

The Ages 751

Chapter 751 - Waiting

The Number One Summit was over, and it was time to see the guests off. Since the host had won first place, the people from the five divine realms certainly didn't want to stay a moment longer.

After Tianming received the heart of the Kilostar Formation, the powerhouses of the eight divine realms left their seats. For the first time, Tianming saw the calamitous beauty, Lunar Master Li Caiwei, known as the number one beauty of the Flameyellow Continent. He felt like he had been hooked by those charming eyes. How gorgeous.

This breathtaking moment was enough to make Tianming forget their age difference. It seemed like a chance encounter with a young girl of twenty-eight, whose gentle smile was meant for him.

She appeared even more girlish than Chu Xiaoqi. Tianming now understood the insignificance of Chu Xiaoqi's charm.

Lunar Master Li Caiwei was gentle, yet unconstrained, a peerless beauty who could dominate the world with her charm. She resembled a graceful fairy. From her sparkling eyes—so enchanting—Tianming understood that she and Feiling were different kinds of beauties.

Aside from her, the world-famous Hexapath Swordfiend Feng Qingyu was equally astonishing. It's no wonder the figures that stood on the peak of the continent were more famous than the three sect masters of the Archaion Sect. Sure enough, they were destined to be dragons among men. On the contrary, the ghoulish kings of the Nonahall Ghost Sect lacked the same temperament. The coral fairy of Triflair Celestial Sect, Long Cangyuan of the Quadform Sect, and the others were about the same as Fang Taiqing. As soon as they left, the tribulation elders immediately stood behind Tianming, Fang Taiqing, and Jian Wuyi, coming face to face with the other party.

"The Number One Summit has ended. Farewell." Feng Qingyu couldn't be bothered to make small talk. He glanced at Tianming, then turned around to leave.

"We shall take our leave as well. Thank you for all your care and congratulations." The red-robed ghoulish king said with a smile.

"There'll be a surprise waiting for you." Li Caiwei smiled faintly.

It seemed Fang Taiqing's presence was the reason for her lack of courtesy.

What was the surprise? Anyway, it wouldn't be anything good for the Archaion Divine Realm.

"Don't frighten them," Long Cangyuan laughed.

This kind of intimidation was somewhat blatant. However, they didn't say much before leaving.

At that moment, the Nonahall Ghost Sect's ghoulish king suddenly turned to the Pentaphase sect master Jiang Yuanjun and the Octagram sect master Lin Yuntian.

"Sect Master Jiang, Sect Master Lin, we're all heading the same way. Shall we travel together? There's some matters I'd like to talk to you about."

As soon as these words were spoken, the area went silent. The Pentaphase Earth Sect and Octagram Heart Sect did share borders with the Nonahall Ghost Sect, so there was nothing wrong with his words. But who knew what he would do on the way back? Wasn't it equivalent to escorting those two sects back?

In fact, even Tianming could hear the oppression in the words the Nonahall Ghost Sect spoke so publicly. Or was it an ultimatum?

"Is that so? What a coincidence, I also have some important matters I'd like to discuss with the two sect masters. How about waiting a few more days?" Fang Taiqing interrupted before the two sect masters could reply.

"Does Sect Master Fang also have something important to discuss with them?" The ghoulish king smiled.

"Yes." Fang Taiqing nodded.

Wait for how long? The Nonahall Ghost Sect couldn't possibly wait a few days for them. If so, it wouldn't exactly be traveling the same way.

"Well it depends on who the sect masters decide to speak to," said the ghoulish king.

"Why so anxious, Ghoulish King? Stay for a few more days and enjoy the magnificent scenery of Taiji Peak Lake. The Nonahall Divine Realm is located in the south, so you don't get any snow at all. You can take your time appreciating it," said Fang Taiqing.

"It's been a month since the start of the Number One Summit. I'm so sick of it I could vomit." As he spoke, his eyes were focused on the two sect masters.

Although their conversation sounded very friendly, it was a confrontation involving the lives of hundreds of millions. Fang Taiqing was very tactful, but the Nonahall Ghost Sect seemed almost forceful.

Would they stay or leave? Tianming looked at the two sect masters nervously. The youths had shown allegiance, but what about their elders?

Jiang Yuanjun and Lin Yuntian exchanged a meaningful look. Finally, Jiang Yuanjun said, "I'm really sorry, the Number One Summit is what it is. If there's anything important, you may send an emissary to the Pentaphase Divine Realm to discuss it in detail. We still have important matters to deal with back home, so we must leave as soon as possible. Please forgive me."

"I apologize, the same goes for the Octagram Heart Sect," said Lin Yuntian.

"I see. You're both so busy," the ghoulish king laughed.

"You must be joking, Ghoulish King," said Jiang Yuanjun.

"Since both of you are in a hurry, we'll meet another time," said Fang Taiqing.

"Farewell, until we meet again."

Their gazes collided, sparks within the surging undercurrent. However, Tianming understood that the sect masters' words were an indirect form of rejection because they didn't have the power or qualifications to say no to the Nonahall Divine Realm.

This was an opportunity he had won for them. If these two sect masters were taken away by the Nonahall Divine Realm, the Archaion Sect would be on a dangerous path.

"Farewell!" the elders of the Archaion Sect shouted in unison as the powerhouses of all eight divine realms took their leave, their voices shaking the heavens. This was no farewell, but a declaration and show of might.

Their thunderous voices swept across the leaving powerhouses, the force rippling their clothes. It was as if a mountain had slammed into their bodies from behind. Some were irritable, others sneered.

Now that the Number One Summit was over, they had shed all pretenses. Everyone knew what would happen next. However, Tianming realized the elders still remained on the Dimensional Battlefield. They stood together, as if waiting for something.

Time slowly passed.

"Why aren't we leaving?" Tianming asked.

"We're waiting," said Yi Xingyin.

"Waiting for what?"

"Allies," he replied.

"What do you mean?" Tianming asked.

"At this point, there's no neutral option. The Nonahall Ghost Sect has given them an ultimatum. After the three sects leave, they'll either rush to apologize to the Nonahall Ghost Sect or return to negotiate with us," he said.

"You're right. There's no staying out of the matter anymore. After all, the five divine realms are impatient. They were originally going to intimidate them in the Number One Summit." Tianming understood the situation.

That said, this was undoubtedly a most tense period in time. Would the three sects return? If they didn't, they would be enemies in the future and the Archaion Divine Realm would be attacked by all eight divine realms. When the time came, those three sects would certainly become cannon fodder.

If they did return, they would have chosen to fight beside the Archaion Divine Realm. For Tianming and the others, that would undoubtedly be the best outcome.

Time trickled by. They were all troubled. Tianming glanced at Fang Taiqing. No matter what his thoughts were before, Fang Taiqing was the Heaven Branch sect master of the Archaion Sect and stood on the same stand as everyone else.

Two hours, four hours... the blizzard stopped as night fell. Even the excitement around Taiji Peak Lake had gradually calmed down. Although many were still celebrating, they kept the noise down.

Perhaps many young disciples weren't aware that the end of the Number One Summit was the moment the fate of the Archaion Sect was decided.

Would they return? Tianming stood in the frost and snow, looking out into the distance without blinking.

"They'll come back. They must come back!" Feiling silently prayed, still attached to Tianming's body.

"Ling'er, it's been eight hours. If they wanted to come back, it wouldn't take them so long. We have our answer—the Archaion Divine Realm will move forward alone. In the face of destiny, they chose to submit. So what if they keep their lives now? Don't they know there'll be a price to pay? The weak make a vain attempt at survival by surrendering. It's all just a beautiful dream. Those five divine realms are more resentful than anyone else." Upset, Tianming took a deep breath.

"Big Brother, you must believe in them. Although it's been eight hours, they're most likely struggling and hesitating. After all, they aren't responsible for the lives of just one man, but their entire divine realms. You must understand, it isn't easy for them. It isn't easy for anyone in this troubled world," Feiling said patiently.

"You have a good heart, but many times, what we imagine is beautiful when in fact the reality is cruel. If they choose us, they'll face the rage of five great sects. Even together, our four sects only add up to about half of their strength. Although there's hope in choosing to fight, many would rather die later if death is inevitable, after all. One more day alive is better than none. There are too few with the courage to fight," Tianming said.

"No, I believe they believe in you! They'll definitely be back!" Feiling said anxiously.

"Believe in me?"

"Yes, you helped their disciples on the Nether Battlefield. You conquered the disciples on the Dimensional Battlefield. You're the symbol of the Great Emperor Xuanyuan. They must've seen everything you did. Big Brother, you must believe there's many people willing to fight with us. Don't be pessimistic! We won't walk this path alone. Look at Zhao Tianxing, Lin Xixi and the others. Aren't they passionate, unyielding, and courageous enough to fight destiny? We're all the same," said Feiling.

"Ling'er, your heart is too pure...."

With the passage of time, the hope in Tianming's heart had dwindled. In the dark night, more than a hundred thousand people waited, their eyes growing dimmer and dimmer.

"Never mind. We'll fight all eight of them. Why not die valiantly?" said Ouyang Jianwang.

There was dead silence for a moment. It was dismal and depressing.

By the time night fell, Tianming had completely given up.

Chapter 752 - Dancing Demons

"Let's go," Fang Taiqing said.

"Okay...."

Many others hung their heads low as they began leaving. From today onward, there would be no turning back. Tianming also turned and prepared to leave.

"Big Brother, stay!" Feiling said. "Ling'er?"

"I want to wait. Please, I don't want to lose hope. I don't want to lose," she said, at the edge of tears.

"Alright."

Tianming stood alone atop the Dimensional Battlefield, looking in the direction their guests had left. Behind him, the hundred thousand tribulation elders gradually left.

"Let's go," Xuanyuan Yu said.

"No." He shook his head, so Xuanyuan Yu had no choice but to stay by his side. There was nothing but silence for a time as darkness enveloped the entirety of Taiji Peak Lake. But then....

"Ling'er, look!" He called out her name from how agitated he was, but thankfully, nobody else was paying attention. However, he sounded so hopeful that the ones who were about to leave suddenly stopped and turned back. In the darkness, they saw some people flying toward Taiji Peak Lake.

"It's them! They're back!"

One excited cry after another sounded out. The entire sect's blood was burning with passion.

"Big Brother!" Feiling was also feeling utterly elated. They could finally stop despairing.

Tianming couldn't wait and used his third eye to look and saw the Triflair Celestial Sect at the very front, led by the coral fairy. To their left was the Pentaphase Earth Sect's master, Jiang Yuanjun, as well as Zhao Tianxing and Jiang Qingqing. To their right were Sect Masters Lin Yuntian and Lin Xixi from the Octagram Heart Sect. All three allied sects were here.

"Archaion welcomes all of you!"

The hearty laughter relieved many of them. The three sects had left, but they didn't choose to side with Nonahall and instead returned to Archaion behind their backs, which was a clear sign that they were determined to resist to their last breath if there was ever one. Coral Fairy Beigong Linlan, Jiang Yuanjun, and Lin Yuntian solemnly came forward.

"Everyone, we wish to have an audience with the goddess," said Beigong Linlan.

The rest looked at each other in wonder. It was the most sincere request one of them could make. The goddess was the person all future events would be centered on, so it was only natural that they would want to talk to her for some reassurance. By now, there was no need to doubt their sincerity.

"Alright, but only the three of you shall be allowed into Soulburn Hall," Fang Taiqing said.

"That'll do." The rest nodded.

"Alright, let's go back for now and wait for further news," Fang Taiqing told the others.

"Understood."

"Li Tianming, come with me."

"Yes, Sect Master." Tianming was overjoyed at this turn of events. It was almost ideal. He also felt like apologizing to Beigong Linlan and the rest, as he had cursed them a bunch before they came back.

They headed toward Xuanyuan Lake and waited while Xuanyuan Yu entered to give them notice of the arrivals. After receiving the news, Xuanyuan Dao personally came out to allow the three sect masters to step into Nine Dragon Formation, followed by Tianming and Fang Taiqing. Apart from them, only members of the Xuanyuan house were allowed to enter Soulburn Hall. Actually, Feiling was still attached to Tianming, but it wasn't necessary to explain everything to them. When they reached Soulburn Hall, Xuanyuan Dao had the others wait and brought Tianming to Feiling's godchild body.

"Sect Master, you seemed rather calm when I told you I got the Dragonhide," Tianming said.

Xuanyuan Dao laughed, and the rest was left unsaid. "If the talks today work out, you will have contributed immensely to the sect. I was right to bet on you."

"Guess it now depends on how the negotiations go later."

"Trust in Her Eminence." Xuanyuan Dao knew that she was attached to Tianming.

After Feiling returned to her body and assumed her throne, the three sect masters were summoned inside. As the imperial son, Tianming finally had the right to stand by her side. The three sect masters walked towards her and looked up, only to twitch uncontrollably. Feiling's beauty was completely unmatched. One look was enough for most people to be convinced that she was indeed the incarnation of a goddess.

"Greetings, Your Eminence!" the three of them said.

"Spare the formalities and take a seat." Though she was a little nervous, she felt a little relieved that Tianming was by her side.

For the sect masters, being offered a seat was the highest form of honor they could receive from her. After they sat down, they exchanged glances and Beigong Linlan spoke.

"Your Eminence, we chose to come back because we already have some plans. However, we still wish to hear what Your Eminence has in mind about this alliance."

"I see. Are you asking what benefits we can give you in the event of our victory?"

"Yes."

"Look into my eyes, all three of you."

They did as they were told.

As her eyes came into focus, she said, "I've been slumbering for a hundred thousand years. Now that I've returned, my only goal is to break the chains of fate that bind me and ascend once more. I am merely following in the steps of our founding ancestor. Cultivation is my only desire and I have no interest at all in the conflicts and wars of the modern day."

Her sincerity was clear for the rest to see.

"Your Eminence means...."

"I am not interested in who reigns supreme on the continent. But if anyone tries killing me to stop me from ascending, they will face my and my descendants' full force and be exterminated. In the event of that, I will shuffle the power balance of the continent and might not mind helping my descendants glean even more benefit. As for your divine realms, I consider them on equal standing with mine. With your help, we will have a good chance of defeating even the strongest of foes. When we stand victorious, we will not forget your contributions.

"Our founding ancestor, Great Emperor Xuanyuan, created symbiotic cultivation and became the absolute ruler of the world. However, he didn't do so through conquest. Instead, everyone came to him and submitted themselves to his rule and protection. Our great ancestor never aimed for material gain and brought true prosperity to our realm. Even though I, Xuanyuan Xi, am not as impressive as our founding ancestor, that does not mean I will not bring about a golden age on the Flameyellow Continent by establishing my own utopia.

"If the three of you help me achieve that, I can promise you will be well rewarded. Abandoning you after you outlive your usefulness is what a lowly person would do. A true ascendant like me wants nothing but to pursue the peak of cultivation, not fleeting material gains like conquest, so you can be assured that if Archaion rules the continent one day, you will all have a seat at the table!"

Tianming had talked to her about this as they were returning to the hall. She more or less knew what words the three sect masters most wished to hear. Basically, they wanted hope, enough hope that they would be motivated to fight to their deaths. That was something Nonahall simply couldn't offer them.

Feiling wasn't Xuanyuan Xi to begin with, so her words were purer, more sincere, easier to believe, and most importantly, she truly meant it. There was no rule that said the world had to be destroyed for them to rule. Great Emperor Xuanyuan was the ultimate ruler; that was universally acknowledged. His deeds had far superseded what the following eight ascendants had achieved. In other words, he was the soul of the human race and the foundation of the Xuanyuan house.

When she finished speaking, the three sect masters lowered their heads and pondered. In the end, Beigong Linlan rose from her seat and knelt. "Your Eminence, the Triflair Divine Realm shall offer our aid!"

The rest also followed.

"The Pentaphase Divine Realm shall offer our aid!"

"The Octagram Divine Realm shall offer our aid!"

Feiling felt truly relieved after that. Her back was soaked with sweat as she looked to Tianming and smiled, tasting true bliss at the end of the tunnel of despair.

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Under the dark skies, a hundred people gathered and danced like demons. Their frustrated growls sounded like the call of beasts. Eventually, the sun began rising and the myriad demons from before were nowhere to be seen. All that remained were people from the five divine realms.

They had come in the hundreds, but by the time they left, Tianming had basically killed off all their disciples. They had been waiting the whole night and smiled.

"Looks like they finally have their answer!" said the ghoulish king clad in red with a chuckle. "How daring of them. Not bad. They actually dared to refuse to join us. Don't they take Nonahall seriously at all? Don't they know that they're alive by our mercy, not Archaion's?"

The other elites of Nonahall were so angry that they were shaking. They had lost the key to the Kilostar Domain and the three other sects had fully turned against them. They had suffered unimaginable losses throughout the Number One Summit.

"At least we now know that they're definitely against us. However, we should deal with other matters first. Initially, our plan was to wipe out Archaion before splitting the other three divine realms up among ourselves. But now we'll deal with them, first. Let's see if Archaion will send them reinforcements."

"That's right! Pentaphase and Octagram are right beside us, while Archaion is some ways off."

"They're really fools to not fear death."

The looks in their eyes grew more and more savage.

The ghoulish king turned to the other four sect masters and said, "Now, it's your turn to choose. Octagram and Pentaphase are sandwiched between us, so let's pick one to wipe out first. They mentioned that they didn't want to be cannon fodder, right? We'll exterminate their divine realm and make corpse puppets from all their sect members and their beasts. In the end, they'll be our cannon fodder all the same."

Cruel laughter rang out across the desolate wilds.

"Very well, let's start with Pentaphase!"

Chapter 753 - Moving Into Soulburn Hall

Within Soulburn Hall, negotiations between the various sect masters continued. Four sects, and their respective divine realms, working together wouldn't be easy, but it wasn't too complicated either as they weren't the aggressors and wouldn't need to talk about dividing spoils. All they needed to clear up was how their defensive arrangements would work.

"Our divine realms are all currently in the same boat. We have to protect every one of us, regardless of who gets attacked, and establish an information network."

"Information is paramount in war, after all."

"We also have to be wary of spies. Only key figures must be allowed access to important deployment information."

There were still many details for them to smooth out.

"Your Eminence, I have some thoughts on the Kilostar Domain," Jiang Yuanjun, the sect master of Pentaphase Earth Sect, said.

"Speak."

"Even though it's remained closed in recent years, we've poured much time into researching and observing it from the outside. Based on written records, the domain might be a battlefield of a war fought in the cosmic aether. It could also be a pathway into the cosmic aether, which is something we're reasonably certain of."

"I see."

"It's also rumored to contain lots of treasure," Fang Taiqing added.

"That's right, we think so too. These days, Nonahall has been pouring in their time and effort to research the domain. It was them who suggested that ultimate tribulation manna be offered as the prize during the Number One Summit. The fact that they gave their disciples such valuable treasures, like the liferot toxin and Sanguine Ferocity, to use in the summit shows how much they value the five ultimate tribulation manna, but their sect definitely doesn't lack manna either. So, I believe the manna themselves aren't what they're really after," Jiang Yuanjun said.

"We also believe that the five ultimate tribulation manna might be able to open the Kilostar Domain. Those that enter will be able to claim the treasures within," Xuanyuan Dao said. It appeared that they had the same thoughts about the domain, more or less.

Jiang Yuanjun continued, "What I'm getting at is that since Imperial Son Li Tianming has obtained the formation heart, we should prioritize the Kilostar Domain. It's possible that the treasures within would allow us to turn the whole war in our favor, so they definitely won't give up on it. As such, if you underestimate the domain's importance and send too few people there, you might fall into their trap and lose control of the domain. That's why you must not lose the formation heart no matter what."

Fang Taiqing looked at Jiang Yuanjun in understanding.

"I also believe that you should take the utmost care," Coral Fairy Beigong Linlan said.

"Nonahall's obsession with winning the summit shows that they know more about the Kilostar Domain than we do. Even if what's inside doesn't help our war effort, we can't afford to let them use it against us either," Sect Master Lin Yuntian of Octagram Heart Sect said.

"Understood. Since that's the case, we'll send some scouts to the domain first to see if anyone's laid an ambush there. Only after we're certain that the area's clear will we send Li Tianming there," Xuanyuan Dao said.

"Very well," Feiling said. She was most worried about his safety. Going to the Kilostar Domain definitely wouldn't be a walk in the park, so she was feeling anxious for his life.

"Your Eminence, Deepstar Hall Lord Yi Xingyin was involved in the making of the Kilostar Formation and has been in charge of the Kilostar Domain this whole time. We can send him to make sure everything's in order first," Fang Taiqing said.

"Noted." Feiling simply nodded since she didn't know the others in the sect too well. Xuanyuan Dao and Jian Wuyi didn't appear to object to Fang Taiqing's idea either, so it seemed safe to assent.

"He wouldn't be in any danger, would he?" Tianming asked.

"Yi Xingyin is actually a rather powerful peak-level tribulation patternscribe with many tricks at his disposal. Nobody should be able to stop him from escaping," Xuanyuan Dao said.

Tianming felt rather relieved. As long as the formation heart was with him, they shouldn't be the ones who had to worry so much. "If Nonahall has plans for the Kilostar Domain, they won't be able to do anything if I don't go there."

While he really wanted the ultimate tribulation manna, it wasn't something he needed to rush. As there was still much to discuss about the alliance, Xuanyuan Dao suggested for them to take it elsewhere, lest they continue disturbing the goddess' cultivation. The others left Soulburn Hall with the three sect masters. Xuanyuan Lake was large, and there were many other places where they could continue their discussion away from prying ears. Fang Taiqing had been left to deal with most of the negotiations about cooperative efforts like troop coordination, formations, and information sharing.

Seeing the others leave, Tianming felt that it was his time to go, too. Just as he was about to go, Feiling said, "Tianming, stay back."

"How may I be of help, Your Eminence?"

"Since the founding ancestor has given you the Human Emperor's Dragonhide, he has basically named you a successor. From now on, there are many more things I need to teach you, so you shall move into Soulburn Hall from today onward."

"Ooooh, many things to teach you, huh?" Ying Huo teased.

Tianming felt himself sweating nervously as he answered, "Yes, Your Eminence!"

Now that he was the imperial son, nobody should be opposed to him moving into Soulburn Hall with Feiling, right? At the very least, Fang Qingli didn't seem opposed to it. Soulburn Hall was quite large, and there was definitely enough space for him to move in. Incidentally, the Nine Dragon Formation around the hall was split into an inner and outer part. Naturally, Feiling lived in the inner part, into which Tianming would move as well. Currently, only Fang Qingli and Xuanyuan Dao were allowed to enter the inner formation, while the others defended it from the outside.

"You are hurt, so you should rest and recuperate," Feiling told Fang Qingli.

"Yes, Your Eminence." Though she left, she stopped not far away from the inner formation, leaving Tianming and Feiling to themselves.

Ying Huo, Meow Meow, and Xian Xian popped out of his lifebound space. Lan Huang also came out, since there were enough mountains and lakes outside Soulburn Hall for the giant beast, but it was too big to enter the indoors area itself so Tianming left it outside.

A green phoenix with nearly eight hundred stars lay in the distance, looking to be in a rather bad mood as Fang Qingli applied some medicine to it. Lan Huang came stumbling toward it and leaned against the inner formation's boundary. "Big Sister, want to play?"

"Buzz off," the phoenix said.

"Alright!" Lan Huang turned back and left as Fang Qingli watched it with a hint of interest.

"Come to think of it, that lifebound beast of his is a dragon too. He probably has some ties with the Archaic House of Xuanyuan after all."

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Within the bedroom, Ying Huo and Xian Xian excitedly flew around, exploring their new environment. Meanwhile, Meow Meow was already snoring away after it had found a nice, comfy spot. It had been hurt rather badly in the previous battle, but thanks to the Prime Tower's healing, it was now fit as a tiger once more.

After Tianming took a short rest, he noticed Feiling happily playing around with Xian Xian. It looked like a real life angel was playing with a smaller one in the snow, making quite a charming sight. He then picked Feiling up, feeling her smooth calves and placing his other hand on a rather pleasant spot. She was so surprised that her face flushed immediately as she checked to see if any others noticed. She breathed a sigh of relief when she saw Ying Huo and the rest behaving normally, though the flush didn't fade from her face.

Looking down and burrowing her head into Tianming's bosom, she said, "Blasphemy! Just because you're my disciple doesn't mean you're allowed to feel up a goddess! I'll cut your arm off as punishment!"

Tianming smiled calmly and said, "It'll be all worth it! I've missed this feeling in my hand. You don't know how painful it was when I couldn't do this!"

Feiling didn't say anything in response, merely moaned softly with her face against his chest. After a while, she said, "Hey, let go now. Fang Qingli will be back soon. She'll freak if she sees this!"

"Hmm, I hope she pops a vein then!" Tianming reluctantly put her down. The snow had stopped as the day broke and the landscape before them was pure white and it sparkled when the golden rays of the sun touched it. Tianming felt truly fulfilled, enjoying the beautiful sight before him as well as the one in his arm.

This was the life he wanted, but it was a shame it wouldn't last long. Here, they would be pestered by Fang Qingli, while farther away, five other divine realms were itching to get rid of Feiling. The only way for him to deal with Fang Qingli was to grow stronger, so he had more say and could truly be with Feiling without hiding their relationship. The thought of openly taking their precious goddess as his lover was exciting to say the least. However, if they were all to survive with their dignity intact, those five divine realms had to be wiped out, or at the very least served a debilitating defeat.

"Big Brother, you don't have to rush things. We're doing fine now, and it'll only get better," Feiling said.

"Yeah." He looked thoughtfully into the distance.

"Do you have some other plans?"

"I'll focus on cultivating for the time being and leave the matter of the Kilostar Domain to the others. I'll continue to go to the Deepstar Pool and Sword Insight Rock, and also try to finish claiming the

Archaionfiend Eye. Lately, I've been neglecting that, thanks to the Number One Summit. Otherwise I would've been done retaking the eye by now."

"Yeah! Your dad asked you to take that Archaionfiend Eye, so you should do it as soon as possible."

"I'll be heading there shortly." Feeling that temporary warmth reminded him of what he enjoyed most in his life. To make that fleeting moment eternal, he had to dive back into the chaotic vortex and fight to make it possible.

"Hey, has your super special private lesson ended yet?" Ying Huo popped out and said.

"Buzz off!" Tianming grabbed it and tossed it flying.

"Haha, you're mad cause it's true!"

"Bad Ying Huo. You're getting more and more naughty," Feiling said. "Yeah, unlike the good boy that I am," Tianming said.

"Good boy? What's your hand doing?"

"Ah, my hand has a mind of its own... I wasn't able to control it," he said, pulling his outstretched fingers back.

All of a sudden, Xian Xian loudly shrieked.

Chapter 754 - The Fifth Primordial Chaos Beast

"What's going on?" Tianming asked.

"There's a really smelly egg! It smells! Ouch, it hurts! Waaaah!" Xian Xian burst out in tears.

"What smelly egg?" Tianming wondered.

"In your tummy!"

She was referring to his lifebound space.

Tianming hurriedly observed it and spotted the 'smelly' egg she was referring to. It was an egg of a Primordial Chaos Beast. The egg was neither large nor small, and was completely grey in color. The grey resembled deathly loneliness and reminded him of Yama's power. It didn't stand out too much among the other eggs, but looked more like a grey pebble he would see anywhere on the road.

But now, a crack could be seen on it. Small though it was, a greyish aura seemed to be leaking from it. It did indeed smell bad, like a rotten egg. The key was that the wafting smell had actually caused Xian Xian's leaves to wither and yellow, and many dark spots to form on them. It was no wonder she had cried out in pain. Thankfully, there was only a little wafting smell coming from the egg, so Xian Xian could easily recover from it. Still, the egg did catch Tianming and the others off guard.

"Is this grey one Fifth? There's a crack on it, so it must be starting to hatch," Ying Huo said as it stretched its claw out in preparation to give it a kick.

However, something mysterious happened: the grey egg was nowhere to be seen!

"It's gone?"

Tianming was just as confused as his lifebound beasts by the egg's sudden disappearance. It was like the egg had really vanished from the lifebound space. It wasn't just a normal cloaking technique; its presence was completely gone. After a whole fifteen minutes, the grey egg appeared again in another corner of the lifebound space without moving in the slightest. It had two black, eye-like spots that looked like they were staring intently at Ying Huo and the others.

"Interesting!" Meow Meow pounced toward it, only to cause it to vanish again. This time, it seemed to be angered as it didn't show up anywhere else.

"Let's leave it alone for now. I think it likes peace and quiet," Tianming said.

The egg only returned to the lifebound space after an hour and had its 'eyes' trailed on Xian Xian's main body without moving in the slightest, as if observing it.

"This grey one seems to have an attitude," Ying Huo said.

"Which one of you don't? You're all troublemakers!" Tianming retorted. He was already used to the common-sense-defying Primordial Chaos Beasts, who were far more ancient than they seemed. "I'm in so much trouble...."

It wouldn't be easy for him to deal with the bunch of ancestral beasts. He had just finished taming Xian Xian, and now Fifth was trying to make itself undetectable in his lifebound space.

"Give it time to get used to things. Xian Xian's egg started cracking when we were in the Grand-Orient Realm. I don't expect Fifth's hatching conditions will be easy to fulfill either. I wonder what type it is?"

Though Tianming couldn't tell, he had a rough grasp about its character. It was probably a beast, judging by how jumpy it was and how it could even cause Xian Xian's leaves to wither.

He took it out of the lifebound space and said, "Welcome to the family, little one." He stroked the shell, only for it to let out a smell and cause his hands to bleed and rot in pain.

"Asserting dominance already?" Tianming smiled. "No need to be so nervous. We'll be looking out for each other in the future.

.....

Two hours later, Tianming headed to Fiend Palace after putting Ying Huo and the rest back in his lifebound space. The grey egg was still monitoring the rest from a far corner. Since Xian Xian still wanted to play with Feiling, and lifebound beasts weren't really needed in Fiend Palace, Tianming left the Radix World Tree at Soulburn Hall. That way, Feiling wouldn't be lonely now that she finally had someone she was close to there, unlike the others who were practically strangers to her.

Now, his life was peaceful once more, and it was during these times that he made the most progress. He cycled between the Deepstar Pool, Fiend Palace, Sword Insight Rock, and Soulburn Hall. Since moving there, he had many more chances to get intimate with Feiling.

Soon, he arrived back at Fiend Palace. The youths of the Xuanyuan house had all excitedly resumed training there since the end of the summit. They stopped training immediately when he arrived.

"Li Tianming! No, you should be addressed as the imperial son now!" Xuanyuan Yucheng said as he waved to him among the crowd. Though they had cultivated here together before, Tianming was now his hero.

He was the successor of Great Emperor Xuanyuan's legacy, and was now the symbol of hope for the entirety of Archaion. Everyone was doing their best now that he had gained the favor of Great Emperor Xuanyuan and become their mental support. It was also for that reason that the Xuanyuan house youngsters were big fans of his.

"Please don't treat me like a stranger and just call me by name," Tianming said. He was quite familiar with the lot, having fought by their side within the Nether Battlefield.

After some time, Xuanyuan Yucheng said, "Alright, let's stop disturbing Tianming's cultivation and go back to minding our own business!"

"Understood!"

The Fiend Palace turned quiet once more. Tianming, sitting in the corner, noticed a young girl in white smiling at him. The icy blue third eye between her brows looked like a deep-sea crystal. That was the symbol of the two-hundred-millennia-long bloodline of the Xuanyuan house.

"Muxue," he greeted when he came to her.

"Congratulations." Her beautiful eyes shone like crystals. When Tianming had killed Yama, she cried tears of joy.

"The joy is for all of us to share," Tianming said.

"You managed to obtain the founding ancestor's legacy and became the imperial son. Now, you stand at the top of the sect. What's there for me to share?"

"Well, I did promise you an ultimate tribulation manna. I'll bring it to you once I retrieve it."

"Alright, I'll hold you to your word."

"Come on, you can at least pretend to refuse."

"No way."

"Haha... Well, it's not like I can go to Kilostar Domain right away anyway."

"Is it because of the war?"

"Yeah."

"I heard the other three sects have decided to ally with us."

"Oh, you already know?" "It isn't exactly a secret. The whole divine realm knows. Initially, many weren't confident about it, but now our four sects will no doubt be brave enough to fight to our deaths. What you did at the summit changed everything. You're now the entire realm's hero."

"Keep that praise coming and I'll soon be too full of myself."

"Thank you, truly," she sincerely said. Tianming merely smiled. "Well, what I did was child's play compared to the real upcoming fight."

"Yeah!"

Everyone could feel the oppressive war looming over them.

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A few hours later, as Xuanyuan Yucheng and the others were leaving, Tianming stopped them. "Brothers and sisters, there's something I would like to discuss with you."

"Go ahead."

"Can I ask to train at Fiend Palace alone for the next few days?" Tianming asked. "Alone?" Xuanyuan Yucheng paused, but didn't ask too much. "Of course. There won't be a problem."

"Alright. Thank you all."

"You're welcome, Brother," Xuanyuan Yucheng said.

"You can ask for anything, even Brother Yucheng's body," someone joked.

"Haha, I worry I'd be beaten up by Sister Qianyu if I did that," Tianming said.

Once they left, Tianming turned to face the Archfiend Eye alone. From now on, he would be able to absorb the essence of the eye into Archfiend.

"You won't be able to escape any longer."

He levitated and began wrapping Archfiend around the eye, slowly absorbing its essence. In time, five days had passed. During that time, he neglected his training slightly to focus on absorbing the eye. Now, Archfiend had eight tribulation patterns. The wave of confusion coming from the eye made him feel a little dizzy; he had been here for a little too long.

"I'd better go back to relax, see Ling'er, and practice my swordsmanship before coming back again."

He left the palace and took a breather, feeling measurably better almost immediately. "Is that how Xuanyuan Yuheng lost his sanity?"

All of a sudden, he recalled Lin Xiaoxiao. "I haven't seen her in a long time. Does she still live at the Number One Pavilion alone?" He decided he would stop there since it was on the way to Xuanyuan Lake.

"Imperial Son!"

Along the way, many disciples called out to him and looked at him with worshipful eyes. Soon, he returned to his former residence and entered. It was dead silent all around. He didn't call out to Lin Xiaoxiao, but quietly headed straight for the snowy courtyard.

"Let's see what that lass is up to!"

Chapter 755 - Fiend Possession

The inside of the building was dead silent. Tianming went from wing to wing, but didn't see any trace of Lin Xiaoxiao. "Did she leave for somewhere else to cultivate?"

Right as he said that, he saw her in the corner of a small room with the door left open. It was really quiet inside. Tianming peeked into it and saw the slender girl shriveled up in the corner unmoving on the cold ground, completely out cold. Her aura was so weak that he would think she was dead if he didn't look closely.

Tianming felt a little troubled seeing her like this time and time again, though he was getting used to it somewhat. He raised her up by her clothes and said, "Hey, wake up and stop playing dead."

Her skin was pale and a few bloody marks were on her face. She seemed a little gruesome to look at. She twitched a little, then slowly opened her eyes and began giving off some faint death tribulation energy.

"Why are you here?" she said weakly with a smile as she pushed his hand away and leaned against the wall.

While her cultivation method seemed really horrifying, it was obviously effective, given her rate of growth. Now that she was a samsaran at her age, she was a proper Heaven Branch disciple. Tianming clearly knew when she had reached the Empyrean Saint stage, after all.

"Take it easy. Don't cultivate so much or you'll die, oh servant of mine," Tianming said a little pitifully.

"Alright. Will you come back here now that the summit is over?"

"I won't be. You're cultivating alone now. I'm now officially the goddess's disciple, so I'll be at Soulburn Hall."

"Alright."

"Disappointed?"

"As if. I love silence."

"Where's your lifebound beast? Let it out to play with Lan Huang."

"She doesn't want to."

"She's afraid? Oh well, I was just here to check to see if you died. Since you're alive, I'll be leaving now." Though Tianming had wanted to find out her secret, it hadn't worked out this time. He decided he would come again, refusing to believe she would be laying on the ground half dead during his every visit.

"I'll send you off," Lin Xiaoxiao said.

"No need." Tianming turned and disappeared in the snow.

When he was gone, an eerie voice came out of her lifebound space. The Archaionfiend excitedly said, "I've been waiting for so long... my chance is finally here!"

"What do you mean?"

"Can't you tell? His body is filled with my eye's aura. He's been stealing my essence with Archfiend alone at Fiend Palace lately, and managed to absorb a lot! But my eye won't be taken so easily. If he's too hasty, he'll end up like Xuanyuan Yuheng and fall under my control!"

"That doesn't seem right. He still seemed like himself to me, unlike Xuanyuan Yuheng."

"That's because he's only starting out. If this continues, his mind will begin deteriorating and I'll get my chance. As long as I find an opening, I'll be able to get back at that shameless, plundering thief."

"He's the imperial son, you know. He's protected by lots of people now. Even if you manage to control him, what can you do about it? I think it's hopeless now."

"That's easy. Xuanyuan Yuheng was a test case, and nobody could tell he was under my control. When the time comes, just take him to the Old Deepstar Path."

"That's too risky," she said with a furrowed brow.

"We have to give it a try. If it works, he'll be mine to toy with or kill! As for you, try to get close to Heaven Cauldron so that I have a chance to interface with my eye to tempt him. Maybe I can goad him into sealing up his lifebound space."

"Kill him? Didn't you say that all we needed to do was take Archfiend away?"

"If we don't kill him, he'll snap out of my control."

"He won't know who took Archfiend anyway, and without it, he won't pose a threat to you."

"Mercy only begets widows, you know. You'll understand when you suffer for being so soft," the Archaionfiend said with a chuckle.

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After leaving his old residence, Tianming decided to head to Deepstar Pool near the Old Deepstar Path. At the entrance of the Old Deepstar Path, he saw a familiar face: Fang Xingying, who was currently standing there alone.

"Hey," he called out before giving him a slap on the back.

Fang Xingying responded exaggeratedly by quickly drawing his sword and charging toward Tianming, but he blocked it by sandwiching the sword between his fingers. "You're too slow and weak."

"Imperial Son!" Fang Xingying began sweating nervously as he knelt, but before his knees reached the ground, Tianming pulled him up.

"Why do you look like you've done something to wrong me?" Tianming asked.

"I.. I didn't," he said, trying to calm down. "You're being worshipped by everyone lately, so I'm just feeling really nervous and salty about it."

"Is that so? Congratulations on reaching the Samsara stage and becoming a Heaven Branch disciple."

"Ah, I see...." Fang Xingying smiled.

"Face your life properly from now on." Tianming then left for the Deepstar Pool. It was already open, and Xuanyuan Muxue was inside.

"Morning," she said.

"Likewise. Today seems like a good day." Tianming entered and immediately began assimilating astralsources. He couldn't stop training his Ancient Deepstar Godbody. Currently, he had around five hundred astralsources absorbed, but he realized he could still accommodate many more. The same applied to tribulation sword ki.

He picked up a rock-like astralsource and took it into his body. It began sizzling and the pain came streaming into his mind. Right at that moment, the dragonhide appeared and covered his body. "What's going on?"

The astralsource near him flooded toward the dragonhide as he stood there, stunned. At the same time, seven or eight of them stuck directly to the armor and began being assimilated. They turned into liquid form before entering his body, allowing him to absorb them at a much faster rate without any additional pain.

"Is it really that good?" Tianming wondered. "The Human Emperor's Dragonhide comes from Great Emperor Xuanyuan himself, while the Old Deepstar Path and Deepstar Pool are also things that the emperor obtained from the cosmic aether. Maybe that's why I can absorb astralsources much faster now!"

Within a short two hours, Tianming had absorbed more than a hundred astralsources, strengthening his body to a frightening degree. During the same time, Xuanyuan Muxue had only managed to absorb two as she watched the monster in front of her. "If I compare myself to you I'll definitely burst a vein one day."

"Smart choice."

Tianming only stopped when it was about time for the pool to close. After that short session, he felt that his body was much stronger than average tribulation artifacts now.

"It's so unfair... I'm the real descendant of the founding ancestor, you know," Xuanyuan Muxue muttered with a pout as she looked at the armor.

"What do you know? I'm a great grandson-in-law of the founding ancestor many times removed, you know."

"What are you talking about?"

"It's a secret."

"Don't tell me... you have feelings for Her Eminence?" she said with an odd look.

"Hey! Don't go around spouting nonsense," he nervously said.

"Know your limits. Her Eminence is way out of your league," she said, chuckling.

"Fine. What made you think I fancy Her Eminence anyway?" Was he really that obvious?

"Well, it's just womanly intuition."

He really didn't know what to say to that. Either way, he would definitely be coming back to Deepstar Pool again thanks to the Dragonhide.

"By the way, make sure to leave some for me."

"You mean astralsources?"

"Yeah, what else?"

"Haha, sure. I'll take the rest then!" Being able to absorb a hundred astralsources a day was unprecedented in the history of the sect.

"Since ancient times, the Deepstar Pool has never run out of astralsources before, but it will soon...." Xuanyuan Muxue had an unpleasant premonition.

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Within the Hexapath Sword Palace under Xuanyuan Lake, Tianming continued keeping himself busy. He was the only one there now, so he casually opened the sword barrier and caused the Hexapath Sword God to appear again.

"Senior, I'm here again," Tianming greeted.

"Beautifully done, young man."

"Can I pluck your beard off?" Tianming asked.

"Beautifully done, young man."

"Haha, Senior, take a look at my Animacorpus Eradication. Did I improve it enough to unlock a new move from you?"

"Beautifully done, young man."

Since he was repeating himself, Tianming decided to split his Grand-Orient Sword into two and perform the Animacorpus Eradication in front of the Hexapath Sword God. "Hungry Ghost Dao, Ghost Sword Intent, Animacorpus Eradication!"

The power of that move had been honed to near perfection after the battles during the summit. His mastery of it was more or less on the same level as his mastery of the Mortal Dao Sword, thanks in great part to the rage he executed it with to avenge the dead disciples of his sect. With his emotions in sync, his sword intent was even stronger. After the demonstration, he turned to the Hexapath Sword God expectantly.

"Beautifully done, young man."

It was the same thing as usual. It appeared that Tianming hadn't met the requirements set for acquiring the next move, much to his dismay. He felt that he had done rather well already.

"Let's try again."

Chapter 756 - Ninesky Beastsoul, Asura

Tianming didn't give up and kept honing the Animacorpus Eradication, performing the move again and again before the Hexapath Sword God. However, the latter didn't respond any differently.

"I wonder what part I'm not getting right."

Feeling a little anxious about it, he pointed his sword right at the Hexapath Sword God.

"If I strike you directly, you should be able to feel my sword intent, right?" He then attacked the Hexapath Sword God with Animacorpus Eradication again and again. However, it was just an ethereal apparition, a kind of sword formation. He repeated it ten times and said, "I guess I'm just still lacking something."

Since he didn't get any response, he decided to leave. But just as he was about to step out of the palace, he heard an old voice behind him.

"Foolish brat, since you dared to mess with me, I'm messing with you back. Will you stop messing around from now on?"

"Senior!" Tianming turned back with his hope reignited and saw the senior stand up and smile at him.

"Your Animacorpus Eradication has been well honed and has passed my test. Today, I will be teaching you the third and fourth moves of the Hexapath Samsara Sword."

"Thank you, Senior. I won't dare mess with you again."

He had only learned the first two moves so far, but he didn't expect he would get to learn the next two at once.

"Come here and watch closely." The Hexapath Sword God looked at him with a dotting gaze, seeming no different than a real person.

"Yes, Senior." Tianming skipped his way back to the sword god.

"Do you see my sword here?" The old man raised his right hand and showed him his middle finger.

"I... I do see it. It is a good sword indeed!" Tianming awkwardly said.

"I've carried this sword across the lands and it has helped me defeat many a blushing beauty, causing them to bend over to me. The ladies all across the realm would cross seas and mountains to have a taste of this sword."

"Senior, I appreciate your fine and poetic way of putting things, but can we get to the point?" Tianming said through gritted teeth. The old man seemed to be rather sleazy.

"Junior, do make way. I wouldn't want my sword ki to hurt you accidentally," the sword god continued speaking mechanically. Then, he put one hand on his waist and pointed his middle finger at Tianming.

"Watch out! Here it comes!"

"Just do it already!" Tianming's patience was at its limits. The old man had started out serious, but was sounding more and more frivolous.

"The Hexapath Samsara Sword is the crystallization of the way of my sword. With this move, I raised a successful dynasty and expanded our borders beyond imagination! The first move, Omniscient Dao, Mortal Dao Sword, and the second move, Ghost Dao, Animacorpus Eradication, represent the cycles of reincarnation for humans and hungry ghosts. They're in the same class of power and represent my very first insights into the sword.

"The third and fourth moves are a tier higher, and represent the insights I gained before I ascended to godhood. They're the cycles of reincarnation for fiendish beasts and the fierce asura!

"The first of my insights concerned the human condition and what it meant to be a ghost during life after death. Before I ascended to godhood, my mood was all over the place as I underwent lots of pressure and hardship during the troubling times of my clan. My swordsmanship back then focused on ferocity, which led to the path of fiendbeasts that connects to the path of the asuras and leads up to the heavens!"

During the whole monologue, the sword god had his middle finger raised, though he sounded infinitely nostalgic about his past experiences.

"Listen well. The third move of the Hexapath Samsara Sword focuses on the Animal Dao. Animals make up the majority of conscious lifeforms apart from humans, so they also go through cycles of reincarnation. This move of mine combines the nine most fearsome beasts, all of them lifebound beasts that were more ferocious than wildbeasts. It comprises nine aspects that are fused into a single move. The aspects are respectively the torch dragon, teng drakeserpent, taotie, guiche ghostfowl, qiongqi, taowu, suanni, skyhound, and zheng leopard. These nine aspects form the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation. Using your sword as a formation, you shall be able to dominate all!"

Tianming came to understand that the third move was a sword formation formed using sword intent with the sword itself as the basis. Yama's Grandyin Fiercesoul Formation operated in the same paradigm, but it couldn't compare to the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation. If the name of the third move already sounded that impressive, Tianming wondered what the fourth move would be like.

The old man continued, "The third move may be among the fiercest in terms of sword intent, but it's still lacking compared to the fourth. The fourth move is the one I developed that led to my ascension, and is based on the Asura Dao. Asuras are fiendgods, and are called such because they're essentially gods—or devas—but they remain tethered to their passions, making them fickle and vengeful. With the fiendgod as a base and a divine point of view, the sword intent can suppress and dominate all that is in the world.

"Asuras are dualistic creatures and their fiendish nature contrasts against their godly nature, like male against female, or yin against yang. Male asuras have nine heads and thousands of eyes, spit fire, and have nine hundred and ninety hands with eight legs. Female asuras have three heads with green and black faces, six arms, and spit water. They're also incredibly charming. These creatures stand at the very top of all things! Using the yin-yang fiendgod sword intent of asuras in the formation, you'll be able to use the Asura Fiendgod Formation."

So that was the name of the fourth move. Tianming couldn't really understand the essence of it, though.

"I have no idea what that even means. It sounds like a lot of babble and gobbledygook," Ying Huo said.

"Me neither," Tianming said, but it didn't matter. All he had to do was watch the demonstration and try copying it.

"It has nothing to do with me anyway. I still haven't mastered the second move, so you can start ahead of me and show me the ropes when you finally get it," Ying Huo said.

"Shameless." It almost sounded like Ying Huo had intentionally slowed its progress down so it wouldn't have to work so hard to figure out the new move.

As they spoke, the Hexapath Sword God started the demonstration and finally put away his middle finger.

"Animal Dao, Ninesky Beastsoul Formation!"

The move caused nine fearsome beasts to manifest in a nonagonal formation. Each of them stood a kilometer tall and had a thousand stars. Any one of them would be able to wreak complete havoc on the world, and they were formed of incredibly dense sword intent.

"It looks much more complicated than the first move. The first two moves only require understanding the sword intent behind them, but these two use sword intent to make formations! They're just like heavenly pattern formations—really complicated!"

He felt his scalp tingle at the daunting notion of mastering those moves. How hard would manifesting even one of those beasts be? Taotie, qiongqi, skyhound, and more.... When the move was executed, the nine beastsouls descended in such an awesome manner that Tianming felt like his head was about to burst.

But that was only a prelude to something even more terrifying.

"Asura Dao, Asura Fiendgod Formation!" That move caused two asuras of about ten kilometers in height to manifest. They were like divine natural disasters, ravaging across the continent! The manifestation of the formation made Tianming feel like the sky was about to collapse. Being the 'target' of the move, Tianming felt his soul shudder as the two asuras coldly stared at him. He almost felt like breaking down and worshipping them as a mortal would a true divine being! His heart was about to burst just from witnessing the moves.

Chapter 757 - Archaionfiend's Puppet

"Beastsouls eradicate the world, and fiendgods shake the heavens! Did you learn it well, brat?" The voice of the Hexapath Sword God came from the mouths of the two yin-yang fiendgods and shook Tianming's ears.

"How can I even begin comprehending something like that? Cut me some slack!" Tianming said.

"Not bad. With your ambition, if you're able to master a ten-thousandth of what I have shown, you'll have done well enough."

Tianming didn't know what to say. "What I meant was it didn't make sense to me at all!"

"You're a brilliant student." The old man withdrew his sword intent and sat back down.

"Can you demonstrate it a few more times?"

"You're a brilliant student."

"You have no balls."

"You're a brilliant student."

It was over. Tianming had more or less memorized the mantras of the two sword formations, but he didn't really understand them at all.

"It's alright, I'll just learn it slowly. This sword art was devised when he ascended, and I'm still quite far off from that. I only need to understand a part of it," Tianming said, calming down.

"Young man, you'd better learn it fast. I want to copy your notes," Ying Huo said.

"You little!"

Tianming left the sword palace with the new techniques in mind. The place was still really quiet and the sword god eventually closed his eyes and turned back into a rock.

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He returned to Soulburn Hall and sneakily spent time with Feiling for the better part of the day. Once he felt he was well rested, he went to the Fiend Palace.

"I'm not surprised this Archaionfiend Eye is something my dad came across during his first life. Even with the Soul Tower in my sea of consciousness, I'm still affected by it if I stay here too long. I must be careful," Tianming said.

"That's right. Everything in moderation, whether it be your relationship with people or your progress with other things," Ying Huo said with a serious look.

"Chicken Bro, who are you talking about?" Meow Meow asked.

"It's a secret."

"Pervert! Ying Huo, you're the one who corrupted the atmosphere in my lifebound space!" Tianming snapped and shot him a glare.

There was nobody else but him in Fiend Palace, thanks to the request he had made. "Let's continue."

He took out Archfiend, wrapped it around the eye, and began his assimilation. Eventually, a few days passed.

I'm feeling a little dizzy now. Guess it's about time, he thought. He felt like he was falling deeper and deeper. Little did he know that at the foot of the Heaven Sacred Mountain stood a girl in black and her lifebound beast, the Archaionfiend itself!

Soon, it was the fourth day and Tianming had fallen deeper and deeper. The Archaionfiend Eye seemed like it was on its last legs. As its essence was being sucked away, it stared deeply into Tianming's eyes. Eventually, a red mist began clouding his vision, growing thicker and thicker before turning into bloody strands that pierced the whites of his eyes. Though he had planned to leave on the fifth day, he didn't seem to be able to move away.

He began hearing many voices in his head, all of which tempted him to walk closer and closer towards the abyss. "Continue, keep on keeping up! You'll succeed! It's your last chance!"

The Archaionfiend seemed excited, as if it had already won. It knew that if it didn't act now, it would never have another chance like this again. Though Lin Xiaoxiao seemed a little unnerved by it, she didn't say anything.

"A few more days and I'll be able to implant my will into his soul! These sky plunderers are too weak, yet they dared to steal my eye. How sacrilegious." The fiend gave one final push. Eventually, ten days had passed.

"It's done! He no longer has a sense of self! Xiaoxiao, let's go straight to the entrance of the Old Deepstar Path at the Earth Branch to meet up with him!" the Archaionfiend said excitedly.

"Alright. We're only taking the chain, right?" she asked.

"Don't worry."

She then snuck there with the beast. As for Tianming, he left the Fiend Palace and went straight for the Old Deepstar Path, Jian Wufeng and Xuanyuan Yu following behind him. They always guarded the entrances of the places where Tianming went to train. Today, Tianming proceeded to the Old Deepstar Path as he usually did, with nothing about him noticeably different apart from his reddish eyes.

However, he didn't stop at the Deepstar Pool along the path, but instead went toward the exit at the Earth Branch. Soon, he went to the wilderness in the Earth Branch and saw Lin Xiaoxiao waiting for him at a valley ahead.

"Give me the chain," Lin Xiaoxiao said.

Tianming took out the chain from his lifebound space and put it in her hands, after which she turned to leave.

"Wait, Xiaoxiao!" the Archaionfiend suddenly said.

"What's wrong?" She immediately snapped alert and turned back, feeling a bad omen, only to see Tianming take out the Grand-Orient Sword and pierce it towards his own heart.

"Wu You!" She knew that the fiend was trying to make Tianming kill himself while he was still under its control.

It actually flew out of her lifebound space and looked straight into Tianming's eyes, trying to strengthen its hold on him. "Die, sky plunderer! How dare you steal my eye?! I'll make sure you die without your corpse intact!"

It was practically touching Tianming as a bloody windstorm came out of it and entered Tianming's eyes, causing him to speed up his suicide and use more force and speed.

Lin Xiaoxiao was almost going mad. She didn't think that Wu You would be so daring as to kill Tianming in the Archaion Sect. It looked like he would be dead for sure.

Right at that moment, Tianming suddenly flipped his sword around, split it, and stabbed both of them into the Archaionfiend's eyes, causing blood to splatter everywhere.

It shrieked, its body stiffening up in an instant. Tianming had completely punctured its eyes, much to Lin Xiaoxiao's shock. Almost immediately, Archfiend flew back into Tianming's hand. Tianming whipped it out and wrapped it around the Archaionfiend, causing its spikes to embed itself into its flesh and making countless holes within.

At the same time, Jian Wufeng and Xuanyuan Yu appeared and surrounded them, closing off their escape route. Lin Xiaoxiao and Wu You only then realized that they had been set up by Tianming.

"Impossible! I already had complete control of you! This can't be!" it howled as it rolled around on the ground, bleeding on the snow as bloody lightning crackled around it.

"You're just a wild beast. An animal. You think you can oppose me?" Tianming was overjoyed at his victory. He had the Archaionfiend completely bound by his chain. With the fiend having just reached the Samsara stage not long ago, it wasn't even able to put up a fight against Tianming, let alone the other two that had come along with him.

Initially, Tianming was planning on leaving the Fiend Palace within five days, since he wasn't one to rush things to begin with—until he heard the Archaionfiend's voice. So, he pretended to go along with it. In actuality, he had the Soul Tower guarding him, so even if he was a little dazed, he definitely wouldn't become its puppet.

He finally understood how Xuanyuan Yuheng had become corrupted, and was frankly rather disappointed to see Lin Xiaoxiao there. He had known she was hiding something the entire time, but he didn't think it would have something to do with Xuanyuan Yuheng's death and the Archaionfiend Eye.

"You're the so-called Archaionfiend? Aren't you a little too pathetic?" Tianming mocked. In actuality, the moment he had heard the 'Archaionfiend', he was livid. That creature actually knew about the sky plunderer race. In other words, it had been plotting to use him to get its eye back this entire time and was only forced to speed things up because his chain allowed him to quickly absorb it. To think that it thought it could kill Tianming just because he didn't seem to be in a good mental state.

"Seniors, this is a personal matter of mine, so please let me deal with it at my discretion," Tianming said to Xuanyuan Yu and Jian Wufeng.

Xuanyuan Yu had known that something was off with Tianming and followed him. Even if he was under the Archaionfiend's control, it wouldn't change the outcome of what happened today with them around.

"Alright." The two of them moved farther away.

"You got hasty and desperate. That's why you failed," Tianming said. Now, its life was completely in his hands.

"Haha, sky plunderer, you'll die for your thefts one day!" it growled painfully.

Tianming ignored it and continued holding tight to the chain as he walked toward Lin Xiaoxiao. He didn't feel too good about this victory of his. She stood with her fists tightly clenched as she shivered and looked away from him.

"Xiaoxiao, you're pretty amazing for switching your lifebound beasts out for the Archaionfiend," he said. She didn't answer him.

"How have I treated you lately?"

"Really well..." she said in a hoarse voice.

"That's why I'm disappointed in you."

"I'm sorry."

"Do you think you can just apologize for an attempt on my life?"

"I..."

"Enough. Just die!" As they spoke, the Archaionfiend's body turned into a vortex of bloody lightning while still being bound by the chains.

Chapter 758 - The Vast World

Tianming was depressed. During their time together, he had thought Lin Xiaoxiao was pretty good. Upon meeting this old friend, Tianming hoped that she would have a better life. Although her existence was a threat to Feiling, Tianming had chosen not to deal with her. He never imagined she remained silent, claiming to have forgotten about Lighting Manor, but all the while scheming with the Archaionfiend.

Never mind the fact she tried to take away Archfiend, but she was actually going to kill him. He would be dead if it weren't for the Soul Tower. In fact, he had trusted Lin Xiaoxiao very much. But the more he trusted her, the more depressed and angry he felt.

As his killing intent surged, Lin Xiaoxiao's gaze turned to despair. She could feel his rage and murderous aura. At this moment, great changes had taken place around the Archaionfiend.

Crimson lightning whirled into a vortex and erupted. Without careful observation, one might think the Archaionfiend had exploded. A violent ray of lightning was aimed at Tianming; however, he swerved sideways, avoiding the blow.

"Trying to resist?!"

The Archaionfiend was trapped by his chain. Tianming yanked on them, but found nothing except for the chains, which bounced back. The Archaionfiend's Bloodfiend Body had disappeared.

Crimson lightning struck his side. Because he didn't know the extent of the Archaionfiend's lethality, Tianming didn't dare use his body to withstand the attack. The crimson lightning bolt passed Tianming and crashed into Lin Xiaoxiao's body.

He knew this would happen, but this time he didn't save her. Anyway, the attack was made by her lifebound beast, so she could reap what she had sown. Lin Xiaoxiao's body exploded as she was engulfed by the lightning.

At the last moment, Tianming's gaze collided with hers. There were all kinds of emotions in those eyes—pain, guilt, disappointment, and anguish, but there was no killing intent.

"You might be young but you can certainly hide well. I won't believe you anymore. You deserve to die after being attacked by your own lifebound beast!"

However, something unexpected happened. Lin Xiaoxiao had seemed to explode, but in fact it was more like she had turned into lightning itself upon being struck. As the bolt of lightning flashed, it suddenly returned to the Archaionfiend's lightning vortex, then transformed into a bloody spike and shot out.

Tianming was just about to go after the Archaionfiend, but an unimaginable picture appeared before his eyes.

The red spike opened the void and, as if tearing through space, suddenly disappeared into thin air. All that remained were echoes of the Archaionfiend's angry roars.

"Thieving sky plunderer race, the outcome has yet to be determined. Don't be too happy! You wait. One day, I'll return and gouge your eyes out!"

Its voice contained immense rage—a deep, irreconcilable enmity. That meant the Archaionfiend and Lin Xiaoxiao were still alive. As soon as the words fell, the two disappeared and silence reigned once more. Xuanyuan Yu and Jian Wufeng appeared beside Tianming, staring blankly in the direction where they had disappeared.

"What was that?" Tianming asked with a frown.

Splitting the void and fleeing in the form of crimson lightning? It was still incredible even though he had personally witnessed it.

"I don't know. I've never heard of it. Who's that girl?" Xuanyuan Yu asked.

"So even you've never heard of that?" Tianming grit his teeth.

Jian Wufeng shook his head as well. They hadn't thought the girl and beast could escape. Tianming's gaze was a little gloomy.

The Archaionfiend must be very powerful. Even if it can't compare to the Primordial Chaos Beasts, it's probably as strong as my father. Although it's become a lifebound beast, much like Ying Huo and the others, and lost a lot of its abilities. It's in a difficult situation and seems to have memories of the past. No wonder Lin Xiaoxiao was able to cultivate so quickly. That's why it could escape this way. Tianming thought.

It seems to know that I'm from the sky plunderer race. God knows if there'll be any trouble from letting it escape like this. I hope it doesn't involve pursuers. Otherwise, it'll be useless even if I obtain the Archaionfiend Eye or become a god. It might've known about my origins for a long time, yet I'm still standing. This shows that it's merely a lifebound beast now. Even if it possesses incredible means, it's most likely limited by Lin Xiaoxiao's cultivation level. How could such a being exist in the Flameyellow Continent? And how did it become Lin Xiaoxiao's lifebound beast? A being like this would never choose to become a lifebound beast if it weren't a last resort. I wonder if the Archaionfiend is aware that I have the Primordial Chaos Beasts.

Many thoughts flashed through his mind. How could he have been completely unaware of such dangers hidden around him?

"Anyway, we've been beaten at our own game. Knowing its identity is better than being kept in the dark," said Ying Huo.

"I wonder if such a method of escape can be used without restraint. If Lin Xiaoxiao is still in Archaion, I must get the sect masters to help me search for her. My heart will remain uneasy as long as the Archaionfiend lives," said Tianming.

"Hurry up then!" Ying Huo urged.

"Alright." Tianming nodded.

Xuanyuan Yu and Jian Wufeng both asked him about Lin Xiaoxiao's identity, to which Tianming replied perfunctorily. Then, they all headed to see Xuanyuan Dao together. It didn't matter who Lin Xiaoxiao was; the important thing was, Archaion's imperial son wanted her captured!

...

On a snowy field somewhere in Archaion, a crimson spike pierced the void and suddenly appeared. Turning into a bloody lightning vortex, it finally formed the Archaionfiend and Lin Xiaoxiao's appearance.

Face pale, she collapsed to the ground. The Archaionfiend had shrunk by at least half and was extremely weak as it crawled on the ground. Its eyes were gone, body slumped and at its last breath.

"What ability was that..." Struggling to get up, Lin Xiaoxiao stared at the wounded and dying Archaionfiend before her, pain wrenching her heart.

"That's Bloodburn Voidbreaker, an ability of the Archaionfiend Clan. I've long been prepared for this. Even though I failed, I won't die. However, I'm exhausted and 80% of my blood has been burned and I'll have to sleep for some time." The Archaionfiend's voice was weak.

Lin Xiaoxiao knew there was nothing she could do. If it hadn't taken a risk this time, it wouldn't have had another opportunity. However, it never imagined that Tianming could damage it so badly. Lin Xiaoxiao leaned on the beast, her mind filled with the look of hatred in Tianming's eyes. And the more she thought about it, the more uncomfortable she became.

"You've lost. It's over. You can leave by yourself," said Lin Xiaoxiao.

"How can it be over just like that?!" The Archaionfiend struggled to raise its head. "Xiaoxiao, I won't be able to hold on much longer. If you listen to what I have to say and do exactly as I tell you, we still have a chance to make a comeback."

"Speak..." Lin Xiaoxiao said helplessly.

After all, this was a manic beast. She was used to it.

"Take me to the Nonahall Ghost Sect. They have what I want and I can make a deal with them. In the Nonahall Ghost Sect, I won't need to hide. I can make their sect stronger. I can cooperate with them. I'm tired of sneaking around with you. For the sake of my eye, an Archaionfiend like me has had to hide like a gutter rat. I must be sick! Now that it's come to this, there's no retreat. I might as well bring chaos to this damn continent. If I don't give it my all, how will I make these ants cower at my feet?!" The Archaionfiend became more irritable as it spoke, but it was already dizzy and struggling to stay conscious.

"You're dreaming again, aren't you?" Lin Xiaoxiao smiled bitterly.

"Being a lifebound beast has suppressed all my abilities. Even you're laughing at me. What a harsh world this is! Since that's the case, I can't bear it anymore. I've almost forgotten what the Archaionfiends used to do!" It shouted.

"What did you do?"

"We're soul eaters. We become stronger by devouring souls! We dominated the endless star domains. We...."

"Go on," said Lin Xiaoxiao.

"I don't want to speak anymore. There's no point in telling you all this. Go to the Nonahall Ghost Sect at once and become their disciple. When I awaken, I'll have a talk with them. In their current situation, they need me," said the Archaionfiend.

For a long time, Lin Xiaoxiao didn't speak.

"What you say is true?" she asked.

"Why would I lie to you? I've lived a million years!"

"It's not like you've accomplished anything in all those years. You don't seem very smart either," said Lin Xiaoxiao.

"You...." The Archaionfiend was about to go mad with anger. It knew that Lin Xiaoxiao was hesitating.

"Xiaoxiao, are you still thinking about that sky plunderer? Was he gentle with you?" The Archaionfiend gritted its teeth.

"Stop talking."

"Wake up. Have you forgotten that he was just about to kill you? It's only been half an hour. I saved you. A weak person has no dignity. You're just a puppy in his eyes. He was going to kill you without even

asking the reason. That means he never considered you a friend. He's just playing with you, just like how his stupid lifebound beasts played with me!" the Archaionfiend persuaded.

Lin Xiaoxiao lowered her head.

"Let's go, Xiaoxiao. I'm begging you, won't you stop playing second fiddle? Starting today, stand up and be just as impressive as him. Make them all admire you, support you. With me, you're qualified to stand at the pinnacle. Your previous perspective of the world was too narrow. Once you've witnessed how truly vast and ruthless the world is, you'll realize how little you know. There's countless wondrous worlds and ancient histories in this vast realm. The more you see, the more you'll understand that a restrained person won't ever amount to anything. You'll discover your true self the day you kill him!"

"Is the world really that enormous?" Lin Xiaoxiao asked blankly.

"It's so big that you'll find tens of thousands of people like Li Tianming. They're more interesting than he is, and they're all waiting for you to get to know them. You can live for millions of years, like me. Only when you're used to immortality can you look upon the world with indifference. That's a true demon. Remember how he looked when he wanted to kill you today. Don't ever forget it. This is the humiliation of a superior."

"I-I...."

Tears slid down her cheeks and she clenched her fists.

"What do you want?"

"I'd like to see the vast world you're talking about."

Chapter 759 - Dreamheart World

Tianming gave Xuanyuan Dao information on Lin Xiaoxiao's appearance, cultivation realm, and anything of importance, hoping to use the sect's intelligence organization to search the realm for her whereabouts. Tianming didn't say who she was, and Xuanyuan Dao didn't ask either.

He had also spoken to Feiling about the situation. In the beginning, there was no way he could approach Feiling, so he had kept it to himself.

"Xiaoxiao?" Feiling seemed to recall the young woman.

Tianming then explained about the Archaionfiend. Feiling agreed with him that the Archaionfiend must be found as soon as possible. Otherwise, it would eventually cause catastrophic consequences.

"Why do you still believe her? After all, she's a member of the Lighting Manor and deeply hates you," said Feiling.

"I'm just a little shocked. I always believed I was good at reading hearts, but I learned my lesson this time. I guess it's impossible to read a person's mind. She really wants to kill me...." Tianming shook his head.

"Don't blame yourself. Perhaps she's just good at hiding her thoughts," said Feiling.

"Tianming isn't the only one. None of us saw it coming. She's usually very decent, but likes to hurt herself during critical moments. She certainly deceived us all," added Ying Huo.

Upon further contemplation, Feiling said, "Is it possible she's being controlled by the Archaionfiend because of all the time they spend together, and that's how she deceived us? Perhaps she's long lost herself and become a puppet."

"It's possible." Tianming nodded. "Anyway, we must find her. I asked Sect Master Xuanyuan for help. The Archaionfiend has its own method of escape. Even if I managed to see through it, I wouldn't have been able to do anything. I only hope this method has its drawbacks."

"That's all we can do." Feiling nodded.

The five divine realms were already a huge cause of anxiety, but now they had yet another matter to worry about.

"It isn't easy here. There's all kinds of people," said Tianming.

Who would have thought they had another crisis lurking nearby?

"We must get the Archaionfiend Eye as soon as possible. There may be a way to restrain the Archaionfiend," said Feiling.

"Yes. Without the Archaionfiend by my side, I should feel more at ease allowing Archfiend to assimilate the eye. Has there been any movement from the five divine realms?" Tianming asked.

"No."

"And Palace Lord Yi Xingyin has yet to return from the Kilostar Domain?"

"Yes, he's been away for a while. He'll probably be back soon," said Feiling.

Now that the four major sects were united and Feiling had personally stepped in, Xuanyuan Dao and the others would inform her about everything, perhaps even allowing her to make decisions.

To avoid disastrous consequences, she had recently been looking into information regarding the Nine Divine Realms so she could play her part well.

"Thanks for all the hard work, Ling'er." Tianming caressed her long hair.

"It's not difficult at all. I'd like to do what I can for our future. I don't want you to shoulder everything alone." She smiled.

"Alright. I'll head to the Fiend Palace."

...

The Flameyellow Continent is a vast expanse of land, seemingly endless. The front was the human world, while the back was the Abyssal Battlefield.

Above the continent, one could fly into the clouds toward the starry sky. The higher one's cultivation, the higher one could go. Only those in the second half of the Samsara stage could access the real cosmic aether. However, that was only the bottom layer.

Apparently, the supreme cosmic aether was what they often called the "sky." Rumor had it that only gods could tread across the sky, fly above the clouds, and reach the cosmic aether.

Cultivators occasionally appeared at the bottom layer. Standing at the bottom layer of the cosmic aether and looking out at the distant firmament, one could behold a sea of stars, a far more spectacular sight than the view from the Flameyellow Continent. Look up and one could see a dazzling sea of stars that shimmered like the brightest lights. All kinds of stars twinkled above the continent—a never-ending brilliance. It almost seemed like the Flameyellow Continent was the center of the world.

Yi Xingyin had witnessed the majesty of the stars countless times. He was born in the noble Xing clan of the Archaion Divine Realm, a clan that had long since fallen. Despite that, the clan's study of astral heavenly patterns and pursuit of the starry sky had been passed on to him. He had many achievements, including the Deepstar Formation and part of the Kilostar Formation.

Behind the Kilostar Formation was the Flameyellow Continent's most acclaimed Kilostar Domain. The Kilostar Domain had existed for a long time, and there were countless legends recorded about it in ancient books. It could even be traced back to the era when the Netherworld Clan ruled the Flameyellow Continent two hundred thousand years ago. However, no one had actually opened it for so many years.

Over the last ten years, five ultimate tribulation manna suddenly appeared at the entrance of the Kilostar Domain, attracting the attention of the Nine Divine Realms. For a time, there was a seething undercurrent.

Within the Flameyellow Continent, numerous legions began to stir. A war was on the verge of breaking; the entire continent was already steeped in tension. However, on the inside of the Kilostar Domain, everything seemed peaceful and there wasn't a single person in sight. This was completely beyond Yi Xingyin's expectations.

To be on the safe side, he instructed several Deepstar Hall disciples to set up numerous alarms along the route leading to the Kilostar Domain. Meanwhile, he approached the Kilostar Formation alone.

"I originally assumed there would be all sorts of ambushes, so escaping alone would be most convenient. I never imagined it would be so deserted."

In locations like the bottom cosmic aether, one could actually tell at a glance whether or not there were people around, unless someone hid within a concealed heavenly pattern formation. Therefore, Yi Xingyin was very cautious.

He was perhaps the best tribulation patternscribe of the Archaion Divine Realm, a celebrated expert in this area. He could find any heavenly pattern formation after investigating.

As soon as he arrived, he acted carefully, immediately investigating the scene. Before that, he glanced at the vast Kilostar Domain in front of him. The Kilostar Formation was a dense fog that blocked his vision. But even so, he still saw a thousand shining stars beyond the fog.

The stars were enormous, scattered throughout the starry sky. Every star was sealed within a dazzling layer. There was only one entrance with a door.

This was the Kilostar Domain.

Every star resembled a small world waiting to be explored. But no one knew whether the small worlds were mortal worlds or nightmarish hells.

"The Kilostar Domain is the dream of our entire clan."

Yi Xingyin's eyes were filled with stars. He began sweeping the area, with the Kilostar Formation as his center.

"Is there really no one?"

Yi Xingyin was surprised. The situation was completely different from what he had thought it would be.

"That's impossible. This place is so important to the Nonahall Ghost Sect. Would they just give it up?"

There was no ambush waiting for him and the Deepstar Hall disciples were already stationed outside. That meant there was no one near the Kilostar Domain. If someone approached, they would immediately know.

"Strange. If I'd brought Tianming along, I would've been able to take away the ultimate tribulation manna, as well as open the Kilostar Domain."

Yi Xingyin hovered in the starry sky, his gaze flickering. His expression suddenly altered drastically.

"Dreamheart World!"

Chapter 760 - Dreamdemon Arcana

Yi Xingyin's body burst with dazzling starlight that pierced through the starry sky. For a moment, the stars sparkled brilliantly, then his body suddenly sank and plummeted toward the Flameyellow Continent.

The starry sky around him fluctuated like ripples. Layers upon layers of an illusory world enveloped him as the sky disappeared.

What appeared before his eyes was a world, vast and boundless. Since there was no end to it, naturally there wouldn't be an exit. Even if Yi Xingyin's star illuminated everything like the scorching sun, he couldn't escape this world.

"Li Caiwei, it's you!" Yi Xingyin's low voice echoed over the mountains and rivers.

"How do you know it's me?"

It was as if everything in this world—the mountains and trees—was speaking with a graceful voice at the same time.

"You're the only one who can create the Dreamheart World left by the Biritual Fiendgod. This is a tribulation pattern formation that transcends the third-origin. It can be considered the work of a god. I didn't think your attainments in formations had reached this level. You've certainly hidden yourself well. However, isn't it overkill to use the Dreamheart World to deal with me? I'm but an unimportant man. Is there any need to use it to deal with me?"

In the current crisis, Yi Xingyin's voice remained calm. He was tough and handsome. Though he might look effeminate, he was in fact a heroic man.

"You're right. You don't deserve the Dreamheart World. But someone else does." The woman's voice gradually grew closer and closer.

"What do you mean?"

Just as Yi Xingxin's voice fell, a figure appeared in front of him. That figure was formed by a combination of stars that condensed into one body. Finally, they formed a dazzling person in front of Yi Xingyin. The man looked at him with a smile. "Don't I look like you?"

Yi Xingyin was startled. This person was exactly the same as him, and even possessed the same aura. If the man didn't make a move, many people wouldn't be able to tell the difference between this person and himself. They even sounded the same.

"Are you Li Caiwei?" Yi Xingyin frowned.

"That's right. Have you ever heard of the Dreamdemon Arcana?" The man smiled.

Yi Xingyin shook his head.

"That's not surprising. After all, this is a technique from two hundred thousand years ago," the man said.

"So, you're going to return to the Archaion Sect as me?" Yi Xingyin narrowed his eyes.

"Yes, but before that..."

The blazing starlight in the man's eyes shone upon Yi Xingyin's body. Then, the light dissipated. Her long hair fluttered in the wind and her eyes glowed. Like a goddess, a gorgeous woman stood before Yi Xingyin's eyes.

...

Ten days later, in the Fiend Palace.

"Twelve tribulation patterns."

Without the interference of the Archaionfiend, Tianming was more efficient. With the Soul Tower guarding him, he was still considered to be doing alright despite the dizziness and exhaustion.

He still set aside some time for cultivation every day, and at the same time, an hour of cultivating at the Deepstar Pool. When Archfiend reached twelve tribulation patterns, his Ancient Deepstar Godbody had absorbed close to two thousand astralsources. This number was almost equal to some of the top elders in the sect.

In other words, Tianming's physical strength had already caught up to those ninth-level samsaran elders. This was a beast-like physique.

There were less than three thousand astralsources in the Deepstar Pool. In fact, Tianming felt a little embarrassed. If he absorbed them all, no disciple in the Archaion Sect will be able to enter the Deepstar Pool for the next thirty years. The transformation of physical strength was his first step in increasing his

strength. During the period after the Number One Summit, he had entered the second-level death phase.

"After entering the death phase, death tribulation energy has reappeared and is plundering my vitality, but the samsara rings of life tribulation energy have amplified and disappeared. That is to say, the power of the samsara rings has been transformed into death tribulation energy."

Tianming once again felt the rapid aging of his body. This time, it was even more aggressive.

Without Omniscient Will in the recent past, it would be difficult for him to keep up with his Aeonic Grandbane. Now that the whole world was turbulent, Tianming was competing with himself.

After his breakthrough, he continued cultivating hard.

Time quickly flew by. During this period of time, the Archaion Sect searched for Lin Xiaoxiao's whereabouts in the entire divine realm. In fact, the borders had already been sealed. With Lin Xiaoxiao's strength, there was no way she could escape.

However, they had yet to find her, which meant two things were possible. Firstly, she may still be in Archaion. Or, she had crossed the border with the Archfiend's special methods.

It was impossible for Tianming to leave and personally search for her, thus he could only wait. He focused on the Archfiend Eye.

Finally, half a month later, the number of tribulation patterns on Archfiend had reached fifteen! Fifteen was the pinnacle of tribulation patterns. In other words, Archfiend had reached the level of the Sanguine Ferocity.

Tianming could feel how terrifying Archfiend's power was. All of the energy within the Archfiend Eye had integrated with his weapon. In the Fiend Palace, the eye above Tianming's head had completely dimmed.

It was now an empty shell and all of its power was contained within Tianming's chain.

What was terrible about the Archfiend wasn't just its power, but also its intangible ability to strike fear. The power of the Archfiend Eye was sealed; otherwise, it would scare many the moment the weapon appeared.

"The problem is how to transfer the Archfiend Eye from the Archfiend to my eye..."

Although Tianming had tried many methods, they were all ineffective.

"My father clearly tricked me. He might've given me the Archfiend but he certainly hasn't explained how to use it. Dammit!"

Staring at the dim eye above his head, Tianming was at a loss for words. However, the good news was that he didn't have to enter the Fiend Palace again. Now, he could place all his energy into cultivating. If his progress was delayed any longer, their enemies would come knocking.

As he cultivated, he continued contemplating on how to transfer the Archfiend Eye. No one would enter the Fiend Palace for the time being. Therefore, Tianming didn't inform the sect about taking away

the eye. Because the eye was a symbol of disaster, the Heaven Cauldron was used to suppress it. Tianming considered it as eliminating evil for the people.

He paid close attention to the latest information regarding three matters—first of all, the general direction of the five divine realms; secondly, Lin Xiaoxiao's whereabouts; and lastly, news of the Kilostar Domain. Although he hadn't heard anything about the first two, there was news about the last matter.

Yi Xingyin was back. Tianming headed to Tribulation Peak, led by Jian Wufeng and Xuanyuan Yu. The tribulation elders occupied Tribulation Peak, the place where the sect discussed important matters.

When Tianming arrived at the Tribulation Hall, Yi Xingyin stood there, informing the others about the Kilostar Domain.

"I stayed there for about a month and searched all over. I didn't find anyone from the five divine realms. When our people from the Deepstar Hall have controlled the way in, we'll have a full view of everything. If the enemy appears, we'll have time to retreat. Of course, whether or not we bring Tianming over depends on what you all decide," said Yi Xingyin.

"There must be something wrong. I think it's strange," said Fang Taiqing.

"The question is, where's the irregularity? The Deepstar Hall palace lord searched for a month. Our manpower is also in place," said Jian Wuyi.

"How amusing! We can't go whether or not our enemies set up an ambush? Our people are in place. Why are you still afraid of the enemy's deceit?" asked a white-haired third-origin tribulation elder.

"That's not true. Forget the ultimate tribulation manna, there's certainly no way they'll ignore whatever's inside the Kilostar Domain. They should at least take a look, shouldn't they?" said Fang Taiqing.

"It might just be a rumor that the ultimate tribulation manna is the key to the Kilostar Domain. Could they be diverting our attention and planning something else?" asked Yi Xingyin.

"I think we're scaring ourselves," someone else chimed in.

Turning to Yi Xingyin, Fang Taiqing said, "The imperial son's identity is important. The Kilostar Domain cannot fall into the hands of the enemy. I think we should let it go for now."

"Sect Master, the question is, assuming there really is treasure in the Kilostar Domain and the ultimate tribulation manna is indeed the key, wouldn't it be a waste of an opportunity if we don't enter, despite having the imperial son?"

"Since our men are in place and we can retreat at any time, we should give it a try. What if our enemy's intelligence is inaccurate?"

Everyone was talking at once.

"How about this? We'll send a few more people. Five third-origin tribulation elders and Palace Lord Yi Xingyin can do another search and confirm the situation." Fang Taiqing looked around and asked, "Who's going?"

Six elders stood up. Glancing at them, Fang Taiqing told them to sit down and pointed at five tribulation elders who hadn't volunteered.

"Sect Master Fang, what do you mean? Don't you believe us?" asked one of the tribulation elders who had volunteered.

"Don't overthink it. This is an important matter. Please understand, I'm doing this to be on the safe side," said Fang Taiqing.

His method of selection had left many speechless. But on the whole, it was clear that it was the right thing to do.

"If you decide to take the imperial son there, I'll escort him," said Jian Wuyi.

Fang Taiqing oversaw the sect, while Xuanyuan Dao protected Her Eminence. Jian Wuyi was indeed the best candidate.

"Alright." Fang Taiqing nodded.

He looked at Tianming. "What do you think, Imperial Son?"

"I don't know the enemy, so I'll follow your arrangements," Tianming replied.

"Alright. We'll wait for news," said Fang Taiqing.

With that, they left the Tribulation Hall. Tianming felt like someone was looking at him. When he turned in that direction, he realized it was Yi Xingyin.

"You've worked hard, Palace Lord," said Tianming.

"It's nothing, but it looks like I'll have to leave again." Yi Xingyin shook his head.

"Do you feel like they don't trust you?" Tianming asked.

"Not at all. After all, the Kilostar Domain is very important, and it's very likely there's a treasure hidden there. If that's true, it may indeed solve our problems. Treating this matter with caution is the best move," said Yi Xingyin.

Tianming nodded.

"I'm heading out now." Yi Xingyin and the five tribulation elders selected by Fang Taiqing left together.

"Wait for my good news."

Meanwhile, Tianming went back to cultivating.

A fortnight passed. It had been a month since Tianming had broken through to the second death phase, and after cultivating hard day and night, he had finally progressed to the third life phase. Having recovered his youth once more, he felt rejuvenated.

The improvement in strength gave him a lot of confidence. In fact, he was now able to fight one on one with many hundred-year-old elders.

While he was cultivating and studying the Archaionfiend Eye, he heard that Yi Xingyin was back again, and with good news.