

The Ages 851

Chapter 851 - Feline River Crossing

"Ghoul King Si Ling departed not long ago. Their army has spread out and sealed off the city. It's obvious that they're trying to stop us from getting any more reinforcements and intend to wipe us out in one go," Xuanyuan Xie said.

Tianming stood on the wall and looked into the distance. All directions were indeed filled with people.

"Tianming, do you have any thoughts?" Jian Wuyi asked.

"Yeah." He firmed his gaze, making up his mind.

"What's it going to be?"

"If I can rush to Fufeng City in time, I might be able to deal with Ghoul King Si Ling. Cut off the blight at its source. How powerful are the Five Wraiths of Shoal Mountain?"

"They're all third-origin tribulation elders at the tenth-level death phase," Jian Wuyi said.

"What about the forces in Fufeng City?"

"There's an army of a hundred thousand keeping an eye on the captives."

"Then Ghoul King Si Ling shouldn't be that powerful if her main abilities come with making corpse puppets. The five wraiths aren't that powerful either, and I'll be able to handle them without issue. As long as Ghoul King Si Ling is preoccupied with capturing me, she won't have time to make corpse puppets. Not to mention, I might be able to do much more than that."

"The problem is we'll have a hard time leaving. If we gather our elites to carve out a path for you, it'll be obvious to them that you're heading toward Fufeng City. No matter how many we send out, they'll definitely have more elites than us. Not to mention, it'll be even more troublesome if they attack while we're outside the city," Jian Wuyi said.

"I don't need you to follow me, I can go alone. I want to see if I can shake them off."

"You alone?"

"That's right. I'm their biggest target, so no doubt I'll draw a lot of attention. The moment I lose them, I'll head to Fufeng City. They definitely won't be expecting that, and instead they'll think I retreated back to Taiji Peak Lake out of fear."

"Can you really lose them?"

"Sect Master Jian, I've improved since you've last seen me."

Everyone looked to Tianming with respect and admiration.

Xuanyuan Xie patted him on the shoulder and said, "Since you've made up your mind, I wish you the best of luck."

The crux of Tianming's plan was escaping the encirclement. One thing was for sure: if he really managed to lose his pursuers, they would definitely assume he left for Taiji Peak Lake rather than that he was charging into the fray at Fufeng City. Once he reached his destination, he would be able to cull the blight at its roots before anyone could notice.

"Wait for my good news, everyone!" Tianming got onto Meow Meow, now in its Regal Chaosfiend form. "We're going to face off against Ghou King Si Ling, an eleventh-level death phase samsaran. Additionally, Fu You, Lan Yi, and You Ying are at the eleventh-level life phase, like Long Cangyuan. Do you think you're faster than them?"

"Worry not, brother. I'm the fastest cat alive," Meow Meow casually boasted.

"Alright, you said it. If I get captured, I'll definitely cut off your balls," Tianming said.

"I'm not afraid! I have the Greenspark Tower to regenerate them for me!"

"Dammit..."

Electricity crackled around Meow Meow and it stretched its platinum bones on the walls while the others watched. "I'm much faster than before thanks to Venus Fiendbone."

It was one star short of a thousand, after all. After getting ready, it looked ahead from the south gate.

"Ghou King Si Ling's army is in the south. Even though she isn't here, Feng Qingyu might be. No matter how hurt he is, his lifebound beasts are still there. As for the north, Ghou King Fu You is there. Taiji Peak Lake is north of us, while Fufeng City is to our northeast." After he made his decision, Tianming bade Jian Wuyi, Xuanyuan Xie and the others farewell before turning toward the north gate.

"Take care, Imperial Son."

Their admiration and respect could scarcely be put into words.

"You too."

Tianming gave Meow Meow a pat, prompting it to roar like a fierce tiger and charge out at a blazing speed. Since leaving the Kilostar Domain, Tianming had risen by two levels, and that had helped Meow Meow's speed grow to terrifying new heights. A bolt of black lightning shot into the distance and turned into an electrical storm. Most people only saw a flash of lightning and nothing else.

"Someone left!"

"Who is it?!"

Almost instantly, the millions of troops blocking off the north of the city were shaken. But Meow Meow was far too quick, looking like nothing but a vague blur that was hard for the eyes to follow. By the time they noticed it, Tianming had passed them over.

"It's Li Tianming!""He's trying to escape! Stop him!"

It was no exaggeration to say that the reason they were there with so many troops was to get rid of Tianming while he was there to begin with. There wouldn't be a point to their encirclement if he left.

Killing him was far more important than taking out Jian Wuyi, after all. In an instant, countless lifebound beasts appeared alongside those who tried to stop him, blasting away with all kinds of abilities.

"Seal the whole area!" cried Ghou King Fu You and many other third-origin tribulation elders.

"Understood!"

The dark sky was turned bright by the blinding flashes of abilities.

"Where is he?"

"Over here!"

"Stop him!"

The whole area broke down into chaos.

"Taste my thunder twister!" Meow Meow snapped as it sent a vortex swirling with black lightning bolts using Misty Hellthunder, immediately electrocuting thousands. The only reason it was so daring was thanks to its newfound powers that had been granted to it by the Greenspark Tower. No matter how Tianming attempted to defend it, though, it still managed to take quite some damage in the form of a few bloody holes.

"Hey, stop messing around and run!" Tianming roared.

"Sit tight! Don't worry, I'm practically immortal now!" Meow Meow enjoyed the prickling sensation of its new healing ability as it picked up speed, shaking off many pursuers at a time. Tianming alone had thrown an army of millions into chaos.

"Think you can run?!" Fu You said as he popped out and gave chase.

"Go!" Tianming yelled. Meow Meow immediately changed directions and ran for real.

"As if I'd let you!" Fu You smirked as countless others came blocking from all directions.

"I don't recall needing your permission." Tianming smirked. "Ling'er!"

"Ready!" She deployed Temporal Field right next to Meow Meow. Now enhanced, it made those in the surroundings slow down so much they seemed to be moving in a quagmire. While the others thought Tianming's confidence had stemmed from Meow Meow's speed, he was actually counting on Feiling's Temporal Field as well. Otherwise, he might not be able to outrun Fu You and the rest.

With Feiling's Temporal Field covering a radius of a kilometer around them, it formed a Temporal Lock at the center of the field. The lock was formless and secured on Fu You's body, causing him to slow down to the point that he couldn't keep up with the third-origin tribulation elders around him.

"What in the world is this power?!" Fu You was completely flabbergasted. Still confused, he slammed straight into an invisible wall. "What the hell is this?!"

Many others, like him, also felt resistance out of nowhere from the enhanced Millennium Fort! Thousands of Spatial Walls made up a grand labyrinth that surrounded the pursuers. Every instant they spent trapped in it was enough for Tianming to widen the distance between them by leagues.

"Give chase!" Fu You cried, but Tianming's figure was no more. Only three third-origin tribulation elders were still on Tianming's tail, but they had already lost their chance. "This will be troubling!"

Even though so many of them had come for Tianming's sake, he was now gone. Worse, Fu You would definitely be held accountable for allowing this to happen. And now that things had developed to this point, they would have to take Tianming City regardless. The arrow was already nocked and it had to be fired all the same.

"If we can't catch up to him, not even killing all the captives in the city will quench my rage!" What made Fu You feel even worse was how he had thought he had a grasp on Tianming's capabilities and character, and was sure that there was no way he would desert the city in its time of need. Yet now, both of those assumptions had been completely overturned. Though, to be fair, he didn't judge Tianming's character wrongly, for he wasn't a deserter. Instead, he headed northeast and soon reached Fufeng City.

"Wait for me, everyone...." He had Meow Meow return to his lifebound space as he carefully approached the city ahead.

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Within Fufeng City, six million people were held captive. The cold night air blew across the streets, carrying pained cries and wails throughout. The captives were so densely huddled together that no end to the sea of people could be seen. They all looked at the center of the city with a terrified expressions.

Each of their faces were pale. Their gazes seemed shaken and their mouths were wide open, yet no sound came out. It was almost as if their very souls were filled to the brim with terror.

However, the piercing sounds of crying were music to some people's ears. There was a gloomy-looking girl in a long dress with her feet bare. The dress draped over her sensual and alluring curves, and her charm was only further highlighted by the dark-purple lips.

Everyone seemed to fear her, but more than that, they were utterly petrified at the sight of the fleshy grey insect next to her that seemed to be a kilometer long and covered with around a hundred thousand grey eyes densely packed together.

Chapter 852 - Nightmare Soulworm

The gigantic beast seemed like an insectoid. Its grey flesh stretched out from the center of Fufeng City. Apart from its dense eyes, its skin looked rather glossy and lustrous. As for the hundred thousand eyes, each of them seemed like it had a will of its own; they didn't seem to just be randomly looking around. They could even look in different directions, making it seem like there were countless other small beasts within the mouthless worm.

The terrifying insect let out a pungent stench that wafted through the city; it seemed to be the source of the many cries of anguish and terror. In comparison, Ghoulish King Si Ling's other three lifebound beasts—the necrofiend flare dragon, necrostyx phoenix and necrogale qilin—seemed really small in comparison. The three lifebound beasts' eyes burned like green fire as they stood guard near the grey insect and the ghoulish king.

Right in front of them were the six million captives of Fufeng City. Each of the weird insect's eyes locked onto a different person, instilling a terrifying silence in the surroundings. The people were huddled together in fear, feeling terror seemingly seep into their bodies through the ground. Regardless of gender or age, they all regarded the demonic fiends before them with terror.

Ghoul King Si Ling's infamy was wider spread than that of Xue Yi or Zi Xiao. Since her birth, she had been a nightmare to all the folk of the Flameyellow Continent. Her corpse puppet army would only continue increasing in number. If no one took action and stopped her, she would easily be able to turn the entire continent into a living hell.

Standing tall, she announced, "Fear not, escape not. You will die without sound nor pain and fight for me as corpse puppets. You won't feel anything at all, and it'll be fine even if your body gets torn to shreds as you're already dead the moment you become my puppet. I'm only using your body after you have no more use for it. In fact, you should even thank me for granting pathetic people like you the honor of contributing your worthless lives to our grand cause."

Her voice was calming and gentle, much like a doting mother's. Standing tall on the worm, she smiled as she watched the six million shivering people and their lifebound beasts.

The crying only intensified as the whole city fell into depths of despair so deep that nobody had thought it was possible to reach.

"Based on the crying, there must be a lot of children here, eh? You parents really are selfish. You must think very little of our sect, for you to have kept your children here with you. This is troubling. Killing too many children is bad for your lifespan, you know, and children make rather weak corpse puppets."

She chuckled, making the rest think that she would release the children. However, her expression turned cold almost immediately. "I have no choice. I'll let the little useless critters spearhead the charge against Tianming City then. I want those so-called 'allies of justice' to see how powerful my army of corpse puppet children is."

Her words sent chills down their spines.

"Ghoul King Si Ling, the heavens won't overlook your evil deeds! You'll die a horrible death!"

"You sick sadistic animal!"

Countless people in the crowd cursed her, but she just smiled. "Don't say that. I'm rather kind to the common folk in the Nonahall Divine Realm, you know. As for you... you're not one of us, so you aren't human. It isn't weird at all, right? Killing you is only a part of war. There's no good or evil in war, got it? As for karma... I've been making corpse puppets since I was ten, and I reckon I've made tens of millions of them. I'm still waiting for divine judgment or karmic punishment. It's funny, when you think about it. I guess you can say I got my punishment if you consider promotions to higher positions of authority with heavier and heavier responsibilities a kind of punishment. Your so-called 'heavenly arbiter' is either stupid or non-existent. It is simply a case of being a higher lifeform than all of you. I'm your god, got it?" She laughed sadistically.

"Do you always say things like that to make yourself feel better before committing an atrocity? Looks like you have some dormant fear of the heavens after all!" a man among the crowd cried.

"Hehe..." She sent her whip flying toward the man and pulled. Before he could cry out in pain, her necrofiend flare dragon caught him in its jaws and chewed him up. Even after the man's lifebound beast emerged from its lifebound space, it suffered the same fate of being torn apart and spat out, man and beast flesh all mixed up.

"Any more dissenting voices?" Si Ling asked. All that remained were terrified cries. "What is good? What is evil? Naive children, they don't mean anything! Strength is the only law in this world. You were lucky to have learned this truth from me. Make sure to become someone like me in your next life. Rule the world with your own power, and everything will fall into place! Got it?" she said with a warm smile.

The children only continued sobbing.

"Cry... cry cry cry! That's all you do! No wonder you're animals that'll never evolve!" She had had enough fun. All this anguish she was witnessing was more than sufficient to wipe away the grief and frustration she had felt at Tianming City. "Li Tianming, Jian Wuyi, Beigong Linlan, Lin Qingtian, just you wait! Let's begin."

There were two keys to making corpse puppets. The first was to use a forbidden art passed down in the Nonahall Divine Realm, Necromantic Metamorphosis. The second was her fourth lifebound beast, the nightmare soulworm. Unlike the heartscourge fiend or greenvoid skydevourer, the nightmare soulworm was a broodmother-type beast in the truest sense. Apart from its size, it had no other redeeming qualities in combat. Usually, it wouldn't even make an appearance. Instead, its true purpose was the manipulation of souls!

"All six million of you and your lifebound beasts add up to at least twelve million... That's too high a number. You three, help us," she said to her other three beasts.

"Understood!" Having cultivated the same techniques, they could share their energy. Si Ling and her three beasts used Necromantic Metamorphosis together. First, they would kill their targets. While their bodies were still warm, they would infuse necromantic energy into their bodies to 'cast' them into corpse puppets. Then, the baby insects of the nightmare worm would enter the corpse puppets and become the bodies' new masters.

Great power flowed through the area as the four eleventh-level death samsarans, beasts included, turned into a grey fog and spread through the six million people. The skies turned dark all of a sudden and the howls and shrieks intensified. At the same time, the hundred thousand people and beasts that had been locked on to by the nightmare worm's eyes immediately blacked out, allowing the necromantic energy to invade their bodies to easily kill and change them, allowing the power of death to fester and turning the body into a suitable habitat for the nightmare bugs. Right after that, the little critters entered the corpse puppets in batches of a hundred thousand at a time. As there were around twelve million people and beasts combined, it would take more than a hundred batches.

"If I don't stop to rest, I should be able to finish in about a day. As it's inconvenient for me to stop midway, I'll need the five of you to keep a lookout for me," Si Ling said.

"Understood!" the Five Wraiths of Shoal Mountain replied. They watched as the necromantic energy wormed its way through the captives like an agile snake. Though they had witnessed all kinds of

atrocities, they still felt a chill seeing the soundless cries of the people play out before their eyes as they were turned into corpse puppets.

"Ghoul King—"

"Don't overthink it. This is war. The victor is king and the loser is lower than a pig."

"That's true. However, even the people with the most power and achievements won't be able to turn back. They have to tread their chosen path to the end."

"Turning back only leads to death. Why bother?"

"Bloodstained hands can never be washed clean. In fact, if your hands are regularly covered in blood and you suddenly touch water, you'll even try to wash the water away with it. Who ever said that blood was dirtier than water? Who decided that was the case? If I like to drink blood more than water, then blood becomes cleaner to me."

No one was born evil by nature. Every action a person did had to be internally justified in whatever twisted way and with whatever mental gymnastics the person required. That was how Si Ling could smile as she slaughtered what she deemed to be nothing but livestock as the five wraiths watched.

The captives were being turned into nothing but empty husks, allowing the bugs to take control of their bodies. They stood on the walls of the city, arms crossed as they tried to stay out of the ghoul king's way. Four cities had fallen, and the nearby area was now Nonahall's territory.

They seemed so different from one another that the fact they were biological siblings was something nobody would ever see coming. If they were related, it wouldn't be a stretch to say that everyone and every beast on the Flameyellow Continent were cut from the same cloth.

All five of them had become third-origin tribulation elders; they were no doubt the only family capable of such a feat. The eldest of them was known as Green Longtongue, for obvious reasons.

Chapter 853 - Timber Woodchild

When the tongue was stretched to full length, it looked a little like a longsword with spikes. Green Longtongue's favorite pastime was to penetrate people's abdomen with his tongue and drag their hearts out before swallowing them whole. There was no such thing as a ban on forbidden techniques in Nonahall Divine Realm. One might even say that special moves and techniques were even more commonplace than traditional ones there, which was one of the sources of their strength.

The second sibling was called Crimson Bloodfiend. She was a woman with blood-colored skin and looked rather ugly, not that she cared much about her looks in the first place. Additionally, she was also the eldest disciple of Xue Yi. As Xue Yi was Si Ling's elder brother, Crimson Bloodfiend now served her instead.

The third sibling was known as Houndgod Palewhite, and was a man dressed in a white robe with skin as pale as his clothes. He was tall, lanky, and seemed rather feeble, but had oily green eyes that looked like wispy flares burning in the darkness. No doubt his name had lots to do with his lifebound beast.

The fourth sibling was Goldspirit Ghoulmount. He was a tall man, about three to four meters in height, but what forbidden technique he had used to achieve his physique was unknown. He looked like a raging bull, ready to charge at any time.

As for the youngest sibling, she was called Timber Woodchild. She looked like a sickly girl with a head of green hair, standing in the middle of her siblings with a pale look. She was the one who had given that little speech about blood and water. While others weren't aware of it, those within the Nonahall Ghost Sect knew that she was the one who had the most authority among the five siblings despite her young age, thanks to her amazing talent. It was said that the position of the ninth ghoulish king had been left vacant since the death of Qing Ming so that she would one day assume it.

Timber Woodchild was of the same generation as Li Caiwei, the only person she wasn't certain she could defeat. Other than that, however, none of her other peers were her match. She was among the youngest third-origin tribulation elders in the entire Flameyellow Continent, apart from Li Caiwei.

All five of them had been serving Ghoulish King Si Ling for about four decades. During the recent conflict at Pentaphase, they'd achieved magnificent results. The fact that Si Ling kept them by her side showed how much she valued them.

Right now, the five of them were watching as the ghoulish king expended her necromantic energy to activate Necromantic Metamorphosis. A brand new army of corpse puppets was slowly being formed. Even though they had short lifespans, it was more than long enough to attack Tianming City.

However, nobody could have expected a gigantic tree to appear out of nowhere along with a strong gust of wind. Xian Xian used Evernight Curse, spreading billions of astral pollen all over. They were so small that they were really hard to detect, making them incredibly effective against the children of broodmother-type beasts. If the nightmare bugs entered the corpse puppets, they would be shielded from the pollen for the most part. However, right now, there were more than thirty million of them floating in mid air waiting for their turn to inhabit a host.

After all, there was no way Si Ling would be able to make so many corpse puppets in one go. The waiting nightmare bugs were infected by the pollen and immediately lost all semblance of control then began randomly darting around and killing themselves off. They ignored all commands from the nightmare soulworm.

Si Ling's plans had been interrupted. While she didn't lack nightmare bugs, as the nightmare soulworm was easily able to produce them almost indefinitely, there was more than enough pollen in the air for them all! Even if Necromantic Metamorphosis itself wasn't affected, the broodmother's control over the nightmare bugs was. Once the corpse puppets were made, they would go out of control without the nightmare soulworm to properly control them.

"What's going on? Something's weird!" the nightmare soulworm said.

"Five Wraiths, look to the south!" Si Ling cried. The last time this had happened, at Tianming City, she had been completely unaware of how Tianming was able to disrupt their control of the corpse puppets.

"Understood!"

The five of them immediately made their move.

"What's going on?"

"I don't know."

Tianming's position was actually not too far off from theirs. Once they charged into the sky and turned south, they saw a gigantic tree with three stand-out flowers.

"Ghoul King, it's Li Tianming's lifebound beast!" Green Longtongue reported.

"Why would he be here?" she snapped.

"That tree should be the cause," the nightmare soulworm said.

"You five! Two of you inspect the surroundings to see if anyone else is around! The other three, go kill him! Send people to Tianming City to see what's going on as well!"

'Understood!"

"I can't move right now, so be careful," Si Ling said.

"Rest assured, Ghoul King. This isn't the Kilostar Domain. The best he can take on is an eighth-level death phase samsaran, right?"

All five of them were tenth-level life samsarans, so they were still confident in being able to deal with Tianming. The time Tianming had battled Xue Yi was within the Kilostar Domain, and that was merely five days ago! There was no way they could be aware of Tianming's two consecutive breakthroughs as well as him having Feiling's help.

Immediately, the five wraiths made their move. The two women, Crimson Bloodfiend and Timber Woodchild, split up to search for other reinforcements, while Green Longtongue, Houndgod Palewhite, and Goldspirit Ghoulmount charged straight for the tree.

"Let's get rid of that tree that's bothering the ghoul king first!" Green Longtongue said.

"Understood!"

They flew past tens of streets at a time until they reached the tree that was rooted to the ground. Beneath the tree was a lifebound beast the size of a mountain with two dragon heads. It roared loudly when it saw them. Atop the beast was a white-haired youth. As for Ying Huo and Meow Meow on his shoulder, they were so small from that distance they were overlooked.

"It's him after all!"

"Kill him!"

The three brothers roared as they charged with the power of tenth-level life phase samsarans.

"Die!"

When they lashed out, their lifebound beasts appeared from their lifebound spaces at the same time. Green Longtongue's beast was a gigantic green toad called a cloudsky fiendtoad. It sported a huge body that was covered in toxic boils. It opened its mouth and a blood-red tongue five hundred meters in length came whipping out. It was the perfect match for Green Longtongue.

Houndgod Palewhite's lifebound beast was a similarly pale hound with five heads, all on the same neck. Each of them leaked drool nonstop. There were more than eight hundred and eighty stars in their eyes. This was a hell ghosthound, and it loved eating human heads. Every time it killed someone, its heads would violently fight each other for the head.

As for Goldspirit Ghoulmount, his lifebound beast was a kilosword titanrhino. As its name suggested, it was covered in swords like a porcupine. Goldspirit Ghoulmount himself wielded a golden spear and stood on the head of his beast as it rapidly charged toward Tianming.

Chapter 854 - Root of All Evil

The two girls were also watching, but didn't act. Instead, they surveyed the surroundings. They would definitely join the fray once they were sure Tianming had no help.

"Brothers, protect Xian Xian and ensure we succeed in interrupting all of this. We can't let Ghou King Si Ling have her way! If she comes, we run. If she doesn't, we'll fight the Five Wraiths of Shoal Mountain to the death!"

The five of them were tenth-level life phase samsarans, but they weren't sealed like when Tianming was in the Kilostar Domain.

"Ling'er, I'm counting on you."

"Don't worry, I'm ready!"

This time, Tianming wasn't fighting alone. Even though he had arrived beforehand, he had to wait for Si Ling to start the process before coming out to stop it. Seeing live humans being transformed into corpse puppets through such a cruel process had set a blaze of rage in his chest.

"Go!" Celestial Wings opened wide on his back, this time much improved from before. There were six translucent wings sprouting from his back. Every time they flapped, he moved at great speed, which heavily complimented his ability to fight airborne.

Normally, sky saints and above were able to levitate. As their cultivations grew, they would even be able to fly and fight at the same time, but fighting on the ground was still the best approach, especially for beastmasters with beasts like Lan Huang. The only lifebound beasts that were actually good at fighting in the air were avian types, like Ying Huo. That was why having actual wings gave Tianming an advantage in aerial combat, allowing him to move more agilely than even natural winged lifebound beasts.

Tianming went on a rampage with his swords while Feiling unleashed her Temporal Field coupled with Tianming's Imperealm Sword Formation. The Millennium Fort also manifested.

"Now Feiling can help me in more ways than simple Spiritual Attachment!" Whether it came to time, space, or flight, he could utilize all of them to gain an edge over the enemy. The Temporal Lock that manifested as a result of Temporal Field secured itself to the kilosword titanrhino at the very front, immediately causing it to stumble and fall, flinging Goldspirit Ghoulmount off of it as its huge body came rolling toward Tianming. However, the Millennium Fort sealed off all directions it could approach

Tianming from. Feiling could even adjust the positions of the walls on the fly, keeping him from harm and his enemies at bay. The individual Spatial Walls' endurance had also greatly increased.

"What sorcery is this?!" They were all bewildered. They had thought that Tianming already dominated the battlefield enough with Xian Xian's abilities, but now his battlefield control was simply unbelievable with the addition of Feiling's abilities. Now, Tianming's combat unit was top tier.

Within a short time, Xian Xian's Radiant Vines had spread through the battlefield, firing Bloodrain Swords wherever they could. Lan Huang also used Primordial Oceanic Purgatory to turn the entire area into seawater, allowing it to dive in. It activated its Kilofold Rings and began grinding away at the rhino in the water, snapping off its sword-shaped spikes one after another.

Ever since Lan Huang had received the benefit of the Greenspark Tower's abilities, it treated combat like a game. It bit the rhino, hurting its mouth from the spikes in the process, but it didn't care and just roared a few more times before biting again. While it was usually meek and pain averse, it could temporarily forget that sensation when it was having a lot of fun. Now, it didn't even have to worry about its injuries as they would heal in no time. The spikes of the rhino were being chewed away, bite by bite.

"Fuck off!" Goldspirit Ghoulmount charged through the water as the golden spear in his hand glowed brightly. He thrust it toward Lan Huang's neck, managing to pierce the enormous scales, but not all the way. "Now, die!"

"What're you talking about? Are you trying to kill me with a toothpick?" Lan Huang chuckled and raised its gigantic claw, slamming it squarely against Goldspirit Ghoulmount's body and slamming it into the muddy depths. At the same time, it plucked out the golden spear with its claws, allowing the wound to heal.

"This little tower is amazing!" it roared like mad, its voice causing a huge tidal wave to form. The simple act of frolicking around in the water with its huge body was enough to displace so much water that it even swamped the cloudsky fiendtoad.

Right then, the toxic boils on the toad's skin began to burst, letting out a green toxic fluid. Within the fluid were tens of millions of little toxic bugs that swam towards Lan Huang. While the toad wasn't a broodmother-type beast, it had a symbiotic relationship with the bugs on its body. They would fester and grow, feeding on the toxic pus coming from its boils.

At the same time, the toad used its long tongue like a greatsword, slashing it toward Lan Huang. What was terrifying was that Lan Huang was able to take it all, thanks to the Greenspark Tower.

"Die!" The toad saw its chance to pierce its sharp tongue into Lan Huang's head as the rhino kept Lan Huang busy, drawing blood.

"Eh?" But right as it thought the battle was over, the other dragon head bit into its tongue.

"Scram!" Before Lan Huang could even roar, it snapped the tongue with its bite. Though the stab to its other head should've been fatal, the toad was shocked to see the wound close and heal almost immediately. In fact, Lan Huang was fine enough to roar and charge at the toad, grinding away at its flesh with the Kilofold Rings. Even after the toad began infusing the toxic fluid from its boils into Lan

Huang, it didn't seem to have any effect. After all, many of the toxic bugs within the boils had been eaten by Xian Xian's roots! Lan Huang managed to dominate the underwater scene with the power of the Greenspark Tower and the assistance of the Radix World Tree.

As their priority was getting rid of Xian Xian, Green Longtongue, Houndgod Palewhite, and Goldspirit Ghoulmount—who had just gotten out of the water—fought Tianming alongside the ghost hellhound. It was four of them against Tianming and his two beasts. Meow Meow intercepted Goldspirit Ghoulmount while Ying Huo crossed swords with Green Longtongue, leaving Tianming alone to take on Houndgod Palewhite and his hellish hound.

"Believe it or not, I only need one move to kill you," Tianming taunted.

"Hmph." Houndgod Palewhite used a ring blade with fourteen tribulation patterns called the Lifeslay Wheel. He charged toward Tianming alongside his beast, which spat out white flames that covered the seas as it approached Tianming; yet countless Spatial Walls blocked the flames off completely. In fact, Temporal Lock was now secured on the hell ghosthound, causing it to slow down a lot compared to its master. Then Houndgod Palewhite clashed with Tianming with his ring blade in hand.

"Die!"

Tianming used Soulshaker Eye, then wielded both swords to execute the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation. The nine ferocious beasts and ten thousand congregating swords channeled devastating power. Meanwhile, Houndgod Palewhite used a powerful battle art that turned his ring blade into a hundred copies and sent them all over the place to dismantle Tianming's sword formation.

"If you can kill me, I can kill you too!" he said with a confident smile.

Oddly enough, Tianming didn't appear to even want to dodge. Instead, he merely charged through and executed two consecutive sword strikes—the first shattering the Lifeslay Wheel, and the other piercing through his heart.

"Ugh..." Houndgod Palewhite was flabbergasted. Tianming had been struck by his ring as well, leaving a gigantic, bloody gash on his chest and even breaking a few of his ribs. "You traded your life for mine?" he said with a rare smile before his last breath.

"No way. You're only worth one of my hairs at best." Tianming pointed at his chest wound that was healing at a visible rate. That was the indirect terror of the Undying Tower.

"Impossible!"

Tianming slashed his sword horizontally, cutting Houndgod Palewhite's head off before pouncing on the hound behind him. Houndgod Palewhite wasn't weak, he had just encountered Tianming, who could afford to fight without a care for his own life. There was no way he could have known that Tianming was so hard to kill.

His siblings witnessed the scene of his death.

"Third!"

The rest felt their world crumble in a short while. Crimson Bloodfiend and Timber Woodchild were still searching for any hidden helpers, only for one of their brothers to die just like that. They immediately joined the fray.

Tianming was rather thankful for the care they had shown. Otherwise, he would have had to fight all five of them at once. There was no way he could do that even with the help of the Greenspark Tower. But now he was confident in his chances, with only four and a 'half' enemies remaining.

"Come on! The more who come, the more who dies!" Tianming's eyes glowed red as he glared at Si Ling. He saw the nightmare soulworm's densely packed eyes and felt his killing intent surge. "That must be the root of all evil!"

Chapter 855 - What Kind of Monster Is He?

After the death of Houndgod Palewhite, Tianming came under an even more severe onslaught. Each attack he received was fiercer than the last, almost fatal even. Green Longtongue, Crimson Bloodfiend, Goldspirit Ghoulmount, and Timber Woodchild all widened their eyes as they watched the headless corpse of Houndgod Palewhite fall straight into the ocean. Right after that, Tianming fused his two swords back into one, wielded Archfiend with his left hand, and wrapped it around the head of the hell ghosthound, causing spikes to pierce into its head.

"Die!"

A sudden wave of energy reverberated through Archfiend and dragged all five of the beast's heads over, causing the tenth-level life phase tribulation beast to be pulled around by Tianming like a pet. Then, he raised the fused Grand-Orient Sword in his other hand and used Animacorpus Eradication twice. While the speed was slower than usual, it hit far harder than when the sword was split.

The black and gold sword slashes hit the heads of the beast, the aggrieved souls that manifested loudly howling as blood splattered all over. Two of the hound's heads went flying and the remaining three cried in pain. The white flames that burned all over its body leaped onto Tianming and exploded, allowing it a chance to escape from Archfiend. At the same time, its allies came to help immediately. As Green Longtongue was still entangled in combat with Ying Huo, only Crimson Bloodfiend, Timber Woodchild, and Goldspirit Ghoulmount came to join the fight against Tianming.

"Third is gone...."

Apart from bloodlust and hate, there was also shock and disbelief in their eyes.

"What kind of monster is this fellow? How long will it be until he's virtually unmatched in all of the Flameyellow Continent? Tomorrow?"

"He's the real reincarnation of Xuanyuan Xi!"

"Perhaps he's the reincarnation of Great Emperor Xuanyuan!"

There were no words that could adequately describe the fear they felt. The youth in front of them had basically broken all precedents throughout the history of the Flameyellow Continent. His meteoric rise

caused those in power, them, to feel threatened and fearful. It wasn't just the power he had displayed; they were far more concerned with the rate at which he had attained that power.

"They said he was only so strong because he was in the Kilostar Domain. Are we only realizing his true power now that he's fighting without the help of the sealing formation?"

They looked at the youth, who glanced coldly back at them with the Grand-Orient Sword in hand and felt utterly confused.

"Stop blanking out. We'll just have to swiftly kill him to rid ourselves of this nightmare. So what if he's the reincarnation of Great Emperor Xuanyuan? That doesn't mean he's immortal!" Green Longtongue said, feeling utterly frustrated at being held back by Ying Huo despite being the eldest of the five siblings.

"Kill him! He must die! Without him, Monorigin will perish! This is our opportunity!"

It only took one exchange of glances for them to convey to each other how rare such a chance was. While they didn't have many lifebound beasts, they compensated by being more powerful individually.

Crimson Bloodfiend's beast was a goreblood seadevil. It was a gory, almost bloody looking deep-sea squid with tens of thousands of appendages. Each tentacle had thousands of suction cups, making them look particularly nasty. The key point was that the ocean formed by Lan Huang's Azure Oceanic Purgatory was the perfect habitat for it, allowing it to maneuver its tens of thousands of tentacles with ease. It sent them toward Meow Meow and released bloody clouds of underwater smokescreens from its suction cups, almost instantly coloring the ocean red.

Timber Woodchild's lifebound beast had more than nine hundred stars—for a third-origin tribulation elder to have a lifebound beast with more stars than even a divine marshal showed how high her status was. What came as more of a surprise to Tianming, however, was that her beast was also a plant-type. It was an ethereal ghostree!

The tree was ashen grey from top to bottom and didn't have many leaves. Instead, it had a lot of claw-like branches, thousands of them. Much more terrifying was the tens of thousands of bodies that hung from the branches. Tianming felt a little lightheaded just looking at it. It seemed that there were tens of thousands of young girls dressed in red hanging from the tree, shaking like bells whenever the tree moved. The grey-skinned girls even abruptly opened their eyes whenever that happened, clutching the ropes from where they hung and letting out bloodcurdling cries and shrieks. Tianming also saw the bloody claws sprouting from their fingers, as well as their sharp teeth.

"Corpse puppets?" Tianming asked.

"More or less. She also learned how to use Necromantic Metamorphosis, but instead of nightmare bugs, she's controlling them with tree seeds," Xian Xian said. "Unlike corpse puppets, these tree puppets have a lot of accumulated grievances and are incredibly effective against the soul. It's likely that they died hanging on the tree like that. While they don't number too many, much of their power was retained so they won't be easy targets to fight against."

Tianming could easily tell that Timber Woodchild was sending her beast after Xian Xian because it was the one that was throwing a wrench in the ghoulish king's plans. The corpse puppets in red hanging from the

tree seemed controlled by the branches, as if they had taken the place of the puppets' nerves. When the ethereal ghosttree took root near the Radix World Tree, the corpses on it shrieked and leaped onto Xian Xian and began madly biting away. They even had tribulation force, making their attacks rather devastating.

"Are you alright?" Tianming asked with concern.

"I'm fine. Watch me beat them up!" Xian Xian snapped.

Even if Xian Xian needed help, he couldn't exactly immediately come to her aid, as he was being ganged up on by Timber Woodchild, Crimson Bloodfiend, and Goldspirit Ghoulmount. Even the hell ghosthound that had lost two heads was still able to charge up to him and attack.

As he spoke, Tianming blocked Goldspirit Ghoulmount's spear, only to be struck by an arrow from behind fired by Crimson Bloodfiend. She was flying across the sky as she launched arrow after arrow from her bloody bow. Each arrow seemed to turn into a bloody shower, with the next wave more threatening than the other. The arrow that struck him pierced through his chest, causing him searing pain. If it weren't for the Greenspark Tower, he would have been heavily wounded and be at the brink of death. However, it only took a few moments for his wounds to recover after he pulled the arrow out. Even he was surprised at how seemingly unkillable he was, let alone his enemies.

"What kind of treasure does he have on him?! Dammit! I don't believe he'll survive if we cut off his head!" Goldspirit Ghoulmount cried.

A green whip multiplied into many different illusory whips that snapped unpredictably at Tianming's back like poisonous green snakes, cracking the flesh off and revealing the bone beneath. But just like before, Tianming ignored Timber Woodchild's attack and charged straight for Goldspirit Ghoulmount, then used the Mortal Dao Sword with his sword split in two. The move tapped into the will of all sentient beings, filling the strike with sword ki that matched Tianming's current mental state.

The whip cracked again. Tianming didn't expect that this time, his whole right arm almost came off before his first strike connected. While the second strike managed to cut Goldspirit Ghoulmount's spear in two and dig ten centimeters into his body, Tianming suffered another two arrow shots. The one that struck his saint palace had been disintegrated by Purple Tower, but the other pierced through his heart.

Tianming felt his vision black out from the pain, though the feeling disappeared after he took a deep breath. His wounds were healed just like before, and even his arm was as good as new. It seemed like the Greenspark Tower's power didn't have any limit. The Purple and Soul Towers' abilities were far inferior and less flexible than the Greenspark Tower's, which gave him a huge boost directly in combat. If not for the tower, he would've died long ago facing off against these five.

The Five Wraiths of Shoal Mountain were powerful tenth-level life phase samсарans who stood at the top of Nonahall's hierarchy. Though Tianming should have been dead, or at least dying, by now, his injuries always healed up perfectly. On the other hand, the wound to Goldspirit Ghoulmount's shoulder had decreased his efficacy in combat, which made him feel like vomiting blood in rage.

"What kind of monster is he? Is he unkillable? Are you a corpse puppet?" Even corpse puppets weren't unkillable and could be disabled with sufficient force.

However, the only reply Goldspirit Ghoulmount received was Tianming's attack. Tianming ignored the two women's attacks and kept focusing on Goldspirit Ghoulmount, thanks to his larger and less agile physique, which almost guaranteed that Tianming's attacks would connect.

"Are you alright, Big Brother?" Feiling felt really tense about such a crude and painful fighting method.

"I'm fine. It's all recovered. However, I do still feel the sensation of death creeping up on me. The Greenspark Tower might be useful, but I can't count on it entirely. I have a feeling that I won't survive my body being cut into many pieces or being decapitated."

Chapter 856 - Evernight Nightmare

The main issue was that Tianming couldn't tell the extent of injuries he could realistically recover from. As far as he was concerned, he definitely shouldn't consider himself immortal. So, how well he could leverage the power of the Greenspark Tower would depend on him.

With Feiling attached to him, it was as if he had more than one pair of eyes. Whenever he wasn't able to make an evasive maneuver in time, she would manipulate the Celestial Wings to move him out of harm's way.

Currently, the only things that really threatened Tianming and his lifebound beasts were tribulation artifacts. Abilities from enemy beasts were hardly effective enough to kill the conjoined pair.

The battle continued intensifying even more.

The five wraiths saw Tianming as a complete monster that couldn't be killed no matter what. Even Goldspirit Ghoulmount, who had the protection of his sisters, had lost an arm in the fight and suffered a sword stab near his abdomen that almost punctured his saint palace. Now, the Grand-Orient Sword's Imperial Sword Prison was tearing away at his flesh. With his saint palace exposed, he had suffered a huge blow! Now paler than his dead sibling, Houndgod Palewhite, he scrambled and crawled to escape in Si Ling's direction.

"Ask the ghoulish king to send the nightmare soulworm to help!" Timber Woodchild cried to him. The five of them had begun the fight filled with confidence, but now they were utterly terrified.

"Alright!"

Even though they could still fight, calling for help was no longer something they could afford to delay. While the nightmare soulworm was a part of the process of making corpse puppets, since its nightmare bugs were in a confused state, it could probably come help them out. Now, Ghoulish King Si Ling and her other three lifebound beasts were trapped in an immobile state while executing the Necromantic Metamorphosis. After the technique began, most of their life and death tribulation force would be converted into necromantic energy. Only after reabsorbing the energy and converting it back would they be able to stop the technique.

However, Tianming wasn't aware of such a detail. The only thing he knew was that he would run if the ghoulish king came to help. Before that, he would do his best to disrupt the whole proceedings as much as he could.

As Goldspirit Ghoulmount was running off, he heard a cry of pain. Turning back, he saw that his elder brother's long tongue had been cut off by a little bird. Next, the bird used its feathers to put thousands of holes into him, immediately killing the tenth-level life phase samsaran.

"This little tower is amazing!" Ying Huo chuckled and stroked its own head, causing the ethereal form of the tower to blink in and out of existence. "Dammit, there's something green on my head! That's a bad omen! Oh wait, I don't have a wife. Hahahaha! I'm single, so I'm safe!"

After dealing with Green Longtongue, Ying Huo immediately turned to the hell ghosthound and gave chase. The little chicken used Imperial Radiance and went berserk with the Hexapath Samsara Sword, immediately pinning the hound on the ground and splattering its three remaining heads. That made the ghosthound the third fighter to be killed in the battle.

However, Ying Huo didn't calm down even the slightest bit and immediately turned back. Lan Huang was still fending off two opponents by itself, after all, and was taking quite the beating. It seemed that neither the cloudsky fiendtoad or the kilosword titanrhino had had any opportunities to finish Lan Huang off, causing the battle to last so long. But the moment Ying Huo joined the fray, the scales completely tipped in their favor. Tianming's current situation was much improved from before.

But in the next instant, he heard a large, earthshaking cry. Looking up, he saw a kilometer-long worm smashing apart many surrounding buildings like a rampaging cobra as it tried to make its way to him, causing many civilian casualties in the process. "So it finally decided it needs to come."

It didn't seem like Si Ling had followed it, however.

"The fact that she didn't come even after all this means she's unable to stop the Necromantic Metamorphosis as she pleases!"

Even so, the nightmare soulworm was an eleventh-level death phase tribulation beast in its own right, which put it three phases above Timber Woodchild and the rest. Tianming felt the terrifying power contained in the insect.

"Big Brother, do we run now?" Feiling asked. Their main purpose was to disrupt the ghoulish king from making corpse puppets; they couldn't afford to keep fighting once the ghoulish king actually joined in. The lovers were already being kept busy enough with the five wraiths, so they would be done in for sure if the ghoulish king decided to fight.

"Let's wait a little bit and see." He glared at the incoming worm, feeling his heart rate increase. That beast was the root of all evil. If it died, he would no longer have to worry about the corpse puppets. While Si Ling was unable to engage Tianming, thanks to the technique, there was no doubt she would come join in the battle as soon as she could.

"After this disruption, they'll definitely have many more people on guard the next time they try making corpse puppets. I'll no longer have a chance to deal with this worm in the future! Let's give it one last best effort!"

"Alright!"

The worm didn't move very quickly, giving Tianming ample time to react. "Ling'er, Temporal Lock!"

"On it!" With how well synchronized they were, Feiling didn't really need to hear him say it to know who to use Temporal Lock and Millennium Fort on.

Meanwhile, Crimson Bloodfiend was still firing arrows away, each one stronger than the last and all aimed at Tianming's head and heart. They had almost hit him many times, so Tianming gave chase. His wings flapped; while the wings' maximum speed couldn't compare to Meow Meow's, they were better when it came to initial acceleration and it only took a moment for him to reach her. It was now her turn to be temporally locked.

"Trying to chase me?" She smirked and turned into a bloody blur as she charged higher up into the skies, ramming through fifty-one Spatial Walls in the process and ending up quite hurt. The key was that Feiling's Temporal Lock made the speed she was so confident in useless.

"That's right, I'm chasing you alright!" Tianming slapped his chest and caused the Dragonhide to manifest. The armor's most potent effect wasn't the defense it offered him, but rather the boost to his capability he got while wearing it. Coupled with Spiritual Attachment, it was even more potent. He executed Animacorpus Eradication, his sword basically unblockable.

"Die!" Crimson Bloodfiend shot arrows rapidly, knowing that evasion wasn't an option. Within an instant, a thousand bloody arrows rained down on Tianming. However, he cleared a path with the sword of hungry ghosts, striking away the arrows that would have been fatal while ignoring the others.

"Who's the one dying now?" Tianming's black sword came slashing wildly as the light the Dragonhide gave off intensified. His sword was pushed through her chest by boundless sword ki.

"You—" Before she could finish, her head was lopped off. Crimson Bloodfiend was dead for good.

"Farewell."

Tianming pulled out the three arrows that had struck his shoulder and charged down. The armor that shimmered in the sunlight made him look like Great Emperor Xuanyuan's reincarnation. He turned to his last remaining foe, Timber Woodchild, who couldn't keep up with him when he was chasing Crimson Bloodfiend down. By the time she could react to the rapid change, Feiling used Temporal Lock on her and sealed off her paths with Millennium Fort to force her apart from Crimson Bloodfiend. By the time she finally made her way close to Tianming, her sister was already killed, joining the other three.

Lifebound beasts aside, three of the five wraiths had already been killed, leaving only Timber Woodchild and the injured Goldspirit Ghoulmount behind. That fact completely infuriated her. She opened her arms wide and glared at Tianming, causing the ten thousand corpse puppets on her tree to stop attacking Xian Xian and surround her. All the female corpse puppets stared daggers at Tianming.

"They were all geniuses who were at the most beautiful age of their lives. After meeting me, I made them part of me. They're now part of who I am," she said with a devious smile.

"So? What're you trying to say?" Tianming raised his swords and went on a rampage. He had been ramping up the pace of battle since the nightmare soulworm started making its move.

"I've seen far too many so-called geniuses. I don't believe that people around your age can actually singlehandedly shake the world!" By now, Timber Woodchild's ego had already collapsed. Her title of

genius had been taken over by Li Caiwei, but she didn't really mind it back then. However, she definitely wouldn't tolerate a youth in his twenties surpassing her!

"I don't care if you believe it or not. Face the facts," Tianming said with a smirk. He came charging down from the skies with swords raised high. The armor glowed as if there were five dragons nosediving like meteors. All of a sudden, everything changed. Tianming didn't need to look to know that the nightmare soulworm was finally here.

"Big Brother...." Tianming felt a little numb, but Feiling's head hurt badly.

"Hold on, Ling'er!" Tianming glanced at the worm using his peripheral vision and saw it coiling up into a spiral. The countless eyes on its body gathered together into a single large composite eye, causing a grey mist to manifest.

Tianming then recalled seeing the Archaionfiend Eye in Xian Xian's dream. Even though it was on a different level, this one was just as terrifying. This was the nightmare worm's ability, Hell's Eye, also known as Hell's Gate.

The skies darkened as grey mist filled the surroundings. Now, the eye looked like it was hanging from the skies as if the heavens were looking down on them.

"What a terrifying ability that confuses the soul!" Tianming wasn't that badly affected by it, but Feiling seemed to have been knocked out cold. Apart from Spiritual Attachment's effect still remaining, the Celestial Wings, Temporal Field, and Spatial Walls all stopped working. She was in a confused state within his body, her consciousness slowly waning.

Chapter 857 - Hell's Eye

If the nightmare soulworm's attack was allowed to continue, they might end up trapped in an eternal nightmare. Hell's Eye seemed to have opened up a gateway straight to the afterlife! While the soulworm didn't have much in the way of offensive capabilities, its abilities could affect the soul in terrifying ways. People who knew better would never dare to underestimate it.

It wasn't just Feiling; Ying Huo, Meow Meow, Lan Huang, and Xian Xian all stopped moving in a daze. They even smiled blankly as if they were completely charmed before abruptly turning to the giant eye. Tianming could see Xian Xian's spiritform do that clearly within his lifebound space as well. Its gaze was completely blank. Even the Radix World Tree, which didn't have eyes on its main body, wasn't impervious to its effects.

However, all of his enemies were unaffected. The ethereal ghostree, kilosword titanrhino, cloudsky fiendtoad, and goreblood seadevil launched rampaging assaults against the unmoving lifebound beasts and Tianming.

Timber Woodchild had been waiting for this moment for far too long. The reason she had said what she did to Tianming was that she knew that the worm's ability was about to be unleashed. So far, she had never been disappointed by its amazing effects. To her, falling under its effect was akin to going through an eternal nightmare, having felt what it was like herself before. As long as one couldn't wake up, they would experience eternal suffering.

"So much for your big mouth! You were never our match to begin with!" The death of her siblings had left her heartbroken, but she wouldn't let a rare opportunity like this go. Swiftly, she charged straight toward Tianming alongside the corpse puppets from her tree. It would probably only take some two to three seconds for her and her puppets to tear Tianming apart and devour him in full. But before the last moment, she felt like she was seeing things.

"How could this be?!"

Was it just her imagination? Tianming's gaze seemed a little too calm to her. "Impossible. Even Ghoul King Po Suo said that she wasn't immune to the effects of Hell's Eye...."

She knew that she couldn't afford to turn back. However, the next moment, she saw Tianming's Dragonhide grow even more savage. He wielded his swords in an even more imposing manner, as if the Dragonhide was giving him an even stronger boost.

Brilliant flashes of the sword could be seen as tens of thousands of sword apparitions manifested alongside nine great beasts in a neat formation. It was the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation, now boosted with the Dragonhide's effects. Each of the beast souls were formed of tens of thousands of sword ki strands.

At the same time, a hundred thousand swords came raining down from the sky in a huge torrent, tearing apart each and every corpse puppet from the tree.

"No...." Timber Woodchild could only watch as all of them were torn to shreds.

"Die!"

The Grand-Orient Sword came bearing down on her, striking her down. The tower beneath her completely crumbled into dust as a bloody flower bloomed where it had once stood. Now, four of the five wraiths had been killed, and Timber Woodchild's fate was the worst of the lot.

She had believed in the nightmare soulworm so deeply that she never could have imagined that its ability would fail her. There was no way she could take Tianming's strongest move in that shocked state of mind.

Soon, the dust settled, but Tianming didn't even stop for a moment. The five wraiths' lifebound beasts were unrelentingly attacking Ying Huo and the rest. The slightest delay could result in their deaths. Even Feiling was still unconscious, as evidenced by the effects of Spiritual Attachment wearing off. There was simply no time to lose!

The instant Tianming killed Timber Woodchild, he charged through the smoke and dust, ramming straight through a few buildings, and lashed out with Archfiend. The whip crashed through countless buildings as it stretched three kilometers in length straight to the Hell's Eye, the nightmare soulworm itself!

"I wonder if you can bleed!" Tianming wanted to make a gamble that he would regret not making ever in his life! Archfiend pierced through the worm's body in a flash. "Your flesh was that soft all along? No wonder you're so huge!"

Tianming was almost beaming with joy. For an eleventh-level death phase tribulation beast to only be as tough as one in the Sky Saint stage, it was a complete glass cannon. Normally, it would be really powerful with its ability and nightmare bugs, not to mention it would be protected by the ghoulish king's other lifebound beasts. But now, its ability didn't work on Tianming, who had the Soul Tower to counteract it!

"Die!" The full length of Archfiend was now even longer than the worm. With a swing, the chain tore through countless lengths of flesh immediately as it wrapped around the worm tighter and tighter. The worm's body shook as Hell's Eye's effects faded. As it didn't have a mouth, it couldn't even cry out in pain; however, grey blood was oozing out of its body as it struggled fiercely, knocking down one building after another.

After Hell's Eye was gone, Ying Huo and the rest awakened from their slumber. Thankfully, they'd had the healing effect of the Greenspark Tower to keep them from dying while they were out cold. Before they had been hit by that ability, they were dominating their enemies. Now, they hurriedly ran away to heal their battered bodies before striking back with even more ferocity than before. Back then, they wouldn't be nearly that powerful as they didn't have the same benefit Tianming got from Feiling's Spiritual Attachment, but the Greenspark Tower had changed everything.

Soon, Feiling reawakened. Even though she was still a little drowsy, the power she had been feeding Tianming returned. "What happened just now?"

"Worry about that later. We have to focus!" He grunted as he pulled on Archfiend with both hands as forcefully as he could, moving the kilometer-long worm. He then charged into the Azure Oceanic Purgatory and tied Archfiend to Lan Huang.

"Go!"

Lan Huang roared and charged with great momentum, dragging the nightmare soulworm along all through Fufeng City. The obstacles in their way battered away at the worm's soft body, leaving a trail of grey blood in its wake.

"Don't even think of running!" Goldspirit Ghoumount cried despite his heavy injuries. He was the only surviving sibling and he gave chase desperately.

"You're the last one remaining! Go reunite with them in hell!" Tianming quickly approached as Goldspirit Ghoumount was about to cut off Archfiend. There was no way someone with his severe injuries would be able to handle the white-haired youth. He used the last of the Dragonhide's power to deal with him before it vanished.

Apart from that, there were four other lifebound beasts giving chase. The ethereal ghostree had already been set alight by Ying Huo, though it may not be dead just yet. As for the goreblood seadevil, cloudsky fiendtoad, and kilosword titanrhino, Tianming killed them one after another until nobody was left to pursue him.

"Nightmare soulworm!" Tianming had waited long for this outcome. The worm was far too big and it would take him the better part of a day to cut it apart with the Grand-Orient Sword. So, using Archfiend to drag it across and let friction peel away at its layers was ideal. Soon, Lan Huang felt the weight on its back lighten and turned back, only to see a bloody chain and nothing else.

"Did it run away?"

"No." Tianming stood on one of the kui mountains on its back. Bloodied and haggard though he was, he could still smirk. "It got turned into mincemeat by Archfiend."

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Within Fufeng City, Ghoul King Si Ling stopped her technique. As she was unable to recoup most of the converted necromantic energy, she and her three lifebound beasts bled from their orifices from the severe injuries caused by blowback from Necromantic Metamorphosis. They would recover from it with enough time, but that wasn't the pressing issue. Her real worry was that her soul link with the nightmare soulworm had been cut off. Right before its death, it cried to her and begged for help. Even though she had immediately decided to stop the technique, it was already far too late.

By the time she looked in Tianming's direction, the sight that greeted her caused her eyes to turn bloodshot and almost pop out. It had happened too quickly. During the time she stopped the technique phase by phase, the Five Wraiths of Shoal Mountain had been killed. Even Hell's Eye had lost its effect, and that meant the nightmare soulworm had suffered certain death!

Had she known the full extent of what was happening, she would have immediately stopped the technique even if she had to suffer worse repercussions from it. However, it was too little too late. It was just one of the many drawbacks of using forbidden arts. "Li Tianming!"

She took such a deep breath that new wrinkles seemed to form on her face. She immediately charged toward him with her three beasts.

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"She's coming!"

Tianming had Xian Xian and the rest return to his lifebound space the moment he felt a killing intent homing in on him.

"Let's go!" He got on Meow Meow and left, laughing the whole way. "We really made a killing this time! Let's see if I'll be able to get off scot-free from being chased by an eleventh-level death phase samsaran."

Tianming's actions had been reckless, to say the least. He had bet on the fact that the forbidden art wasn't something that could immediately be stopped, and he was right on the money.

"No matter what, Ghoul King Si Ling is different from Ghoul King Fu You and the rest. Meow Meow, I'm counting on you."

He turned back and saw grey mist rapidly closing in on him.

"Hmph! There's no way they'll catch up to me!" Meow Meow charged forward with even more intensity than before.

Chapter 858 - The Way of the Heavens Stems from the Heart

The death of the nightmare soulworm meant that yet another terrifying nightmare of the citizens of Archaion was taken care of. Si Ling was completely enraged at the utter defeat; Tianming could see her raging through the grey mist behind him.

First, she turned into a grey beam that pierced through the clouds. Then she let her necrostyx phoenix give chase. The gigantic phoenix of death flew faster and faster with the wind. Tianming noted that its flesh seemed a little rotten and battered, and was oozing some kind of toxic liquid. Its eyes were also an oily green. It almost looked like it was heavily injured.

However, that was merely a consequence of a technique it cultivated with the ghoulish king. When it spread its wings, the feathers on its back looked like a terrifying visage with sharp teeth. Before it even arrived, the flora around it was completely torn apart from the strong winds.

"Quick, zig zag!" Tianming cried.

"What do you mean?" Meow Meow asked.

"You're smaller and more agile, so if you randomly change directions you'll have the advantage!"

"Oh!" Even though it was now in its Regal Chaosfiend form, Meow Meow was still incredibly agile. It charged into the wilderness and kept changing directions as the phoenix's abilities rained down on them. It looked just like a bird of prey hunting down its next meal as it almost instantly closed the distance. Si Ling leaped off the phoenix's back.

"Ling'er!"

Feiling's temporal control ability was used at the opportune time, coupled with the countless walls. Si Ling rammed through the obstacles posed by Millennium Fort nonstop, demonstrating far more power than the five siblings had earlier, and Tianming had already had to risk his life in that fight.

"If she catches up, the only thing I can do is hide in the Prime Tower and remain captured." There was even a good chance he would never be able to leave the tower.

Fortunately for him, Temporal Field worked really well. Temporal Lock zeroed in on Si Ling without her noticing. From her point of view, Tianming and Meow Meow would simply charge with a sudden burst of speed whenever she approached. No matter how hard she tried, she wasn't able to keep up.

"Ghoul King Si Ling," Tianming said, turning back to face her cold gaze.

"What?"

"You've committed far too many sins. One day, I'll send you to hell."

"Haha, so you must be a saint then? Have you not killed a single person before? How can you justify your own killing while condemning mine? It's just a double standard peddled by pathetic hypocrites like you. We're essentially on the same path. You have no right to mock me just because I'm ahead of you," she mocked.

"You're right. It's merely a matter of degree. You've had your share, and I'll soon have mine. I won't judge you, but I will eradicate you. I'll leave the judgment of good and evil to the heavens!"

The only reason that even occurred to him was the good karma he had received after killing the nightmare soulworm. Over the years, Si Ling had made corpse puppets all over the place, and the worm had no doubt played a huge part in that as well. Compared to Omniscient Will, good karma seemed to be even more potent and arcane, seemingly intertwined with the powers of fate. Its appearance had tremendously fueled Tianming's growth.

Even though he was at a bottleneck, he could still experience rapid spurts in his growth—much like the time when he had first formed his Imperial Will. He believed that no other heavenly will could possibly grow using his method. Imperial Will was far more significant than its name alone would suggest.

"Killing evildoers is a trial of the mind and heart. My intentions are simple and pure, and I shouldn't doubt myself." Feeling the benefits he had received from the worm's death brought him much comfort.

Si Ling was his next big target. She was the only one that had committed more sins than Ye Bodhi. Of the ghouls outside Tianming City, not even all of their sins combined would amount to a tenth of hers.

Throughout the nightmare soulworm's life, it had controlled tens of millions of soul puppets, all of whom continued suffering even after their death without so much as being able to shed a tear. Now, the waves of warmth that washed over him flowed toward the sword-shaped Imperial Will within his sea of consciousness. He saw countless smiling faces each time he felt the warm pulses. They had all been living, breathing people who'd had their own lives and families, yet the nightmare soulworm had ruined all of that, causing them to lose their sense of self and become mindless zombies. But today, they were finally free.

Tianming finally knew what good karma was about. It was the single chance for the aggrieved to thank him for the service he had rendered them. When they touched his soul, it felt like they were fusing into his lifeblood itself.

"Thank you."

"No matter what happens, we want you to know that you did the right thing."

"You're committing the act of killing, but the consequences of your actions bring benefit to others, unlike those who kill for their own sake."

"Those who follow the way of the heavens shall be rewarded!"

"What is the way of the heavens? It's formless. It isn't gods, and not even the laws of the world can fully encompass it."

"If there's one way to describe it, the way of the heavens would be the hearts of all sentient beings!"

Tianming had always thought that the way of the heavens was the ultimate arbiter of truth and justice. But today, those he put to rest had taught him that it might stem from the hearts of people instead.

"Walk your own path without a hint of regret! No matter what kind of obstacles you run into, don't turn back!"

Si Ling had brought pain and suffering to countless lives. The word countless, ironically, didn't even come close to being able to describe the extent of her atrocities. They were real, warm-blooded humans who shouldn't be brushed off by a single word like that. That fact alone was enough to make Tianming

shed a tear for their souls. This infusion of good karma steeled his resolve and helped his Imperial Will grow past the level required for the seventh-level life phase. However, he couldn't stop now to form his next set of samsara rings, as Si Ling was still on his tail.

"I helped them, and they paid me back in kind. I have to keep doing more." He urged Meow Meow on in the direction of Tianming City.

"This isn't the Kilostar Domain! There's no sealing formation, so how am I not able to keep up? If I let this monster escape and grow, he might be the key that ruins all of our plans! He has to die!" Si Ling zipped across the landscape, consistently feeling the distance widen every time she and her phoenix approached Tianming. The phoenix's abilities didn't do any real damage to the fleeing pair, either.

Gradually, the distance began widening and Tianming grew closer and closer to the city. It was a shame that the messenger that was sent out from Fufeng City was probably only on the way back now. Currently, Si Ling had no way of knowing what was happening with their army around the city.

When Meow Meow crossed the mountains, Tianming finally saw the city in the distance. "Do we rush in?" it asked.

"No." Tianming looked around and saw a large river nearby. "Meow Meow, you should go there."

"What are you planning?"

"There's no time for questions."

"Meow!" The gigantic feline beast leaped into the river, causing a huge splash.

"Go back to the city alone and be careful!" Tianming said.

"What? Why?!"

Tianming had jumped off its back and entered the river, then burrowed deeply into the mud. Meow Meow was too lazy to figure it out and did what he said.

"You won't get away!" Si Ling's voice rang from the distance.

"Catch him!" The troops outside the city began acting once more.

"Meow?" It finally occurred to the cat that it was being used as bait. "Now I'm the only one in danger of losing my life!"

It desperately charged at the city as frantically as it could.

"Fu You, catch it!" Si Ling yelled, causing many third-origin tribulation elders to come charging out. However, Fu You wasn't among them. Meow Meow used this chance to zigzag around as it made its way toward the city.

At the critical moment, the city gates opened and a sword flash of about ten thousand meters in length came blasting out, helping the cat deal with the obstacles around it. Meow Meow easily entered the Sun-Moon-Star Formation and was finally safe. Right after it entered, a large group of people surrounded it, among them Jian Wuyi, Beigong Linlan, Lin Qingtian, and Xuanyuan Xie.

"Where's the imperial son?" they anxiously asked. Meow Meow had returned alone; what could it mean?

"Him? He abandoned me halfway here! That traitor! I'm so mad!"

"Is he fine?"

"Of course he is! He probably had me come back alone to trick the enemies into thinking he's back in here." As Meow Meow ran toward the city, its body was covered in black lightning from Ninefold Chaos Thunderscape, so it would have been hard to tell if Tianming was sitting on its back.

"What's he planning?" Jian Wuyi asked.

"I don't know," Meow Meow said haughtily. They watched as it turned back into its smaller form and stretched lazily. Yawning, it said, "I'm so worn out. Since he abandoned me, he'd better not blame me for sleeping! Ah, it's going to be awesome for my sleep to not be interrupted all the time!"

Meow Meow leaned against the city wall and prepared to doze off.

"Wait a second, Sir Cat," Xuanyuan Xie said with a smile. "You haven't told us what happened after you went to Fufeng City. What happened? Did Tianming stop Ghoul King Si Ling from making more corpse puppets?"

"Stop her? Meow Meow widened its eyes, stretched out its claws, and patted Xuanyuan Xie's head. "Are you looking down on my brother?"

"Then what did you do?"

"We killed the Five Wraiths of Shoal Mountain and that kilometer-long worm!"

Everyone's face froze, then the joy set in. It was news that was worthy of celebration! The only question was what Tianming was planning that caused him not to return to the city.

Chapter 859 - Paving a Path of Blood

Outside Tianming City, Ghoul King Si Ling simmered with rage. "Where's Fu You?!"

"Ghoul King Fu You gave chase when Li Tianming escaped north. When he returned, he heard that Li Tianming had gone to Fufeng City and rushed there. I am guessing that he should be there right now," said a third-origin tribulation elder.

"Was Li Tianming the only one who escaped from Tianming City?" she asked.

"Yes."

"And so many of you couldn't even stop a single person?"

"This...." The others didn't dare to say anything, but the unspoken implication was: wasn't Si Ling herself unable to chase him down?

"This brat's lifebound beast is shockingly fast. He's as slippery as a snake," Si Ling said with a sigh. She knew that Tianming was getting harder and harder to kill. Ever since the events in the Kilostar Domain, everyone was trying to kill Tianming and none had succeeded. The only time they'd had a real chance at killing him was when they caught him and brought him to the entrance of the domain. Now, he was causing them to vomit blood time and again.

"How many troops do we have gathered here?"

"Including those from Hexapath, we have over six million. More troops are still coming to join us."

"Have Fu You come back. Li Tianming is back at Tianming City, so the corpse puppets won't be of use any longer. When the other two ghoulish kings get here, we'll start attacking the city! Our main priority is killing Li Tianming!"

"Understood!"

"Have Ying Zi and Lan Yi come to see me too!"

"Yes!"

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When Si Ling passed Tianming as she chased Meow Meow down, Tianming poked his head out and saw Meow Meow return to the city safe and sound. Jian Wuyi and the rest had definitely prepared themselves for his return, so he knew it would be fine.

"If nothing goes wrong, Si Ling definitely thinks I'm back inside the city." He snuck away from where he was.

"Big Brother, with the corpse puppets now gone, they'll launch an attack on the city soon. Where are you going now?" Feiling asked.

"Back to Fufeng City."

"To save the six million captives?"

"Yes. As long as they're in enemy hands, even if they won't get made into corpse puppets, the enemy will still use them as hostages to pressure us. Now that they think I'm back in the city, this is the perfect chance to save them." He flapped his wings and flew off toward Fufeng City as quickly as he could.

"There's around a hundred thousand Nonahall troops there, but with Xian Xian, it won't be that much of a problem."

"That's right. Most of them are only empyrean saints. While I can't take on too many of them in the short term, there's six million people in the city. All they lack is a leader. With me there, they'll be able to work together to crush Nonahall's army. Right now, the enemy is focused on conquering Tianming City, so they only left a measly hundred thousand people to watch the captives."

That number was enough, if all they had to do was keep watch. Not to mention, according to their original plan, Ghoulish King Si Ling was supposed to turn all twenty million captives of the four cities into corpse puppets.

"But where will they go after you lead the charge out of the city?" Feiling asked.

"We'll go north, I suppose. Maybe spread out a little. The enemy is too focused on Tianming City now, so they won't be able to spare men to chase them down. Once they break out of the city, they might as well be in the wilderness."

Most of the people of the south had gone north already. The ones who remained were those that loved their homes to death and couldn't bring themselves to leave.

"Now that they're occupied, and the nightmare soulworm is gone, this is the only way they'll survive." Tianming continued traveling toward Fufeng City at full speed.

"Wait, I see someone!" He hurriedly hid himself when he saw a large group approaching. "That's Ghoulish King Fu You?"

The ghoulish king was traveling with a group of personal attendants back toward Tianming City.

"Thank goodness I didn't run into him, or this chance would've been wasted." He breathed a sigh of relief and continued on, finally reaching his destination, and launched into a frenzy. The enemies would never think he would show up there again.

"Now that Meow Meow isn't with us, I can't form a new samsara ring for a breakthrough, but that's fine. I'm powerful enough to take them on right now." He saw the six million captives, surrounded by the enemy soldiers and their lifebound beasts. Anyone that dared to run would be killed alongside hundreds of other innocents near them. It was a common sight to see cruel methods of crowd control like that; it wasn't that their captors were completely oblivious to the cruelty, but too many people had attempted to escape and they were already numb toward the prospect of killing them. The captives huddled together with fearful gazes, looking at their evil captors as they wondered what kind of horrible fate would befall them.

"I wonder if the imperial son is doing well...."

"He killed that worm and saved us. Pray the heavens will watch over him."

Their tears fell like rain.

"Daddy, will the imperial son come to save us?" the children asked.

"He will! Definitely!" Though, even he knew that the imperial son was in deep trouble. Despite knowing that the enraged Si Ling might take out her anger on them, the father still persisted and smiled to give his children hope. Many of them tightly hugged their wives and children in the corpse-filled city that was tainted with the scent of blood. The stench coming from the remains of the nightmare soulworm only made the smell worse.

"Behave yourselves! Anyone that dares take a single step will be roasted alive alongside those around them!"

"Huh, and they call themselves an Archaic House that has a history of over two hundred thousand years. What a joke. They're all weaklings."

To control the group of captives that was more than ten times their number, they chose the cruelest method. There were those that cut off limbs from belligerent captives and kicked their limbless torso around like balls. After the victim died, they tossed the body back into the crowd to sow terror among them.

"You're lucky you don't have to become corpse puppets any longer! Now, your lives depend on the higher ups. If you're lucky, you'll be given a chance to change your ways to become peasants of the Nonahall Divine Realm. If not, you'll all be roast pigs!"

Sinister laughter spread throughout the hundred thousand troops.

All of a sudden, a red chain rampaged among the troops, piercing through beastmaster and lifebound beast alike. With a great swing, a large number of people collapsed.

"Who is this?!" they cried, shocked. Soon, some began to recognize Archfiend.

"It's Li Tianming's weapon!"

"He's back!"

The captives were delighted to hear that and immediately turned to look at the white-haired youth descending from the sky. When he landed on the pile of corpses, they cheered as tears of joy flowed.

"Imperial Son!"

It had only taken a single person to give the entire city hope. The fervent gazes of all six million captives were cast on the youth, and the gigantic dragon, tree, and small bird next to him. The tree was rooted on the dragon's back, spreading its vines all across the area.

"People of Fufeng City!" Tianming yelled, "Join me and pave a path of blood out of here! A debt of blood can only be repaid with blood!"

Standing on Lan Huang's head, he charged toward the hundred thousand terrified troops. Wherever Archfiend flew, blood flowed! Lan Huang was like a huge killing machine, crushing the empyrean saints and their beasts like tofu, and Xian Xian's vines were able to whip and easily kill. The sight was like a shining beacon of hope for the citizens in their darkest moment.

"Quick! Follow the imperial son!"

"Everyone, join in!"

A riot ensued. There wasn't much Tianming needed to do, either. His might alone was enough to terrify the enemies into completely losing their fighting spirit. All it took was a path to be made for their captives to escape. The momentum of the six million stampeding people was terrifying indeed; Tianming marveled at the sight.

"They aren't even aware they could've escaped without my help. The combined power of the ten million folks in Tianming City was even able to crush the Hexapath Swordfiend. This just shows how important it is to have a leader!"

Under his leadership, the despairing citizens of Fufeng City all charged out of the north gate, only to be greeted with an endless plain. They were finally free.

"Goodbye, everyone! Head north!" he said while standing atop the gate.

"Imperial Son, aren't you going to travel with us?" they asked.

"No, I have to return to Tianming City."

Now that he had done his deed, he felt much better. Captives were rather troublesome in war, as keeping watch on them required manpower. As such, crueler folks would just choose to massacre all of them and be done with it. But now, thanks to Tianming City's perseverance, the captives of the four fallen cities had a chance at life.

"Imperial Son, you will definitely succeed!"

Tianming could see how they worshipped him like a deity after he restored their human dignity. "I suppose being able to rescue millions of lives is a kind of good karma too."

But he didn't really care if he actually got good karma from it. He was doing what his heart commanded. Protecting the weak was the burden and responsibility of the strong, and he didn't stop there.

"Word of what happened here will no doubt reach Si Ling's ears. They'll definitely react to it, so I don't have much time left."

He immediately charged toward Liuyun City as quickly as he could.

Chapter 860 - First Priority

Tianming's end goal was the liberation of the captives from all four cities, so he needed all the time he could get. "Let's hope I make it in time."

He took a deep breath and left as fast as he could. "Once the captives are all rescued, I'll go back to Tianming City and fight our foes to the death!"

Soon, he reached Liuyun City. What surprised him was that there were more than four hundred captives trying to leave the city. Leading the charge were some ten folks, killing as many as they could to make way. It was plain to see they were peak elites who could force the hundred thousand enemy troops away.

"Who are these?" Tianming immediately went to them.

"Imperial Son? Why are you here?"

They were glad to see him. Tianming looked closer and saw that it was Xuanyuan Yuheng's father, Xuanyuan Xiao. He was leading a group of ten or so second-origin tribulation elders.

"Most of the enemies have headed to Tianming City and are preparing for a siege. I snuck away to see if I can save some captives. I already liberated Fufeng City."

"Is that true? Our house king read the reports and said they're congregating their forces at Tianming City. It's predicted that Ghoulish King Si Ling will make corpse puppets, so we sent a team here to see if we can rescue some people," Xuanyuan Xiao said.

"That's right. Fufeng City is the closest to Tianming City. Isn't the ghoulish king there?"

"You might not believe it, but I killed the lifebound beast the ghoulish king uses to make corpse puppets. It was a nightmare soulworm and it had a terrifying ability, but its body was actually pretty weak," Tianming said.

Their mouths hung agape at the news, but they were actually more or less used to hearing about ridiculous feats like that from Tianming.

Xuanyuan Xiao immediately calmed down and said, "Word from Fufeng City and here will spread quickly. We don't have much time. Let's act separately! You should go to Linyu City while we head to Guiyang City!"

"Alright!"

With them here, Tianming's job was much easier and he felt much less pressure.

"Imperial Son, if it works out, come back to Taiji Peak Lake with us. Tianming City is far too dangerous," Xuanyuan Xiao offered.

"There's no need!" Tianming immediately left without turning back.

"The enemy will continue sending reinforcements. Once Tianming City falls, not even Jian Wuyi and the rest will be able to escape."

"The imperial son is taking too huge a risk."

"Our forces number too few. The only thing we can do is to fight to the death at Taiji Peak Lake."

"Let's hope Tianming City continues to hold."

Before the war began, Fang Taiqing had wanted to clear out the southern cities and evacuate the residents northward. However, too many people were unwilling to leave their homes behind. Either way, the enemies would be marching north, so why couldn't their stronghold be a city with a Sun-Moon-Star Formation? As Taiji Peak Lake couldn't accommodate all those people, places like Tianming City were required as the vanguard of the resistance forces.

"Anyone that dares invade our homes will die!"

As for Taiji Peak Lake, they made sure to send reinforcements to Tianming City, as well as others like Xuanyuan Xiao to rescue the captives. They hadn't given up on those cities after all. Now more than ever, defending their land held even more significance than before.

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Back outside Tianming City, someone came to make a report. His expression was completely languid. The four ghoulish kings were gathered together and discussing war plans.

"Report!"

"What is going on?"

"Ghoul Kings, Li Tianming showed up at Fufeng City, killed thousands, and saved all six million captives. They're now on the run to the north."

"Impossible. I saw him enter Tianming City. He couldn't have left," Si Ling said.

"Ghoul King, I personally saw him there with three lifebound beasts, missing only for his fierce tiger beast!"

"Fierce tiger?" Si Ling's expression immediately sank. "He didn't go back at all?! We've been messed with yet again!"

Being toyed with by a brat felt worse than being force fed feces.

"That child is impossible to catch, just like when he was in the Kilostar Domain. Next time we meet, we have to work together to instantly kill him. We can't afford to give him any chances," You Ying said. She'd had a chance to assassinate Tianming back at the Kilostar Domain, but it didn't work because the Prime Tower got in the way. It left a real deep impression on her.

"He's hard to kill, like a cockroach." Si Ling let her rage simmer even more.

"Report!" Someone else brought news to them.

"Speak."

"Liuyun City is being attacked by Xuanyuan Xiao. They're taking on the forces left to defend the city! As they number too few, they might not be able to hold on for long. The captives must've been liberated by now. Ghoul Kings, please understand that the captives aren't helpless and can also fight back."

"That leaves only Linyu and Guiyang then," Si Ling said.

"That is the case."

"Have the captives in those two cities killed. Leave not a single one alive. If Li Tianming and the rest don't act quickly enough, I'll show them what hell looks like!" Si Ling said.

"Aren't we going there to stop them? Even though there's two cities, we have more than enough people to split some off," You Ying said.

"No. I've learned that chasing him down is the same as being led around by the nose. It's better to make a trap here and lure him in."

"A trap?"

"Our forces are now six times their number. The heartscourge fiend and skyscourge bloodfiend sent word that they'll be coming to Tianming City to help us. Once they arrive, we'll attack the city. Even if Jian Wuyi and the others are able to escape, we'll massacre everyone that remains! We will not let a single one of the ten million citizens live! The people here are worth far more than the other cities. Li Tianming's goal is to save lives, right? I won't bother making corpse puppets any longer. I'll go straight

for the kill. We'll see if he comes to save them! We won't have to worry about him returning to Taiji Peak Lake alone if that's the case."

"Understood!"

Their greatest fear was for Tianming to escape again.

"This fellow has killed countless people, so I thought he'd be more coldblooded than that. I didn't think he'd be the kind to play hero of justice," Lan Yi said. That was a huge weakness as far as he was concerned.

"That's right. Last time, he even lost the Kilostar Photondragon to save Yi Xingyin. We should've known long ago that we could just use the captives to force that brat to die. It's a huge waste."

"It's fine. The people within Tianming City are far more important to him."

"I'm serious. we shouldn't look at him like a brat any longer. Since he left the Kilostar Domain, he even killed the five wraiths. Who knows if he'll eclipse us in strength half a month from now?"

"I feel like thinning out their tribulation elders during the siege should be our second priority. Our first is forcing Li Tianming to his death."

They had reached a consensus.

"Enough talking. The two beasts will arrive soon, in four more hours at most. Let's prepare for the attack!" Si Ling said.

"Alright. The beasts wanted to act when we reached Taiji Peak Lake, but they couldn't stop themselves from coming after hearing that Li Tianming was here. Since my big brother is gone, I'll let Tianming City taste the wrath of his beasts!"

"It's about time this puny city fell. Otherwise, those of us from Nonahall will lose out to Birtual!"