fact, as soon as he entered the Fiend Palace, he would close up his lifebound space and only open it again after a long time," it said.

"The Archaionfiend Eye?" They were astonished.

"Yuheng was one of the best disciples at ocular arts...." Xuanyuan Xiao stumbled backward.

"Palace Lord, there's nothing I could've done. I didn't want this to happen. I'm sorry," said Tianming.

Xuanyuan Xiao looked at him helplessly.

Revenge for his son? He couldn't think of any reason. Because of this, Xuanyuan Yu's daughter had lost a lifebound beast. He thanked the heavens they hadn't caused any trouble for him.

"The Archaionfiend Eye is suppressed by the Heaven Cauldron. Nothing like this has ever happened. We must find out if anyone from the Yinyang Demon Sect has infiltrated the sect," said Xuanyuan Dao.

"Yes."

"Bury Yuheng."

"I will."

Glancing at Tianming, he said, "Follow me. We're going to see Her Eminence."

"Alright." Tianming nodded.

With her mother by her side, Xuanyuan Muxue's subsequent recovery wouldn't be a problem. As for the two dragons left by Xuanyuan Yuheng, they were no longer Tianming's concern.

Tianming met Xuanyuan Xiao's gaze. In this world, people weren't divided into purely good or evil. Xuanyuan Yuheng couldn't be considered a bad person, and Tianming couldn't be a good one. The same was true for Xuanyuan Xiao.

"I'm sorry," Tianming repeated.

"It's all fated. I advised him so many times, but nothing worked." Xuanyuan Xiao smiled bitterly. "If only I hadn't sent him to Godservant Hall."

...

Soulburn Hall.

Upon hearing Xuanyuan Dao's recounting of the events, Feiling's expression changed drastically. Her reaction was nothing short of intense. She only managed to relax when Tianming blinked at her, suggesting that she should calm down.

"Fang Qingli," she called.

"Your Eminence." Fang Qingli walked out trembling, her face pale as a sheet.

"What was wrong with your disciple?" asked Feiling.

"I don't know. The child has always been good. Even if he had a little conflict with Tianming in the beginning, that was dealt with. There was no need for him to—"

"Do you mean Tianming orchestrated all this for revenge?" Feiling asked coldly. She had begun resembling the goddess more and more.

"Your Eminence, you misunderstand. I wouldn't dare," Fang Qingli quickly replied.

"Your Eminence, this whole incident is rather strange. I'll investigate to see if it's related to the Archaionfiend Eye or the Yinyang Demon Sect. Yuheng has always been decent. His deranged behavior is rather suspicious," added Xuanyuan Dao.

"Alright." Feiling nodded.

Her trembling eyes collided with Tianming's. Throughout the day, she had been filled with worry and anxiety for him, but because she couldn't leave, she could only wait for news.

"Your Eminence," said Tianming.

"What is it?"

"I'd like to participate in the Number One Summit and contribute my strength to the Archaion Sect!" Tianming said fervently.

Although he couldn't verbally express how much he personally wanted to protect Feiling, she would certainly understand.

"I don't recommend that. Tianming's future prospects are amazing. The Number One Summit is very dangerous. If the others know that Tianming is your disciple, he's likely to perish," said Xuanyuan Dao.

"Please, Your Eminence." There was resolve in his voice, passion in his eyes.

Feiling stared at him for some time.

"Alright," she said.

Tianming smiled; she understood him.

Chapter 679 - The Hexapath Sword Sect Approaches

Heaven Branch, the Number One Pavilion.

Lin Xiaoxiao had returned. The Archaionfiend lay in the snow, a heap of white piled on its body. Upon noticing Lin Xiaoxiao, it rose to its feet and turned its dark red eyes on her. "Where were you?"

"Weren't you wondering where Xuanyuan Yuheng went last night? Well, I went out to ask around," said Lin Xiaoxiao.

"Tell me."

"He kidnapped Xuanyuan Muxue to lure Li Tianming out and kill him." Lin Xiaoxiao stared coldly at the Archaionfiend.

"And what was the result?" it asked.

"Li Tianming is dead." Lin Xiaoxiao gritted her teeth.

"Really? That's good. What a pity Xuanyuan Yuheng probably came to a miserable end as well. It wasn't easy confusing a medium," the Archaionfiend lamented.

"Have you been exposed? Li Tianming is your only threat so it doesn't matter if your medium is gone. You can slowly look for another one. No one's competing with you anyway," said Lin Xiaoxiao.

"Lin Xiaoxiao, are you trying to trick me?" it shouted.

"Why argue with me? Do you dare say Xuanyuan Yuheng's behavior has nothing to do with you?"

"I merely magnified his emotions and resentment. Otherwise, how could I get him to listen to me? Don't you understand there's a reason behind everything?" the Archaionfiend sneered.

"Serves you right! Everything you've worked for has gone down the drain," said Lin Xiaoxiao.

"What do you mean?"

"Tianming killed Xuanyuan Yuheng. His progress is faster than anything you could ever achieve. Didn't you say you can fuse Heavenly Wills? But why do I get the feeling that you can't?" Lin Xiaoxiao sneered.

"He killed Xuanyuan Yuheng?" The Archaionfiend was stunned.

"You're clearly shooting yourself in the foot and inviting humiliation," said Lin Xiaoxiao.

The Archaionfiend's expression turned gloomy. It had never expected it would lose control of Xuanyuan Yuheng.

"That's impossible. How could his progress be faster than my fusion of Heavenly Wills? Even so, his lifebound beasts shouldn't be able to keep up!" It crept in the snow, eyes dripping blood.

"What are you going to do next?" asked Lin Xiaoxiao.

"It's alright. He doesn't have Fiend Shackles and isn't strong enough. He can't touch my eye for the time being. I'll look for another medium. Anyway, there's tons of people filled with resentment. Otherwise, I'll have to wait for you to achieve samsara then find a way to enter the Fiend Palace. Perhaps you could ask Tianming to take you in. He'll only grow more powerful in the sect. After some time, such a request would be easy for him," said the Archaionfiend.

Lin Xiaoxiao nodded.

"Additionally, I need tribulation manna. Ask him for one."

"No."

...

With the Number One Summit just around the corner, all Heaven Branch disciples were cultivating in retreat; there was almost no one to be seen. Tianming ascended the Heaven Sacred Mountain.

"Tianming, come and have a drink," Ouyang Jianwang shouted from atop the Heaven Cauldron.

"Brother Ouyang." Tianming descended before his eyes.

"I heard about you and Xuanyuan Yuheng," said Ouyang Jianwang.

Nodding, Tianming glanced at the red-faced 'poet' and asked, "What did you mean by 'The weather is dry. Beware of fire'? Were you warning me about this?"

"Take a guess."

"That must be it," said Tianming.

"You're right. When Xuanyuan Yuheng began to act, he was spotted by a friend of mine," said Ouyang Jianwang.

Xuanyuan Yuheng's actions were sudden and unexpected, so stopping him would have been impossible. Thus, Tianming didn't bother himself with the issue.

"Why didn't your friend stop Xuanyuan Yuheng?"

"Since things were already set in motion, we had to see what the kid was going to do. Last night, I watched the entire process and witnessed your performance. The power of your lifebound beasts is unprecedented. I'm amazed by their coordination." Ouyang Jianwang smiled.

"What about the end?"

"In the end, you were quick to attack and I was careless. I thought he seemed a little strange and decided to wait until the end of your battle to investigate further. When he pulled out the heavenly pattern tome, I was going to help you, but I didn't expect that tree of yours to be so ferocious," said Ouyang Jianwang.

At the time, Xian Xian could have just thrown aside the heavenly pattern tome. However, being a newborn, Xian Xian's first reaction upon perceiving danger was to get angry and worry about Tianming's safety. It was so frightened that it stabbed Xuanyuan Yuheng to death with its Bloodrain Sword. Xian Xian couldn't be blamed for that; it was just a baby. Though highly intelligent, it had little experience and a strong sense of self-protection. On the other hand, Ying Huo had experienced many situations with Tianming.

"I see." Tianming nodded.

"Since I failed to deal with it promptly and caused the trail to go cold, I won't report it to the Xuanyuan Clan. It's fine that you know about it." Ouyang Jianwang patted him on the shoulder.

"Sure, I won't say anything," said Tianming.

"I think it might have something to do with the Archaionfiend Eye. If you're going to cultivate, you must be careful. The eye was originally a demonic object, but it's suppressed by the Heaven Cauldron. If we lose control of it, there'll be hell to pay," said Ouyang Jianwang.

"The Archaionfiend Eye?"

"That's right. It's true that Xuanyuan Yuheng resented you, but now your status is different. With his intelligence, there was no way he would've behaved so hysterically. Something must have affected his mind. Since he's never left the sect, I don't think it's the Yinyang Demon Sect at work. In the days to come, you must be mindful of your surroundings. It's easy to dodge an open attack, but not a hidden one," added Ouyang Jianwang.

"Alright." Tianming nodded. "Brother Ouyang, can I ask a question?"

"Go ahead."

"Who do you, Yi Xingyin, and Gou Yuqiu represent?"

"I'm a straightforward man, so I won't beat around the bush. We represent the three great clans among the Tribulation Peak elders. We're natives of the Ancient Divine Realm, but not the core of the Archaion Sect. Do you understand?" asked Ouyang Jianwang.

"I get it. So the famous tribulation elder, Dugu Jin, is one of you? Tianming asked.

"No, he's a maverick. An exception," said Ouyang Jianwang.

"Then what's your relationship with the three major clans?"

"We're on ordinary terms with the Draconis House of Jian. There's no conflict between us, but our relationship with the Sterling House of Fang isn't so good," replied Ouyang Jianwang.

"So you're on better terms with the Archaic House of Xuanyuan?"

"The Archaic House of Xuanyuan is the legitimate successor of the Archaion Divine Realm. Although the entire realm has always respected the Archaic House of Xuanyuan, they've had their ups and downs. In truth, they're not at their strongest right now. We're not considered close, and there's been certain past estrangement. After all, Tribulation Peak is an amalgamation of forces, not a unified whole," Ouyang Jianwang explained.

"What do you mean?"

"Our goals for the near future coincide with those of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan, and that is to hold on to Her Eminence. However, the Archaic House of Xuanyuan is wary of outsiders. They're very nervous about the matter, and don't exactly trust us. Since you're Her Eminence's disciple, we hope to gain her trust through you," said Ouyang Jianwang.

"You're being so honest," Tianming laughed.

"We have no choice. Anything regarding Her Eminence is a sensitive matter. Even if those of us who are passionate want to fight for our home, the stubborn and conservative Archaic House of Xuanyuan refuses to believe us. Right now, they don't trust anyone besides those from Xuanyuan Lake. After all, Her Eminence was almost assassinated in Soulburn Hall. Who can tell who's an enemy and who's a loyal servant?" said Ouyang Jianwang.

"I understand," said Tianming.

"I don't insist on Her Eminence's trust, as long as you understand us. Time will prove everything. Tianming, we love this place. Change is coming, and that calls for us to bravely step forward. When the time comes, it'll be clear who's loyal and courageous, and who harbors rapacious designs."

Ouyang Jianwang patted him on the shoulder.

"Yes, only time will tell," said Tianming.

"Furthermore, judging from your performance last night and your progress during this period, we all agree that you might one day become the eleventh supreme god in the history of the Flameyellow continent." Ouyang Jianwang smiled.

"That's all too far in the future. We'll talk about it when we get there," said Tianming.

"Very well. You're a special child, I'm optimistic about you. If the day you become a god comes, don't forget there was once a talented poet on the Heaven Cauldron," said Ouyang Jianwang.

"Of course." Tianming smiled.

"Are you going to participate in the Number One Summit?" asked Ouyang Jian.

"Yes."

"Remember, stay alive."

"I won't die," said Tianming.

"There's a fine line between brilliance and death. The Number One Summit is the biggest obstacle in the Archaion Sect. If you don't make it through, many hearts will crumble, but if you survive, we'll be filled with passion and hope."

Tianming understood the significance of this battle.

"If Her Eminence dies, the Archaion Sect's future over the next hundred thousand years will be bleak. Time will distinguish the heroes and the villains!"

Just as the words left his lips, sword ki whistled in the distant sky. The harsh sound alarmed the entire sect.

Tianming looked up at the sky and noticed thousand-meter long sword lights amid the clouds and mist accompanied by the mighty roars of gigantic beasts that shocked the earth.

"What's the purpose of being so aggressive?" Tianming asked coldly.

"Naturally, it's an initial show of strength," Ouyang Jianwang sneered.

"Who are these people?"

"With sword ki soaring to the sky, it's obvious they're the Hexapath Sword Sect of the Sixpath Divine Realm." Having cultivated the sword his entire life, Ouyang Jianwang was eager to fight them.

People from one of the other eight divine realms had arrived.

Soon, the powerhouses and geniuses of the other divine realms would follow. The day when they all gathered would be the Number One Summit.

"Are you going to the Heaven Divine Hall to welcome them?" asked Ouyang Jianwang.

"No, I'm going to take a look at the Archaionfiend Eye."

Eyes surging with tribulation sword ki, Tianming glanced in the direction of the Hexapath Sword Sect.

Chapter 680 - Li Muyang's Present

The arrival of the Hexapath Sword Sect caused a huge uproar in the Archaion Sect, and many people gathered in the Heaven Divine Hall. The place was massive, as it was a place meant to receive the eight divine realms' masters and disciples. During the Number One Summit period, the eight divine realms would be staying in this hall.

To control the situation, all three Sect Masters were present, along with the masters of the Archaion Sect, to receive the guests. The Number One Summit was an event for friendly sparring. The last time the Archaion Sect had hosted it was a hundred years ago.

But everyone knew that this Number One Summit would be different. It was rather obvious, judging from the Hexapath Sword Sect's attitude. Chaos was descending, and everyone had their own thoughts. So who could be free from it?

The Archaion Sect's atmosphere was intense. It felt like they were facing an enemy, which ignited a fire in Tianming's heart.

"This is probably my last chance to make a breakthrough before the battle begins. I might be able to defeat Xuanyuan Yuheng with my current strength, but it's meaningless since I'm only ranked in the middle of the Heaven Branch." Tianming didn't want to be put in a situation where he was powerless about everything. This was when his passion was high, and he didn't want to take a break.

After he bid farewell to Ouyang Jianwang, he entered the Fiend Palace. The Archaionfiend Eye was still the same as before, and Tianming observed it for a long time.

"The nine soulshaker meridians are all unlocked. Next is to cultivate the Soulshaker Eye, and I don't need the Archaionfiend Eye for that. But I'll wait for tonight since Xuanyuan Yuheng is dead." There were still people in the Fiend Palace, and they were all disciples of the Trioptic True Dragon Branch. When Tianming entered, all of them looked at him with a complicated gaze.

They had grown up with Xuanyuan Yuheng, and regardless of the reason, it was undeniable that Tianming had killed Xuanyuan Yuheng. Xuanyuan Yuheng's position in the Archaic House of Xuanyuan wasn't something that Xuanyuan Yufeng could be compared to.

"Forget it. Since he's joining the fight, then let him fight for the sect."

"Even Uncle Xuanyuan Xiao has already admitted to it. Let's not join the mess."

"In the end, Yuheng had a bad life...."

Tianming wasn't bothered by their reactions. He had never hoped that they would stand on his side to begin with, but at least they had the same goal.

He sat down and started his cultivation. After some time passed, he heard a loud explosion coming from outside that shook the Heaven Sacred Mountain several times.

"It must be the Hexapath Sword Sect."

"Their display of strength seems pretty powerful."

"They're taking it too far!"

Disciples continued leaving the Fiend Palace to look at what was going on. After all, it would be tough to concentrate with all the divine realms gathering over the next few days.

Tianming was just waiting for them to leave. Around evening, everyone had finally left and he was left alone with the Archaionfiend Eye.

"Finally." Tianming closed his eyes and soared into the sky, looking at the Archaionfiend Eye with the eye in his hand. Above the eye was the Heaven Cauldron, suppressing it. That was the reason there was no life in the Archaionfiend Eye.

"Is there a possibility that the Archaionfiend Eye changed Xuanyuan Yuheng?" Tianming approached the Archaionfiend Eye with that thought. When he was beneath the Archaionfiend Eye, and only one meter away, he could no longer get close to it. There was a layer of the Heaven Cauldron's energy covering it, and there was nothing Tianming could do. But the impact was significant when he looked at the eye from up close.

"Dad didn't tell me how I should take the Archaionfiend Eye." Tianming rubbed his temples. He realized that there was no reaction even after getting close to the eye. The Heaven Cauldron was acting as a barrier that stood between him and the eye. Looking at it from this position, Tianming felt nothing aside from sore eyes.

"So what's so bewitching about the Archaionfiend Eye?" But just as Tianming was about to go down, he suddenly sensed a commotion coming from his spatial ring. He had changed to a ring with a larger internal space that day. Aside from his personal items, it was packed with food prepared for Xian Xian.

Wildbeast corpses wouldn't rot in the spatial ring for a short period, and Xian Xian wasn't picky when it came to what it ate. So Tianming had made a brief trip to the Abyssal Battlefield to gather food. Not only had he resolved the exhaustion from his battle with Xuanyuan Yuheng, but there was a surplus to use later.

The commotion had come from his personal items in the spatial ring. When Tianming changed his ring earlier, he had gone through all of his items. Even the spirit core he got from Red Twill Mountain was well-kept. When he looked through his personal items, he discovered that the commotion was coming from a black chain lying in the corner.

“Isn’t this the weapon my father gave me when I went to the Grand-Orient Sect? What’s the name again?” Tianming pondered. “Archfiend!”

Tianming’s body jolted as he took out Archfiend from his spatial ring. “Back then, dad was still Uncle Yang, and he told me there was something strange about this chain he got from the Abyssal Battlefield.

“The name Archfiend is so similar to the Archaionfiend Eye. Is there a connection between them? Can it be that dad already prepared everything for me?” Tianming became emotional. Archfiend was composed of eyes that had been made into links of a chain.

He remembered using it briefly before tossing it aside. He didn’t spend any time looking into it. But when he took it out this time, he discovered something unusual about it.

“I can’t believe I failed to notice something like this on me!” Tianming smiled bitterly. But he was more curious about the connection between the Archaionfiend Eye and Archfiend. Would there be a reaction if these two came in contact?

When Tianming took out Archfiend, it turned into a circle just like those in its eyes. The reaction coming from the chain also started to grow. At the same time, the Archaionfiend Eye also jolted. The dull-looking eye suddenly appeared to be trembling in fear.

“What’s going on?” Tianming opened his third eye. He saw the Archaionfiend Eye trembling as it released a dark red miasma toward Archfiend. When the miasma fused into Archfiend, it caused the chain to change.

The aura on it began increasing, as though something baleful had awakened. Even the spikes on it became sharper. Under the Archaionfiend Eye’s nourishment, Archfiend began increasing in strength.

The foundation of an artifact was its spiritual runes. As time passed, a saintly heavenly pattern appeared on Archfiend, transforming it into a saint beastial weapon. But it didn’t stop there. The heavenly patterns continued increasing in number and reached a hundred after an hour. After one night, the patterns increased to a thousand before they converged into a crimson tribulation pattern. The pattern was long, and covered the entire chain like a blood vessel.

With the formation of a tribulation pattern, it meant Archfiend had turned into a tribulation artifact. It even had a transformation like the Three-Thousand Starfield. It could extend in length now up to at least a thousand meters. Although the length was still inferior to the Three-Thousand Starfield, it was more than enough for battles.

Aside from looking a little gross with countless Archaionfiend Eyes strung together, the black spikes could instantly turn someone into meat paste when they pierced a target. With just a glance, Tianming knew that it was an ominous weapon.

Even after the tribulation pattern took form, it continued devouring the Archaionfiend Eye’s essence. Tianming didn’t know what Archfiend was absorbing, but called it essence for the time being. He had a

feeling that the Archfiend was draining the Archaionfiend Eye of something, as the eye was slowly losing its luster.

Although Archfiend hadn't absorbed too much right now, would it suck the Archaionfiend Eye dry if this goes on? Tianming laughed, "Can it be that I'll have to suck the eye dry with Archfiend and transfer its power to the eye in my hand?"

He had no proof, but his thinking was sound, and he could only allow Archfiend to continue absorbing the Archaionfiend Eye. At least he could tell that the Archaionfiend Eye couldn't resist, since the Heaven Cauldron was suppressing it.

"This means I'll be able to suck the Archaionfiend Eye dry as long as no one disrupts me and turns it into an empty shell. Furthermore, with more tribulation patterns forming on Archfiend, will I be able to use it as a weapon?"

Archfiend was being strengthened. It was now stronger than the Three-Thousand Starfield, but it was only the beginning. Who knew how many tribulation patterns it would have by the end of this process.

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In the Number One Pavilion in the Heaven Branch, Lin Xiaoxiao was cultivating and a cry suddenly sounded out from the Archaionfiend.

"What the hell are you doing?" Lin Xiaoxiao frowned.

"This is impossible! Impossible!" the Archaionfiend roared and charged out of Lin Xiaoxiao's lifebound space. Crimson bolts of lightning began discharging and reduced the cultivation chamber to ash.

"Are you insane?" Lin Xiaoxiao was speechless.

"He has Archfiend! He has Archfiend!" the Archaionfiend Eye yelled.

"So what?" Lin Xiaoxiao asked.

"That means he can take my eye away! No, I can't let this go on any further!" The Archaionfiend had violence flashing in its eye. "Lin Xiaoxiao!"

"What?"

"Right now, this instant, go with me to kill Li Tianming!"