

The Ages 911

Chapter 911 - Honor is More Important Than Conscience

Nonahall, Quadform, and Heptastar had become the Flameyellow Imperial Sect, with more than 700,000 samsarans. It was three times as powerful as the Archaion Sect.

Finally, Dugu Jin's gaze fell upon the Hexapath Sword Sect who still had more than a hundred thousand powerhouses. All forty thousand of the Draconis House of Jian had returned to Xuanyuan Lake, seemingly tricked out of the battlefield and still in a state of confusion. The situation had taken a drastic turn. Without Jian Wuyi and Feng Qingyu's flight of fancy, they weren't willing to merge with the Tai'e House of Jian. At the moment, the Hexapath Sword Sect was being led by Feng Qingyu's swordbeasts.

"Greetings...."

Just as Dugu Jin spoke, one of Feng Qingyu's swordbeasts interrupted, "Sect Master Dugu, wait until you've taken Xuanyuan Lake before you even think of swallowing Hexapath."

The Jian clan were still arrogant. After picking up Feng Qingyu's corpse, the three swordbeasts left with more than a hundred thousand powerhouses.

"Are you joining the four sects?" Dugu Jin asked coldly.

"You're mistaken. We just want to go back to the Swordsoul Mountains and bury our sect master."

While they weren't willing to surrender, like Changsun Shenqiong, they wouldn't help the Archaion Sect either. The Draconis House of Jian's indifference had chilled their hearts. With that, Hexapath departed.

"Aren't they stubborn! Now that Feng Qingyu is gone, Hexapath is merely a second-rate sect, yet they're still building castles in the air. It'll be their turn once we've taken Xuanyuan Lake!" Changsun Shenqiong pursed his lips.

"When Xuanyuan Xi is dead, the Archaion Sect will be destroyed. We won't have to set foot on the Swordsoul Mountains, they'll come out on their own. How long can the three swordbeasts who're in the death phase protect them? No one can stand alone in this new world." Dugu Jin smiled coldly.

Changsun Shenqiong truly understood the extent of his cruelty from his smile. Fortunately, he had made the correct decision.

So the next step was to attack Xuanyuan Lake? Dugu Jin stared at the lake, lips curled in a sinister smile.

"Do you understand now why I tried to assassinate Xuanyuan Xi during the Number One Summit? It's because I knew Di Zang would attack Archaion whether Xuanyuan Xi exists or not. It doesn't matter if she's dead or alive. I was headed to the Kilostar Domain, so that was my only shot at killing their so-called goddess. It's a pity she's a resilient one. But that's alright. There's only two people in this world who're on their way to achieving godhood. As long as I kill Xuanyuan Xi, there'll be no one else to threaten me! Of course, I have to kill Li Tianming as well!"

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Ten miles outside Xuanyuan Lake, a group of eighty thousand Samsara powerhouses had returned. They paused temporarily, watching from the sidelines, witnessing the earth-shattering changes in Xuanyuan Lake—from the battle between the five allied sects and the four great sects, the defection of Biritual, Tianming's shocking revelation, to Dugu's Jin's murder of the specter race, the establishment of the Flameyellow Imperial Sect, unification of the three divine realms, and the apparent domination of this land.

Fang Taiqing frowned at the sight of all this. Narrowing his eyes, he stared at Dugu Jin for a long time, his gaze thick with indifference. The look in his eyes fluctuated.

"Who would've thought that your subordinate is a descendent of the Blooddragon Clan! Even more unexpected was the fact he had the specters fooled. It's amazing he's achieved all this." Fang Yuqing sighed, shaking her head.

"His progress has made us all sit up and take notice. Not bad," said Fang Taiqing.

"So Great Emperor Xuanyuan cruelly punished the Blooddragon Clan because their power threatened him? What a tragedy," said Fang Yuqing.

"You believe in words meant to confuse?" Fang Taiqing sneered.

"Is that so? What a complicated man! His lies sound like the truth." Fang Yuqing was speechless.

"The dead cannot testify, and the truth is no longer important. Everyone's looking for a way out, and Dugu Jin's appearance has given them hope," said Fang Taiqing.

"It's a pity the opportunity didn't fall into your lap." Fang Yuqing lamented.

"I can't do it, because I can't kill Ghoulish King Po Suo. That's the key to controlling the masses. What's more, the Nonahall Ghost Sect looks down on me." Fang Taiqing was pleased that the two ghoulish kings who once humiliated him had died miserably.

"Big Brother Qing, what should we do now? Archaion Sect is facing a crisis, but you've become stronger. If we return to the sect, we might be able to turn the tide," Fang Yuqing suggested.

"Are you stupid? Do you think we can go back? The Archaion Sect must hate me to the bone. Now that Biritual is on their side, Xuanyuan Lake no longer has a place for the Sterling House of Fang. If we go over now, they'll only resent us." Fang Taiqing glared at her.

"In this case, there's obviously no way for us to intervene. Even if we decide to take them by surprise, who should we attack? Judging by the current situation, it's best to withdraw from the fight like the Hexapath Sword Sect. We still have the advantage of an entire clan's fighting power. Let them fight while we hide and take our time to develop," said Fang Yuqing.

"No." Staring at the other side, Fang Taiqing shook his head.

"Why not? If nothing works, then what should we do? Join the Flameyellow Imperial Sect?" Fang Yuqing sighed.

"That's right." There was madness in his eyes.

"What?" Still in shock, Fang Yuqing grabbed Fang Taiqing. "Stop joking, Big Brother Qing. Don't scare me."

"I'm not. I mean it. I'm going to meet Dugu Jin and join the Flameyellow Imperial Sect," Fang Taiqing replied.

"Why?"

"It's simple. First of all, the Flameyellow Imperial Sect has an absolute advantage. Secondly, although Dugu Jin is powerful, the Blooddragon Clan no longer exists. He doesn't have a clan to support him. Most importantly, he's now in the death phase and only has thirty years to achieve godhood. He's not a specter. I'm betting he'll die!" said Fang Taiqing.

"What do you mean? Didn't he say he'll achieve godhood in three years?"

"If he doesn't reassure them with something, will Nonahall be willing to support him? Yuqing, now that I have reached the twelfth-level life phase, I understand how difficult it is to become a god. Before me is an immeasurable chasm. I don't believe he'll make that breakthrough. No one has been able to ascend to godhood for a hundred thousand years. If he fails, he doesn't even have a clan behind him and the world will be in my hands. I won't enter the death phase. By relying on the strength of the Imperial Sect, the Sterling House of Fang will flourish for at least three hundred years!" Fang Taiqing said passionately.

"But what if he does become a god?" asked Fang Yuqing.

"Then he'll dominate the world. When that happens, the Imperial Sect will be the only one standing. I'll be second in command, and the Sterling House of Fang will be able to grow. Why not? There's no losing on this path. Do you understand?" Fang Taiqing smiled.

"I don't understand, and I don't want you to do this." Fang Yuqing was in tears.

"Why can't you understand such simple logic? We must strive for the best, let alone the weak who must seize every opportunity to climb up." Fang Taiqing sounded angry.

"But how many years has our clan been in Taiji Peak Lake? Our ancestors worked so hard to grow here and share Archaion's fortune. We've contributed so much to the growth of the Archaion Sect. Many people in Xuanyuan Lake are acquaintances, and even friends. Forget the fact that we fled when the sect was in danger. How can we help the people who're trying to kill them? What about our conscience?"

Pulling his arm, Fang Yuqing pleaded with her eyes. "Big Brother Qing, shall we stop struggling to survive in the cracks? The dignity of our clan and the respect of others must be obtained through our own strength. I know you're confident after your breakthrough, but they'll only look down on us if we play up to those in power!"

"You're wrong, Yuqing. Only irresistible power can win the respect of others. They won't care what means you use, they'll be frightened for their lives! Conscience won't help the Sterling House of Fang develop. Only by relying on strength can we dominate this world. History is filled with examples of this," said Fang Taiqing.

"Why can't we behave righteously—"

"I join the Imperial Sect and destroy the Archaion Sect with my strength to fight for control of this world. Doesn't that make me righteous?" Fang Taiqing asked.

"Have you forgotten about the three-faced house pets? They'll call us the four-faced house pets behind our backs! Isn't it humiliating enough?" Fang Yuqing said with tears streaming down her face.

"Humiliating? When we stand at the pinnacle of this world, anyone who dares speak those words will die! Don't you understand that only strength will shut their mouths?"

"I don't understand! I know that you've been insulted and spurned for deserting the sect. You're unwilling to leave like this, unwilling to hide and develop. You want to prove yourself so they stop mocking you! So you've not only endangered the clan once, but you're about to do it again!" Fang Yuqing said frantically.

"Yuqing!"

Fang Taiqing roared, raising his hand to slap her. However, he still held back.

"Is honor important?" she asked.

"Yes." Fang Taiqing breathed hoarsely.

"More important than your conscience?"

"Yes!"

"You're not weak, so you're unwilling to give up. You think that you can make them respect you, respect us."

"Yes!"

"Only with strength can you accomplish this."

"Yes, that's the reality of the matter!" said Fang Taiqing.

Fang Yuqing stumbled backward.

"I've misjudged you, Big Brother Qing." She trembled.

"Don't make your final conclusion. You should ask everyone else for their opinion." Fang Taiqing pointed behind them.

All eighty thousand powerhouses were listening to them quarrel.

"What do you choose? To put away your conscience, rise to higher peaks and bask in the glory, or retreat, suffer the ridicule of others, and live like cowards?" Fang Taiqing asked, his eyes red.

Their hearts shook.

"I support the house king!"

A slender figure emerged from the crowd.

Chapter 912 - The Imperial Sect's Second Sect Master

Fang Xingying was a humble figure that no one paid attention to. Fang Taiqing had almost forgotten about this man. He smiled at him.

After Fang Xingying, members of the Sterling House of Fang expressed their willingness to follow Fang Taiqing until Fang Yuqing was the only one who remained. Their actions proved one thing—honor was more important than a conscience.

"Yuqing, go with your conscience." Closing his eyes, Fang Taiqing took a deep breath.

Eighty thousand people turned and rushed toward Xuanyuan Lake.

Very soon, Fang Taiqing realized that Fang Yuqing had followed them.

"What're you doing?" asked Fang Taiqing.

"I'll collect your body when you've suffered retribution," said Fang Yuqing.

He took a deep breath and roared with laughter. This was the most important bet of his life.

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As soon as the Jian clan left, the Imperial Sect's seven hundred thousand warriors gathered in front of Xuanyuan Lake. A phoenix cry sounded from the north; everyone looked up to see more than a hundred thousand phoenix lifebound beasts braving the wind and snow. Their flames melted the heavy snow and formed a monstrous wave of fire. What a spectacular sight indeed.

"It's the Sterling House of Fang!"

"They're returning to the Archaion Sect?"

"The enemy approaches!"

Many among the Imperial Sect were vigilant. Dugu Jin was the only one with a faint smile on his lips. The moment he waved his hand, the crowd fell silent. Approaching the Sterling House of Fang, he said, "Why so disconcerted? Our visitors are like-minded people."

"Fang Taiqing is on our side?" Changsun Shenqiong did a double take.

Amidst his puzzlement, the phoenixes descended from the sky and landed before the seven-hundred-thousand-strong army. Out from the crowd walked Fang Taiqing, dressed in cyan phoenix robes and supported by the Sterling House of Fang powerhouses. Dugu Jin stood opposite him, clad in black and red. Both men held their hands behind their backs as they exchanged a smile.

"Not bad. You've made a breakthrough and reached the peak of the twelfth-level life phase. It's no wonder you returned." Dugu Jin smiled.

Having entered the life phase, Fang Taiqing appeared a lot younger. The change was obvious at a glance. The two men had once competed for the position of Heaven Branch Sect Master in Archaion Sect. In truth, no matter how strong Dugu Jin was, he was destined to be the loser because he didn't have the

support of a clan. There were certainly grievances in the contention between the two, but now it seemed their intention was to bury the enmity with a smile.

Perhaps because they were competitors, they knew each other better. After Fang Taiqing reached the twelfth-level life phase and become the next Feng Qingyu, the meaning was different. Fang Taiqing stepped out and got straight to the point. "Sect Master, the Sterling House of Fang is willing to join and serve the Imperial Sect, defeat the Archaion Sect, slaughter the tyrant's descendants, and seek justice for the Blooddragon Clan."

Dugu Jin laughed. Because they were so familiar with each other, this scene was all the more unexpected.

Upon hearing Fang Taiqing's words, many smiled knowingly and cursed; the leopard never changes its spots.

Dugu Jin walked up to Fang Taiqing. The two men stared at each other, gazes fiery. Then, Dugu Jin stretched out his arms and gave Fang Taiqing a warm hug.

In front of everyone, he raised Fang Taiqing's hand and solemnly announced, "From today onward, Fang Taiqing will be the Imperial Sect's second sect master!"

An uproar ensued. Although the status of Archaion Sect's Heaven Branch sect master was equally esteemed, what the Imperial Sect possessed was the audacity to unify the land. The position of second sect master was undoubtedly more prestigious than any in the Archaion Sect. More importantly, Dugu Jin placed Fang Taiqing in such a high position regardless of their former hatred. With one hug, he had silenced all the naysayers.

It was clear that they needed each other. Dugu Jin required a truly capable general, and Fang Taiqing needed to make a comeback. Their needs happened to click, thus the two came together. At this point, it didn't matter if either man harbored ulterior motives.

"Second Sect Master!" they shouted.

Perhaps there were those among them who were dissatisfied with the outcome. However, their disapproval meant nothing in the face of the majority. With the merger came a top powerhouse at twelfth-level Samsara and eighty thousand mighty members of the Sterling House of Fang. Although Heptastar had hundreds of thousands of Samsara powerhouses, they wouldn't necessarily be a match for the Sterling House of Fang. Amidst the commotion, Changsun Shenqiong grit his teeth and was forced to accept the situation. Although Dugu Jin hadn't specified, it was obvious that Changsun Shenqiong had become the third sect master.

"Please abandon all prejudices from now on. There is no Nonahall, Heptastar, Quadform, or Archaion Sect. We are one! Let's fight for our common goal!" said Dugu Jin.

"Thank you, Sect Master. Thank you for your trust. I, Fang Taiqing, will set an example and give my all for the sect!" said Fang Taiqing.

"I will do the same." Although Changsun Shenqiong couldn't get a word in edgewise, he bit the bullet and shouted.

Sweeping his gaze across the masses, Dugu Jin declared, "The rules of the sect will gradually be introduced. Today, I shall declare the first article—the Imperial Sect's three sect masters are chosen and ranked based on strength! As long as you have the strength, anyone can challenge a sect master and replace him!"

As soon as the words left his lips, the crowd cheered. This regulation was intended to appease the Nonahall powerhouses. After all, Nonahall consisted of many clans. They were the Imperial Sect's most powerful force, yet none of them had been elected sect master. Even if Dugu Jin was a supporter, there was bound to be discontent.

This gave every clan hope. At the very least, there would be someone who could surpass Changsun Shengqiong, who was only an eleventh-level samsaran. A system based on strength was most convincing.

Regardless of how united the newly formed Imperial Sect was, it had now gathered the peak powerhouses and an army of eight hundred thousand samsarans. It was much stronger than the original Nonahall Ghost Sect.

"Sect Masters, are we going to flatten Xuanyuan Lake?" they asked.

"Of course! They're still dealing with Ghoulish King Di Zang. Even if they have the help of Yinyang and six hundred thousand tribulation elders, the Nine Dragon Formation is currently being restrained by Di Zang. They don't stand a chance against us!"

There was no need for prompting; Dugu Jin couldn't wait any longer. He didn't immediately slay Di Zang in order to use the last remaining ghoulish king against the Archaion Sect. Words alone weren't enough to build up the Imperial Sect; this was the perfect time to show their strength and destroy the Archaion Sect.

"We'll slaughter all of them, flatten Xuanyuan Lake, then head to the Swordsoul Mountains and conquer the Hexapath Sword Sect. The world will be ours! Brothers, come with me and kill the enemy!"

Chapter 913 - Eighth-Level Life Phase

Within the Nine Dragon Formation, Xuanyuan Dao, Li Caiwei, and the sect masters of Triflair, Pentaphase, and Octagram, as well as many third-origin tribulation elders were all battling Ghoulish King Di Zang and his lifebound beast. By the looks of the situation, all was under control. Having arrived at Soulburn Hall, Ouyang Jianwang was protected by the inner formation and safe for the moment.

The crisis brought by the remnants of the specter race had been eliminated after Dugu Jin and Feng Qingyu slew Ghoulish King Po Suo and Jiang Wuxin respectively. The remaining ghoulish king, Di Zang, wouldn't be able to overturn the heavens. Victory was in sight, but there was still a large Nonahall army outside. The four major sects were still sailing close to the wind.

Tianming hadn't participated in the battle against Di Zang. He retreated to Xuanyuan Lake with the Amnestic River Voidbanner.

"There are three hundred million vitae imprisoned by this banner. Let's see if I can tear it apart."

There were two parts to the Amnestic River Voidbanner. The first part was a gray spear that served as the flagpole, and the second part was the banner that imprisoned three hundred million vitae. These two parts combined constituted the power of this divine artifact.

“Feng Qingyu’s Hexafirmament Eradicator cracked after attacking the Prime Tower, which proves that the Grand-Orient Sword and Prime Tower are of a higher level.”

Placing the banner on the ground, Tianming roared and used all his strength to pierce the banner with his sword.

Although he failed to break the banner, it trembled. It was clear the Grand-Orient Sword had a certain effect on it.

“It isn’t broken? One more time!”

Focusing on one spot, Tianming stabbed the Grand-Orient Sword over and over again.

Ten, twenty times! Those who weren’t aware of the sword’s might would assume he was fooling around. On his thirtieth strike, the sword finally pierced and tore the banner, causing a loud buzz. The banner violently vibrated, then evaporated into a large cloud of white mist that rose into the air and gradually spread out.

Three hundred million vitae was no small figure. Among them were the vitae of beasts. The thick white mist propelled Tianming outside and instantly filled most of the battlefield before soaring into the clouds. Upon closer inspection, the clouds and mist that swept across the entire battlefield seemed to contain countless figures, all staring at him.

“Thank you...” a voice sounded in his ears. It wasn’t spoken by one person, but by hundreds of millions. Tianming felt as if the entire world echoed these two words.

“Thank you for freeing us.”

"You’ll be rewarded."

“Don’t stray from this path.”

Toward the end, the voice no longer sounded like it came from these vitae, but from the heavens and earth.

“Transcend all living beings and escape the mortal coil, and boundless beneficence will follow.”

Tianming had never experienced such resonance of the soul. When these mist-like vitae soared into the sky and began dissipating, it seemed like they were responding in kind; Tianming’s Imperial Will grew once more.

“I recently advanced to the seventh-level death phase before entering the Ninefold Hell. It’s only been a few days....”

His present epiphany was similar to attaining the dao. This was the Imperial Will that he cultivated, a special path of cultivation. Ordinary people seldom possessed this mode of comprehension. Cultivating

in the mortal world, fighting wars, and slaughter were all ways to learn through experience and begot good fortune.

Three hundred million vitae were saved. In the transcendence, Tianming's heavenly will was sublimated.

"I might be able to break through to the eighth-level life phase."

This time, his Imperial Will had grown tremendously. The Grand-Orient Sword in his sea of consciousness was stronger and more defined.

"I'm close to the eighth-level death phase."

Three hundred million vitae was an impressive figure indeed. However, the closer one approached completion on the path of Samsara, the more difficult it became. Ghoul King Si Ling's crimes were trifles, compared to the Nonahall Specter. Because Tianming was so close to Ascension, his Imperial Will was in abundance. It was nothing short of a great gain for such monumental growth to occur at this point.

"The Aeonic Grandbane has given me the ability to plunder vitality and transform it into samsara rings. In the Ninefold Hell, I slaughtered many of the specter race and seized their vitality with the power of death. My eighth samsara ring is almost fully formed."

In the past, what he lacked was expansion of his heavenly will. But now that his Imperial Will had grown, the only thing remaining was his eighth samsara ring, which would form at an amazing speed on this battlefield. Thus, Tianming successfully entered the eighth-level life phase and would soon be able to break through to the eighth-level death phase.

"My cultivation stage would make me a second-origin tribulation elder, but based on my strength...."

His strength would have to be determined in actual combat.

"The Aeonic Grandbane allows me to plunder vitality even in the death phase, so I'm able to form the next samsara ahead of time. My strength grows with the expansion of the samsara rings."

Although he could no longer steal vitality at the eighth-level life phase, Tianming experienced a big surge in strength due to the expansion of his samsara rings.

"So the increase in strength from my transition from death to life phase is actually greater than the other way around. I wonder what'll happen to my Aeonic Grandbane when I reach Ascension."

Tianming was filled with anticipation. After advancing to the life phase, he recovered his youth once more and resembled a young boy of seventeen, tender and lovely.

"How annoying. You look more and more like a younger brother," said Feiling.

"Nonsense! I'm a hunk!"

With his increase in strength, Tianming's confidence had received a boost as well.

"The Progenitor asked me to return his caelum to the Old Deepstar Path. There's more progress to be made. I need time! I must drive these people away!"

At the thought of that, Tianming picked up the Amnestic River Voidbanner from the ground.

“The banner has withered away, but the spear remains. It can still be used. Although half of its power has diminished, it’s still a divine artifact. Vitae are no longer required.”

After all, it was a divine artifact. Tianming put it away.

“Right now, I may be the most powerful of all four sects.”

Fang Taiqing had fled.

Narrowing his eyes, Tianming glanced at Di Zang.

“But within the two formations, Sect Master Xuanyuan and Li Caiwei are the strongest.”

With them stationed in the formation, Tianming wasn’t planning on heading over at the moment. Once the threat of the specter race was eliminated, would the five allied sects outside still have their hearts set on killing Feiling?

Immediately after his breakthrough, he headed outside. Arriving on the edge of Xuanyuan Lake, he witnessed the establishment of the Imperial Sect, their merging with Heptastar, and their preparations to attack Xuanyuan Lake.

At this juncture, Fang Taiqing returned with eighty thousand members of the Sterling House of Fang, then joined the Flameyellow Imperial Sect and became the second sect master. Such drastic changes confirmed Tianming's worries.

Chapter 914 - The Chaosblitz Tome

"Just as I thought, these bastards haven’t abandoned their wild ambitions. As a descendent of the Blooddragon Clan, Dugu Jin must destroy the Xuanyuan clan and Archaion Sect. Ling’er and I are his most important goal and he’s now the most powerful man in the continent. Our sides are like fire and water. We’re bound to fight to the death!"

The reasons behind the conflict had continuously changed on both sides. And now they had returned to the original reason for the war—that is, to slay Her Eminence. This was Tianming’s greatest conflict with them.

“Fang Taiqing is even more despicable than I thought. The man will do anything to achieve his goal, even work for the interest of the enemy at the expense of his own sect and ruthlessly betray the sect. Such a man is detestable!"

Dugu Jin wanted to dominate the continent for revenge. In his opinion, there was nothing wrong with that. He had killed Ghou King Po Suo, but Fang Taiqing had not only fled from Archaion Sect, which led to their defeat, but now his actions had added insult to injury. Fang Taiqing’s declaration of loyalty to Dugu Jin made Tianming tremble with rage.

“How can such a despicable man exist! I thought he’d at least have a bit of conscience." Feiling fumed.

“I’m not surprised. He condoned his son’s move to steal Fang Xingying’s Rainbow Phoenix Bloodline. How can he be any good? He’s a treacherous, immoral man. In order to climb up the ladder, his clan has

forsaken all principles. Their disciples were extremely arrogant in the Deepstar Battle. Fang Xingque's disposition is the embodiment of their clan!"

"Big Brother, they're about to attack us! Xuanyuan Dao and the others are occupied with dealing with Ghoul King Di Zang. We alone can't stop Dugu Jin and Fang Taiqing, can we?" Feiling said anxiously.

"Why not?"

With the loud commotion from the Imperial Sect, almost everyone in Xuanyuan Lake knew about them. Just after having freed themselves from the threat of the specter race, they were now faced with an even more deadly threat—Dugu Jin and Fang Taiqing, who led eight hundred thousand troops.

"Assemble!"

They all roared. Aside from Xuanyuan Dao and Li Caiwei, there were six hundred thousand samsarans after the addition of the Yinyang Sect, all of whom flew toward Tianming.

"Fang Taiqing, that shameless lackey!"

"What a repugnant man!"

"The Archaion Sect gave them a place to stay and allowed them to develop and grow. Even the Xuanyuan clan made way for them. They were despicable enough to flee before battle, and now here they are, repaying good with evil!"

Everyone despised traitors more than a strong enemy. Although Dugu Jin had also left the Archaion Sect, he had hatred with the Xuanyuan Clan and his own clan had never benefited from them. He had always been considered a marginal man in the sect.

On the contrary, Fang Taiqing was the Heaven Branch sect master, and their current generation was indeed talented. Aside from Fang Taiqing, Xuanyuan Dao, Jian Wuyi, and Dugu Jin, even Yi Xingyin and Ouyang Jianwang were impressive. It was a pity that each had their own ambitions; one laid dormant for revenge, another was unscrupulous, and another treacherous.

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Outside the formation, Fang Taiqing and Dugu Jin led an army of eight hundred thousand.

"Kill Xuanyuan Xi, Li Tianming, and Xuanyuan Dao!"

Those were Dugu Jin's goals. Xuanyuan Dao was targeted because he possessed one of the keys that opened the Heaven Cauldron. Gazing into the formation, Fang Taiqing immediately caught sight of Tianming and his steely-eyed death stare.

"You take Xuanyuan Xi. Leave the imperial son to me." Fang Taiqing smiled coldly.

"So you're eyeing his treasures?" asked Dugu Jin.

"No, they belong to you," Fang Taiqing replied.

"I'm joking, Brother. Alright, you can have Li Tianming!" Dugu Jin laughed.

"I won't let you down!"

The army charged into the Nine Dragon Formation under their leadership. An earthshaking battle was about to begin. Because of Dugu Jin and Fang Taiqing, Xuanyuan Lake was faced with another crisis. With Di Zang impeding the Nine Dragon Formation, Xuanyuan Lake was defenseless; the force of a unified Flameyellow Imperial Sect was absolutely terrifying.

"A year ago, who would've thought that our own Heaven Branch sect master and first tribulation elder would be the ones who most wanted to destroy the Archaion Sect!"

Many people in the sect were sad. The world was changing too quickly, and the hearts of men were unpredictable; everyone seemed to want to rule the world and become emperor. Who would remain loyal and righteous? Who would still fight for justice? The current generation of the Archaion Sect was its most glorious throughout the past hundred thousand years, but they were also the most unfortunate. When the shepherds quarreled, the wolf had a winning game. And the two wolves, Dugu Jin and Fang Taiqing, were loathsome.

The mountains and earth shook as the army entered Xuanyuan Lake. Despair and rage boiled in the hearts of every Archaion Sect powerhouse. The four sects had been rendered speechless.

Steering his blood-red dragons, Dugu Jin led the way. Upon entering the formation, the first thing he did was to approach Li Caiwei and loudly say, "Li Caiwei, the remnants of the specter race are gone. What remains is the grievance between the Flameyellow Imperial Sect and Archaion Sect. You can choose not to participate. If you decide to help us, we'll naturally welcome you. I won't stop you if you choose to withdraw, but if you insist on assisting the Archaion Sect, the Imperial Sect will trample the Yinyang Sect and annex the Birtual Divine Realm. Please think twice for the sake of the billions of lives in Birtual. Don't sacrifice your friends for the sake of selfishness and self-interest!"

His power was overwhelming. The fact that Li Caiwei was given a chance to retreat and leave, like the Hexapath Sword Sect, was considered a sign of respect. However, Li Caiwei ignored him.

"Li Caiwei, I'll give you one last chance. Don't ruin the Yinyang Sect," Dugu Jin warned.

"Do you take me for a fool? If you think you can take down the Yinyang Sect without a fight and make me bow to you, you can dream on. Do you think a lone marshal without a family or clan who relies on winning over people's hearts is worthy? Right now, you control their hearts because of your outstanding talent, but you'll be the first one they kill when you fall. Even Fang Taiqing dreams of killing you." Li Caiwei smiled contemptuously.

Dugu Jin roared with laughter. He was well aware of what his weakness was, that is, the lack of a clan and foundation. Everything she said was right.

"There's no way I'll fall."

Power was his source of confidence. With that, he sought out Solar Master Qin Fengyang from within the crowd and said, "Sect Master Qin, you're welcome to bring the Yinyang Demon Sect and merge with the Imperial Sect! After we've taken Xuanyuan Lake, Birtual Divine Realm will be yours to govern!"

"Are you serious?" Qin Fengyang's eyes lit up.

"I give you my word!"

Qin Fengyang was struggling inside. Glancing at Li Caiwei, he stood up and shouted, "Brothers of my Yinyang Sect, the Archaion Sect is at the end of the road, and Dugu Jin is the most powerful man in the continent. Even Fang Taiqing has joined them and is sitting in the town. In this chaotic world where outstanding heroes have risen, only one man stands out, and that's Dugu Jin! The threat of the specter race is gone. Please follow me in joining the Flameyellow Imperial Sect and creating a prosperous world!"

Despite his excitement, there was dead silence behind him. No one had responded to him.

"Fuck off, you running dog," said a young tribulation elder.

Qing Fengyang was shocked.

"Can't you see the situation clearly? You've all been bewitched by Li Caiwei. It seems you won't repent unless you're dead!" he said bitterly.

"Fuck off!" they all shouted.

Qin Fengyang had completely lost power. Without any support, he had no value in the eyes of Dugu Jin. Ignoring him, Dugu Jin turned to Li Caiwei. "Alright, you've made your choice and missed the opportunity. You'll regret this."

"I've always lived honorably and righteously. I have no regrets. You can fuck off now." Li Caiwei threw him a scornful look.

From the very beginning, what she had wanted was to regain possession of Taiji Peak Lake, which had originally belonged to the Yinyang Sect.

Dugu Jin sneered and turned to stare at Xuanyuan Dao. They were equally familiar with each other, and Dugu Jin wanted Xuanyuan Dao's life.

"Old friend, I trust you've been well since we last met," said Dugu Jin.

"Don't call me like that. You don't deserve to," Xuanyuan Dao said coldly.

Dugu Jin laughed. In that instant, the man shot toward Xuanyuan Dao with his red dragons.

"Die, descendent of the tyrant!"

.....

On the other side of the battlefield, Fang Taiqing arrived in front of Tianming in the blink of an eye, spear in hand.

"Imperial son, I trust you've been well since I last saw you."

"Whose dog are you? You're pissing everywhere. Where's your master? Come get your dog!" Tianming mocked.

"Why bother? You're a man, so the rules of adults apply to you. Don't you understand that it's every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost?" Fang Taiqing smiled.

"Is that the reason you're so ruthless and working with the enemy? To deal with your own sect? What a cliché! Can't you come up with a better excuse? At least we won't look down on you." Tianming sneered.

"What's the point? History will only remember who dies today, and who becomes king," Fang Taiqing replied.

"You're right, but a dog like you will never become king," Tianming said coldly.

Fang Taiqing laughed. "Goodbye, genius."

With his spear aimed at Tianming, he darted out. At that moment, Tianming pulled out a ten-centimeter-thick heavenly pattern tome from the Skydragon. The tome had a total of three thousand pages filled with heavenly patterns. Tens of thousands of heavenly patterns made up a complex and terrifying third-origin tribulation pattern tome.

What was a third-origin tribulation pattern tome? Its value was equivalent to an ordinary third-origin tribulation pattern formation. Although it wasn't comparable to the Sun-Moon-Star Formation, it was very precious. Despite having different advantages, tribulation pattern tomes and tribulation pattern formations produced similar effects.

The top tribulation patternscribes in the Flameyellow Continent were Yi Xingyin and Li Caiwei. They could create third-origin tribulation pattern formations, but not tomes. In other words, this was an absolute gem that could only be found in the Skydragon. Unfortunately, such treasures were the minority. But today, he had to use the chaosblitz tome.

Just as Fang Taiqing led his army in attack, Tianming activated the chaosblitz tome and tossed it toward Fang Taiqing.

"Get out of the way!" Fang Taiqing's expression took a drastic turn.

Chapter 915 - The Reincarnation Of The Tyrant

Fang Taiqing darted up into the sky, avoiding the impact of the third-origin tribulation pattern tome. However, there were at least a hundred thousand warriors behind him that were enveloped by the majestic power of the chaosblitz tome.

The heavenly patterns on the tome instantly exploded, turning into a purple lightning pool tens of thousands of meters wide. Thunder rumbled and lightning crackled, sweeping forward like Lan Huang's Primordial Wheel. Lightning shot across the area, shaking the earth.

The raging lightning exploded over a hundred thousand beastmasters and lifebound beasts. With the eruption of the chaosblitz tome, at least thirty thousand of them were instantly electrocuted to death, turned into fragmented corpses and ash. Only a fifth of the powerhouses escaped. The rest were severely injured and had temporarily lost their combat effectiveness.

What did that mean? The chaosblitz tome had toppled a group of warriors equivalent to the Draconis House of Jian, some killed and others incapacitated. Of course, to achieve this kind of frightening effect, there was indeed a prerequisite—they had to be crowded together.

Xuanyuan Lake wasn't very large. Because they had rushed in to attack without any preparation, the warriors had swarmed together, allowing for such lethality from the chaosblitz tome. Tianming's move shocked the entire Xuanyuan Lake.

In that instant, the advancing army stopped in horror, including Dugu Jin who was about to attack Xuanyuan Dao.

"Chaosblitz tome? It originates from the tyrant!" Dugu Jin frowned. "Fang Taiqing, kill him immediately!" he ordered.

Up in the sky, Fang Taiqing, who had just escaped the attack, looked down. Because the Sterling House of Fang was accustomed to following him, at least half of the fatalities belonged to his clan. He felt as if his heart was bleeding.

"Li Tianming!" Fang Taiqing stared at the young man with red eyes.

At that moment, there was yet another major turn of events. Ghoulish King Di Zang fled with his lifebound beast!

The reason was simple—his presence neutralized the power of the Nine Dragon Formation, which was tantamount to assisting Dugu Jin. If Dugu Jin received the keys, it would be more difficult for him to seize them. Since Po Suo and Jiang Wuxin had perished in battle, it made no sense for him to keep fighting.

With the Dreamheart World and Nine Dragon Formation, as well as the mayhem caused by the chaosblitz tome, Di Zang and the hell soulbeast drilled into the ground and fled in a panic. Thus, the situation had taken another turn.

As soon as the Nine Dragon Formation and Dreamheart World were freed, Xuanyuan Dao and Li Caiwei exchanged a meaningful look and eyed Dugu Jin. The Flameyellow Imperial Sect had lost their decisive opportunity.

Under such circumstances, Tianming stood in front of the army, pulled out two more third-origin tribulation pattern tomes, and roared, "Come on! You're all going to die! Let's see if I have more treasures than you have lives. Come on then! Are you afraid of death? I'll give you two more third-origin tribulation pattern tomes! Let's see who's lucky enough to be sent down to hell this time!"

Tianming was surging with majesty, his voice fierce and the two tomes in his hand truly intimidating.

Fang Taiqing's spear flew toward him. One hand holding the tomes and the other wrapped around the Grand-Orient Sword, Tianming went head to head with Fang Taiqing.

Although he was forced back several meters, Tianming was unscathed. After the expansion of his samsara rings, he was brimming with explosive tribulation force and managed to resist the twelfth-level life phase samsaran.

"Li Tianming is incredibly strong!"

"The second sect master is a twelfth-level life phase samsaran, yet still failed to injure him!"

"How terrifying! Rumor has it that this young man is the reincarnation of the tyrant!"

Their astonishment was nothing compared to Fang Taiqing's; he could hardly believe his eyes. Before his breakthrough, perhaps even Fang Taiqing wouldn't be able to easily block that move. Tianming was obviously stronger than an eleventh-level death phase samsaran. The threat of such an imperial son enraged him, and within that hot-blooded emotion was a trace of fear.

While the man was still immersed in shock, Tianming burst toward the Imperial Sect army with the two tomes.

"Run!"

The charging army was so terrified they quickly turned around and the scene descended into chaos.

On the other side, Dugu Jin was trapped in the Nine Dragon Formation. Their greatest advantage had been completely reversed because of Di Zang's escape and Tianming's powerful outbreak. Despite their numerical advantage, they had fallen into an impasse.

"Sect Masters, I don't think we should go on like this. We don't know how many treasures Li Tianming possesses!"

"He's here! Run!"

"Second Sect Master, stop him!"

The scene was out of control. Everything was playing out contrary to Dugu Jin's expectations.

"I thought Di Zang was completely mad. I didn't expect him to just escape."

Now that things had come to this, there was little Dugu Jin could do. Pressing on with meaningless sacrifice would bring him no benefit. When both the Imperial and Archaion Sects were consumed, Di Zang would be the ultimate winner, which would be yet another turn of events.

Under these circumstances, Fang Taiqing couldn't take on Tianming. Even if Dugu Jin knew how powerful the young man was, the Fang clan leader was helpless.

"Hear my order, Imperial Sect! Withdraw from Xuanyuan Lake!"

Upon Dugu Jin's command, the army under Tianming's pursuit breathed a sigh of relief and withdrew from Xuanyuan Lake. Dugu Jin escaped from the Dreamheart World as well.

As soon as they left, they gathered outside the lake. In fact, the newly-established Imperial Sect had received a rude wakeup call, a stark contrast to their prior high spirits. The sect was unstable and their members' eyes were filled with doubt.

"Please listen to me!" Dugu Jin's bearing remained unchanged. Facing the crowd, he shouted, "Understand that we will be the ultimate victors of this war. As long as I achieve godhood, Xuanyuan Lake will fall. In truth, there's no need to be impatient. With the Nine Dragon Formation, our opponents have a certain advantage and we'll have to sacrifice a great deal to defeat them. I stopped our losses in time because I don't want to see us wounded. But is the Archaion Sect really that strong? No! They rely on the other sects to stop us! However, the base of Biritual, Pentaphase, Triflair, and Octagram aren't located here. Since their powerhouses are gathered here, we can attack them one by one! Eighty percent of Biritual's powerhouses are here, and those remaining in their sect can't stop us at all. If we

attack the Biritual Divine Realm first, do you think they'll all be transferred back to the sect to fight us? Of course not! It's easy for us, now that they've chosen to stay here. Let's take this opportunity to take down all four divine realms and seize their territories. What can they do when all they have left is this tiny Xuanyuan Lake? And most importantly—"

Chapter 916 - Specter Blood Caelum

Dugu Jin cracked a smile and said, "The remnant of the specter race and those within Ninefold Hell have agreed to attack the Skysource Hellshaker Barrier together from within and without twenty-four days from now. If they miss that chance, the specters will have to wait a thousand more years before the formation collapses, even if the tyrant's divine body is destroyed. That's why Di Zang will fight the Monorigin Sect one more time. There's no way he'll let that final chance slip. Since that's the case, let's take the other four divine realms while they sit here and wait. I'd like to see whether Di Zang would dare to run away then."

Dugu Jin's backup plan won the trust of the others once more.

"That's right! We only have to destroy the other four divine realms first! If they don't chase us down when we leave, their divine realms will fall!"

"They can't fight us based on their own power, so they have to rely on their formation! It's too bad for them that so many of them have their own home bases to worry about."

"So if we wait here long enough, we win either way!"

Since Di Zang wasn't going to cause trouble at Taiji Peak Lake, there was nothing Dugu Jin could do. His efforts would only be hampered by the two formations that remained anyway. So all he could do was wait, though he could still try to force those within the formation to leave while he waited.

"I wonder if you'll stay cooped up inside your tortoise shell once we destroy your home bases! When you dare to leave, I'll make sure to kill you!" Dugu Jin laughed as he led the eight hundred thousand elites towards the Biritual Divine Realm, that was the nearest to where they were.

"Qing Fengyang!" Dugu Jin called out.

"I'm here."

"Lead the way!"

"Understood!"

.....

The battlefield was a sight of chaos and destruction. One blackened corpse had already been covered completely by the snow. At that moment, one black tentacle after another wrapped around the corpse and dragged it deep underground.

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After the Flameyellow Imperial Sect left, peace finally returned to Taiji Peak Lake. Tianming looked in the direction Dugu Jin and Fang Taiqing had left with searing killing intent. He turned around and headed to where Li Caiwei and Xuanyuan Dao were.

"Sect Masters, may I have some of your time?" he called out.

Almost immediately, a charred person on the ground stretched his shaking hands toward Tianming and cried out, "Li Tianming..."

Tianming stopped, finding the sound a little familiar. It appeared to be someone who had been blasted by the chaosblitz tome. His organs had been destroyed and he was at the brink of death; not even gods could save him now. He had come charging from the Flameyellow Imperial Sect's side.

"Fang Xingying?" Tianming asked.

"It's me."

"It's too late. You can't be saved," Tianming said after giving him a look. Since Fang Xingying was among the large group of fighters from the Sterling House of Fang, Tianming didn't notice him when he struck.

"There's no need. I have a secret to tell you..." he said exasperatedly.

"Alright, I'm listening."

"I... was the one who killed Fang Xingque. I turned him into meat paste, hahaha...." As he said that, some clarity seemed to return to his eyes.

Those words came as a shock to Tianming. But by the time Fang Xingying finished saying that, his breathing had stopped.

"Even though the death of Fang Xingque could have been a factor for Fang Taiqing's actions today, you only did what you had to do, so I won't blame you for it. However, you should've told me about this earlier. I always considered you a friend."

Perhaps Fang Xingying wouldn't have been among the ones killed if he had told the truth about the matter earlier. He might have stood on a different side of the conflict entirely.

"Such is life." Fang Xingying's death was but the tip of an iceberg. All this only made Tianming hate Fang Taiqing even more, for he was the one who brought his kin to the battlefield against him in the first place. Even though those who remained at Xuanyuan Lake had a brief moment of respite after their arguable victory, none of them seemed relaxed at all.

"Imperial Son!"

Everyone was looking at him, the young man who wasn't even thirty yet had managed to become the moral support for everyone there. In front of Tianming were Xuanyuan Dao, Li Caiwei, Lin Yuntian, Jiang Yuanjun, and the coral and rose fairies, representing the five sects.

"Everyone, Dugu Jin has left for the Yinyang Demon Sect now. I'm sure you all know what he's going to do next, right?"

"That's right. Apologies, but we'll have to go back as soon as possible." Li Caiwei seemed rather pale and exhausted after maintaining the Dreamheart World for such a long time.

"I'm actually rather impressed. I thought for sure that you would've joined Dugu Jin," Tianming said.

"Hmph, you were looking down on me, weren't you? I'll have you know that I have a spine!"

"Then do you trust me?"

"Of course. Making miracles happen is your thing, isn't it?" she snapped.

"Sect Masters, would you place your trust in me and let me handle everything that comes later? I'll do all I can to make sure everyone here has a chance of prevailing," he said with the sincerest tone he could muster.

"Tianming, compared to back then, you've really grown. You've proven yourself time and again to be reliable and resourceful. You have my complete trust," Xuanyuan Dao said.

"You were even able to take on the twelfth-level life phase Fang Taiqing. From now on, we'll leave matters in your and Her Eminence's hands," Lin Yuntian said.

The representatives of the other two sects also assented.

"Very well!" Tianming turned to Li Caiwei and said, "From now on, everyone should stay here at Xuanyuan Lake. There's no need to go back to your sects."

"But—" Li Caiwei sounded a little worried.

"Hear me out. You should send a group of people who can travel faster than Dugu Jin's army to your sects. Have your disciples and civilians scatter and escape into the wilderness. You can still make it, since the army can only travel so quickly," Tianming said.

"You mean to say that we'll protect the people? As long as they aren't gone, our sects won't perish even after our lands are taken?" Li Caiwei said.

"That's right. If they send their armies to deal with normal civilians, I can take them all alone if they're not samsarans. All you have to do is to have your people split up and take the treasures of the sect that you can bring with you. That way, their army won't be able to deal too much practical harm to your sect. Compared to this, if you leave Xuanyuan Lake as a group, you'll just make yourself easy targets."

"What's next then? Do we engage in a stalemate with them here for good? Dugu Jin will eventually ascend to godhood. Not to mention, Ghoulish King De Cang will no doubt return within twenty-four days. As long as the ghoulish king acts, they'll use that chance to cause trouble for us again. De Cang will definitely not run next time!" Li Caiwei said.

"Just leave that to me!"

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I have a way to make us all stronger within twenty-four days. I have tomes, tribulation artifacts, and tribulation manna!"

"Are you referring to the treasures left behind by Great Emperor Xuanyuan? Is there a lot? But isn't that something your ancestors left for your sect? Can we... can we really have some too?" Li Caiwei asked. They weren't from the same sect, after all; Great Emperor Xuanyuan had left those treasures for his sect.

"Everyone, you all came here to protect our sect. Now, we're in the same boat for survival. You've already given so much for us, so there's no way we can afford to be stingy now. I trust that those from my sect won't hold back either. More importantly, we have more than enough treasures. In terms of tribulation artifacts alone, we have more than enough for six hundred thousand people!" Tianming generously said.

"Now you're talking!" Li Caiwei cheered.

"Please don't hold back. It's time for us to count on one another. Whether you're doing this to help our sect or simply to ensure your own survival, we're grateful nevertheless. Consider this as repayment for your gracious deeds!" Xuanyuan Dao said.

"Apart from distributing these treasures, there's something else... Sect Masters, please come with me," Tianming said.

The others that remained were standing guard at the perimeter to have a good grasp of the location of Dugu Jin's army. At the same time, others were being sent back to their respective divine realms to mount a resistance effort in a similar vein to Archaion's—they would abandon their homes in favor of their lives. The sect masters, on the other hand, followed Tianming to the Old Deepstar Path.

"Let's head inside."

Past the entrance of the path, they entered the starry world.

"This is... oh, right, this is Great Emperor Xuanyuan's Caelum."

"Is he going to share Great Emperor Xuanyuan's caelum with us too?"

The sect masters looked at each other with eager anticipation. This sudden change in the status quo gave them some time to take a breather, during which they could grow much stronger. Finally, the gifts left behind for the descendants of Great Emperor Xuanyuan would be put to good use!

Tianming took out the stone containing the emperor's caelum. Right away, the caeli of a human and five dragons rose into the air. They began brightly glowing like suns, thanks to the Old Deepstar Path, and burned in the sky, illuminating all the Astral Wills there. At that moment, the Old Deepstar Path itself seemed to have gained a soul.

"What powerful caeli.... I sense a really strong will coming from them. As long as we can gain some insights from it, we'll benefit a whole lot." Li Caiwei's pink eyes shone with absolute wonder.

"Great Emperor Xuanyuan truly was impressive. I refuse to believe what Dugu Jin said about him," the coral fairy said. She was the one who had suffered the most out of all of them here. However, nobody would criticize her for it; instead, they consoled and supported her.

"That's not it!" Tianming said.

"What do you mean?" Xuanyuan Dao asked.

"When I entered the Ninefold Hell and killed the specters' crown prince, I also got a surprising gain. Everyone, take a look!"

He took out the melted eyes of the crown prince. All of a sudden, countless caeli came whooshing out of the eyes. When they were captured by the Old Deepstar Path, they immediately changed into blood-colored moons that hung near the six blinding suns, the center of which was Great Emperor Xuanyuan's. The other five suns orbited around it, and the blood moons orbited the ring of suns to form another ring.

"Great Emperor Xuanyuan's caelum is that of a god. I wonder if the caeli that came from the specters are the same..." Li Caiwei said.

Chapter 917 - The Hundred-Thousand-Year-Old Girl

Li Caiwei marveled as the caeli continued rising. Eventually, a thousand red moons hung around the ring of suns.

"According to the founding ancestor, only caeli that reach the Ascension stage can be retained and preserved. These blood moon caeli are all so much larger than Astral Wills, so they're obviously past the Samsara stage. Those thousand blood moons must be the souls of the specter gods!" Tianming said.

"What? The specters were that powerful?" Xuanyuan Dao said.

"It's not really that surprising. These gods were probably born over two hundred millennia, and history states that the specters were much more powerful than humans. It wouldn't be surprising for them to have up to a thousand gods among their ranks throughout all this time. I wouldn't even be surprised if there were more. The crown prince probably only retained a small portion of all the god caeli they have, possibly to aid in his cultivation. They should have thousands of such caeli. After all, not even gods are immortal, and they still die of old age. Even if they're specters, I wouldn't expect them to live longer than two millennia, let alone two hundred," Li Caiwei said. It seemed that she was rather well informed about such matters.

"The main point now is that their gods might come to benefit us! Even though they use a different method of cultivation, I discovered that the way they grow their heavenly will is similar to ours! Perhaps not all of them cultivate using evil methods, either. Instead, there should be all kinds. They probably have a more complete cultivation system that's even more powerful than those developed by us humans," Tianming said. Those were his conclusions after observing all those caeli. "The fact that they can give the crown prince so many of them means that they actually have tons of resources. It appears that the legacy of the specters is far more complete than our own. We basically don't have any god caelum to pass down, after all."

"Tianming, I want to give this a try. How do I attract these caeli?" Li Caiwei impatiently asked.

"They're already a part of the Old Deepstar Path. Just feel them out and try communicating with them."

"Alright."

Li Caiwei's talent wasn't just for show. Some time after, one of the blood moons descended and enveloped her and the other sect masters also gave it a try and succeeded. Xuanyuan Dao even managed to attract the sun caelum of one of the emperor's dragons. Tianming, on the other hand, made no moves yet.

Some time later, Li Caiwei left the blood moon, causing it to return to the sky above. Filled with joy, she said, "Amazing! The specters really are capable. For them to be able to come up with such ingenious methods.... It's no wonder they're so powerful!" Her expression was one of utter bliss.

"So you're saying that the caeli of specters are useful to us?" Tianming asked.

"Of course. You were right. They have a complete cultivation system that's far beyond ours. They aren't evil by definition. In fact, their cultivation path seems really profound! There's something we can learn from them!"

Specters and humans used to be masters and slaves. It wasn't a simple division of good and evil; both sides had cultivators belonging to both ends of the spectrum. Naturally, that didn't mean that they would be good people after they're released. The animus they had for humanity spanned two hundred millennia, and wasn't something that could simply be reconciled.

"Wonderful!" Tianming finally felt relieved.

"So what's your decision?" Li Caiwei asked, her gaze affixed to his.

"From now on, anyone from the five sects should be allowed to enter the Old Deepstar Path. Naturally, we should take all necessary precautions. After this, I'll distribute the treasures of the founding ancestor. Everyone will grow stronger!"

Li Caiwei puckered her lips and gave him a few more charming glances.

"Have you fallen for me?" Tianming said.

"I'm starting to notice you're a rather charming one. But I do wonder why there aren't packs of rabid fangirls orbiting you. Don't tell me that you're already taken?" she said with an odd look.

"Haha...." Tianming looked up at the sky. It was now his turn to absorb some caeli. No matter what, he was bound to be the one who gained the most from the legacies of the Xuanyuans and specters. Only he could possibly make rapid advances within this place.

"Ah, I must've hit the mark. Who's the lucky girl?" Li Caiwei asked.

"I know the Octagram Heart Sect is really huge on gossip and romance, but are you from there?" Tianming asked, clearing his throat.

"No, I'm not."

"Then stop prying."

"Oh, so you don't like a hundred-year-old 'girl' like me, but you'll go for a hundred-thousand-year-old girl?" she said, winking suggestively.

Tianming immediately glared at her. How was she so sharp?

"Ah, looks like I hit the mark again. You have pretty refined tastes, young man." She nodded flirtatiously, as if she had figured everything out.

"Stop messing around."

"Take me to see your goddess, then. I heard she's breathtakingly beautiful, so it's making me rather curious."

"Nope."

"Hmph, stingy!"

"Ma'am, you're not a young lass anymore. Act your age and stop pouting like that."

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Ten days later, a bloody light shone brightly from the center of an island to the south of the Nonahall Divine Realm. A black-clad girl was trapped within a formation of blood. Black chains stretched out from the electrical formation and completely tied her down, not allowing for the slightest movement.

Currently, the girl was out cold. Outside the formation lay a gigantic black beast that stared at her coldly. The wounds it had sustained in its abdomen had just healed, so the slightest movement still caused it much pain. It clearly needed some more time to recover from that devastating blast.

"Can't you just kill her off? Why go through all this trouble?" said a man with a deep voice as he came out of the shadows. It was none other than Di Zang.

"You make it sound so easy. I'm now bound by symbiotic cultivation. Her death would see me crippled, and that would be the end of me," the Archaionfiend bemoaned.

"Whatever. Now that she's bound, let's go. It shouldn't be too long until the appointed time. The ten days of travel should be enough for you to recover in full."

"Has the monster you brought recovered?"

"Almost. If anything, our bodies are tough. The ones with royal bloodlines even have two hearts. There's no way our bodies are similar to human ones. Speaking of which, that imbecile Feng Qingyu really let his emotions overwhelm him. What was all that about, dying with Jian Wuyi? He killed his own disciple and atoned for his sins, only to kill himself right after? Laughable. I wonder if his soul will scatter at the Yellow Springs once he finds out that his disciple isn't dead after all, haha!"

At that moment, a youth in black suddenly appeared and punched Di Zang in the face, breaking it completely. His teeth were completely shattered as he shrieked in pain.

When he fell to the ground, the youth clutched his neck and lifted him up. He used so much force that the ghoulish king's neck was completely crushed.

Chapter 918 - The Final Battle at Xuanyuan Lake

"Say that one more time!" the youth in black snapped, glaring at Di Zang with his bestial eyes.

"Don't be reckless, Wuxin! We're on the same side!" D Zang struggled to say.

"Say that again and I'll tear you apart alive."

"Alright, it's my mistake! Don't do this, Wuxin!"

Jiang Wuxin only loosened his grip after Di Zang pleaded with him. Then he walked a few paces away and sat on a nearby boulder, staring northward. His hand clutched his empty left chest. Only one heart in the right side of his chest continued beating.

Di Zang wiped the blood off his face and pretended to forget what had happened moments ago. "I really didn't think that I'd be screwed by that accursed Dugu Jin. He's still waiting for me to go back to Xuanyuan Lake and take on the brunt of Nine Dragon Formation for him! He plans to use me to rule the world!"

"But when the time comes, you'll have to go back in and fight to the death all the same, right? It's your fault for letting him find out about the communication ritual, you know," the Archaionfiend said.

"It's all in the past now. It's still not certain yet which side will emerge victorious! We still have two critical trump cards! First, they all think that Jiang Wuxin is dead. Jiang Wuxin can just hide among Dugu Jin's army and steal Xuanyuan Dao's key when others least expect it. Second, I bet many of them also forgot about you, right? The other key should be inside Soulburn Hall, so you should go take it. As for me, I'll act as bait and draw their attention and the attacks of the Nine Dragon Formation. I'll lure Dugu Jin's army to cause chaos for the two of you to act."

"You might just die from this, you know," the Archaionfiend said with a chuckle.

"It's only a matter of time anyway. I just want the specters to return. Someone has to be the sacrifice."

"How impressive. All I want is to take my eye back. After that, I'll make sure that brat pays dearly for what he's done! He's so powerful that I can no longer deal with him alone. When the specters return, I'll work with them. They'll eat lifebound beasts while I'll consume caeli. We'll have a feast and grow stronger together!"

"That's why it's imperative that you take Ouyang Jianwang's key!"

The Archaionfiend responded with sinister laughter. "Just wait while I add a few more seals to make sure the girl is secured here for good. That way she won't be able to cause any more trouble."

"You're a really good judge of character, picking a partner that'll intentionally work against you." Di Zang shot him a thumbs-up.

"Leave it alone!"

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Xuanyuan Dao entered the Old Deepstar Path and looked around. At the very front of the group of people was a blinding sun that illuminated the entire path. There were a few other suns that orbited around it, the combined light of which made the whole place even more blinding.

When Xuanyuan Dao came to his side, the light from the suns began receding, revealing a white-haired youth. Based on his aura right now, he had once more advanced to the death phase.

"How many days left?" Xuanyuan Dao asked.

"Twelve," Tianming said.

"I see. Looks like the specters awakening from hibernation in the Ninefold Hell has bought us some time." Xuanyuan Dao seemed relieved. Tianming's advancement was always a good thing for them.

"Is there any other matter?"

"Two days ago, you went to Pentaphase and stopped those originally from Nonahall from attacking the cities there. However, Dugu Jin has now occupied the four sects and destroyed their formation cores. Now, his army is marching back to Taiji Peak Lake in preparation for the final battle."

"Have they already arrived?" Tianming said with a furrowed brow. "By the way, can formations be restored after their cores are destroyed?"

"Normal formations can be repaired if the foundations for the formation are still around. Rebuilding will take some time, though. The Ninefold Formation, for instance, needs a month at least."

"Looks like we won't make it in time. The final battle will take place here at Xuanyuan Lake, then."

"Are you confident?"

"If Di Zang comes for a suicide battle, I think we can just barely hold on."

"Can you fight Fang Taiqing off as you are now?"

"I'm not too sure, but I'll give it a try. We still have time, so I'll keep working at it."

"Alright, I'll stop bothering you. I'll inform you if anything changes."

"Have the treasures been distributed?"

"Yes. Our combined might has significantly grown. Even though we only have around six hundred thousand troops, we should be stronger than their army."

"Great."

Once Xuanyuan Dao left, Tianming continued his cultivation.

"The caelum of the founding ancestor is truly impressive. Now my heavenly will is improving at a rate similar to when I'd just reached Samsara. In fact, the heavenly will he cultivates is incredibly similar to my Imperial Will. It's like the caelum was made for me. That's probably why the Dragonhide chose me."

Being able to look into the caelum of the emperor was like experiencing his life and insights firsthand. Some memories were a little blurry, but Tianming could feel how badly the humans from two hundred millennia ago had had it. They were enslaved and stripped of their dignity, practically reduced to living corpses. That feeling deeply resonated with Tianming, allowing him a deeper glimpse into the path the emperor had taken.

In a short dozen days, he had managed to break through to the eighth-level death phase. Naturally, a huge part of his improvement was also thanks to the good karma he had received from breaking the Amnestic River Voidbanner.

"It's still not enough power! The fourth strike, Asura Fiendgod Formation, is starting to take form. But I still need more practice. Asura, fiendgod, slaughter, death, hatred, battle.... Perhaps I should look into how the specters cultivate for some insight."

Tianming temporarily released the caelum of Great Emperor Xuanyuan and turned to those of the specters. He released his feelings of fiery passion, anger, and bloodlust that derived from his experiences here and his and Feiling's fates, especially Fang Taiqing's betrayal.

"Even though Xuanyuan Lake is in peril, the founding ancestor is looking over us. Not only that, the caeli of the specters will definitely bring me even more different insights." Killing the crown prince of the specters and getting all those caeli had been a grand stroke of luck for him.

He attracted the many specter caeli, causing them to surround him. "Come!"

He opened his arms wide and allowed them to envelop him, diving deep into the cultivation experiences of the specters. Since they were able to ascend, their experiences would be valuable to him.

The emperor was only one example, after all, and there were many more ways the specters used to achieve godhood. The fact that they were able to do so while imprisoned in the Ninefold Hell was probably something he could afford to learn more about.

"There's many ways to ascend to godhood, but the common point is making sure that your heavenly will is cultivated to its fullest extent! I'm only at the eighth-level death phase right now, so I have to continue cultivating my heavenly will to break past to the ninth-level life phase. However, breaking through should be enough for me to change my and Ling'er's fates, perhaps even that of the world...."

Tianming rapidly absorbed the experiences from the specter caeli, distilling them to their quintessence for his cultivation. Days passed with his cultivation uninterrupted, a sign that Dugu Jin was still waiting for Di Zang's appearance. The fact that he hadn't made a move yet meant that he was still waiting for the perfect opportunity. Otherwise, even if he managed to get the keys, he wouldn't be able to enter the Heaven Cauldron. They had believed that Tianming wouldn't be able to do much within that short period of time. Little did they know that Tianming had the help of all those caeli from the specters.

"I'm just a little bit short! Just a little bit more!" This entire time, he had been trying to form his ninth life samsara rings. Twelve days passed and he was almost there.

"Fate, are you fucking with me? Or are you telling me that I have to fight a close call to be able to gain true insight into survival? Even with a thousand gods helping me, the path to godhood is still unbelievably hard!" he lamented.

"You're probably just being too hard on yourself. Most people take at least ten years to go from the eighth-level death phase to the ninth-level life phase," Feiling said.

"Well, that's true...."

Right at that moment, someone came in to make a report. "Di Zang's lifebound beast has appeared near Xuanyuan Lake!"

That was the sign of the impending chaos. Everyone in the Old Deepstar Path immediately left, Tianming included.

During the past two weeks, all six hundred thousand strengthened troops had been waiting for this day to come. Xuanyuan Dao and Li Caiwei's formations were deployed while Lin Yuntian and the other sect masters were getting their samsaran elites prepared for battle. With their respective sects now occupied, they no longer had anywhere to retreat to.

"Everyone, once Dugu Jin shows up, use the tomes to hold him back! Keep him away from Soulburn Hall!" Tianming told the sect masters. He had given them the few third-origin tribulation tomes he had.

"Alright."

Xuanyuan Lake waited in silence as the grand army of the Flameyellow Imperial Sect emerged from their stations. They were all mounted on lifebound beasts that growled impatiently for the start of battle. The land outside Xuanyuan Lake was already shaking from the approach of the impressive army.

Tianming turned back to the rest, all of whom were his seniors, with a resolute gaze. Protecting humanity meant protecting himself. "We will win! Nobody shall tread on our turf unabated!"

Everyone nodded in response. While Tianming really was young, he was still the backbone of their morale.

Chapter 919 - Imperial Son Versus Fang Taiqing

"The imperial son is the second coming of the founding ancestor!"

"With him here, it's like Great Emperor Xuanyuan himself is standing with us! What do we have to fear?"

Everyone's fervent confidence in Tianming was unwavering. By now, they had basically deified him in their minds, something that would no doubt boost their morale and efficacy in battle. The catch was that he couldn't afford to fail at all. The moment he did, the whole army might just collapse.

Soon, the ground began rumbling. The army of the Flameyellow Imperial Sect was shouting their war cries, applying quite a lot of pressure to the fighters in Xuanyuan Lake. When Tianming had announced the truth about the specters, he only mentioned that there were treasures, but not how many he had. As a result, it was something the enemy feared.

"Let's hope the third-origin tribulation tomes will be able to hold Dugu Jin back long enough for me to take on Fang Taiqing!" Beside Tianming, Ying Huo, Meow Meow, Lan Huang, and Xian Xian all appeared. The gigantic tree took root in Xuanyuan Lake itself. It was now so huge that it could cover the entire battlefield, and it would be responsible for supporting the six hundred thousand troops on their side. Lan Huang, on the other hand, stood at the vanguard with its Kilofold Rings spinning as it roared.

"The grand battle is here! Descendants of Xuanyuan Xi, unite to face our enemies against the agents of the specters! Defend our home!"

"Kill!"

The loud roar shook the waters of Xuanyuan Lake. Currently, the snow was stronger than ever. The blizzard was so powerful that everyone's sight was slightly obscured. Not only that, the whooshing winds could be heard throughout. Amidst such an atmosphere, Di Zang and his lifebound beast, the hell soulbeast, appeared. The former charged straight for Xuanyuan Dao while his beast moved about underground and clashed with Xian Xian's roots.

Almost immediately, the fight between the two titans began! However, Xian Xian's roots did prove to be quite an obstacle for the beast. Li Caiwei's Dreamheart World was also projected underground to affect the beast mentally.

Xuanyuan Dao, on the other hand, had prepared the Nine Dragon Formation in anticipation of Di Zang's arrival. Di Zang had come with the resolution to go all out. Both Xuanyuan Dao and Li Caiwei could only take on either Di Zang or Dugu Jin, not both at the same time. Given the urgency of stopping the specters from returning, Di Zang was naturally their priority.

The nine dragons of the formation immediately intercepted Di Zang, but that consequently meant that Dugu Jin and his sect would face no resistance. After a loud roar, the eight hundred thousand troops charged toward Xuanyuan Lake from all directions. Dugu Jin led from one side while Fang Taiqing came from another.

The sect masters that held the third-origin tribulation pattern tomes were stationed where Dugu Jin was coming from. Perhaps with their six hundred thousand troops, they might yet slow down the enemy's momentum somewhat. Tianming's mission was to kill Fang Taiqing, one of their peak elites. As for Qin Fengyang, Changsun Shenqiong, and the rest, they didn't play much of a role in this battle. The moment Fang Taiqing entered the formation, Tianming locked on to him and vice versa. Fang Taiqing was armed with his spear, the Seven Punctures Phoenix King.

"Haha!" he chuckled, and Tianming echoed the baleful sound. With so much rage and hate in his heart, Tianming didn't want to waste time saying a single word to him. He couldn't risk letting Dugu Jin cause more trouble than he already had.

Fang Taiqing was wary of Tianming since he had previously failed to kill him. He had a feeling that Tianming had to die at all costs, otherwise none of his plans would ever work out. "You're nothing but an obstacle to the Sterling House of Fang!"

Fang Taiqing charged in with his three phoenixes as countless others watched the duel begin. In recent days, rumors of Tianming's cultivation had spread throughout Xuanyuan Lake. They all wondered what kind of power he would display in this fight, and how it would change the tide of battle.

Tianming had to win for the sect to have any hope at all. Otherwise, either the specters would return or Dugu Jin would take over the world. Tianming knew better than anyone how heavy the burden that rested on his shoulders was. He alone carried the hopes of the entire Flameyellow Continent!

Everyone in the sect considers me to be the reincarnation of the founding ancestor and is willing to give their all to me! Since the four sects were willing to give up on their homes to fight here with us to their deaths, I'll risk my life and not disappoint them! Fang Taiqing, just die already! His eyes burned with searing passion during the battle.

"Go!" Apart from Xian Xian, who was supporting the army, the rest of Tianming's lifebound beasts were fighting by his side. Meow Meow immediately turned into its Regal Chaosfiend form. Now, both he and Fang Taiqing had three beasts fighting alongside them.

"Brothers, let's make a bet!" Tianming said.

"What bet?" Ying Huo asked excitedly.

"The one who takes out his enemy the last will have to eat a pile of shit!"

"That's too harsh... but I like it!" Meow Meow said.

"I want in on it too..." Lan Huang said weakly.

"Damn, just one pile? Tortoise Bro is so huge that's barely a speck of dust! I, on the other hand, would have to spread it across three meals!" Ying Huo snapped.

"So you think you'll lose then?" Tianming said.

"No way! I'll take your bet, dammit!" Ying Huo immediately charged toward one of Fang Taiqing's phoenixes.

"Chicken Bro, that's cheating! Wait for me!" Meow Meow quickly followed suit.

They were communing telepathically, so that discussion happened in a flash. Speaking of which, they hadn't had a life and death battle in a long time. Tianming felt his blood boiling; he was almost intoxicated by this feeling. He was relishing in his hate and anger for Fang Taiqing and was already fantasizing about slapping the face of a peak elite like him. He couldn't wait to smack his face swollen.

Fang Taiqing used to have four phoenixes, but one had died, so only three remained. Their colors now corresponded to his hair, namely green, white, and red.

The blazing white phoenix was an aether white phoenix. The crimson fiery phoenix was a grand arcana phoenix. The green one was a clearflare chaos phoenix. All three of them had more than nine hundred stars. Fang Taiqing was also an expert in Infernal Will. With his robe and hair fluttering about and his spear in his hand, his sharp eyes didn't look sinister at all. Instead, his gaze seemed incredibly cold. The blazing aura coming from his body made sure that nobody could doubt his status as the second most powerful person alive.

Soon, they clashed as everyone watched.

Chapter 920 - Spearheading Phoenixes, Slashing Fiendgods

Thanks to the fact that the enemy lifebound beasts were fire phoenixes, Ying Huo had a huge advantage. It was facing off against the aether white phoenix, whose pure-white flames were void of any impurities. In terms of size, Ying Huo looked like a baby chick compared to the gigantic bird.

However, at the moment of the clash, Ying Huo unleashed its abilities in full to avoid losing the bet. Its Infernal Haze clones immediately used the Hexapath Samsara Sword with their wings against the phoenix while the real Ying Huo used the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation, something Tianming didn't find

surprising at all. The little phoenix summoned nine grand beasts of terror and unleashed their full might against the white phoenix.

Enraged, the phoenix caused its feathers to glow white hot as it used its ability, Flashflare Blast. It was an attack with both light and fire elements. The moment it exploded, the entire area was covered in blinding light that spread with the flames.

The white phoenix's physical capabilities were also powerful, but it was too bad it could hardly hit Ying Huo, who charged into the area covered by the blinding-white flames. Thanks to its fire resistance and the Greenspark Tower, it wasn't afraid of that ability at all. As such, when it appeared before the white phoenix, it only suffered some minor scratches on the surface.

Subsequently, the nine beasts formed from sword ki bit down on the white phoenix and left bloody gashes behind. The ninth-level life-phase Ying Huo had become the first one to subdue its foe! Needless to say, it wouldn't be eating shit anytime soon.

Meanwhile, Meow Meow was facing off against the crimson arcana phoenix at a lower altitude. Their fire and lightning clashed with each other time and again. While Meow Meow wanted to engage using its Fiendish Venus-enhanced body, the phoenix didn't humor it at all. Most of the time, Meow Meow was suppressed by its foe's Illuminating Flare and Solar Supreme. Even so, Meow Meow wasn't at a disadvantage with the help of the Greenspark Tower.

On Lan Huang's side, one was fighting in the water and the other was in the air. All the clearflare chaos phoenix dared to do was rain down Azure Skyfire Rain on Lan Huang without daring to go down. Lan Huang didn't dare to go up to fight either. The only way it could take care of the phoenix was to wait for it to give up on its aerial superiority. As such, the one most likely to lose the bet was Lan Huang. Even so, it did a good enough job holding the phoenix back, so it couldn't disrupt the others.

All in all, Tianming's lifebound beasts were already performing far beyond expectations. After all, Fang Taiqing was a twelfth-level life phase samsaran, someone comparable to Feng Qingyu back when he had showed up at Tianming City. If anything, this was a stunning testament to Tianming's current abilities.

Between the fighting beasts were the beastmasters themselves, Tianming and Fang Taiqing. Tianming's white hair flared up after the first time he clashed with Fang Taiqing. Fang Taiqing's fearsome spear art was called Returning Phoenix. Despite his usual dignified appearance, he could be quite a savage fighter if he needed to be.

"Amazing, Li Tianming!" That clash alone was enough to verify Fang Taiqing's fears. Now, he had no choice but to be extremely careful.

"A dog like you has no right to praise me." Tianming deployed the Imperealm Sword Formation, causing countless strands of sword ki to run wild and help suppress the eight hundred thousand enemies. Not only that, using it didn't affect Tianming's own combat capabilities either, but even boosted his attack.

"Die!"

The more he looked at Fang Taiqing, the angrier he got. He lashed out with the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation, causing the heavenly beasts' power to descend. At the same time, he also used his Soulshaker Eye.

"Hehehe..." After being insulted so many times, Fang Taiqing not only grew more annoyed, his killing intent also soared to the roof. "There's nothing to fear about a naive, confused child like you!"

His lance danced as he wielded it, flaring bright with flames. He didn't seem to fear the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation at all. "Return to the skies!"

When his lance struck, hundreds of birds seemed to be rising into the sky and turning into a gigantic pillar of flame, piercing past the nine beasts as well as the Soulshaker Eye. A twelfth-level samsaran was no joke.

"Your improvement has truly been amazing. It's like you're a monster forged by the heavenly dao. It's a shame that you aren't good enough," Fang Taiqing said with a smirk as he easily deflected Tianming's attempts.

"Showed off enough yet?" Tianming let the power of the death phase surge through his body. His eyes glowed gold and black so brightly that the light even illuminated Fang Taiqing's face.

"Give up. You can't save Xuanyuan Xi alone, and she isn't worth it anyway." Once more, Fang Taiqing's multi-colored hair brightly burned as his resolve to kill intensified. His Rainbow Phoenix Bloodline seemed to manifest as intense heat as his powers rose once more. While his flaming state was akin to drawing more power than he actually had, it was perfect for fatal moments like these. "An amazing genius like you should be exterminated by someone great like me!"

Fang Taiqing laughed out loud. His bloodline was achieving nirvana, reaching a fully blown-out state. "Today is the day the clan of the phoenix achieves nirvana! We shall be reborn, despite the odds! No longer will anyone remember the Sterling House of Fang of Archaion. From now on, we're the Phoenix Clan of the Sterling House of Fang!"

The phoenix was reborn in a blaze of glory. That lance thrust contained Fang Taiqing's will. It glowed ever so brightly and powerfully. It was a mark of pride for the powerful and the culmination of the will and desire of his clan. They would rise again with this power and earn the respect they deserved. Defeating someone who was considered to be the reincarnation of the founding ancestor was the perfect chance for that! Fang Taiqing flashed forward and thrust with all he had.

"Breeaaaaakk!" His roar contained his solemn oath and all the pent-up frustration within him. However, when he caught sight of Tianming, his lance-holding hand suddenly shook. "What in the world is that?!"

Tianming was hovering in the air with swords in both hands, both pointing towards the sky. Above the swords were two kilometer-tall fiendgods. They were asura fiendgods, one male and one female, corresponding to yin and yang. The male had nine heads, thousands of eyes, nine hundred and ninety arms, eight legs, and breathed fire. The female had three heads with dark green faces, six arms, shot water jets from its mouths, and looked shockingly seductive. The two fiendgods were formed by condensed sword ki from the sword formation. They looked at Fang Taiqing with gazes of dignity, domination, and wrath before they opened their mouths and spoke with booming voices.

"Fang Taiqing, you betrayed your own conscience and turned against your benefactors in your time of need. You deserve death!"

Was this the judgment of the fiendgods themselves? No, they were Tianming's own words, spoken through the mouths of the two asura fiendgods.

"Your whole life has been one of fence-sitting! Just as you have risen by going to one side of the fence, you shall fall by moving to the other side! Since you have chosen betrayal, don't fault me for being ruthless!"

If the words had come from Tianming's own mouth, Fang Taiqing wouldn't feel the least bit taken aback. However, these words were spoken by the fiendgods' booming and soul-crushing voices.

"Die!" Tianming struck out with both swords, each corresponding to one asura fiendgod. One was the sword of judgment, and the other was the sword of execution! This was the Asura Fiendgod Formation!

At that moment, Fang Taiqing's radiant phoenix lance strike crossed Tianming's sword formation. The radiant lance pierced through Tianming's chest, leaving Tianming's own two strikes completely untouched. Then, the two fiendgods applied insurmountable pressure on Fang Taiqing.

Boundless sword ki tore Fang Taiqing's phoenix robe apart, piercing through his pride and crushing his will. He opened his eyes wide; he had considered whether he should join the Flameyellow Imperial Sect countless times. He thought that nobody apart from Dugu Jin would be his match. If Dugu Jin didn't ascend to godhood, he would still have a chance for glory. Little did he know that the person that would truly bring his end would be the once-sky saint white-haired youth at Xuanyuan Lake! Perhaps this was destiny, or it could be karma! This was the fruit of his own decisions. Since he had picked his side, he had to face the consequences of his decision!

"Yuqing!" At the final moment, he thought of that woman and her objection to his decision. It was at that moment when he teared up. "I chose an unattainable path even though the person I cared for the most was right in front of me! That single choice doomed me for good! Aaaaaaaaagh!"

His howl was filled with deathly regret. It was such deep regret and hatred that it could scatter someone's soul. He regretted not cherishing the woman who had solemnly stood by his side for all that time. His greatest regret was being unable to tell her he was sorry.

"I was mistaken. It's too bad. I'm already done for."

Just like that, Tianming's explosive power from the Hexapath Samsara Sword swallowed Fang Taiqing up, killing him for good. The sword ki was so powerful that it ravaged the battlefield around them, drawing much attention to Tianming. When they witnessed the death of he who could be the second strongest among them all at their moment of desperation, their worship for the imperial son soared to new heights.

"The founding ancestor has really reincarnated!"

"Keep fighting!"

Their capabilities seemed to be boosted by sheer passion alone. In their eyes, Tianming was now akin to a god, and he didn't disappoint. Tianming looked down on the wound near his chest that had almost fully healed thanks to the Greenspark Tower, and turned to Fang Taiqing. He had many thoughts, but he didn't have the time to say them all. "You reaped what you sowed. Nobody can help you now."

Then he turned to look at the rest. Ying Huo had already dealt with its foe, while Meow Meow and Lan Huang were still fighting.

"Time to go!" He was going to seek out Dugu Jin. Everywhere he passed, the crowd cheered. His fame had reached new heights, while Fang Taiqing had fallen to the wayside for good.

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In a dark corner, a four-irised youth glared at the glorious Tianming as he continued to sneak toward Xuanyuan Dao.

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Near Soulburn Hall, blood-colored lightning struck and a beast appeared out of nowhere.