

## The Ages 741

### Chapter 741 - Liferot Toxin

Hei An couldn't help laughing madly in the face of Tianming's pursuit.

"What gives you the right to laugh?" Tianming smiled.

"You're too arrogant. You think you're the protagonist of this world, capable of changing everything and crushing everyone. So I'd like to tell you this: the moment a man dies, the story is no longer his. Once you die, I can also think of myself as the protagonist and consider this world designed for me. Do you understand what I'm trying to say? Li Tianming, don't overestimate yourself." Hei An laughed.

"What gives you the courage to say all that?" Tianming narrowed his eyes.

"Because you're poisoned!" With a wave of his hand, Hei An smiled.

Tianming stopped and looked down. His chest was filled with black ki. It was as Hei An said—the poison had already attacked his heart. When he finally composed himself, he found that his internal organs had been filled with a poisonous mist.

The poisonous mist resembled little insects that multiplied in his heart and lungs, so small they were imperceptible. When they began traveling along his blood vessels and uncontrollably breeding, Tianming's flesh, muscles, bones, and internal organs began withering and the shadow of death descended upon him.

Although Ying Huo, Meow Meow, Lan Huang, and Xian Xian had shields that resist poisons, they were all somehow infected by the toxin. The living poison was so tiny that no one could detect it. It all happened in an instant. What a nightmare!

It was impossible to find at first, and by the time Tianming discovered its existence it was too late. It sucked away at his flesh and blood, crazily reproducing. The more it spread, the more of them there were. There was no way he could kill them all. Tianming's body had become a nest for these creatures.

His expression turned ugly and Hei An laughed even more presumptuously.

"Do you now know what a dead end is? Are you still the protagonist of the Flameyellow Continent? How does it feel to watch your life slowly disappear? Who hasn't thought of themselves as protagonists? And then what happens? Still got your arrogance? Your astonishment makes you look stupid." Hei An burst into laughter.

Delighted, he began chattering, "Now let me formally introduce myself to you. My name is Hei An. I was born with an extremely rare poison body. Because of that, I can coexist with all sorts of poisons, and even gradually enhance them within my body. I've consumed poison as food since I was a child. I am the source of all poisons. Can you compare to me? Who do you think you are, shooting your mouth off? I admit you're strong. If I hadn't absorbed this liferot toxin over the past few days, I wouldn't be able to deal with you. Liferot toxin is practically a deadly poison tailored for me. Can you feel it? It's as if they're alive. They were released from my body and exist around me. They're tiny, silent, and invisible as they enter your body through your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. There, they take root and multiply inside of

you. When you finally discover them, you've already been turned into a breeding ground of toxins. In the days to come, I'll be able to kill you all with the liferot toxin in my hands. No one can stop my living poisons. And you're just the first of my children's food. Such an ending is an honor. Doesn't it feel wonderful? The protagonist of Archaion? The eminent's disciple? What other titles do you have? I'll announce them all for you."

Hei An was a little crazy. After being infected with the liferot toxin, shocking changes had taken place. He was the natural host of living poisons. With the liferot toxin, he would be a great slayer of the Nonahall Divine Realm. Wherever he went, people would die—especially the ordinary ones; they couldn't stop it at all.

"With this toxin, I will slaughter the people of Archaion and let this plague kill everything in its wake. It's just a pity that you won't be able to witness it." Hei An convulsed with laughter.

He came from a humble background, and wasn't of high standing in the Nonahall Ghost Sect. However—

"From today onward, this liferot toxin will make me superior. One day I will stand at the top of the Flameyellow continent, and the powerhouses of the world will kneel when they speak to me!"

His eyes turned red. He opened his arms, feeling the liferot toxin multiplying and spreading everywhere.

There was no hope for Tianming, wasn't it?

"Aren't you now an empty shell?" Hei An asked with a smile.

Tianming stared at him blankly with a look that made Hei An want to laugh.

However, Tianming immediately put away his dazed look and asked coldly, "Are you done? Time to hit the road. I'll send you to the gates of hell. You can dream all you want there."

"Are you still trying to fight?" Hei An sneered.

"Trying to fight?"

Tianming couldn't help but laugh.

"Do you know what Primordial Chaos Beasts are?"

Tianming uttered these words in a very low voice, so the others couldn't hear him in the cacophonous battlefield.

"What?" Hei An was confused.

"We might be nothing—even weak—and afraid of many poisons. But your living poisons want to eat us?!" Tianming laughed.

In the beginning, they'd fallen short on defense and had indeed allowed this liferot toxin to invade and breed within their bodies. At the time, it was uncomfortable and despair seemed natural. Ying Huo and the others could feel it as well, and they were afraid. The panicked Xian Xian had even begun to cry.

However, Tianming rose up. He wasn't a man who was used to giving up. Together with his lifebound beasts, Tianming used his own power—in particular tribulation force from his lifesbane—to cleanse himself and fight against the liferot toxin.

There was no fear, only the desire to fight! They couldn't lose, nor would they be allowed to die!

In fact, he had to thank Hei An for spouting a bunch of nonsense and giving him time to fight the toxin. When they fought together with one heart and combined their tribulation forces, the blood of the Primordial Chaos Beasts exploded. These so-called living poisons went from multiplying uncontrollably to being struck by lightning, then finally disappeared.

Their physiques had played a part, but their determination and confidence were the defining factors to quickly destroying the toxin. Hei An might have chosen them as his first opponent, but had ended up kicking an iron plate.

At that moment, the poison dissipated and its intended targets were seething with fresh rage and killing intent.

Having personally experienced it, Tianming knew that the liferot toxin would be a terrible thing for ordinary disciples. Silent and invisible, it lived on flesh and blood, multiplying without a trace until it would spread across the entire divine realm!

"Hei An, you must die!"

Tianming and his four beasts attacked at the same time. Ying Huo burst into flames, exploding with tens of thousands of sword ki strands that stabbed the myriadeyes bloodbat's remaining wing.

Lan Huang slammed the eight-armed rakshasa into the sea of poison. When the roots of the Radix World Tree entangled the rakshasa, Lan Huang sank its teeth into the bat head. With one bite, its dragon teeth were deeply embedded into the beast's flesh and tearing it apart. The rakshasa's head ripped into two. This was the ultimate counterattack! At the same time, Tianming and Meow Meow took Hei An on together.

Hei An didn't believe that the liferot toxin could fail. In his opinion, this was their dying struggle. However, he had never expected Meow Meow's lightning could contain so much power.

Tens of thousands of lightning bolts rained down. Meow Meow trapped Hei An in its Myriad Thundernet, electrocuting him until he was scorched and foaming at the mouth.

Hei An was dumbstruck. He looked up and saw Tianming surging with a murderous aura. The power of his two swords was unparalleled as the Imperealm Sword Formation and tribulation sword ki accumulated.

"What about the liferot toxin? This is just a dying flash!" Hei An's eyes widened.

Filled with disbelief, he became even more frantic. He struck with the weapon in his hand.

Stygian Club—Skydevourer! The short stick in his hand turned into a black torrent and shot into the sky with a momentum capable of devouring the heavens.

"You say you were born for poison and can't be killed by them?" There was only indifference in Tianming's eyes.

Hexapath Samsara Sword—Animacorpus Eradication!

"I'll show you what a real god of death and evil spirits looks like!"

Animacorpus Eradication embodied the path of slaughter. With a swing of the sword, waves of evil spirits surged, their roars of resentment echoing. The sky was filled with ghosts, millions and millions of them gathering amidst the power of his sword, heading for Hei An.

The sword and rod collided. Struck by Meow Meow's lightning, Hei An was half dead and numb all over. He actually still believed in the liferot toxin. But what made him uncomfortable was the fact that Tianming's attack was far more terrifying than he had expected.

With the whistle of the sword ki, a murderous aura pierced through the air and death descended. The golden Grand-Orient Sword split open Hei An's head while the black sword sank into his chest.

Screaming miserably, Hei An died instantly.

"You're the source of all poisons?"

As soon as the words left his lips, a flame lotus burned Hei An's body. Infernal Blaze engulfed the corpse, burning all poisons to ashes.

"Won't they all die as long as I incinerate you?"

The snow fell heavily, burying the black blood. Hei An's body quickly burned into ashes and disappeared in the wind. Amid the blazing flames, the myriadeyes bloodbat and eight-armed rakshasa also turned to dust.

"There is no poison that can kill the Archaion Sect!"

The snowstorm raged on until the flames finally died out and all the toxins were covered by the snow. The world returned to a sheet of white.

On the snowy battlefield, Tianming turned and left with his four lifebound beasts.

The young man's valor was unparalleled!

For a moment, the entire world shook. Deathly silence enveloped the Specter Mountains in the distance.

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Tianming returned to Xuanyuan Dao. Upon seeing the smiles and marvel on their faces, he felt content.

A man charged in right then.

"Sect masters, there's been an assassination attempt on Her Eminence!"

**Chapter 742 - A Bolt From The Blue**

Tianming was immersed in the joy of beheading Hei An, and the powerhouses of the Archaion Sect were just as pleased.

The Nonahall Ghost Sect possessed great power. In the past hundred thousand years, even the disciples of the various major sects who had dominated the Flameyellow continent were hardly able to contend with them, what more defeat Hei An. Liferot toxin was something that all of them had heard of, so they knew what a terrible weapon it was. Once it spread, it would effortlessly destroy any armies that encountered it.

Although Hei An had possessed liferot toxin, he'd been killed by Tianming. Thus, the source was destroyed. After all, not just anyone could become the host of liferot toxin and help it flourish. Because he possessed a poison body, Hei An was undoubtedly an important part of the Nonahall Ghost Sect's future and his death had made the entire Nonahall Divine Realm uncomfortable.

At this moment, there was killing intent breeding in the Specter Mountains. As the current overlord of the Flameyellow continent, the people of the Nonahall Divine Realm were known as the Supernatural Legion. Wherever they went, not even a blade of grass would grow.

In making them feel uncomfortable, dejected, and even humiliated, Tianming had once again shown the continent the strength of the Archaion Sect.

However, something happened to upset Tianming and the powerhouses of the Archaion Sect at a time like this.

"There's been an assassination attempt on Her Eminence?!"

What a bolt from the blue! As soon as they heard the news, the powerhouses rushed toward Xuanyuan Lake. They were all top figures in the continent. Fang Taiqing, Xuanyuan Dao, and Jian Wuyi disappeared in the blink of an eye.

There was hardly anyone left; the sect descended into chaos.

Tianming suddenly felt a stabbing sensation in his skull, the kind of pain that was beyond words. The thing he least wanted to happen had happened again, and at such an unexpected moment!

It was extremely difficult for him and Ling'er to survive in the cracks between these major forces. Tianming had always been cautious as he walked on thin ice, but there was still disaster. The only thing he could do was trust that Xuanyuan Dao and the others could protect her.

Unfortunately, during this decisive battle, Xuanyuan Dao was also present on the Dimensional Battlefield. Without him, the assailant might have been successful. After all, who would dare make such an attempt if they weren't certain of success?

"The powerhouses of the other sects are all present on the battlefield. Who could it be?" Tianming breathed heavily, his eyes turning red.

He couldn't stay here.

"Tianming!"

Ouyang Jianwang appeared, solemnly guarding him.

"Brother Ouyang."

"It's rather chaotic, stay close," said Ouyang Jianwang.

"I want to go to Soulburn Hall." Tianming grit his teeth.

He felt like a volcano was bubbling in his chest. All sorts of terrible thoughts appeared in his head, making him irritable. The volcano erupted, manifesting as throbbing veins that were visible in his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. His bloodshot eyes made him appear extremely ferocious.

"Are you sure?" Ouyang Jianwang asked.

"Yes."

"Alright, I'll take you there."

Ouyang Jianwang and the other third-origin tribulation elders exchanged a look. The elders would remain here while he brought Tianming with him. Right now, tens of thousands of tribulation sword ki strands burst from within Ouyang Jianwang and condensed into a solid form before him. As soon as he brought Tianming up, Ouyang Jianfeng mobilized his tribulation sword ki and the two flew toward Soulburn Hall at a terrifying speed.

The fighting on the Dimensional Battlefield immediately stopped with the disturbance at Xuanyuan Lake. The powerhouses of the major sects remained seated for the time being. After all, there were still a number of Archaion Sect powerhouses monitoring them.

As soon as Tianming left the battlefield, there was an enormous tremor in Xuanyuan Lake. Nine gigantic dragons measuring a thousand meters long suddenly soared into the sky, releasing deafening roars that shook the earth. The dragons devoured the clouds, spewing wind and fire that swirled to form a spherical shield covered in dense dragon patterns that enveloped the entire lake. These weren't actual dragons, but a combination of spirit hazards and the power of heavenly patterns.

"They've activated the Nine Dragon Formation. It should be fine, so don't worry," said Ouyang Jianwang.

In fact, the formation had always been activated, though concealed. However, it restricted outsiders. If the battle had taken place at Xuanyuan Lake, the perpetrator was most likely someone from the sect.

Ouyang Jianwang sped up and soon arrived near the lake. At the moment, the Nine Dragon Formation was completely sealed so he couldn't enter, either. Both men could only watch anxiously.

A terrifying battle was taking place on Xuanyuan Lake. There were too many people attacking for Tianming to tell who was who, and most of the buildings had collapsed. There was an explosion and ice and water splattered across the sky.

"It's him!" There was disbelief in Ouyang Jianwang's cold eyes.

"Who?" Tianming asked.

"Dugu Jin, the first tribulation elder of Tribulation Peak!"

Tianming had heard about the man; it was rumored that he was very powerful. Although he wasn't a sect master, he ranked among the top three in the entire Archaion Divine Realm. Outside the three

great clans of the sect, he was the strongest. Ouyang Jianwang and Yi Xingyin weren't nearly as powerful as him.

"Ling—is Her Eminence alright?" Tianming asked.

"I don't know. I can't see into the interior of Soulburn Hall, but the place is half destroyed. It seems that the formation was broken." Ouyang Jianwang frowned.

"Is Dugu Jin working for the Nonahall Ghost Sect, the Yinyang Demon Sect, or the Hexapath Sword Sect? Could he be the one who attempted to assassinate Her Eminence last time?" Tianming asked anxiously.

Now that the Nine Dragon Formation was sealed, Ouyang Jianwang couldn't enter. Although Tianming was able to break through the formation, he might be attacked by the formation itself if he entered in such a manner. Not being able to do anything felt extremely uncomfortable.

"The last attempted assassination must've been Dugu Jin's doing. After all, he has the strength. In fact, we're very close with him, and even consider him our guide. Based on my understanding of him, he has nothing to do with the other sects. Assassinating Her Eminence could be his own decision," said Ouyang Jianwang.

"Why do you say that?"

"This matter might be a bit complicated for you," said Ouyang Jianwang.

"It's alright. I'd like to know!"

"Then I'll make a long story short. Tianming, we can see from the Number One Summit that the goal of the five divine realms headed by the Nonahall Ghost Sect isn't purely Her Eminence. She's just their excuse. The Nonahall Ghost Sect and the other four sects want to use this to divide the Flameyellow continent between them and destroy part of our divine realm. They have rapacious ambitions. It was previously rumored that they were going to kill the disciples of the Archaion Sect and force us to surrender Her Eminence. In fact, the rumors are all untrue. They don't want to deal with Her Eminence during the Number One Summit, because once she's dead, they won't have an excuse. What they want is the Kilostar Domain, and at the same, to pressure the Triflair, Pentaphase, and Octagram Sects," Ouyang Jianwang replied.

"What does this have to do with Dugu Jin?" Tianming was confused.

As he was speaking, he stretched out his left hand, intending to tear open the Nine Dragon Formation so Ouyang Jianwang could take him in. However, he was worried that not even Ouyang Jianwang would be able to withstand the attack of the formation once they entered.

"Dugu Jin probably wanted to kill Her Eminence so they wouldn't have an excuse to send their troops. He must've started having such thoughts the moment Her Eminence returned. Perhaps he thinks this is the best way forward for Archaion. That's why I don't think he's working for the Nonahall, Birtual, or Sixpath Divine Realm, because those three realms hope Her Eminence lives until they conquer Archaion. You've just defeated Hei An. If you're the victor of the Number One Summit, the entire sect will wholeheartedly prepare for battle. He thinks this may be our last chance." Ouyang Jianwang looked a little uncomfortable when he uttered those words.

It was obvious they were on good terms with Dugu Jin. After all, they all shared the same origins. The oppression from the five divine realms was fuel for Dugu Jin's attack.

However, Tianming didn't understand him. He didn't want to think about the rights and wrongs of his behavior. All he knew was that Dugu Jin wanted to kill Feiling.

The ways of the world were tumultuous. When Tianming had first arrived, there were times he felt uneasy, unsure of whom he could trust. For example, he had always been on good terms with Ouyang Jianwang. However, Dugu Jin, a man from the same faction, had made a move. Would Ouyang Jianwang be the next Dugu Jin, laying dormant by his side just waiting for an opportunity? According to them, the five divine realms wouldn't have an excuse to go to war if Her Eminence died. Wouldn't that preserve the safety of Archaion?

"In truth, they can easily come up with another excuse. Today, their excuse is Her Eminence, and tomorrow it might be something else. As the Nonahall Ghost Sect expands, they'll eventually attack us. Dugu Jin is clearly confused," Ouyang Jianwang said despondently.

They had tried their hardest to win Xuanyuan Dao's trust. But now that Dugu Jin had acted on his own, they must feel very uneasy if they were truly sincere.

"Tianming, we've failed to live up to Her Eminence and Xuanyuan Dao's trust!" Ouyang Jianwang sighed, shaking his head.

"Take me in!" Using his dark arm, Tianming tore the Nine Dragon Formation open.

"How did you do that?" Ouyang Jianwang asked in shock.

"It doesn't matter," Tianming replied.

"Alright then."

Ouyang Jianwang pulled him into the formation. Just then, the rumble of an explosion sounded above the Nine Dragon Formation; someone had forcibly broken the formation and fled.

With his third eye, Tianming could tell the man was Dugu Jin! He and two crimson dragons rushed out of the formation covered in blood. One of the dragons had broken two of its claws. As soon as they returned to Dugu Jin's lifebound space, the man flickered away in a bloody gleam.

He was escaping!

### **Chapter 743 - Whether We Live Or Die**

Dugu Jin's voice rang out through the entire Xuanyuan Lake. "So long as Her Eminence is alive, Archaion will eventually meet its end. I, Dugu Jin, am willing to take up the mantle as the ultimate sinner to spare you from that fate, yet you're trying to stop me from making this sacrifice. You won't be able to regret it when it's too late! Fang Taiqing, Xuanyuan Dao, Jian Wuyi, you three are so incompetent that the sect will eventually perish at your hands!"



Even though he had immediately vanished, his voice still echoed through the area. Soon after, two figures gave chase alongside their lifebound beasts, zipping away just as quickly. They seemed to be Fang Taiqing and Jian Wuyi.

Dugu Jin had temporarily made his escape. It sounded like he hadn't managed to make the kill, which made Tianming slightly relieved. Even so, the rage in his heart still hadn't been quenched.

"How long will it take until I'm able to control whether we live or die?"

The vortex of conspiracies seemed to be growing deeper and deeper. Tianming watched as Dugu Jin escaped, heavily injured. All of a sudden, he saw a golden light coming off of his body. "Why does it look like the flames of Soulburn?"

Shocked, he saw the light turn into a spiritform as it lost its heat and approached Tianming, then melded into his body. It was Feiling using Spiritual Attachment!

"Ling'er, you're out here?" he asked telepathically.

"I had no choice! Granny Fang wasn't able to stop him, so I left my body and attacked him with Soulburn so she'd be able to take my divine body to safety," she said in a weak, fatigued voice.

"You used Soulburn? Are you alright?" He felt the rage in him burn even more. If only he was there to see how dangerous it was. There was no doubt her life was at risk for her to resort to using Soulburn.

"I'm fine, Big Brother. I'm much stronger than before, now I'm at the Emyrean Saint stage, so the side effects of Soulburn aren't as serious. Not to mention, I wasn't going all out, so all I need is some time to recover. Bring me back to my body," she quickly explained, not wanting him to worry.

After a long time of not having used Spiritual Attachment, Tianming felt his tribulation force grow by leaps and bounds when she entered his body. Soon after, the Nine Dragon Formation began attacking him, but Xuanyuan Dao quickly deactivated it.

"Ouyang, you should leave first," Xuanyuan Dao said.

"Yes! Apologies, Sect Master." Ouyang Jianwang hurriedly left, leaving only the elites of the Xuanyuan house, Fang Taiqing, and Jian Wuyi within the formation. Given Ouyang Jianwang and Dugu Jin's relationship, Xuanyuan Dao wanted to give him a chance to leave for now.

With a grim expression, Xuanyuan Dao asked, "Did he open the formation to let you in?"

"I did it myself."

"You did?"

"Yes, it's a unique talent of mine."

"Whew..." Xuanyuan Dao heaved a sigh of relief and waved for Tianming to follow. "This is getting troublesome. Fang Qingli said that Her Eminence split in two. One part of her turned into flames that entered Dugu Jin's body while the other seemed to have lost her soul," he said in a hoarse voice.

"Sect Master, it's fine. Her Eminence has returned to my body."

"What do you mean?"

"You'll find out soon."

"Alright."

They entered the ruins of Soulburn Hall. There were a few tribulation elders of the Xuanyuan house, some injured and others just looking defeated. The whole place was a mess. The fact that they had defended the goddess, however, was a sign of their loyalty. No matter what the others thought of Feiling, at the very least, those within the formation were earnestly trying to protect her.

When Tianming entered with Xuanyuan Dao, he saw Fang Qingli's green phoenix bleeding profusely. One of its wings seemed to have been broken and it was heavily injured. Fang Qingli was right beneath it with blood-colored flames still burning on her. She was holding on with the last of her endurance, defending the innate godchild body behind her.

"Your Eminence, your old servant shall bear the sin of not being able to protect you properly!" Her tears fell like rain, mixing with her blood as her shoulders shook.

While she was kneeling and kowtowing nonstop to the body, a spiritform left Tianming's body and transferred to the godchild body. Feiling rubbed her eyes and was helped up by Tianming. "What are you panicking about? Do you think a little junior like that would be able to kill me so easily? Hehe," she said with a cold, haughty smile.

"Your Eminence!" Fang Qingli was overjoyed. Xuanyuan Dao immediately knelt.

"Your Eminence's wondrous methods aren't anything that we can fathom. It's no wonder Dugu Jin didn't succeed!" Now, Fang Qingli's eyes were filled with worship. As far as they were concerned, splitting the body and soul was a fresh, albeit weird, concept, not to mention Feiling had ten abilities sealed in her nails. However, no records of them had been made. Xuanyuan Xi had existed a hundred thousand years ago, after all. Dugu Jin's failed assassination attempt only added to her myth in modern times.

As a real worshipped goddess, she really needed some kind of miracle that would shock the world. Tianming felt that leaving her by Fang Qingli's side wasn't too appropriate. After all, she believed he had killed her beloved grandson. Though he had told Xuanyuan Dao about his thoughts, Xuanyuan Dao could only vouch for her loyalty to Feiling. And today, she had proven herself by defending her and almost dying from it. While Tianming didn't understand Godservant Hall that well, they did seem to be quite the loyal bunch.

The other elites of the Xuanyuan house were even more impressed at Feiling's methods and grew to worship her even more. They seemed far more resolute to defend her than before.

Feiling decided to strike while the iron was still hot. "It's not really a big deal. Some people are of a rather lowly character and can't see the bigger picture. It's even better that they've exposed themselves. I've come back to life after a hundred thousand years, so there's no way an insect like that would really be able to end me. One of these days, I'll learn who is truly loyal, and who isn't, and pay them back in kind."

"All hail Her Eminence!"

Everyone knelt. Feiling had never gotten truly angry before, so the others felt an oppressive pressure that made it hard to breathe. Fang Taiqing and Jian Wuyi just happened to enter when she said that and heard her.

"Your Eminence, Dugu Jin had a treasure ready for his escape, so we weren't able to catch up." The two of them knelt with their heads down.

"What happens now?" Feiling asked.

"From now on, all of Dugu Jin's positions will be stripped and he will be chased out of the sect. He will also be a lifetime fugitive!" Fang Taiqing said.

"That isn't necessary. When the time comes, I'll personally deal with him."

"Understood!"

"Everyone, we are the first divine realm. We can't behave like cowardly rats and shame our forebears' legacy. I'm sure you all know what you need to do. I will not mistreat anyone who contributes to our cause, nor will I forgive anyone that dares cross us!" Though her voice wasn't loud, it carried a weight that moved others' hearts. She was their goddess, after all, and she'd managed to use her mysterious abilities to fend off Dugu Jin, revealing a hint of the limitless potential she had.

Tianming had gone over what she said today with her before. If she had a chance, she was to demonstrate her authority and power to win some of their confidence. Given their current situation, running off to somewhere far away wasn't an option. If they wanted to survive, they would have to fight alongside the sect, and everyone was looking out for a chance. The Archaion Sect wasn't as weak as many imagined it to be, especially after Tianming had wiped out the top disciples of the five enemy sects during the summit.

"Understood!" Fang Taiqing, Xuanyuan Dao, Jian Wuyi and the others knelt and nodded. As for who truly felt awe and respect, there wasn't really a way to tell. While some might think their goddess was a little too much like a little girl, the composure she had shown during the assassination attempt and what she'd said right after had surely demonstrated that she was in control. Perhaps it had been part of her plan as well.

"Deal with the aftermath," Feiling instructed, then turned to Tianming. "You, come with me."

"Yes, Your Eminence." Tianming was impressed; she managed to grab the opportunity to give Fang Taiqing and the rest a stern warning. The whole time, she had been thinking hard about how she could increase her and Tianming's chances of survival. Now, one of the hidden threats had revealed itself, but nobody could say for sure whether anyone else who shared Dugu Jin's thoughts existed.

If the goddess was dead, the five divine realms would lose their excuse to fight a war. Without proper justification, their troops' morale would be severely affected. Dugu Jin was only able to do such a thing because he had no familial ties weighing him down. Other people would think twice before risking their family's extermination in the event of failure. Even so, he was one of the top three most powerful members of the sect, so other people who tried harming her would have even lower odds of succeeding.

Tianming followed Feiling as she returned to her still-intact bedroom. The others were already used to seeing the two of them alone. Once they left, the rest turned to each other.

"From today onward, we will not leave Soulburn Hall. Apart from the Archaic House of Xuanyuan and the lord of Godservant Hall, nobody else is to be allowed within the Nine Dragon Formation. Sect Masters Jian Wuyi and Fang Taiqing, your loyalty will be clear for Her Eminence to see, even outside Xuanyuan Lake," Xuanyuan Dao said.

"Understood. You should also make thorough investigations of your own house as well," Fang Taiqing said.

"What about you?" Xuanyuan Dao asked Jian Wuyi.

"I have no qualms about the arrangement."

"The summit is still ongoing, so we have to go back and manage it. Remember to take Tianming back," Fang Taiqing reminded.

"Do wait for a bit."

"Is there anything else?"

"A goddess that has come back to life after a hundred thousand years wouldn't fear the actions of an ant. Sect Master Fang, you might want to reexamine your allegiances."

"There's no need for that. The Sterling House of Fang will defend Her Eminence to the end. As long as our house survives, the sect will not be exterminated!" Fang Taiqing said resolutely.

"Well said." Xuanyuan Dao turned to Jian Wuyi again. "What about you?"

#### **Chapter 744 - Raging Return**

"While the Draconis House of Jian can't compare to your two houses, Archaion is our home now. Naturally, we'll serve the sect until our death," Jian Wuyi said.

"Very well. Anyone can profess their loyalty. All I hope is for all of us to remain united on the day our sect reigns supreme once more," Xuanyuan Dao said.

Today was the day when the summit would end, but everything was only just beginning. The failed assassination attempt had ushered in weird changes in the sect. As for how the individual actors would make their moves in the future, Xuanyuan Dao didn't know.

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When they entered the hall, Feiling quickly turned around and gave Tianming a deep hug. "Big Brother, I'm scared..." Her eyes were red as tears began flowing nonstop.

"I know, I know. I'm sorry, Ling'er..." He stroked her back lightly to comfort her.

"You're not at fault for this... those people are just too much. Everyone's involved in this huge mess, right?" she said helplessly. They couldn't even blame Dugu Jin, who was doing it for the sake of Archaion. If anyone really was to blame, it would be the five divine realms led by Nonahall. They were the ones who greedily wanted to take Archaion's territory for themselves.

"I don't know how much longer you'll need to continue putting up a brave front." Tianming grit his teeth as the flames of anger burned in him.

"It's fine. At least the traitors have shown themselves. What we need to worry about next will be war."

"Don't worry. No matter how many come, I'll defend you," Tianming said.

"Okay!" She leaned in tight against him, suddenly looking a little pained. "Big Brother, is Dugu Jin right? If I die, will the other divine realms really give up on taking Archaion and slaughtering countless innocents?"

"Nonsense! Might makes right. If they're powerful enough, they don't need any justifications for whatever they do. The war will happen either way to fulfill their territorial and material ambitions. Even if you were gone, they'd only hold off for a short while until another justification arose. Archaion was just unlucky to have a grudge with Biritual and Hexapath."

"I get it. In the worst case, we can just give up on my innate godchild body and return to how we were before. I can still travel around with you," Feiling said.

"No way. If you give up on it, you won't be able to cultivate and your lifespan will be limited to a hundred years." Not to mention, Perpetia was inside her body!

"I know... I was just talking about the worst case scenario."

"Ling'er, you did really well today. Let's just see if Fang Taiqing's confidence will be inspired by your words. After all, it's really important for the sect to stay united for the war that'll come after the Number One Summit."

"I was only faking my bravery throughout, and saying whatever came to my mind. Who knows if it'll work?" She pouted.

"Who's to say it won't? It's just like whether I can get the title of number one. The only reason Dugu Jin chose to make his move was that he feared that I actually could. The ultimate tribulation manna of the Kilostar Domain seems to be highly valued by the other sects, too."

"Are you going back to fight now?"

"Yes."

"Should I use Spiritual Attachment on you?"

"Come to think of it... you've already shown them the ability, so it's not a secret anymore. Perhaps it'll even make you seem even more mysterious."

"Then I'll invite them back in."

Soon after, Fang Qingli and Xuanyuan Dao entered.

Feiling said, "I'll be going out with Tianming. With my help, he will be even more powerful. I need you to guard my divine body."

"Understood!" The two of them bowed deeply. As they watched, Feiling split in two and one of her bodies fused with Tianming.

"Your Eminence is actually able to directly boost Tianming's capabilities!" They were shocked to see it happen right before their eyes.

"It's but a small trick in my arsenal," she said.

"Will personal protection for Tianming be necessary?" Xuanyuan Dao asked.

"No. As long as my divine body lives, I will not perish."

Hearing that relieved Xuanyuan Dao. Even so, he still asked Xuanyuan Muxue's mother, one of the lords of the Nine Divine Halls, Xuanyuan Yu, to be Tianming's personal bodyguard. Xuanyuan Dao trusted her more than he did Ouyang Jianwang right now.

After Tianming bade them goodbye, he returned to the Heaven Branch's Dimensional Battlefield. Unlike before, he was burning with endless rage, thanks to the assassination attempt, and he was going to vent it on the source of all his woes: the Nonahall Ghost Sect. Dugu Jin wouldn't have been prompted to do something like that if it weren't for them.

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Now that Tianming had defeated Hei An, he was among the top four. The following battles were rather meaningless, with one side surrendering before they even began. The final four participants were Yama, Bai Rao, Lin Xixi, and Tianming, and they would be matched randomly once more. By now, Fang Taiqing and Jian Wuyi had returned there. Most people across the Flameyellow Continent weren't aware of the assassination attempt, as it wasn't broadcast through the Skyeeye Formation.

"Heaven Branch Sect Master, who was the one that tried assassinating your goddess?" a charming voice asked from Birtual's corner. It was the Lunar Master Li Caiwei.

"It seems to be your first tribulation elder, Dugu Jin. This is interesting. I wonder why someone within your sect would attempt something like that?" the sect master of the Quadform Oceanic Sect, Long Cangyuan, asked.

"That's right. Nothing's even happened yet, yet one of your own already did something so crazy out of fear," said the sect master of the Heptastar Aerial Sect.

"Please hold on until the end. We haven't even said anything yet. If you kill your goddess so soon, you'll be a laughingstock. Don't you know how embarrassing that'd be?" said someone from Nonahall.

"Mind telling us if Xuanyuan Xi's dead?" Li Caiwei said.

Many of them burst out laughing. Such an embarrassing display of disunity happening during such a prestigious event was indeed rather laughable.

"I wonder if you're keeping a goddess or a pig.... It's like you can send her to the slaughterhouse whenever you want! We've come all this way to be your guests, and we haven't even caught a glimpse of her yet," Long Cangyuan mocked.

After suffering so badly during the Nether Battle, they felt all too willing to capitalize on this scandal. It was one thing if the assassin had been an outsider, but this time it was someone with such a high position. That hadn't only earned the mockery of the five enemy sects, but also caused the three allied sects to doubt Archaion's determination. If they could even kill their most respected goddess, how could other sects trust them to have their backs during the war? The three sects chose to keep quiet for now, putting an awkward pressure on Archion.

Everyone turned to look at Fang Taiqing. "That was the act of a suicidal clown. I didn't think all of you would be so easy to humor. You must be rather lacking in quality entertainment. Our goddess is sacred, and anyone that defies her shall be persecuted to the ends of the world. I hope you all got your fill of laughter today, because I doubt you'll be able to do the same once you see what we have in store for you."

It sounded like an obvious warning, and it didn't seem like an empty threat. For someone from the Sterling House of Fang, who'd had a rather bad streak lately, to say something like that meant that their house was still confident in the sect despite all their misfortunes. The sect could really have something that would turn the tables.

The others didn't respond to him and merely snickered.

Just like that, the matter was pushed aside. However, it was still a fact that the Archaion Sect's reputation had suffered a hit as a result of the inside hit job. Fang Taiqing's statement wouldn't be able to change everything, but the focus of the day was still the summit.

The lights of the formation began flashing once more. While Tianming wasn't there, the light still managed to reach him from far away as it rotated between the participants. Once Fang Taiqing gave his statement, the light settled on the first pick, Bai Rao, then alternated between Tianming, Yama, and Lin Xixi.

Eventually, Yama was picked to be the second match, much to many others' relief. Tianming wouldn't have to fight three enemies in a row to become number one. Naturally, Nonahall, who wanted both Bai Rao and Yama to torture their enemy's disciples, were more than displeased with that, but alas, it was just a matter of luck. The Number One Formation no longer had a purpose after this matchup. It was already decided that Lin Xixi would surrender to Tianming, so the final battle would be fought between him and one of the top two geniuses of Nonahall. However, Bai Rao didn't yield, nor did Yama. Two top geniuses from the same sect stepped onto the battlefield.

"Let's save the treasures we got in the past few days. The one who wins gets to kill Tianming and take the number one title," Yama said.

"Deal." Bai Rao nodded with a furious glare in her eyes. As the eternal runner-up, proving herself on this grand stage was really important to her.

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When Tianming returned from Xuanyuan Lake, the battle was already over. Even before he did, he knew that the two Nonahall disciples were fighting each other, for Lin Xixi wouldn't be either of their match and would simply yield without a fight. The battlefield was now really messed up from the clash.

"How'd the battle go?" Tianming asked.

"Yama crushed Bai Rao completely. He suddenly broke through to the fifth-level death phase, a truly powerful level. It's been at least a thousand years since someone's managed to reach that level as a disciple." Xuanyuan Dao seemed a little shaken.

Since Tianming didn't have to fight Lin Xixi, the final battle was about to begin. He would finally be able to vent his anger on Yama.

## **Chapter 745 - Ultimate Fiend**

Only two participants were left in the Number One Summit. One of them was the disciple of the goddess, while the other was a fifth-level death phase samsaran demonic genius. There wasn't a disciple in the past millennium that had achieved what Yama had. In time, he would no doubt become someone on the level as Li Caiwei or Feng Qingyu.

All everyone was waiting for was Fang Taiqing's announcement, after which Tianming would have to step into the battlefield and face his ultimate foe. The snow had been falling at Taiji Peak Lake for a few months now, and the storm was at its strongest today. The winds howled like wild celestial beasts on the Dimensional Battlefield and the ubiquitous snowflakes seemed like blades in the wind, scattering all over. The amount of snow falling made it seem like the world was going to have a pure white end. Most normal people wouldn't be able to survive in such a cold environment, nor would they survive the howling winds. Many people across the continent felt a chill as they watched the snowscape from the Skyeye Formations, unable to imagine how truly cold it was. It was a primal fear of the unfathomable mother nature. No matter how bloody the battle, the bloodstained battlefield would soon be covered in snow once more.

Before the battle even started, the howling winds had already ratcheted up the tension of the audience. The strongest Nonahall disciple would soon be facing off against the disciple of the goddess. Tianming was currently standing outside the battlefield with his hands behind his back, his hair fluttering in the wind and his black robe whitened from the piling snow. Even his eyelashes had frozen solid.

"Tianming, you have to give this fight all you've got. Nobody could've expected Yama to make a breakthrough. Now, he stands atop all disciples on the Flameyellow Continent. Even if you aren't able to get first place, you must make sure to survive. If you live on, you'll definitely eclipse him one day. You're still young, after all," Xuanyuan Yucheng said.

"Is there anything else special about him?" Tianming asked. He had gone to the Heaven Cauldron right after emerging from the Nether Battlefield, so he hadn't learned anything about Hei An and Yama before this, apart from how strong they apparently were. It was only after fighting Hei An that he learned they were indeed the most powerful disciples of Nonahall.

"Specialties? Well, he's definitely far more special than Hei An, alright."

"Let's hear it then." Tianming turned to look at Fang Taiqing as he spoke. Fang Taiqing met his gaze, as if to ask him if he was prepared. Tianming nodded back.



"It's said that Yama was abandoned by his parents in the Abyssal Battlefield in his youth, yet he somehow miraculously survived. Word is that he was raised by a bunch of bloodthirsty wildbeasts, which is why he has a really strong bloodlust, just like the wildbeasts of the Abyssal Battlefield. He's also a lone wolf, so to speak.

"There's no doubt he's a naturally fiendish creature. At the age of ten, he left the pack to join the Nonahall Ghost Sect and started cultivating from the Beast Vein stage. In a short decade, he reached where he is now. Had he started from Heavenly Will, he'd be even more powerful now, and in the ranks of cultivators who're in their hundreds.

"I also heard that he was born with a ravager bloodline; he has ravager ki in his blood, which can turn him ruthless and fierce like a wildbeast. He doesn't fear death and knows nothing but slaughter. Someone who'll fight without fear of death after suffering debilitating wounds is definitely dangerous. He'll only get stronger when driven into a corner! Most importantly, if Hei An absorbed liferot toxin right before the final phase, Yama has definitely gotten something from his sect as well. You must be prepared for it."

Xuanyuan Yucheng told Tianming everything he knew about Yama out of worry. Everyone now considered Yama to be far stronger than he had been an hour ago. Now, he was a whole league above Hei An. Even the Archaion disciples were feeling a little hopeless about Tianming's victory after seeing Yama easily defeat Bai Rao, who was already stronger than Hei An.

Now, it seemed that the fifth-level death phase samsaran was the strongest of the four final participants. If anyone was to be given the title of number one, it would be him. Though, the rest weren't worried about Tianming not getting first place, for that was far from the worst outcome. He had already surpassed so many expectations to reach where he was. Instead, they were worried that Tianming's meteoric rise would be abruptly reversed to a meteoric fall in his clash with Yama. Given how much they loved and respected him now, losing him would no doubt crush the hopes and dreams of many.

"Please... please don't die."

"As long as you survive, there's hope. You're still young, so you won't necessarily be weaker than him in the long run."

"All he had was a head start!"

"Li Tianming, you've turned everything around. Losing at this stage is by no means humiliating."

"So long as the forest survives, there'll be firewood to burn. Don't let yourself be completely uprooted and exterminated."

Lin Xixi, Zhao Tianxing, and many others kept throwing advice Tianming's way, all concerned for him after seeing Yama fight. However, he didn't have the slightest intention of surrendering. He was fighting with Feiling supporting him, and didn't fear death in the slightest.

Closing his eyes, he waited for Fang Taiqing to announce the start of the battle.

"The final battle of the Number One Summit starts now! From the Archaion Sect, Li Tianming. From the Nonahall Ghost Sect, Yama. Take your positions. The victor shall earn the title of number one and obtain the five ultimate tribulation manna of the Kilostar Domain!"

The announcement shook the entire realm and fervent cheers erupted all throughout the Flameyellow Continent. Those in the Biritual, Quadform, Hexapath, Heptastar, and Nonahall Divine Realms all cried, "Yama, kill him!"

The sheer volume of those cries seeped through every corner of the continent. "Kill him!"

Their rage and determination made it feel like billions of eyes were furiously staring at Tianming at the same time. The gazes endlessly mocked Tianming as they made Yama the vessel of their remaining pride and dignity.

Amidst the fervent curses, Tianming adjusted his clothes and stepped onto the battlefield's snowy ground, watched by everyone. His clothes and hair fluttered in the harsh winds, painting a picture of a demon waiting in a blizzard. Not only had he chosen to fight, but he'd brought out all of his lifebound beasts from the very start; they surrounded him and took control of the battlefield. He wasn't alone either—Feiling was supporting him from within.

"Everyone's together now." Not a single piece was missing. Tianming had never been more fearless than he was now.

The blizzard seemed to be a reflection of the nervous palpitation experienced by everyone watching the battle. Strong as it was, Tianming remained firmly rooted where he stood, dominating the battlefield.

As the winds continued furiously howling, Yama emerged, a thin boy who stood only as tall as Tianming's chest. His skin was pale and grey, covering his slender physique. The grey tones of his hair made him out to be the antithesis of all things living. His eyes glowed as crimson as the most fearsome of wildbeasts, though they were filled with no emotion aside from killing intent. He was bestial in the truest sense of the word.

"This is a most special day in my otherwise meaningless life. I shall feast on your flesh and drink your blood to celebrate the brightest moment of my life before an audience made up of everyone on the continent," Yama growled in a hoarse, animalistic voice. He was so cold and ruthless that the blizzard almost seemed to be a manifestation of his mood. His frosty killing intent seemed to seal up the entire area.

"Is that so? It's a shame that I have to go through the trouble of adding your name to my ever-growing list of boring people that I've killed." The only thing that was out of the ordinary for Tianming today was Dugu Jin's assassination attempt. But at the end of the day, the Nonahall Divine Realm deserved all the blame for it. Feiling was one of the two most important women in his life, and the recent affront to her safety fueled his murderous wrath.

The moment he set his eyes on Yama, he exuded boundless killing intent as the Grand-Orient Sword appeared in his hand. Each step he took in the snow, his golden eye flashed with a domineering light of authority.

Yama stopped speaking as Tianming sped up. A bloody stench began enveloping—ravager ki. The greyish-crimson ki caused his body to twitch as he began moving more and more like a beast. The ki mingled with his death tribulation force and grew even more explosive. Now he wasn't fighting with human awareness. He had turned into a beast who saw Tianming as nothing more than prey. He lost himself in the abilities granted to him by his ravager bloodline, becoming the ultimate fiend and cracking a smile when his prey charged toward him of his own accord.

At the same time, the roars from his four lifebound beasts shook the entire arena. His signature lifebound beasts were all also raised by wildbeasts.

### **Chapter 746 - Ghostfowl, Taotie, Qiongqi, Taowu**

With loud roars, four fearsome lifebound beasts appeared around Yama. His body seemed tiny, in comparison to their huge builds, and each of them looked like their natural habitats were seas of corpses. Tianming didn't understand Yama's background, but he did know something about those lifebound beasts.

Each of them were fifth-order tribulation beasts with more than five hundred stars. Someone like Yama would definitely be able to overpower Xuanyuan Yucheng, the former top disciple of the Heaven Branch, and his four lifebound beasts were a good match for him too.

It was said that the reason Yama had been abandoned in childhood had something to do with those beasts. When they were born with him, they weren't nearly as powerful and were also considered bad omens. They were all of different species, much like Tianming's.

The first was a dreamless ghostfowl, a grey avian creature with spikes instead of feathers, making it look like a porcupine with a bird's build. Most terrifying was its nine heads, each of which had glowing red eyes.

The second beast was a twinhead darkvoid taotie. Tianming had seen taoties before, and there were many varieties. This one was dark all over, covered entirely in black scales. It had two heads and four strong limbs that were adorned with sharp claws. Its heads had bloody mouths with rows of densely-packed serrated teeth that were able to easily grind any of its prey into mincemeat.

The third was a darkstar ghosteyes qiongqi, a beast that resembled a cow with red hair all over its body, two draconic horns on its head, and a pair of wings on its back that allowed it to fly. Its two eyes were so dark that they were like hypnotic vortexes.

The last beast was an eight-armed yellow-spring taowu. It had a humanoid face and a tiger-like body that was covered in long, dark-yellow fur. On its face were boar tusks and many teeth. It also had a whip-like tail. It looked like a rolling ball of filth and had the smell to match.

All of them had ravager bloodlines. Whenever Yama lost his reason, so would the four beasts. They glared at Tianming and his beasts with their mouths open—they didn't want to kill them, but eat them! Throughout Yama's battles, many of his opponents had been consumed, and not only by his beasts. When he lost himself, he would sometimes partake in his enemies' flesh and blood as well, only to wake

up vomiting it out. That was the fate of someone with the ravager bloodline, and he couldn't resist it. He had to endure it in order to grow strong.

Yama wielded a sword and a blade, both of which had eight tribulation patterns. The blade was as broad as a door and dark like the night forest. It was known as Hellgate and was said to have been made specifically for beheading.

As for the sword in his left hand, it was called Yellowspring Darkriver. Like its name suggested, it was colored a dark twilight yellow and looked like a flowing river. Countless patterns depicting skeletons and souls were carved on it, causing it to emanate an unparalleled aura of doom. Both of Yama's weapons were symbols of the hellish afterlife. With them in hand, he was like the ruler of hell himself, coming to the human realm with his four fiendish familiars to harvest souls.

"I'm going to send you off to the afterlife." The fact that he was able to say that meant that some trace of his reason remained, but that would swiftly vanish when the fight started for real.

The two of them weren't talkative to begin with. In almost an instant, the forces of life and death clashed in the blizzard. Both of them were quad beastmasters with beasts of different species. However, Tianming had Xian Xian supporting him, so he chose a different fighting style than usual. Against a forceful opponent like Yama that attacked relentlessly, he opted for a defensive approach.

"Since he's given up his reason for power, I must make use of my reason rather than getting swallowed up in his crazed fervor." He knew that this was a most risky fight for him, so care was all the more paramount. "Xian Xian!"

First, he had Xian Xian take root and control the battlefield with its black roots. The white and red flowers bloomed in the blizzard as its vines and leaves stretched up high.

"Unleash!" Tianming's Grand-Orient Sword shook as the Imperealm Sword Formation covered the entire battlefield, sending black and gold sword ki all over it. He forged his own terrain with his portable formation.

"Ling'er, let's see if your abilities have improved!"

"I got them ready long ago."

Tianming wasn't going against fate alone; Feiling was with him this time. She had nothing better to do in Soulburn Hall the entire time they had been in the sect. Though she was a girl with no interest nor talent in combat, she had given all her effort toward her cultivation. Unlike Yama's offensive lifebound beasts, Tianming had many more methods he could use to direct the flow of battle. With Feiling accompanying him, he would have even more options.

The sword formation encompassed the entire battlefield in tandem with the Radix World Tree. Imperial sword ki and realm sword ki shot toward the ferocious beasts alongside Xian Xian's vines, though Yama was like a beast himself. Oddly enough, his eight-armed yellow-spring taowu was armed with tribulation weapons with six or seven patterns.

Roars echoed throughout the entire battlefield, with the dreamless ghostfowl's nine heads letting out even more ear-piercing shrieks. It shot out countless black spikes when it flew in front of Yama. Those

spikes looked like Xian Xian's Bloodrain Swords, and although they weren't as numerous, they were far sharper. It looked like thousands of arrows were raining down along with the blizzard.

Xian Xian's Radiant Vines bunched together and formed shields for its allies. While they were soft, they were flexible and managed to absorb most of the force of the ghostfowl's Dreamless Soulspear ability. As the name suggested, there was a soul component in the attack. Fortunately, Xian Xian's spiritform existed separate from its main body and was hiding within Tianming's lifebound space, completely unreachable by the attack.

In an instant, the battle shifted to the next phase as Yama and his beasts charged into the tree's area of control. All of a sudden, Xian Xian sent countless leaves, vines and roots bursting out of the ground, prompting the taotie and taowu to quickly run. Their legs tugged hard and broke the roots that wrapped around them, but they were still tripped and fell into the snowy ground.

"Come on!" Lan Huang charged in when it saw them fall. The four enemy lifebound beasts were incredibly huge already, but Lan Huang was larger than the taotie and taowu combined. It used its Primordial Wheel, rolling up snow as it progressed and becoming a rolling snowball. The nine kui mountains on his back and the Annihilation Godsword on its tail sawed repeatedly against the two beasts' bodies, sending chunks of flesh flying. Meanwhile, more and more roots came burrowing out of the ground to tie the enemies down while more Radiant vines came down from the top. Even if they were able to tear some of the vines off, it would still be a huge nuisance to them.

"After he broke through to the fifth-level death phase, his lifebound beasts also grew stronger. Feiling boosts my strength, but not my beasts! I must take on a bigger burden for their sake!"

Thankfully, the five of them had Lifesbane increasing the size of their samsara rings, or they would be having an even much harder time. Lan Huang felt that the two enemy beasts were much tougher than the eight-armed rakshasa, and they didn't fear death one bit. Even as their flesh was ground away, they roared ferociously and continued fighting.

The taotie opened its two large mouths and spat out an inky-green mist that spread all throughout the battlefield. It was a poison mist that stuck to any flesh it found its way to, and it turned the entire battlefield into a murky hell. While the blizzard was cold enough already, the mist somehow seemed to be even colder, so cold that not even a samsaran would be able to resist it. The ability was called Darkvoid Hell.

Beside it, the taowu also used its ability. It didn't have as many teeth as the taotie's two heads, but each of its arms carried tribulation weapons. It hacked them toward Lan Huang nonstop with terrifying might, even without using any battle art. The long hair on its body continuously secreted water as it swung its arms. Eventually, there was enough of the yellow water to form a river, the water from which seemed able to pierce through Lan Huang's Mountainsea World. Even the Infinite Stardragon Diagram didn't seem able to stop it when the droplets touched Lan Huang's scales, causing them to rot and lots of bloody cold burns to form.

However, Lan Huang bravely took the damage and continued putting pressure on the two enemies with Xian Xian's support. Suffer as it may, the two enemy beasts weren't faring any better. They had been counting on approaching Xian Xian and uprooting it, but Lan Huang prevented that from happening.

Just then, Tianming intercepted Yama with Archfiend using the Eight Desolation Fienddragon Whip, the chain wrapping around the taotie's mouth and piercing its tongue before emerging from the bottom of its jaw.

### **Chapter 747 - Temporal Lock, Millenium Fort**

The twinhead darkvoid taotie cried out in pain as its body shook, dragging Tianming away by the chain and just so happening to help him avoid Yama's attack as it had already lost all sense. It was preparing to bite Tianming with its other head.

"Want to eat me, eh?" Tianming used the Soulshaker Eye on it, causing it to blank out.

"Die!"

He unleashed all of the tribulation sword ki in his sword, slashing it right before the taotie's mouth closed. Its throat was torn into a bloody mush!

Lan Huang then came in and swung its tail at the taotie's neck, tearing out a bloody gash. However, Tianming was unable to follow it up as Yama was now behind him, aiming a fatal blow toward the back of his heart. Yama was just as fast as him!

"Ling'er!" Tianming cried without turning back. From within his body, she used Temporal Field, making it seem like his enemies had stepped into a quagmire and slowed down. That sudden change caused them to miss the opportunity to apply more pressure on Tianming. However, that wasn't all her field did after so long. Nobody could see it apart from herself and Tianming, and she could even control it.

She moved the field and focused it on Yama. Tianming saw the vortex turning into a lock, slowing down Yama by half; now, he had more than enough time to react. "Is this a new form of Temporal Field, Temporal Lock?"

"Yeah," Feiling replied. The field was still present, but a new lock had formed that seemed to bind Yama's arms and legs. Yama wasn't able to feel himself slowing down, either. Instead, from his perspective, the world around him had doubled in speed! As he couldn't even feel the lock on him, there was no way he would know how to break out of it, not that he could even if he did, since he had no reason to work with. All he knew to do was roar and lash out wildly. Even while slowed down, he was still terrifying to behold.

"Did Spatial Wall also get an upgrade?"

"Of course! Watch! Millennium Fort!" Suddenly, thousands of Spatial Walls appeared at her beck and call, forming together into a fortress. Not only did they stop Yama, they even split his four beasts up, yet Tianming and his own beasts were completely unhindered.

No matter how the beasts tried to ram the walls, all they did was hurt themselves. The walls were much stronger than they used to be. Now, Feiling seemed to be the undisputed ruler of both time and space with both her abilities deployed, and as far as the stronger ones in the audience were concerned, all they could see were formless walls seemingly blocking the beasts' way. They didn't even notice the dilation of time.

It was finally Tianming's chance for a comeback. "Ling'er's abilities aren't unlimited, so it won't hold for long! Quick, attack!"

"I'll deal with that hairless turkey first!" Ying Huo flashed brightly, as it was running away from the beast before. It had a few close calls and had almost been eaten by the ghostfowl, having been humiliated too often by the mindless brute. But now the ghostfowl was trapped, ramming against the walls so hard that it bled all over. Then its nine heads cried loudly as it used its ability, Naraka's Ghostfire. The green flames that spouted from its beaks spread throughout Millennium Fort, making the outlines of the walls visible. Then they turned into claws that homed in on Ying Huo. Even though Infernal Haze had made quite a number of clones, there were enough flaming claws to match it.

"What's wrong with that green fire of yours? Don't tell me your wife is the loose and easy kind?" Ying Huo quipped. [1]

Ying Huo swerved through the countless flames and shook its rear, angering the ghostfowl even more. As its nine heads were fast, and it had an arsenal of abilities that could greatly harm the Radix World Tree, there was a limit to Xian Xian's ability to help Ying Huo so it had to face this enemy alone. It didn't feel like it had a good chance against it in close range, given how the ghostfowl had traded its mind for insane strength. Instead, Ying Huo skirted around its sides, causing it to set itself on fire.

Meow Meow turned into a Regal Chaosfiend and managed to gain an edge against the qiongqi with help from Xian Xian's Bloodrain Swords. After turning into its giant form, Meow Meow was an amazing fighter at both close range, with its physical capabilities, and long range with its abilities. Chaotic blasts of thunder covered the entire battlefield while Soulchasing Hellthunder homed in on Yama.

On the heels of the Soulchasing Hellthunder came countless sword-shaped petals launched from the branches of the Radix World Tree, many of them embedding themselves in the qiongqi's fur. Once the petals absorbed enough blood, they would explode and cause a second round of damage. So far, the qiongqi was only barely holding on, but its berserk form allowed it to hold its ground against Meow Meow for a time. However, thanks to Xian Xian's aid and the Millennium Fortress, Meow Meow wasn't entangled with it.

The qiongqi used Galaxy Ghosteyes, causing its vortex-like eyes to spin rapidly, increasing the size of the dark void that resembled star-devouring black holes. All of a sudden, tens of thousands of black stars started falling from the sky, shattering Millennium Fortress and even breaking through Meow Meow's Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape. Xian Xian was also under threat from that powerful ability, so it had no choice but to retract its Radiant Vines to block the attack. But that way, Lan Huang's pressure began mounting as it started struggling to hold back two foes. Thankfully, Millennium Fortress and Temporal Field had greatly decreased the enemies' mobility, allowing it to hold on for a little longer.

The fight was really intense, both on the beastmasters' side as well as the beasts'. Abilities shook the battlefield again and again with no end in sight. Even though Tianming was obviously slightly weaker, he did have an advantage with the types of lifebound beasts he had. Their unique coordination and teamwork, coupled with the Millennium Fortress and Impereal Sword Formation, allowed them to hold on against Yama and his beasts' onslaught.

"Isn't he a little too strong?"

"Why do I feel like he wasn't nearly as strong an hour ago when he fought Hei An?"

"He definitely wasn't. His beasts seem the same, but Tianming himself got much stronger. He probably used some kind of unique method."

"He went to see Xuanyuan Xi, right?"

The elites from all over the Flameyellow Continent began talking about it. They hadn't expected this battle would reach this level of intensity.

"These two young folks are truly amazing. When we were in our thirties, we didn't even come close."

"Even when Li Caiwei got first place in the Number One Summit held decades ago, she was only a fifth-level life phase samsaran on the level of Bai Rao."

"This disciple of the goddess really isn't simple. I heard he joined the Deepstar Battle as well, so he's only twenty."

"His talent for cultivation and combat really is impressive. This might be Yama's only chance to kill him."

"And it looks like he won't be able to do that either."

"Huh, not just that. Yama seems to be the one being pressured on the battlefield right now."

"What?"

No matter how much those elites overestimated Tianming's abilities, they wouldn't be able to expect how much Feiling's Spiritual Attachment could do for him. Xuanyuan Yucheng and the rest had told Tianming to surrender the match to keep himself safe, but now it seemed that their worries were unnecessary.

"I knew I shouldn't have asked him to surrender. Now it looks like we don't trust him at all! He really is a banger," Xuanyuan Yucheng said.

"It's not over yet! Let's hope he wins and kills Yama!" Beigong Qianyu began praying.

If even the ones qualified to watch from the Heaven Branch's Dimensional Battlefield were impressed, the others watching through the Skyeeye Formations were absolutely floored.

"Is this really a fight between disciples?"

"Many seniors above the age of a hundred aren't even that powerful."

"You're mistaken. Most people won't be able to achieve that level of power throughout their entire lives."

The fight kept them constantly on the edge of their seats. The slightest change could result in one of their deaths. As they watched, Tianming pulled the taotie along the ground with Archfiend while he fended off Yama's pursuit. He had to create an opening for Ying Huo and the other three to gain an advantage before letting go of the taotie and engaging Yama properly.

By now, Temporal Lock and Millennium Fortress had reached their peak usefulness. Yama was slowed down so much and blocked by the Millennium Fortress, giving Tianming the chance he was looking for.



With a fierce swing, he sent the nearly hundred-meters-long taotie smashing against the wall of the Dimensional Battlefield.

"Xian Xian!"

When he called out, it responded by sending countless black roots piercing into the injured taotie's mouths to shred its innards. The beast shrieked and wildly flailed, but Tianming had it completely tied up with Archfiend. More and more of Xian Xian's roots poured into it.

"Now it's nothing more than a wildbeast! Xian Xian, I permit you to eat its innards when you find them! Let's see who's the hunter and who's the prey!"

Tianming had heard that they often ate their opponents after defeating them, so he wanted to see whether they had the appetite to compete with the Radix World Tree.

1. Wearing a green hat is Chinese slang for being cheated on, and the author is drawing an association with the green flames.

### **Chapter 748 - Sanguine Ferocity**

Xian Xian's roots were ravaging the taotie, yet it couldn't move at all, thanks to being bound by Archfiend. Facing an enemy that had turned into a wildbeast that regularly ate its prey, Tianming would never hold back.

Xian Xian was all too excited to hear the order. The whole day, it had exerted itself lots and couldn't wait to feast on meat.

"Thanks, Half-daddy!"

Its roots went wild inside the taotie. The two mouths it had used to feed on others were now allowing itself to be fed on in a deliciously ironic turn. Its insides were almost instantly shredded, but there was nothing it could do. It couldn't even so much as cry in pain with its mouths choked off. The best it could muster were gurgles. It rapidly hammered its claws on the ground, shaking the entire battlefield.

Then the roots came bursting out of its eye sockets, popping the eyeballs out before swiftly reaching out for them again to munch on them. At the gruesome sight, Tianming finally understood that real monsters shouldn't be judged by their hides nor appearances. It was a matter of bloodline!

Since the taotie loved to feast, Xian Xian turned the very same nightmare it had inflicted on so many of its victims back on itself. Tianming let go of Archfiend and let Xian Xian have its way with the taotie; it was as good as dead now.

With the impressive advantage Yama had had neutralized, he could now leave the other beasts to his own. Turning back, he saw that Yama was angrily chasing Meow Meow down, as he was unable to reach Tianming. His darkstar ghosteyes qiongqi made a bloody cut on Meow Meow, who would've had its guts spilled had it not run fast enough.

"Are you alright?" Tianming asked.

"I'm fine! I want to bite it to death, don't butt in!" Meow Meow was truly enraged. It ignored its injuries and clashed with the qiongqi once more.

Before Yama could unleash another move, Tianming came straight at him. "It's finally your turn!"

He split his Grand-Orient Sword into two; they glinted magnificently in the snowstorm.

Yama only responded with a roar before charging in with his blade raised, executing a second-origin samsaran battle art, Corpse Soulslaying. The blade was enveloped in piercing ki and turned into a large crescent moon, swooping Tianming's way. Though Yama seemed to have a small build, his blows were filled with power.

All Tianming did as he faced the strike was smirk. At this moment, he was being bathed in too much Omniscient Will. Even though it wasn't enough for him to make a breakthrough, it had a significant effect on his combat capabilities. "This is the power of the entirety of Archaion!"

Omniscient Will caused the Grand-Orient Swords in his hand to feel much more hefty and powerful than before. One sword was as heavy as a mountain, and the other was as deep as the sea. The power in his body endlessly surged as he used the Mortal Dao Sword.

His swords seemed to be out of his control. Instead, they seemed to move according to the will of all the sentient beings across Archaion, guiding his hand as he executed the move. Never before had he channeled their will to such heights. By now, Tianming was quite far along the path of a sovereign. Facing the evil force that charged straight at him, he was a picture of calm and nothing else. "The will of all life shall dispel the revenant spirits that block my way!"

The familiar move seemed to pack the power of billions of lives behind it. This was the Archaion Divine Realm that the others thought was weak. This was their rage! Sword ki blasted all over, engulfing man and beast, overcoming their savage nature with Omniscient Sword Intent and sending Yama into a retreat as his own Corpse Soulslaying was interrupted. He had no choice but to revert his blade back to its Hellgate state and use it as a shield. Even so, the Grand-Orient Sword still shattered the blade into countless pieces.

About a hundred of the fragments pierced into Yama's body, causing him to bleed profusely. That explosive power was seven-tenths a result of Tianming's own power and three-tenths thanks to Omniscient Will. It was the core of the Primordial God-Emperor's legacy.

Having been forced back, Yama was quite injured. The sight of that caused the entirety of Archaion to cheer with glee. It seemed that the world itself was shaking. Those in the Nonahall Divine Realm, on the other hand, howled in grief and were unable to stop themselves from feeling the hurt. How could the most powerful disciple to appear in the past millennium not be able to take on Tianming? It shouldn't be possible; he was at the fifth-level death phase!

As for their allies, they were all flabbergasted. Countless peoples' faces were blank and stiff, yet something even worse happened before their eyes: Xian Xian had completely devoured the twinhead darkvoid taotie, even its tongue. Nothing but the outer husk of the beast remained, standing as still as a sculpture and stunning everyone into silence. Even those watching from Archaion were completely flabbergasted by Tianming's display of power.

With Yama wounded and the taotie gone, the balance of power had tipped. How would Yama be able to resist Tianming next? Archaion finally had some real hope for survival. They could definitely imagine Tianming taking the number one spot as their cheers reverberated throughout the entirety of Taiji Peak Lake. "Li Tianming, number one!"

They had finally begun smiling after having suffered for so long. It seemed miraculous, but even that was an understatement. Not even a miracle could have helped them achieve this kind of result! Before the battle even ended, Yama felt himself falling into an endless abyss.

"Yama, what are you waiting for?" cried a voice in dissatisfaction from Nonahall's section of the audience. It appeared to be one of the ghoulish kings. Everyone had only just remembered that the goal they had to achieve no matter what was to obtain the key to the Kilostar Domain by getting the number one title. There was no way they would let Tianming take it from them, for if they lost it, Nonahall's strategy would be completely ruined. It wasn't something their divine realm would be able to accept.

Now, they all turned to Yama and shot him fierce glares. The short, grey-robed youth pulled out the shards of his broken blade and stood up, all bloodied. Looking toward the husk of his taotie, the bloody light faded from his eyes. He seemed broken. "It was my mistake...."

The ravager bloodline had never failed him, and always guaranteed that he would devastate his enemies. Yet Tianming had played him like a fiddle. As he lost his reason, he had a harder and harder time recalling his memories. Usually when he regained consciousness, he would find his enemy dead, but this time his lifebound beast was dead. It was the greatest tragedy! It was the first time that he had ever suffered as a consequence of his bloodline. If not for that, he could've gone to save his taotie when it was in danger with his final trump card. He teared up for the first time in his life as he looked at the corpse, and when he turned back to Tianming, his rage reached a boiling point; but this time, he would fight as himself, not a wild beast.

"Li Tianming, I was too prideful. I thought I'd be able to dominate you with my own abilities. But now it seems I have no choice but to rely on an external power. My pride has cost me dearly!"

"So what?" Tianming stood coldly in the snowy battlefield.

"And now, I'll bury you alongside my beast!" His voice cracked. The death of his taotie seemed to have driven him mad.

"Tianming, watch out!" the seniors watching from the sidelines cried.

Tianming had been waiting for that the whole time. Hei An had liferot toxin with him, so Yama definitely had something, too.

The grey-eyed youth laughed maniacally as he opened both his arms and looked toward the sky. All of a sudden, a terrifying aura of dread that was ten times more powerful than before spread from his body. Countless strands of black and red aura seemed to emerge from his body, forming countless ghostly fiends that circled him and infused him with great power. Then a blood-red armor appeared on his body; it looked like normal blood that had coagulated into a solid form all around his body. As it formed, countless beasts circled around his body before rising protectively around his head. The feeling he gave off was far more ferocious than the ravager bloodline.

"Sanguine Ferocity!" someone cried from the audience.

Tianming wasn't sure what it was, but he saw fifteen tribulation patterns on the armor. That was the maximum number of tribulation patterns an artifact could have, and it was no doubt among the strongest tribulation artifacts that ever existed. Beyond that, it would be on the level of divine artifacts. Tianming's Grand-Orient Sword seemed to be a divine artifact, but it hadn't been fully activated yet. Not to mention, most of the benefits it afforded were realized within Tianming's own body. However, this armor was an external force that boosted Yama's potential to the limits.

"Sanguine Ferocity was made using the blood essence of a seventh-order tribulation beast. It's among the top ten most powerful artifacts on the continent! To think that they'd let a disciple use it to win the Number One Summit...."

"Did anyone see how they undid all the limits on the armor? Yama was never meant to be able to control that kind of power! He'll definitely end up injured after using it! Since it isn't Yama's own power, can't this be considered a violation of the rules?"

"That is hard to say. They could just claim that Yama was the one who used Sanguine Ferocity without any limits."

"But his body's about to implode...."

"What we say doesn't matter anyway. Tianming's in danger!"

"Sect Master Xuanyuan isn't here. I wonder if the other two sect masters will step in to save him?"

The appearance of Sanguine Ferocity caused a huge commotion. Countless beasts stampeded on Yama's body, seemingly giving him a boost ten thousand times stronger than his ravager bloodline. However, this time he was still conscious and filled to the brim with hate for his devoured beast. Wielding his blade, he truly seemed like an incarnation of his namesake, the King of Hell and Judge of the Living Dead himself. "Li Tianming?"

"What's up?"

"I want to kill you and turn you into mincemeat, then eat you up!" he roared like countless beasts.

"Well? Do you actually bite or do you only know how to bark?" Tianming beckoned for him to come with a fingertip.

## **Chapter 749 - The Imperial Son Comes**

Yama exploded in rage.

With a roar, he charged toward Tianming amidst the many panicked expressions of the elders of the Archaion Divine Realm.

"In a world where the strong prey on the weak, you and the Monorigin Divine Realm aren't worthy of this land. So you must all disappear! The Nonahall Divine Realm will one day devour the heavens and earth and dominate this land!"

Thousands of beasts roared, the violent sound resounding through the entire lake. The other party's oppression had a third of the audience worried about Tianming.

He laughed instead.

"You're indeed fierce, but I bet you don't know that I've been waiting for you to show your trump card. Yama, do you think that you're the only one with a card up your sleeve?"

Revealing one's trump card first was a mistake.

Tianming had been waiting for this moment. As the blizzard raged, Tianming flashed toward Yama with the Grand-Orient Swords in his hands, attacking without hesitation.

At this moment, he was majestic.

"Keep your eyes open and take a good look at what real armor looks like!"

Hand over his chest, Tianming roared and the answering roars of five violent dragons shook the sky.

Tianming's body shone as five divine lights soared into the sky, illuminating the entire battlefield. This was the real earthshaker. It was as if the world was welcoming the return of the progenitor.

"The Human Emperor's Dragonhide has returned!"

A million dragon scales fused into a complete set of armor on Tianming's body. This set of shining armor was much more dazzling than the Sanguine Ferocity, which only had fifteen tribulation patterns.

Dense, neatly-arranged dragon scales sealed him off. The dragon helmet, combat boots, shoulder plates, wrist guards, and even the cape were magnificent.

"Yama, you're merely a wild dog compared to me!"

Tianming's description couldn't be more appropriate. His brilliance overshadowed Yama's murderous aura. As the dragons roared, their light shocked the heavens. These evil outsiders would see whose territory this was!

"The H-human Emperor's Dragonhide!"

"The Progenitor's Grace!"

"Blessings from heaven! The Great Emperor Xuanyuan's successor is born!"

At this moment, Taiji Peak Lake was boiling with excitement. On the Dimensional Battlefield, many third-origin tribulation elders rose to their feet, watching the scene almost fanatically.

Their eyes reflected the bright light. No words could describe the surprise in their hearts at this moment.

In fact, when Tianming had first received the Dragonhide, Xuanyuan Dao and Ouyang Jianwang appeared calm. Therefore, he wasn't aware of its significance.

Right now, he was only aware of the surge in strength he possessed—a result of the Dragonhide and Feiling's presence.

"I don't want to live through the precarious days. From now on, I want to control my destiny. I don't want to hide, I want to be number one!"

Killing Yama would make him number one. There was a lot he desired. He wanted to protect his family and lover and to unite the Archaion Sect. And above all, he wanted to protect the sect and its heritage.

With the Dragonhide wrapped around his body, Tianming announced the return of the Progenitor to all the powerhouses of the Archaion Sect.

"Die, Nonahall Ghost Sect!"

Animacorpus Eradication! He matched the Dragonhide with the Hexapath Sword God's Hexapath Samsara Sword art. Amidst the resplendent brilliance, the lethality of the move reached an unprecedented level.

Yama tossed aside everything else as well. There was only one thing on his mind—kill! The Yellowspring Darkriver in hand, Yama slammed into Tianming in the cold blizzard.

Grandyin Fiercesoul Formation! Ten thousand strands of sword ki formed a ferocious beast. Tianming made two consecutive attacks, each of them containing the power of tens of thousands of resentful evil spirits.

"Die!!"

The Dragonhide and Hexapath Samsara Sword both dominated the battle.

Neither the Sanguine Ferocity nor the Grandyin Fiercesoul Formation was Tianming's rival.

They crossed swords and the fierce beast surrendered beneath the evil spirits. The Yellowspring Darkriver shattered from the tip of its blade.

"Die!"

The black Grand-Orient Sword was unstoppable. The Sanguine Ferocity gave Yama superb lethality, but did nothing to protect him.

Ignoring Yama's trembling gaze, Tianming impaled his head. Innumerable strands of sword ki flowed through the sword, causing Yama's head to explode. Then his entire body followed. Flesh and blood flew everywhere, splattering and dyeing Tianming red. The crimson blood seemed harsh against the white snow.

The Sanguine Ferocity fell to the ground, shattered. The spirits of these beasts trembled and hid themselves.

Yama had perished. The storm came to an abrupt end at this moment.

In the silence, Tianming raised his foot and trampled on the Sanguine Ferocity, spitting on it with some of Yama's blood that had splattered in his mouth.

"Fuck the Nonahall Divine Realm. You call yourselves the strongest divine realm, yet none of you can fight...." He roared with laughter, his blood-stained white hair fluttering freely in the blizzard. This was true madness!

However, it was founded on the current results. The strongest disciple of the Nonahall Ghost Sect had suffered a miserable death at Tianming's hands. In the entire world, Tianming was the only one who could say that.

As soon as the words were uttered, silence resounded for a moment before chaos descended. The blizzard seemed to rain down even harder.

Everyone had watched as Tianming and his lifebound beasts slaughtered everything in their path. They were covered in blood at the end of the battle, and rivers of blood dyed the battlefield crimson.

The young man stood atop the heap of corpses he had mutilated, looked up at the Skye Formation, and wiped the blood stains off his face, lips curled into a smile. His smile was a nauseating sort of provocation to the Nonahall Divine Realm.

But what could they do? At the end of the day, they were forced to swallow their anger.

The Number One Summit was over and the entire world knew who the victor was. In this battle, Tianming's contribution went beyond just killing Yama or becoming number one. He had done so much more.

"What the hell?!"

At the end of his bloodbath, Tianming looked up, only to be shocked by what he saw. More than a hundred thousand Archaion Sect powerhouses appeared in the sky. If he wasn't mistaken, these people were tribulation elders—normal tribulation elders, first-origin tribulation elders, and second-origin tribulation elders. Even the third-origin tribulation elders were on the Heaven Branch Dimensional Battlefield, including Fang Taiqing and Jian Wuyi.

Their eyes were fiery as they stared at Tianming. Only Ouyang Jianwang was smiling. After all, he had known about the Dragonhide some time ago, but Xuanyuan Dao had asked him to keep it secret. The reason for doing so was to create a most explosive effect at such a moment.

Tianming had done it! But why were they staring at him so fiercely? What did they want with him?

In the blink of an eye, more than a hundred thousand tribulation elders charged into the snowy battlefield. Everyone, including the third-origin tribulation elders fell to their knees, gazes fiery as they shouted,

"The founder has bestowed his grace. The imperial son is here!"

"Imperial son?" Tianming was stunned. The successor of Great Emperor Xuanyuan? Why didn't Xuanyuan Dao explain that clearly before the battle?

Even the third-origin tribulation elders were kneeling down and worshiping him. Was this the power of the Human Emperor's Dragonhide? Tianming noticed the enthusiasm in their eyes.

He seemed to understand what the Dragonhide meant. While the Archaion Sect was in a precarious and unstable situation during an event like the Number One Summit, Tianming had won first place as the imperial son. This had an important effect on the sect.

The Progenitor had bestowed the Dragonhide upon Tianming. Did this mean his divine grace was still present? Was he showering favor upon Xuanyuan Xi?

In the Flameyellow continent, the gods were the human world's ultimate power. The symbol of a god was also the symbol for the top. No matter how powerful the Nonahall Ghost Sect was, once the Great Emperor Xuanyuan sent down the imperial son, anyone who wanted to attack the Archaion Divine Realm must think twice.

Tianming didn't know any of that. All he knew was that he had risen to the top on this snowy day. The imperial son's name shook the heavens!

Fang Taiqing and Jian Wuyi were the only ones that remained standing, which showed just how high the imperial son's status was. It seemed he was considered half a god!

"Damn! Sect Master Xuanyuan and Ouyang Jianwang actually reacted so calmly...." Tianming was dumbfounded. Perhaps Xuanyuan Dao was already brimming with tears of excitement in the Soulburn Hall.

He had used the Human Emperor's Dragonhide at the most critical moment, which resulted in a shocking effect and the elders' enthusiasm.

Xuanyuan Xi merely symbolized herself. The god who had the greatest impact on the Archaion Divine Realm was the first supreme god, the Progenitor of Humanity—Great Emperor Xuanyuan!

Tianming was nothing compared to Great Emperor Xuanyuan, who was the spiritual pillar for the entire realm. In this tumultuous world, Emperor Xuanyuan's grace was extremely important to them.

"Elders, please get up," Tianming said quickly.

"Alright!"

They looked at him with fiery eyes. In fact, Tianming was actually more powerful than some of them. At this moment, he had conquered most of their hearts. In their eyes, Tianming was hope incarnate.

However, Tianming only had one thing on his mind. That is—

"Is the imperial son allowed to openly fall in love with Her Eminence?" If so, that would be great.... Everyone was speechless at this moment.

Right then, the formation in the sky condensed into a ray of light and shot toward Tianming.

"Tianming, quickly put the armor away. This is the heart of the Kilostar Formation and the key to obtaining the ultimate tribulation manna!" said Ouyang Jianwang.

This was the victor's reward. Countless people were jealous of him. But since the reward was his, he would certainly enter the Kilostar Domain and use the "key" to retrieve the ultimate tribulation manna.

## **Chapter 750 - The Fundamental Principles**



In fact, there was no need for Tianming to actually pick it up. The formation heart drifted toward him and hovered in front of his chest. The Number One Formation was jointly created by the Nine Divine Realms for the Number One Summit and had been used for many years. The structure of the formation was completely fair and just. After the final check, it was activated and operated autonomously.

As the ultimate victor, Tianming would be rewarded the formation heart that was previously placed within the Number One Battlefield. A luminescence made of heavenly patterns hovered above Tianming.

As soon as he stretched out his hand, the formation heart melted in his palm, merging with his flesh and blood. Finally, a star was formed on his palm.

"According to the rules of the Number One Summit, once you obtain the formation heart, no one can take it from you, even if they kill you. If you die, it'll disintegrate on its own. Only when you use it to open the Kilostar Formation will it automatically disappear." Yi Xingyin, Palace Lord of the Deepstar Hall stood beside Tianming, looking excited. Even the way he looked at him was different. In the past, Tianming was just a junior to him. But now, he was a half-god.

"What's the Kilostar Formation?" Tianming asked.

"It's a formation jointly created by the Nine Divine Realms. I, too, participated at the time. The whole purpose was to add a lock to the ultimate tribulation manna in the Kilostar Domain, so that only those who have the key can unlock it. You have the key now," said Yi Xingyin.

"I see!" Tianming nodded.

"The decision to set the ultimate tribulation manna as reward for the victor of the Number One Summit was driven by the Nonahall Ghost Sect. They were also the ones who proposed setting up the Kilostar Formation to lock away the ultimate tribulation manna. They were certain of winning the five ultimate tribulation manna and never expected you'd show up, kill them all, and take away the treasures. Tianming, you're the only one who can open the Kilostar Formation. If someone else destroys it using external forces, it'll automatically destroy the five ultimate tribulation manna. The entire Nonahall Divine Realm must be furious!" Yi Xingyin smiled happily.

Obviously, the Nonahall Ghost Sect considered the ultimate tribulation manna in the bag, believing their disciples were strong enough. On top of that, they had numerous arrangements in order to obtain these treasures. They had even given their disciples the liferot toxin and Sanguine Ferocity. Yet, their plans had been ruined by Tianming.

"What if they deliberately tamper with the Kilostar Formation and destroy the ultimate tribulation manna out of rage?" Tianming asked.

"They won't," Ouyang Jianwang sneered.

"Why not?"

"First of all, the Number One Summit has been held for tens of thousands of years. Fairness and impartiality are its hallmarks. Despicable behavior like sabotaging the prize would only make them a laughingstock once people learn about it." Ouyang Jianwang said.

"So is there a second point?" Tianming asked.

"Yes, the second point is: the ultimate tribulation manna exists at the entrance of the Kilostar Domain. At present, we have intelligence that suggests that the Kilostar Domain contains many treasures from the cosmic aether. There were also rumors that the Kilostar Domain is actually the cosmic aether's battlefield. Anyway, there are all sorts of rumors and many records in ancient books. They say that these five ultimate tribulation manna are perhaps the key to opening the Kilostar Domain. The Nonahall Divine Realm has had their eye on the Kilostar Domain for many years. They were the ones who spread the news. Thus, they must be most reluctant to destroy the ultimate tribulation manna," Ouyang Jianwang said.

"So, that's the important point," said Tianming.

"That's right."

"Then when are we going to take the ultimate tribulation manna?" Tianming asked.

"This depends on what the three sect masters and the Tribulation Peak elders decide. This is a major decision that requires some thought. After all, I don't think anyone aside from Sect Master Xuanyuan expected you to win the prize. This is a heavy blow for the Nonahall Ghost Sect. You've made a great contribution, Imperial Son." Yi Xingyin praised.

"Alright, I'll abide by the sect's arrangements." Tianming nodded.

Anyway, he had the formation heart and no one could steal it; there was no need for him to worry. Even after Tianming had received the formation heart, the tribulation elders remained by his side, protecting him.

His name resounded throughout the Archaion Divine Realm. Many disciples on the Human Branch Dimensional Battlefield had lost their voices shouting. This was a time for passions to run high.

"The imperial son!" Tianming knew that in terms of status, he was already standing atop the Flameyellow Continent. Raising his head, he looked in the direction where the Nonahall Ghost Sect powerhouses were seated.

Gloomy, angry gazes fell upon him. A chill crept from the soles of the feet all the way to his skull. Killing intention shot toward him, sending a tingle of goosebumps across his skin.

At this moment, the Nonahall Ghost Sect was mad with rage, and so was the entire Nonahall Divine Realm. Their territory was two or three times larger than the Archaion Divine Realm. Because the region was fertile, their population had reached four times that of the Archaion Divine Realm as well.

At this moment, the hundreds of millions of citizens in their countless cities all had the same look of disbelief on their faces. They cursed and screamed. Some reviled Tianming, while others condemned Yama. A storm of depression, irritability, and powerlessness swept through the entire realm over the next few days.

Fortunately or unfortunately, those who had watched the duel in the Skyeeye Formation would remember Tianming for their entire lives.

...

On the Dimensional Battlefield, the Nonahall Ghost Sect powerhouses remained in their seats, aloof and indifferent. They had watched in silence as Yama was killed, without the slightest movement. The silence was evidence of what a blow the young man had caused.

"It's already come to this. They even brought out the Human Emperor's Dragonhide. Our defeat seems only fair. With the Great Emperor Xuanyuan's grace, the Monorigin Divine Sect will be even more difficult to deal with. I know you're all very upset, but there's no way around this. Anger and irritability are useless. The most important thing now is to solve two things: first of all, will the appearance of the imperial son and the grace of the Great Emperor Xuanyuan have an impact on the future battle? And secondly, how do we deal with the treasures in the Kilostar Domain?" The pale-faced ghoulish king had a low, gritty voice that sounded very uncomfortable.

"The first one may affect the decision of the three sects. They were originally uncertain, and now they're probably racking their brains trying to find ways to stay out of this. However, in the face of absolute power, no one can escape. They'll probably submit if we give them a little attitude. The fight between disciples is of little importance. Since that's already been resolved, let's move on to the real thing," said Ying Zi.

"We must speak to the Council of Ghoulish Kings about this, then come up with a specific plan with Feng Qingyu and Li Caiwei. We may have to make an example out of one of their divine realms to force the three sects. There isn't much to gain from them. Don't forget, our main goal is the Heaven Cauldron. The three divine realms are nothing. As long as we frighten them, they won't be of much consequence," said the ghoulish king.

"As for the second matter, what's most important is that no one else knows about the existence of the star atlas aside from us, Feng Qingyu, and Li Caiwei. Without the star atlas, navigating the Kilostar Domain is almost impossible. Even if they get their hands on the ultimate tribulation manna, they'll be no different from chickens when they enter," Ying Zi replied.

"No, even if they don't have the star atlas, we can't allow them to enter. That's something that belongs to us. The Kilostar Domain has too great an influence on the future. If they're lucky and find treasures, we'll be at a disadvantage," said the ghoulish king.

"Do you mean to take them by storm?"

"Yes, we must immediately station our troops so we have control over the entrance of the Kilostar Domain. Once their people enter, we can capture them all and force Li Tianming to open the Kilostar Formation so we can open the Kilostar Domain ourselves. At the same time, we'll kill the so-called imperial son. If he dies, the Archaion Divine Realm's spiritual support brought about by the Great Emperor Xuanyuan will disappear. Just like their goddess, this man must die. They both fall under the same category," said the ghoulish king.

"That violates the principles of the Number One Summit. I wonder what Feng Qingyu and the others think."

"Feng Qingyu wants the star atlas. He wants to enter the Kilostar Domain more than we do! The Flameyellow Continent is in chaos at the moment. Is there any significance in the Number One Summit, which originated in more peaceful times? Because the Monorigin Divine Sect isn't aware of the

existence of the star atlas, they're still stuck at the ideation stage. They might not realize the importance of the Kilostar Domain. Once they send people there, they'll be completely wiped out," the ghoul king replied.

"Should we open the Kilostar Domain or follow the original plan? The plan was to explore the Kilostar Domain after the Number One Summit as well as launch a full-scale attack. What now?"

"We'll see what their thoughts are when we get back. I don't think there's any conflict between the two. But let's see what the three sects say. It's about time they pick a side," the ghoul king replied.

"I thought they'd be on their knees. Who knew there would be such a surprise?"

As they stared at Tianming, their eyes filled with killing intent. The surrender of the Triflair Celestial Sect, Pentaphase Earth Sect, and Octagram Heart Sect was originally in the bag. Yet now, Tianming had taken that away.

...

In the corner, a young man in black leaned against the wall, listening to the elders of the Nonahall Ghost Sect talk about Tianming. He folded his arms, his eyes gray and vacant. Everything about him resembled a corpse.

Those dead eyes stared at the bloody, white-haired man on the battlefield. His nails were embedded in his own flesh, drawing blood. He had once dreamed about climbing to the top, yet the one who'd shocked the entire world wasn't him. It was as if he had taken a knife to the heart, like his whole body was covered in wounds. His breathing grew heavier and heavier.

At that moment, a man in red robes stood up in the distance, turning to him, "Jiang Wuxin, come back with us."

"Yes, Ghoul King." The young man nodded.

"Don't be like this. His glory ends here. From here on, yours is the name that'll resound throughout the heavens and the earth," the red-robed man laughed.

Jiang Wuxin forced a smile.

They were all laughing. Was this mockery?

He secretly vowed, Yes, it's me, Jiang Wuxin, not a puppet.