

## The Ages 931

### Chapter 931 - Godslayer Archaionfiend

Once Jiang Wuxin got the two keys, he didn't say another word and charged toward the Heaven Cauldron. With the Archaionfiend taking the brunt of some of the attacks for him, he was having an easier and easier time escaping. In a flash, he vanished from the eyes of everyone there.

Apart from Tianming, the strongest person there was Li Caiwei. However, she was mainly reliant on her Dreamheart World and couldn't quite chase down Jiang Wuxin to stop him. While Di Zang had died, it seemed he had succeeded in his goal. Jiang Wuxin was mainly able to break out of the formation because Xuanyuan Dao's saint palace had been ruined, causing the formation's dragon spirits to be severely weakened. The fact that he had the element of surprise after faking his death following the fight with Feng Qingyu had no doubt played a huge role as well.

Tianming had come to understand that everyone had desires that they would never give up on. For instance, Di Zang was willing to sacrifice his life to keep him bound, the Archaionfiend was fighting to regain its prominence, and Jiang Wuxin was acting for revenge. Their determination and wills were able to cause trouble for him time and again. He wasn't the only one in this world fighting for his desires.

Di Zang's sacrificial move was indeed really powerful. Thankfully, Tianming and his beasts had managed to hide in the Prime Tower in time to avoid being killed. While the vortex was at its strongest, the Prime Tower was trapped within. Though Tianming tried his best to break through with the tower, he had no choice but to wait for the vortex to lose power first. By the time he broke out, he saw Jiang Wuxin with both keys in hand.

"Tianming, chase him down, quick!" Li Caiwei hurriedly cried out.

Without another word, Tianming flapped his wings and sped on, using all of his power to catch up. "Di Zang's already dead, so it'll all be over after killing Jiang Wuxin!"

The fact that both keys were lost meant that Ouyang Jianwang's saint palace was also ruined. Even if they managed to obtain victory in the end, it wasn't something worth celebrating. Now, only Tianming could possibly stop Jiang Wuxin. As he didn't have a visual on him, all he could do was hurry as fast as he could to the Heaven Cauldron. They were racing against time, and Feiling used Temporal Field to speed him up as much as possible.

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When Jiang Wuxin broke out of the Nine Dragon Formation, the ancestral dragon spirits were no longer as effective. The Archaionfiend was still causing chaos within Soulburn Hall. It stomped on Lin Xiaoxiao and smirked. The lightning bolts that struck caused the hall to shake and eventually collapse.

"Where is that so-called goddess of yours?" It pushed the dragon spirits away and sprayed lightning into the inner parts of Soulburn Hall, causing the building to collapse. "Oh, so it's here."

The fiend broke through the roof of one of the wings and saw the divine body within. "Ah, a divine body, reborn after a hundred thousand years, huh? I had long wanted to see what makes it so special. Not to mention, I should be able to use you to force Li Tianming to beg me for forgiveness, right?"

Soulburn Hall used to be the safest place in the Archaion Sect, thanks to the inner formation. That was the only place Tianming could think of to leave the innate godchild body. The body wasn't a mere husk or corpse; it had signs of life. Its blood flowed and its heart still pumped. All it lacked was a soul.

Perhaps thanks to the relation it had with Perpetia, Tianming wanted to try storing the body in a spatial ring like he would the carcass of a wildbeast, but that didn't work out. Back then when Ye Lingfeng had projected his spirit out of his body, his body was no different from a corpse and could be stored in a ring. But once Tianming had left the Qilin Clan, he took the body out immediately.

However, the innate godchild body didn't work the same or he would have kept it beside him at all times. But now that Jiang Wuxin had both keys, Feiling's body was the last thing on Tianming's mind. The Archaionfiend immediately leapt toward it the first chance it got.

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Tianming flapped his wings time and again, hearing the wind whoosh past him. At that moment, the wings suddenly seemed to lose effect. The effects of Spiritual Attachment also seemed to be wearing off. In other words, Feiling was leaving his body.

"What's going on?!" he asked.

"I don't know. I think someone touched the innate godchild body!" Feiling said, before she immediately flew toward Soulburn Hall in her spirit form. This was something they had never expected. Who knew that the innate godchild body would cause the acquired godchild to be forcefully pulled away? Feiling wasn't able to control it at all and was immediately swept away.

"It must be the Archaionfiend!" With the dragon spirits losing their power and Xuanyuan Dao barely holding on, there was a good chance that the Archaionfiend was engaging in a slaughter at Xuanyuan Lake. With Feiling now gone, he could no longer ensure his safety.

What was more troubling was the fact that Jiang Wuxin was about to undo the Skysource Hellshaker Formation. Given the circumstances, Tianming had Meow Meow follow Feiling's spiritual body back to face the Archaionfiend. He also let Lan Huang and Xian Xian follow suit. Meow Meow could control the situation long enough for those two to arrive. He only hoped they would be able to do it in time.

"Without Spiritual Attachment, I'm quite a bit weaker. However, Jiang Wuxin isn't a twelfth-level death samsaran, either!"

He no longer had the luxury of hesitation. He would keep charging toward the Heaven Cauldron with Ying Huo by his side. But needless to say, he was moving at a slower speed than before, which made things even more dire. As much as he worried about the Heaven Cauldron, he was also worried for Feiling's safety. "Ling'er, you must survive until I get back!"

The flames in his heart continued burning. "Archaionfiend, Jiang Wuxin, you two are dead!"

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"Everyone, cease!" The Archaionfiend laughed as it emerged from a pile of rubble. In its huge claw were the two dainty arms of Feiling's innate godchild body. The Archaionfiend held the body by the hands in front of it and stomped Lin Xiaoxiao, who was trying to get back up, back into the mud. Almost a million people stood before the Archaionfiend.

"Is this soulless person your goddess?" it asked mockingly. The descendants of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan watched with pale looks of shock. "Isn't she a little too pathetic? She's as good as dead, yet you're using her to scare others! What a joke."

If the Archaionfiend had a third arm, it would surely be clutching its belly as it hollered with laughter.

"Let Her Eminence go!" many cried, though none acted. For all they knew, their goddess could be torn to shreds at any moment.

"Stop making a fuss over your catatonic goddess. The specter race will soon return, and you humans will be in a living nightmare that lasts at least a million years. Given how quickly you humans propagate, I'll be in for a great feast. The days to come are sure to be pleasant indeed. Weak lifeforms like you are meant to be slaves to the powerful, after all. As for your so-called goddess, I'll keep her as my toy. I need her to trade for Tianming's life, after all."

It raised Feiling's body to its snout and sniffed curiously. "She truly is a beauty by your human standards. Though... the limbs are getting in the way. I doubt she'll die just because I pluck them off, right?"

The nightmarish laughter of the Archaionfiend immediately enraged everyone.

"Shut up and don't move, or I'll crush her immediately! Should that happen, all of you will be just as guilty of killing your so-called goddess!"

The Archaionfiend had everyone dancing in the palm of its hands.

### **Chapter 932 - Princess Ling's Bloodrose Curse**

"You ants... open your eyes wide and enjoy the show. Watch me toy with your imperial son and precious goddess to their deaths. I've lived for millions of years. Did you think those little tricks would work on me?!" The Archaionfiend had been messed with by Tianming this entire time, but now it could finally convert all its pent-up frustrations to a rush of pleasure.

"Now watch as I tear her arms off!" It gripped both of Feiling's arms and began pulling. The situation was a nightmare for the Xuanyuans there.

At that moment, a glob of light came flying from the distance into the innate godchild body. "What in the world is this? A spiritform?"

At that moment, Feiling opened her eyes, but they looked cold and empty, as if they had a history of tens of millions of years. She looked at the Archaionfiend completely calmly and a light was projected from her eyes that seemed to prick the Archaionfiend's body.

"What in the world?!" it shrieked as it hurriedly closed its eyes. Its soul shuddered as it felt a chill through its entire body and a primal fear deep within his blood set in, causing all of its organs to throb.

Even though it was but a small change, the Archaionfiend felt that the body that had been about to be killed moments before had reverted into an ancient deity that had stood at the pinnacle for eternity. She looked at the Archaionfiend as one would look at a mere beast. Even though it felt primal fear, it still hadn't given up on tearing Feiling apart.

"How dare a vile beast like you touch me?" she said with a cold voice. It rang so loudly that the Archaionfiend's arms shook.

"What kind of being are you?!" it howled in pure terror.

"Hmph!" The goddess didn't even bother to say another word to the Archaionfiend. Her body began brightly glowing, illuminating the entirety of Xuanyuan Lake.

"Her Eminence is manifesting her divinity!" The crowd immediately went wild. It looked like a miracle in the making. Every samsaran, even those that weren't from the Archaion Sect, were fully convinced by the powers of the imperial son and their goddess. It was one thing for the imperial son to be as insanely powerful as he was, but it was another thing for Xuanyuan Xi, someone who hadn't made a public appearance before, to make the Archaionfiend lose its wits in practically an instant, and that was only the start. A loud rumble was heard as a black, ancient divine city manifested in the sky above Soulburn Hall. The aura of the city was so dense that it gave the impression that the city was being locked away and didn't look like its true form.

"The Demon City! It's Her Eminence's lifebound 'beast'! It's finally appeared!"

That was the most mystical of the legends of the Archaic House of Xuanyuan. It was said that a girl who didn't have a lifebound beast, but rather a lifebound city, had ascended to godhood at the age of twenty, only to die under mysterious circumstances. To this day, there were no clear answers pertaining to what had happened. Yet today, that mysterious Demon City had appeared once more. In fact, it was none other than the Tomb of the Ancients. The Primordial God-Emperor and the Primordial Demonlord that Ye Lingfeng had mentioned seemed to have come from this very city. This was Xuanyuan Xi's biggest secret that even Tianming had no idea about. Feiling, as the acquired godchild spirit, didn't know about this either.

However, what Tianming did know was that there had once existed such an eternal city on the Radix World Tree, in other words, Xian Xian. Within the dreamscape, he recalled seeing a girl just like Feiling together with Xian Xian. The city in the dreamscape and this Demon City were in fact the Eternal City of Perpetia, the very one that had just appeared without warning. Not even the Archaionfiend was aware of what it was. The next instant, the city came crashing straight down on the Archaionfiend's head.

"Aaaaagh!" it howled as it collapsed, bleeding. The city continued crushing it, pinning the beast completely on the ground, breaking its bones and forcing blood to burst out of its veins from the sheer pressure. All that remained of the beast was its head, which could do nothing but cry in pain. That sight both stunned and caused the audience to cheer. Many elites of the sect acted as if they were looking at a real goddess, kneeling in submission with utmost sincerity.

"Your Eminence!"

Amidst their worshipful gazes, the glowing, black-haired girl descended from the sky before the Archaionfiend. Her eyes were white and empty, devoid of all emotion.

"Goddess, forgive me! Spare me! That was a mistake!" The Archaionfiend now knew true fear. It had sensed that this existence was one that was far beyond itself and had no idea why her power was so unstable. It seemed on the surface that her body had no power at all, but the sudden appearance of the city had been enough to completely dominate it.

Though Feiling hadn't moved the entire time the Archaionfiend begged for mercy, she suddenly stretched out her index finger, out of which a drop of divine blood flowed. She then began drawing a mark on the face of the beast. The marking looked really savage and began seeping through the body of the beast, soon self-replicating into many rose-like patterns that spread throughout its entire body.

"Uuuugh!" Confused, crying and panicking, the Archaionfiend continued to struggle and beg until the blood roses covered it in its entirety. Compared to its former pitch-black body, it now looked like a work of art. However, it had been completely defeated.

"What is this? I'm already begging for mercy, aren't I?" It ground its teeth in pain. What was the terrifying being doing not killing it? It began feeling extreme regret, knowing that its own actions had drawn this being to the surface. If it hadn't touched her, it could have slaughtered everyone there. But now, regret was pointless.

Once the marking was complete, the glowing girl approached Lin Xiaoxiao, who was completely dumbstruck, and helped her stand back up. Lin Xiaoxiao was covered in dirt and blood, though she looked at Feiling time and again without the slightest awareness of her injuries. "Princess Ling... how could it be you?!"

Wasn't this the girlfriend of Tianming all the way back in the Vermillion Bird Kingdom? She was the goddess the whole time? That meant that Tianming had been dating their goddess all along! It was no wonder he had moved into Soulburn Hall. Despite learning the truth, Lin Xiaoxiao felt nothing but fear and respect. When 'Feiling' gazed through her heart and mind, her voice rang out as if it was coming directly into her ears. "I applied the Bloodrose Curse on the beast. All you have to do is to memorize this incantation. Whenever it is disobedient, recite the incantation. It'll make the beast beg for the sweet release of death instead. From now on, you are its master."

Those words inspired feelings of absolute bliss in Lin Xiaoxiao. "Yes, Princess Li— I mean, Your Eminence! I'll remember them!"

Who could've known that such a fate would befall the Archaionfiend? It felt like a dream to her. After that, the words of the curse rang out beside her ears. The incantation itself wasn't long, but Lin Xiaoxiao still repeated it to herself countless times to make sure she wouldn't forget it. All of a sudden, the hand that held hers loosened up. The so-called princess's eyes dimmed before her body slumped and softened, as if she had fainted, so Lin Xiaoxiao hurriedly held her up. The terrifying sensation she had emanated soon vanished. Even the gigantic city that crushed the Archaionfiend reformed into a black beam and entered Feiling's body. Now, the goddess looked no different from a normal saint. The whole place was quiet once more.

The only one that moved was the Archaionfiend. It got up and scrutinized the markings on its body before turning to the unconscious Feiling and smirking. "Is that all? What else is there?"

It turned its savage gaze back to Lin Xiaoxiao, who immediately handed Feiling's body to Xuanyuan Yu. When the rest saw that their goddess was still breathing, they sighed with relief. However, it seemed that the Archaionfiend was about to cause trouble once more. As it sinisterly walked toward Lin Xiaoxiao, she recited something so quietly that most people couldn't quite make out what she was saying.

All of a sudden, the rose patterns on the Archaionfiend's body moved and glowed bright red. Stunned, the Archaionfiend immediately collapsed and rolled around in pain. It felt like it was being eviscerated, having its organs gouged out one by one, and its teeth being chipped bits at a time. It was causing such a huge commotion that most people took a step away from it.

"Aaaaagh! Aaaaaaahhhh!" It continued rolling in pain, clutching its head helplessly and crashing into what remained of Soulburn Hall to make it even more of a wreck.

"How painful must it be feeling to react so badly?"

"How does it feel? Worse than death?"

Everyone watched with their mouths agape, even feeling a little pitiful for the beast though it completely deserved what it was getting. It kept clawing away at the scales on its body as it cried and begged for mercy, after which Lin Xiaoxiao stopped reciting the incantation. Only after that did the Archaionfiend stop to catch a breath, though it still cried from the horrifying experience.

"That's how I'll discipline you from now on if you don't do what I say, understood?" Lin Xiaoxiao said.

"Got it, Master! I understand! Waaaaah!" It even prostrated itself. Nobody but it would know how truly grueling and horrifying an experience that had been.

"Now get up and take me to Jiang Wuxin!"

"Yes, right away!" I'm the Archaionfiend! I adapt and survive! it thought to console itself.

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When Meow Meow and the rest saw the Demon City appear and the Archaionfiend being reined in, they immediately rushed back to Heaven Cauldron. However, they still lost considerable time making that trip. All they hoped was that Tianming would be able to catch up to Jiang Wuxin. What was more concerning was whether he could possibly take Wuxin down with three of his beasts and his sweetheart not by his side.

### **Chapter 933 - I Am Become Fate**

Tianming ran with all he had toward the Heaven Cauldron with Ying Huo. He felt like his heart had been torn in half, one part worrying about Feiling and the other concerned about Jiang Wuxin.

"Don't be anxious. Trust them," Ying Huo said, seeing him so frantic.

"Alright." Tianming forced himself to nod. It was one thing for him to be worried, but he trusted Feiling and the rest no matter what. They had already tipped the scales in their favor a few times in battle, and

now they were going through the most dangerous climax. This whole time, Tianming had been giving it his all. Everyone else also contributed, including Lin Xiaoxiao, Xuanyuan Dao, Li Caiwei, Ouyang Jianwang, Yi Xingyin, and so on. At this point, none of them could afford to lose.

Finally, the Heaven Cauldron was within view. The five-colored pillar that blasted toward the heavens was an impressive sight to behold. "We're finally here!"

The fact that the pillar of light remained meant the body of Great Emperor Xuanyuan was still intact. When Tianming climbed up to the Heaven Cauldron, he saw a figure enter the pillar of light. It had to be Jiang Wuxin! He immediately gave chase and sank to the bottom of the cauldron.

When the pillar of light had appeared, all the spirit hazards within the cauldron were pushed out. Now, only the pillar filled the cauldron. The pillar of light was hot and contained chaotic energies. Tianming felt like he was being burned even with the Greenspark Tower and Ancient Deepstar Godbody. Most normal people wouldn't even be able to go inside. However, Jiang Wuxin's royal specter bloodline allowed him to move about as he pleased.

"He's down there!" Tianming pushed himself through the pillar of light. Soon, the black figure grew clearer in his view. It was indeed Jiang Wuxin.

He looked up from the bottom of the cauldron coldly. "You really are slow. I've been waiting for quite a while." Then, he took out the two keys.

Tianming was still some ways away, so he wouldn't be able to stop him in time. However, what did Jiang Wuxin mean when he said he had been waiting for quite a while? He must have arrived much sooner and would have entered if he hadn't been waiting for Tianming. "No matter what that means, at least I still have a chance to stop him!"

Tianming continued charging down as Jiang Wuxin coldly opened the Heaven Cauldron. A deep pathway appeared before him, into which he jumped.

"Li Tianming, come down if you dare," he said, his voice ringing out from the pathway. Now that he had gone down, he could destroy the divine body at any moment. Tianming had no choice but to follow.

Tianming and Ying Huo followed closely behind Jiang Wuxin. The moment he entered the pathway, the light from outside completely vanished. The Heaven Cauldron had sealed itself once more; Jiang Wuxin and Tianming were both trapped within.

When Tianming landed, he disturbed quite a lot of dust on the ground. The surroundings were pitch black and dead silent. There was nothing to be detected apart from the aura of a great beast before him. The eyes of the beast were clear to see in the darkness; they were white with bloodshot streaks. Each of the bloody streaks contained endless hate toward Tianming.

Using his Plundering Eye, Tianming clearly saw Jiang Wuxin, as well as the divine body of the emperor and his five dragons. The ancient body was deep within the cauldron. Even after the passing of two hundred millennia, it still exuded a stunning aura.

The two youths stood face to face before the emperor. Neither of them would ever have been able to imagine that it would come to this when they had first met during the Number One Summit.

"Not bad. The two of us now hold the fate of all the humans on the Flameyellow Continent in our hands." Jiang Wuxin clutched his head and laughed like a madman.

Tianming narrowed his eyes, having prepared himself for the slaughter that was to come. However, one question still lingered: why had Jiang Wuxin not destroyed the divine body immediately even though he'd arrived first? The fact that he was talking to Tianming meant that things could still take another turn. "What do you want?"

Jiang Wuxin chuckled and swallowed the two keys. Then, he smiled and said, "Great, now it's just the two of us. We're trapped down here. If you want to leave this place alive, you have no choice but to kill me and dig the keys out of my corpse."

Now Tianming was certain that things were not yet set in stone. However, one thing was for sure: one of them had to die here today.

Jiang Wuxin glared at him and said, "Li Tianming, you're humanity's hero, the hero of the Flameyellow Continent. On you rests the fate of billions. It's as if you were made for this role. You're supposed to be a perfect paragon of justice, right?"

"Enough nonsense. Get to the point."

"Do you want to know why I waited for you to come down here?"

"What?"

"Would you believe it if I told you I've been regretting things ever since I fought my master? I've let him down too much in this life. If it weren't for the fact that I had no choice, I wouldn't keep doing things that disappoint him. He doesn't want the specters to return to this world, and neither do I." As he spoke, blood oozed out of his eyes.

"That'd be ideal. At least the Hexapath Swordfiend wouldn't have died in vain. If he helped change you, at least his reputation won't be stained for generations to come."

"No, no, no! You misunderstand me. If that was the case, I wouldn't have gone through all this trouble to get these two keys, right?"

"Then, what's the point of all this?" Tianming knew that this wasn't a good sign.

"This whole time, I've been making choices. Each time, I seem to be making one worse choice after another. Eventually, I came to understand that I've never been given a choice at all. Fate was driving me into a corner and laughing at me as I stumbled along. I'm disappointed in the human realm. Compared to a perfect paragon like you, I'm nothing more than a lowly frog, right?"

"You're not the only one that's been driven into a corner. It merely depends on your perspective."

"You're wrong, too wrong. I refuse to believe that you'd still act normally after you lose those most precious to you. There's no way you could continue loving the world if that happened," Jiang Wuxin said.

Tianming didn't want to respond to that. He had indeed experienced loss of that degree, yet he was still himself. "So?"



"Well, I've decided to play the role of fate today. I'll give you a choice." Jiang Wuxin couldn't help himself from laughing all the while Tianming watched. "Li Tianming, you have two paths before you! The first is that I'll destroy the divine body and release the specters into the human realm, bringing about a million years or more of suffering for all of humanity. As for the second... I want you to die right here and now! As long as you die, I won't release the specters on account of your generosity. I'll ensure that peace holds and do all I can to fulfill any regrets that you may have! Making this choice will make you the hero. You only have to give everything you have as a sacrifice. It'll also release you from the great burdens you bear."

He widened his eyes and approached Tianming. "Do you understand now?! As long as you die, I'll finally be released from all this! I can finally start living up to my master's hopes! No longer will I have to do any evil! I can turn over a new leaf and be a good person! I'll love those that you love, protect those that you want to protect! I will defend this world! We'll no longer be threatened by the specters! All I need is your sacrifice. Isn't that perfect? You're a saint, right? Then throw yourself into the fire for all humanity!

"Li Tianming, don't tell me you'll refuse. If you do, you're nothing but a hypocrite that lives for his own sake! You'll force me to release the specters! Then you will be the one who doomed humanity! By then, you'll no doubt be the one that takes all the blame! The descendants of humanity will curse you for making them livestock for life! They'll curse you for not sacrificing yourself for the greater good! Do you understand now? I hate the specters! I hate those monsters! Don't force me to do something that's against my nature! Don't force me down the abyss for your own selfishness!"

Though he was rambling like a madman, there was a logic to his arguments. He seemed calmer than before. "Yes, as long as you do what I say, nobody has to suffer. Sacrifice yourself and bless all humanity. That's what you've wanted to do all along, right?"

Tianming said, "I'm much weaker now than when I killed Dugu Jin and I only have one of my lifebound beasts by my side. You can just fight me and kill me the normal way. If you really don't want to disappoint your master, you don't have to drag the specters into our personal grudge. I'm sure if you fight me to the death here, everyone will look up to you."

"No, you don't get it at all! I want you to die for sure! A hundred percent! I don't want you to fight me to a bloody pulp! Think well! You only have two choices! Only two!"

### **Chapter 934 - A Murderous Noble Gentleman**

The atmosphere seemed to turn still as Jiang Wuxin glared at Tianming, awaiting his answer.

After some thought, Tianming said, "Jiang Wuxin, the fact that you're threatening me with this matter means you only care about whether I die, not the specters at all. Since that's the case, don't even bother morally impugning me. If you really want others to look up to you and to turn over a new leaf, you should become a proper avenger. Back then, you were powerless to do so, but now it's changed. I killed your loved ones, and you want revenge. This is perfectly fine, and you have the chance to do so right here and now. I've been an avenger myself, but even then I didn't go against my conscience and blackmail others using innocent bystanders as bargaining chips!"

Tianming glared at Jiang Wuxin angrily, his every word seemingly slamming into his chest and burning with righteous flames. "Don't bother lying to yourself! Since you embarked on this path, don't use your master as an excuse! Back then, those of you from the Hexapath Sword Sect came to the Number One Summit to kill disciples from my sect and force us to hand over the goddess. I killed your lovers because they wanted to kill my comrades. This is perfectly normal in the course of battle and war. It has nothing to do with good or evil. I never considered your desire for vengeance evil. You're doing what's right for you! But don't ever use the specters as bargaining chips. Doing so will only make you look lowly and pathetic!"

That was all he could say to protect the divine body. With Jiang Wuxin in his current frenzied state, there was no way Tianming would believe him. If he really chose death, who would be able to stop the specters if Jiang Wuxin chose to release them anyway? That notion wasn't even funny to ponder.

Hearing that, Jiang Wuxin burst out laughing. "As expected of the founding ancestor's reincarnation. With a few short words, you managed to make your fear of death sound so noble and right. Color me impressed."

In his eyes was seething mockery. "I understand now, Li Tianming. You just don't want to die. You're willing to betray your own beliefs and the dao you cultivate. You're even willing to let billions of people come to harm. Make sure you remember that this was all your own doing when you see hell unleashed upon the human realm!"

"Since our intentions are irreconcilable, let's just fight!" Tianming drew the Grand-Orient Sword and pointed it at Jiang Wuxin. "No matter how it all ends, you've wasted your master's sacrifice. I honestly look down on people like you. The fact that you don't dare to fight me fairly only means you're afraid of me."

Jiang Wuxin's eyes were completely bloodshot. He grit his teeth and stared holes into Tianming. "Tell me. How have I wasted my master's teachings?!"

"Well, you dragged him into this and claimed that he was the one who led you astray. Even though you've already done him in and supposedly settled it, you're now trying to pin the blame of the specters' return on me. Did your master's sacrifice mean nothing to you?"

"Shut up! Shut up shut up shut up!" Jiang Wuxin roared, his voice echoing throughout the cauldron. He lowered his body in a bestial manner.

"You misunderstand me. I've never claimed to be a saint. I have my fair share of sin and I also work in my best self-interests. But at the very least, I uphold my principles and never cross my bottom line. I have a path to tread on and seniors to guide me, unlike you!"

That was all thanks to Wei Jing, Li Muyang, and Li Wudi, and to some degree, Great Emperor Xuanyuan, whom Tianming had never met before. They had all influenced him and helped him forge his own path. Li Muyang wanted him to be a man of noble character, while Li Wudi wanted him to be a noble warrior who wasn't afraid to kill.

Jiang Wuxin, on the other hand, had Feng Qingyu, who had encouraged him to be a man without heart, something which not even he had managed to do himself. Now, these two youths with polarizing worldviews stood against each other with the fate of all humanity at risk.

"Shut up!" Jiang Wuxin repeated, then pounced like a wild beast.

Now that Tianming didn't have Feiling by his side, Jiang Wuxin's power was a real threat to him. He blocked the first punch with his sword, but was still sent slamming into the wall of the cauldron. His bones seemed on the verge of breaking. Wiping off the blood at the corner of his mouth, he cracked a smile and said, "You want me to shut up? Are you afraid of what I'm saying? That means you know that I'm right! You're just afraid to face the truth!"

Jiang Wuxin didn't respond to that at all. Instead, he looked at his fist and mumbled, "How were you able to kill Dugu Jin with that little power?"

He had thought that Tianming was really powerful after Dugu Jin's death, yet now he seemed far too weak in that clash. It made Jiang Wuxin even more frustrated. "Since you want to ignore the consequences of your actions, I'll just kill you myself!"

He punched Tianming again, breaking his Mortal Dao Sword counter. Not only did he have boundless power, his body was also incredibly tough and was able to withstand the cutting power of the sword. The barrage of attacks forced Tianming to gradually retreat. "You're far too weak!"

Tianming's mind raced on as he parried the rapid strikes. If I hold back, he might get the impression that he'll be able to kill me quickly and easily. That'll keep him from touching the divine body for a time. I might only have one chance to go for the kill!

He knew that there was a small part of Jiang Wuxin that didn't want to release the specters. Otherwise, there would be no need for him to go through all these hoops to confront Tianming. He could have just let the specters out and Tianming would be doomed either way, unless he chose to ignore the masses and go into hiding.

Human nature was indeed complex, and there were things that even Jiang Wuxin struggled to comprehend, like Feng Qingyu's expression as he took his own life. Now, Tianming didn't have much of a choice other than reducing the risk as much as he could. Whether Jiang Wuxin really intended to release the specters or not, Tianming's only course of action was to wait for a chance to kill him, so he feigned weakness.

With the Greenspark Tower, Jiang Wuxin wouldn't be able to kill Tianming that easily without intentionally tearing him into countless little pieces. Still, Tianming had to keep the act up. Ying Huo joined the fight and allowed him to fare much better. In fact, against someone as monstrous as Jiang Wuxin, he wouldn't be able to gain much of an edge within a short time even if he were to go all out.

Soon, fire abilities were launched all over the inside of the cauldron. Right as Jiang Wuxin had drawn the Firmament Godsword, it was broken by Tianming, so he had no choice but to rely on his fists. Now that he had consumed so many lifebound beasts, he was incredibly agile and vigorous. As long as he wasn't directly struck by the Grand-Orient Sword, he would be fine.

"Die!" He avoided another sword strike and went in for a punch, slamming Tianming back against the wall of the cauldron. "And stay down!"

Jiang Wuxin quickly caught up and kicked at Tianming's head, threatening to crush it flat. However, Tianming reacted quickly by using the Soulshaker Eye. The sun-sized eye that appeared caused Jiang

Wuxin to fall into confusion. In a brief time, Tianming was fully healed from his injuries and evaded the fatal kick.

With a loud boom, Jiang Wuxin crashed into the wall. Before he could turn back, Ying Huo's Sixpath Infernal Lotus slammed into his body, causing him to growl in rage. He wanted to hunt Tianming down immediately, but couldn't see him through the countless Infernal Haze clones. When Jiang Wuxin noticed that quite some time had elapsed since the battle began, he knew that something was wrong.

"So you're unkillable too? Looks like you have quite a few treasures! Ah, I see! You're trying to feign weakness to distract me from the divine body, eh? I almost fell for it too! I was thinking there was no way you could be this weak!"

Jiang Wuxin had figured out the plan before it could even be put into action. He came to understand that if Tianming were serious about staying alive, even releasing the specters wasn't something that would be enough to kill him, given his techniques and treasures. However, Jiang Wuxin was dead set on revenge. That means there's only one path for me to take. Master, don't blame me. Since Li Tianming wasn't willing to sacrifice himself for humanity, I have no choice! This isn't my fault, it's his!

Jiang Wuxin would rather see Tianming accept his death for the sake of the Flameyellow Continent's peace. "If I can't avenge Little Yin and Little Yu, then whether the people of the world suffer or prosper no longer matters to me!"

He roared as he pushed Tianming aside and turned to the divine body, charging toward it like a mad demon. "Be destroyed, you sick hypocrites!"

He was filled with hate. However, he seemed to see Feng Qingyu stepping forth to block in front of him. Move aside! Get out of my way!

Just then, a blue chain came from behind and wrapped around his body. Tianming had taken out a chain with fifteen tribulation patterns from the ring, Skydragon. "Get over here!"

He gave it a pull, causing Jiang Wuxin to smash into the ground.

"Do you think you can actually stop me?" Jiang Wuxin snickered and pulled the chain so hard that it actually snapped.

### **Chapter 935 - Cornered Beast**

"Jiang Wuxin!" Tianming intercepted him. Jiang Wuxin crawled back up and launched toward the divine body once more.

"Li Tianming, you won't be able to stop me this way. As long as you die, I'll immediately leave this place, I swear!" He laughed cruelly and sped up even more. "Make your choice! Everything I do is due to your sins! Li Tianming, you can only atone for your sins through death!"

It was Tianming's death against the destruction of the divine body. While it would be hard for Jiang Wuxin to kill him, destroying the body would probably not be too difficult.

"If you're not going to die, make way!"

Tianming grit his teeth. "Ying Huo, let's not overthink it. There's no way I'll choose to die. All we can do now is kill him! If we fail to stop him, we'll have to face off against the specters!"

They had already survived the battles at Tianming City and Taiji Peak Lake. Di Zang, Po Suo, and Dugu Jin were all dead. Right now was the time to unite humanity. They definitely had a chance for survival. Tianming had seen and killed countless specters himself, so how scary were they, really?

"You're right. Since we have no choice, let's fight to the end! No matter what Jiang Wuxin says, doing what he says to 'save the world' is something only a madman would do!" Ying Huo said.

Their telepathic conversation was over in an instant. They had come all this way, surviving one despairing situation after another. Just like the will of Great Emperor Xuanyuan, they shouldn't give up until the very end. Not to mention, even if he failed today, he still had the Divine Moon Realm as a trump card.

"Kill him!"

They no longer cared about anything else. With Jiang Wuxin wanting to destroy the divine body, it became a rather difficult battle. Ying Huo activated Imperial Radiance while Tianming summoned the Dragonhide and they both flanked Jiang Wuxin.

"Scram!" Even though Ying Huo charged at him like a meteor and used the Ninesky Beastsoul Formation, it was sent flying off by Jiang Wuxin's punch. A moment later, Tianming came charging in with the same move.

The fists and swords clashed. Jiang Wuxin avoided the fatal sword ki attacks, but he still ended up hurting Tianming quite a lot. He had applied his Heartless Sword Art to his fists. While he took quite a few cuts as a result of the exchange, he still managed to land a punch on Tianming, caving in his chest and causing him to pale from the pain. Right after that, Ying Huo appeared again. With a flash of Infernal Haze and sword ki, it forced Jiang Wuxin back again.

"Get out of my way!" Jiang Wuxin lashed out with a rapid flurry of punches, ignoring the fire that burned on his body as he continued his mad dash.

Tianming charged toward him again, his chest restored to normal.

"So you can't die after all!" That disappointed Jiang Wuxin greatly. The only hope he had left now was the divine body.

The battle continued for quite some time in the darkness. Tianming and Ying Huo used all their tricks to stop Jiang Wuxin, but to no avail; he was getting ever closer to the divine body, though his wounds kept piling up. One of his hands was completely cut off by Tianming, and his body was mostly charred. There were even a few bone-deep wounds. He was even cut in the neck by Tianming, his head nearly severed. Comparatively, he was struck far more often than Tianming, who seemed to be in a much better state.

Not having a weapon to parry Tianming's Grand Orient Sword with was really bad for Jiang Wuxin. Coupled with the Greenspark Tower, there didn't seem to be any way for him to kill Tianming. Even then, killing Jiang Wuxin wasn't the goal, protecting the divine body was. As injured as Jiang Wuxin was, especially after the constant burning of Infernal Blaze, he was still fighting like a mad dog. He knew he wouldn't be able to kill Tianming, so his entire focus was given to reaching the divine body.

"Li Tianming, had I known you were a twisted monster like this, I wouldn't have waited for you to come in here! This was such a waste of my time!" As he continued his charge, he laughed maniacally. "Don't blame me, Master! He was the one who forced me to do this!"

Despite the struggle in his heart, he blamed everything on Tianming. Eventually, he gave up on blocking altogether and quickly closed a lot of distance. "Break!"

He seemed unstoppable. Even after Tianming cut off one of his arms, he still kept going. Then Ying Huo intercepted Jiang Wuxin once more.

"So this is your lifebound beast!" It was widely known that Tianming's beasts were among the most unique things about him. That thought made Jiang Wuxin salivate. Smiling, he allowed his body to expand to ten times its size to crash into the divine body, ignoring Ying Huo's attacks and stretching his last remaining arm out to grab it before stuffing it into his mouth and swallowing it like it was a little snack! "Haha, I ate it too quickly and didn't get to savor the taste!"

He turned back to Tianming with a more twisted smile. "How does it feel to have your lifebound beast eaten?"

"You sure you want to eat it? I'm worried you'll get indigestion." Tianming got back up and charged into the madman once more.

"There's nothing a royal specter's body can't digest!" After stopping to taunt Tianming, he turned back to the divine body. "Now, it's over! Li Tianming, let me say this once more. I really don't want to destroy the body, let the specters return, and disappoint my master. Otherwise, I wouldn't have bothered waiting for you to come! You've forced me to do what I'm about to do! It's your fear of death that doomed everyone!"

"Is that really important to you? Why do you keep repeating it nonstop?"

"Of course it is! I can't accept that you accused me of disappointing my master!" All he needed was an excuse to push the blame onto Tianming. That way, he could convincingly lie to himself. It all started when the seed was planted in him by Feng Qingyu's suicide. Who was in the right now was no longer important.

Tianming gave it one last swing with all he had, yet Jiang Wuxin wouldn't let it end just like that. He snickered and spun around to punch the divine body. Just then, a loud explosion was heard and Jiang Wuxin's abdomen burst open, letting a flaming phoenix out.

"You think you can digest me with your bloodline?" Ying Huo's Infernal Blaze flared up, burning up even more of Jiang Wuxin and blasting him into Tianming's attack.

"Now, die!" Tianming used his fastest attack, Animacorpus Eradication, twice in succession and pierced them through Jiang Wuxin's body. He let all the sword ki in his body out in fear that it wouldn't be enough! By now, no matter how many hearts he had, they were surely pierced through by the Grand-Orient Swords. His sword art's name was Heartless, and now he finally lived up to it. Tianming slashed down on his head one final time. "It's over for you, Jiang Wuxin."

Tianming's face was pale and he breathed a sigh of relief. The decapitated head was still staring back at him. "It's over!"

It was too close a call. Tianming really needed to vent.

"Hahaha... as expected of the savior of the Flameyellow Continent.... You're practically unbeatable. Why isn't that savior me?" Jiang Wuxin continued to chuckle.

"Stop wasting time. It was a personal grudge from the very beginning. I'm no saint, nor are you a demon. We simply fought and you lost."

Ying Huo returned to Tianming's side. With the Greenspark Tower, it was impossible for even a royal specter to digest it. Swallowing Ying Huo basically amounted to suicide. Yet even now, Jiang Wuxin still continued to laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" Tianming said, furrowing his brow.

"Well, you're just wrong. I am a demon. An evildoer. And I haven't lost yet. Li Tianming, you chose your own life and set things in motion. Don't blame me for the return of the specters. It was all your fault! You've doomed all of humanity!" After that, the last bits of his consciousness vanished from his eyes.

But the next moment, his head, body and limbs suddenly began expanding, sending Tianming flying and slamming into the divine bodies of the emperor and his five dragons. Then the gigantic monster exploded, sending Tianming crashing into a corner of the cauldron. Whether it was a specter's ability or some kind of forbidden art no longer mattered. The point was that Jiang Wuxin was dead for sure, but all of Tianming's efforts had still seemed to come to naught. It seemed that he was determined to release the specters as long as Tianming was alive, and the only difference was that he had ended up self-destructing to do it.

"This will be troublesome...."

It seemed that this was all inevitable. One single madman had sent the entire Flameyellow Continent into hell. Tianming closed his eyes at this despairing situation.

"Fuck!" Ying Huo cursed. They exchanged glances, to no avail. After the explosion, the dust began settling in the cauldron. The bodies of the emperor and the five dragons were completely gone.

"What else can we do?" Ying Huo asked.

Tianming stood up and patted the dust off his body. Calmly, he said, "Let's find the keys and open the cauldron. We'll go straight to the Old Deepstar Path."

### **Chapter 936 - Human Emperor**

An endless darkness spread out all over the place. The dreamscape was a simple one; many of the things recorded within the books appeared superficially without any significant essence or taste. Within the dream of Little You, there would often be a blade of green grass in the distance. Every time Little You wanted to approach and give it a sniff, it appeared to move further away into the distance.

The books had mentioned that the smell of the grass was really refreshing, but at present, she didn't even have a grasp of the concept of the word. She had asked her many companions what 'refreshing' felt like, but none could answer that question of hers.

That day, she dreamed about green grass once more. She opened her eyes wide and climbed toward it with all her power, intent on plucking one blade of grass. "Don't run, don't run...."

She quickly scrambled with her hands and just as she was about to catch up to it, the world twisted and the grass disappeared.

"How annoying." She felt like crying. It was a dream she couldn't wake from, one that repeated itself again and again. But this time around, the world seemed to twist far more than before. There was a flash before her eyes and she could hear a familiar voice calling out to her.

"Little You, wake up! Wake up now!"

A little confused, she soon realized who it was. "It's Mother's voice!"

She had been dreaming for so long that she almost couldn't recall the voice of her favorite person.

"Mother told me that the day I wake up is the day I'll get to see grass!"

She was filled with endless excitement. The twisted world reformed before her eyes once more. She could finally see clearly. A woman with snow-white skin smiled at her as she lifted her out of a snow-white cocoon.

"I missed you, Mother!" she said, hugging her tightly.

"Do you still remember the day I told you about? It's today!" Her face was covered in warm tears that dripped onto her daughter's face. She was filled with utter adulation.

Then Little You heard a rumbling from the sky. She looked up blankly and saw countless of her own kin attacking the red roof of their domed world. The roof that had kept them trapped for countless years was finally starting to crack.

"Whoa! Mother, is this the legendary day when we return to the light?"

"Yes! Little You, those of our generation are too fortunate! Our descendants will be too!"

"What about our ancestors? What about Grandpa and the rest?"

"They were sacrificed by the demons. They never got a chance to see the light their whole lives!"

"Those demons kept us locked up for two hundred thousand years! They're so cruel. What did we do to deserve such punishment?" Little You's tears began flowing.

"We didn't do anything wrong! They were just cruel and evil! Little You, we'll leave and get our revenge. We'll vent the hatred of our ancestors that never got a chance to see the light over these two hundred millennia," the mother said with a furious look.

"But... all I want is to see real grass...."

"After you get your revenge, you'll get all the grass you want for all eternity."

"Okay." Little You still had other thoughts. She looked around at her skinny, hungry kin who were giving it their all, crying out at the top of their lungs as they attacked the roof. "Mother, where's Big Brother? Before we slumbered, he told me he'd see the grass together with me. Is he awake now?"



"Little You...." The mother hugged her tight as more tears flowed, albeit for a different reason. "Your brother will never wake up ever again."

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Soon, night fell. Tianming found the two keys of the Heaven Cauldron and left. Unsurprisingly, the five-colored pillar of light sprouting from the cauldron was no more. The starlit sky now seemed really gloomy. Standing atop the cauldron, Tianming looked up and saw that the five-colored star was no more. There was only a grey star remaining, and cracks had appeared on its surface. At the very least, the Skysource Hellshaker Formation hadn't completely collapsed yet.

"We don't have any more time." It was a full-on disaster. All he knew was that no matter how frantic and panicked every human on the continent was, he had to remain calm no matter what. "Back then, the Grand-Orient Realm was defended by my stepfather and the Divine Capital was defended by my dad. However, I'm the only one who can stand up for everyone on the Flameyellow Continent now."

Usually, the time one undertook heavy responsibilities was also the time of rapid growth. However, there was no time for him to admire the moment. The pressure he felt from his burden would make most people forget to breathe.

"The founding ancestor was able to do this before. I'm no longer young, so it's no excuse. I have to do it as well." If he escaped or cowered in fear in the time of crisis, even if he could escape alive, his dao of cultivation would no doubt collapse. Only when his fate was intertwined with that of all humanity could he truly comprehend the dilemma of a ruler.

"Let's go!" He and Ying Huo immediately made their way toward Xuanyuan Lake.

"Boss!" Meow Meow flew toward them from ahead.

"How's Ling'er?" he asked anxiously.

Meow Meow quickly briefed him on what had happened.

"Great, she's fine for now." Tianming finally breathed a sigh of relief. Even though Feiling had managed to stop the Archaionfiend, he hadn't managed to stop Jiang Wuxin. The Archaionfiend had slowed down Tianming. Had that not been the case, he would have been able to intercept Jiang Wuxin before he entered the cauldron. "Is she still out cold?"

"Yes. Tortoise Bro and Sis are staying by her side," Meow Meow said.

"What about the Archaionfiend?"

"It's reined in for now."

Since that was the case, he decided to immediately head to the Old Deepstar Path. He took out the moonjade the emperor had given him as he charged toward the place, looking up at the grey star from time to time. He could still hear the booming from the Skysource Hellshaker Formation. The specters were about to return to the human realm!

When he reached Xuanyuan Lake, he noticed that all the elites there hadn't dared to leave. The situation at the Heaven Cauldron was already a statement as to what would happen to humanity from

that moment onward. As samsarans, everyone there knew that this wasn't a matter they could not involve themselves in. Even so, Tianming's return slightly soothed their worries. He had the others wait while he entered the Old Deepstar Path, going all the way to the end to the Deepstar Pool. The Deepstar Formation that Yi Xingyin had laid was still there.

"Great Emperor Xuanyuan said that the Moon Astral Gate was beyond the Deepstar Pool." He circled to the back of the pool, but there didn't seem to be anything there. However, when he took out the moonjade, he noticed that the astral patterns in front of him swirled and formed a star diagram that sparkled brightly. In the middle of the diagram was a depression that just happened to be the right size for the moonjade.

"I wonder if anyone from the Divine Moon Realm will come."

He squatted down and fit the moonjade into the hole. The star diagram slightly shook as it glowed bright with a gentle moonlight. A silver beam rose skyward, piercing through the Old Deepstar Path. Everyone outside could see the silver beam shoot toward the moon before vanishing into the clouds above.

"I wonder if this signal will get all the way to the Divine Moon Realm."

The moonjade was no more. It looked like it was meant to be used only once.

"I guess all we can do now is wait. However, the Ninefold Hell is about to be breached. Even if we do get help, will they make it in time? If there are those on the level of gods among the specters, they'll no doubt dominate us."

Not knowing was the worst kind of torture. When he left the path, he saw many people waiting outside for him. Xuanyuan Dao, Li Caiwei, Lin Yuntian, and the other sect masters, including Heptastar's Changsun Shenqiong, were there. The Sterling House of Fang and Draconis House of Jian hadn't left, either. Even though Tianming had a bone to pick with the Fangs, this wasn't the time. They were facing the extinction of all humanity.

With Fang Taiqing now dead, those from the two houses could only kneel and beg for forgiveness.

"Human Emperor, please defend humanity!" said the million samsarans as they half-knelt in unison, including even those from Nonahall. This was the conclusion they had come to after a huge discussion—they would pledge their loyalty to him!

"Rise, everyone."

Most of them there didn't have any say in the infighting. They had mostly been manipulated by the ghoulish kings and Dugu Jin. Bringing up their past mistakes before the threat that was to come was completely pointless.

Even though the title of human emperor was a little extravagant, desperate times call for desperate measures. His authority also came with responsibility to match, and it wasn't something just anyone could take on. That night at Xuanyuan Lake, the million elites pledged themselves to Tianming. Even though they were only a small part of humanity as a whole, it was clear that hard times were coming, even to those who had fled to the wilderness to hide.

"Everyone, now that it's come to this, there's no other choice. After a million years of enslavement by them and two hundred millennia of their imprisonment by us, the hatred between humanity and the specters is irreconcilable. There's only one way to resolve this: a fight to the death. I'll do my best to find out how powerful the specters are before coming back to reorganize. As long as we stand a chance to fight, I'll never give up. Not being able to stop Jiang Wuxin was partly my fault. The return of the specters is inevitable now, so the fate of all humanity is tied together! As elites, every one of us here must fight on the frontlines for us to stand a chance at survival. Surrendering or running away will not save us! Our only choice is to fight to our last breath."

He had intended to still their hearts and minds with those words. It was a time of panic, and many were already beginning to lose it.

"He's right. There's no point in being afraid before we know anything. What we need to do now is prepare and scout out our enemies first. This is no longer a petty matter like dividing up the land for our rule. Instead, it's a debt of blood between us and the specters. If we lose, we'll end up as livestock! I'm sure you haven't forgotten how Jiang Wuxin alone consumed fifty million lifebound beasts, right?" Li Caiwei said. She showed her full support to Tianming and calmed many of the others down.

"More importantly, they've been imprisoned for all this time. They might be far from their peak. No doubt, the Ninefold Hell isn't a good place to live in. We might stand a chance of winning after all!" Lin Yuntian said. Many others agreed to that sentiment.

Tianming looked up at the sky once more. Then, a loud rumble echoed throughout as the Skysource Hellshaker Formation fractured into countless shards and rained down on the human realm.

### **Chapter 937 - Into the Abyss**

The Ninefold Hell was descending upon the world. Every human was more tense than ever before when they heard the sharp, crackling sound from the sky. No doubt, the same historic phenomenon could even be seen all the way back at the Decimo Dao Nation.

It was as if the land beneath them was shaking furiously. Shocked cries and rumbling rang out from Xuanyuan Lake, with all the people there looking grim without exception. With the collapse of the Skysource Hellshaker Formation, the grey star was in full view in the sky above the Flameyellow Continent. Contrary to what its muted grey color might suggest, the star looked absolutely harrowing.

Regardless of how far away they were, the common folk were able to smell the hate wafting off the star. Countless people all across the continent looked up at the nightmarish celestial body that hovered above them, reacting with terror, curiosity, despair, and even shocked indifference. They all knew that the days to come would be spent hiding and fighting for survival.

The end of the world had arrived.

At that moment, the Ninefold Hell underwent another sudden change nobody had expected: it began falling. The gigantic grey star was plummeting from the sky! What kind of catastrophe would result from its impact? Nobody could possibly stop the descent of such a huge mass. What made Tianming even more speechless was that the specters were seemingly able to move the Ninefold Hell around. He had

gone inside it once himself, so he knew how truly vast the whole place was. It was far beyond what he had expected.

Yet the thing everyone was worried about didn't come to pass. The star didn't smash into the continent; instead, it stopped when it reached the horizon. The Flameyellow Continent didn't seem the least bit disturbed. What could that mean? Had the Ninefold Hell gone all the way to the Abyssal Battlefield? That was the first thing that came to people's minds.

"Let's head to the Abyssal Battlefield!"

Many people at Xuanyuan Lake began flooding toward the many entrances to the Abyssal Battlefield. Tianming himself had gone there often to get food for Xian Xian, so he was the fastest to reach it. When he emerged from the other end of the entryway, he saw the grey star hovering in the sky of the Abyssal Battlefield. As it was quite close to the ground, it looked as large as the inverse sun!

"What'd they come here for?" The moment he said that, he saw countless specters swarm out from Ninefold Hell, filling the sky with their sheer numbers. That sight caused many humans who had just arrived to immediately flee back through the entryways.

Tianming watched as thousands of monstrous specters killed wildbeasts on the Abyssal Battlefield rather than immediately attacking the Flameyellow Continent. Not only that, they also devoured the beasts! While their numbers were nothing to scoff at, the Abyssal Battlefield was more than wide enough to accommodate them.

Tianming couldn't figure out what they were up to. "Did they used to eat wildbeasts as well?" he asked Li Caiwei.

"They did, but according to historical records, they consumed so many of them that it drove the wildbeasts nearly to extinction. That was when they turned their sights to the lifebound beasts of humans. Our lifebound beasts are more powerful and luxurious for them, after all, thanks to symbiotic cultivation. Eventually, those that fed on wildbeasts only included those in the low rungs of specter society. However, the wildbeasts here now number far more than they did two hundred millennia ago. I believe they're too hungry to be choosy now, so they're eating them for some immediate gains first," she reasoned.

"While growing physically stronger by consuming beasts is their natural talent, it isn't able to help their cultivation progress," Tianming said.

"Well, we can't deny that they'll get stronger in combat overall just by strengthening their physical bodies. Though, with how they're spread out like that, there's nothing we can do to stop them."

"Given how urgent it is, we still have to scout them." Tianming quickly located a lone specter nearby.

"A human?" The specter was freaking out, but Tianming had no problem subduing a mere sky saint.

"I'm going to ask you a question, and I expect nothing but an honest answer from you!"

But the moment he said that, the specter growled, "Humans shall die without question!" Then the specter's body exploded.

"They can even self-destruct?" Tianming was completely speechless.

It was just like Jiang Wuxin. Every time he caught a specter, they would fearlessly self-destruct almost immediately. An adversary as foolhardy as the specters was surely not easy to deal with. There was nothing he could do apart from instructing others to capture as many as they could until they found one who would talk.

While a few of them were eventually brought to the Flameyellow Continent, they exploded without a word before they had even been brought to Tianming. While Tianming had thought of going back into the Ninefold Hell to take a look, it was too risky to attempt. What was even more troubling was how many entryways leading to the Flameyellow Continent there were. They would be impossible to completely get rid of, especially with how numerous the specters were. They were too spread out and no single assault could wipe them out!

"The fact that they have to get more powerful means that they're still weak." There was little humanity could do apart from monitor the specters for now. Thus, Tianming gave an order. "Have the formations of every city deployed and make sure to house as many humans as possible in the cities!"

Back then, the largest of the cities had undergone a complete change. Even places where cities didn't stand had fortresses and strongholds of all varieties with their respective defensive formations.

By now, Tianming basically ruled the entire Flameyellow Continent. Not even Long Youyue would disobey him. The order soon spread all through the Flameyellow Continent. As for his second order, it was to defend the formations with all they had. For instance, while Taiji Peak Lake's formation cores were damaged, the foundation of the formations were still there. It was the same with the other sects as well. It would take time for them to be repaired, but the specters didn't seem like they would be mounting a large assault any time soon, so they still had a chance.

"If Di Zang and Po Suo were already twelfth-level death samsarans, and considering the fact that there were more than a thousand caeli that'd reached godhood in the eyes of the crown prince, there must be at least one ascendant in Ninefold Hell. I guess we still have to count on the Divine Moon Realm."

Under his command, many elites tried their best to gain as much intel as they could from the Abyssal Battlefield. Tianming looked up to the moon over Xuanyuan Lake with a grim expression. Since he had returned from the Heaven Cauldron, he still hadn't met Feiling yet, so he immediately zipped back to Soulburn Hall, only to see that it was in ruins. Feiling was resting in a smaller room nearby. When Tianming came up to her, he noticed she was in a deep sleep.

"Perpetia appeared again. More importantly, how was she able to put a Bloodrose Curse on the Archaionfiend?" He looked at the slumbering goddess before him. "Xian Xian, call out to me the moment Ling'er awakes."

"Alright!" It nodded obediently.

Tianming left the hall. In the darkness ahead of him was a huge beast and a black-clad girl.

"Xiaoxiao," he greeted with his hand extended.

"What's this about?" she asked warily. She seemed a little afraid of him.

"Let's start off on a clean slate."

She bit her lip before hesitantly taking Tianming's hand. Then, she met his gaze and smiled. Their old grudges and dealings had thus been settled in a single instant. Ever since the day she had stopped the Archaionfiend's assault at Tianming City, Tianming no longer held anything against her. The misunderstanding was no more.

Seeing the two make up, the Archaionfiend chuckled with a mocking look. Tianming turned around to face it, squinting as he inspected the rose patterns on its body. It looked tempting, yet terrifying at the same time.

"Do you know where that comes from?" he asked.

"How would I know what that woman did to me? Stop kidding around!"

"So you don't feel like answering?"

"Buzz off! Who do you think you are?" it snapped.

Tianming turned to Lin Xiaoxiao.

"Wu You, tell him what he wants to know," she said. "No way! I'm the Archaionfiend, not a captive!" It got up and growled threateningly at Tianming, then Lin Xiaoxiao, who was already beginning to mouth the incantation.

"Stop, I yield! Don't! Aaaaaagh! Don't!" It immediately knelt and begged her to stop.

"There will be no more warnings in the future," she said.

"I'm disappointed in you, Lin Xiaoxiao! I'm your lifebound beast, yet you treat me like a complete stranger! I hate you!"

"I don't care."

The beast was utterly flabbergasted by that response.

"You've committed too much evil. But don't worry, there'll be more than enough time for you to make up for it." The Archaionfiend's antics had played a pivotal role in the release of the specters. If it weren't for the Bloodrose Curse, and the fact that Lin Xiaoxiao needed a beast of her own, Tianming would have chosen to kill it.

"Just ask what you came for! I don't have time for your petty judgments!"

"You claim to have lived for millions of years, so you must be really knowledgeable. So, do you recognize the Bloodrose Curse? Where did it originate from?" Tianming asked. The answer to that question could shed light on the secrets of Perpetia.

### **Chapter 938 - Welkin Plane**

"I really know nothing about it! It's something that's beyond me. Not to mention, since I reincarnated and became a lifebound beast, I forgot part of my memories. If I knew what it was, I probably would've been able to undo it too!" the Archaionfiend said.

"Let's try another question then. Did you find out how many ascendants there are among the specters in the Ninefold Hell while you were cooperating with them?" Tianming asked. That was the true reason he had come.

"I don't know, but I bet there's at least ten! They have the full legacy of their forebears. Even though they're starved for spiritual energy, they cultivate really quickly and can reach the Ascension stage far quicker than humans!"

"At least ten?" How would they even be able to stand a chance? It seemed that they had little choice other than to wait for the Divine Moon Realm to respond to their call.

"Stop worrying. Don't you have that transmission stone with you? I bet news has already reached the outpost. The specters would never expect you to possess one of those. The fact that they're busy eating without any worry shows that much. These specters are terrified of the people at the outposts. That's why they sent their lair to the realm of chaos! Otherwise, they would've come for you long ago.

"Well, Li Tianming, I'll tell you something good. If those at the outpost care about humanity's survival, you'll stand a chance. If they don't, you're doomed for sure. There's no way you'll be able to resist a superior lifeform with your capabilities alone!"

All in all, Tianming now had a few more vague pieces of information. The transmission stone must be the moonjade. There was also mention of some realm of chaos and an outpost.

"Why's the Divine Moon Realm called an outpost? By realm of chaos, you must be referring to the Abyssal Battlefield, right?"

The Archaionfiend burst out in mocking laughter with a look of superiority. "It's really pitiful of you to be so clueless about your world even though you live on the plane of symmetry."

"Answer my question!" Tianming slapped it on the face.

"You...!"

"Speak!" Tianming gave its head a smash.

Right as the beast was about to retaliate, it glanced at Lin Xiaoxiao and held itself back. Mumbling some curses under its breath, it stopped putting on airs. "The Divine Moon Realm is located at the topmost region of the lower levels of the cosmic aether. The plane of symmetry is supervised from their outpost. That's how order is maintained. The reason it's called an outpost is because it's where the order of the plane of symmetry is maintained from. The outposts are the eyes of the realm of order. The realm of order has countless outposts, and the Divine Moon Realm is merely one of them."

Though Tianming wanted to ask more, the information dump he had just received already confused the hell out of him. "Realm of order?"

The Archaionfiend rolled its eyes and sighed. "Fine, sit down. I'll tell you about the true nature of the world!"

It was far more easygoing now that it was afflicted with the Bloodrose Curse. However, that didn't mean it was answering willingly. If there was a good opportunity, it might just turn on them without warning. But for now, while they were horribly lacking in manpower, Lin Xiaoxiao and the Archaionfiend were

decent allies to have. They might even be able to face off against some specters. Tianming trusted that she could keep the beast on its leash well enough.

What he needed now was information about the Divine Moon Realm. He was also quite curious about the so-called cosmic aether, so he listened properly. He knew that Li MUYANG, the sky plunderers, the Primordial Chaos Beasts, and the Archaionfiend were all alien to the Flameyellow Continent. It was only a matter of time before he went after his parents, as well as in search of the origins of the Primordial Chaos Beasts, so he was bound to roam the aether one day.

To defeat the specters, he needed to understand enough about the cosmic aether that Great Emperor Xuanyuan had once roamed, and much of that hinged on whether they would be able to capture a live specter. He had sent many people on that very mission. Meanwhile, the cities spread all across the continent under different sects were busy trying to recover and plan their next move while he sought answers from the Archaionfiend.

The beast proudly stretched out its tail and drew a line on the ground. "Think about this line as a plane. It's a surface without an ending or boundary. Call it the plane of symmetry, or the Welkin plane."

"Welkin plane, got it."

"On Welkin are many continents just like the Flameyellow Continent. Collectively, they're known as Welkin continents. These continents have one thing in common: they're all bilateral, meaning they have one side above and another below. For instance, the side you call the Abyssal Battlefield is the flip side of the Flameyellow Continent."

"So there's many other continents just like this one?" He had seen the dreams of the Primordial Chaos Beasts. The Genesis Chaos Thunderfiend, for instance, created countless worlds with its lightning, while the Primordial Terraqua Dragon's body itself housed many different worlds that were all many times the size of the Flameyellow Continent. That's how Tianming knew that the universe was far wider than he could ever imagine. Even so, hearing it straight from the Archaionfiend's mouth, thus confirming it as fact, was a whole other matter entirely. Space and time seemed to stretch far beyond the bounds of his conception. All of a sudden, he felt like an insignificant speck amidst the grand cosmos.

"Haha, are you sure you're a sky plunderer? You were definitely abandoned here. You're just as clueless as the natives of this world," the Archaionfiend mocked. It seemed unable to stop putting others beneath it.

Tianming didn't bother with the comment. He knew better than anyone else what he really was. "Go on."

"Well, listen up! The plane of symmetry—in other words, this Welkin plane—is the foundation of the cosmos. The Flameyellow Continent itself is, in some ways, bisected by the plane of symmetry. Looking up from this side, you'll see an endlessly stretching world. The same thing applies when you look up from the Abyssal Battlefield.

"The two sides of the continent are completely symmetrical. The worlds beneath the plane of symmetry are called realms of chaos. I won't go into anything too esoteric for now. First, let's focus on what's above the plane of symmetry. In other words, what you see around you now. All of this is called the realm of order. Here, the laws of the world apply. There's a pattern and rhythm to all phenomena, all



following the grand dao of the heavens in strict order. The realms of chaos are the antithesis to that. They're lawless worlds without any semblance of order, just like how the Abyssal Battlefield is to the Flameyellow Continent. Legend says that everyone in the realm of order has a doppelganger down in the realm of chaos, one that's the opposite of you. Don't you think that's terrifying?" it teased.

"I have a feeling you're just messing with me," Tianming said with a glare. It sounded entirely too far-fetched.

### **Chapter 939 - War for the Nova Source**

The so-called order probably meant rules. A world with rules, and a world without rules. However, the order and chaos bits all sounded too ridiculous.

"So what're these Divine Moon Realm, outpost and Orderia?" Tianming asked bluntly.

"Hah. I'll do you a favor and explain the structure of the world to you. The world of order and world of chaos are like two towers. And the base of the two towers is the Welkin plane.

"Right now, you're at the bottom of the realm of order. Sure, the Welkin plane is the foundation of the world, but the truly spectacular worlds are above your head. I told you before that the Divine Moon Realm is an outpost for Orderia. Its location is at the top of the lower levels of the cosmic aether. It supervises the order of dozens of Welkin continents. This means that Flameyellow and dozens of other continents share the same moon.

"The lower levels of the cosmic aether are basically where dust gathers. Above the lower levels of the cosmic aether is the astralscape of order, the land where greater races battle! The Orderia I'm talking about is located in exactly that astralscape of order," the Archaionfiend explained.

"I understand. Both the lower levels of the cosmic aether and the astralscape of order are in the realm of order. The lower levels have many outposts, while the astralscape of order has Orderia. And each outpost manages multiple Welkin continents." Tianming tried organizing the Archaionfiend's ramblings in his mind.

The Flameyellow Continent, the Ninefold Hell, and the Divine Moon Realm were all part of the lower levels of the cosmic aether. Orderia was in the astralscape of order. Both levels were part of the world of order.

Below the Welkin plane, beyond the Abyssal Battlefield, was a realm of chaos where ordinary people couldn't tread.

"Now do you know how puny you are?" The Archaionfiend smirked.

"How boring you are." Despite the vagueness of the fiend, the rough outline Tianming had in his head was still very interesting to him. It seemed the boundless world above his head was even more spectacular than he had imagined.

Li Muiyang, the sky plunderers, the Primordial Chaos Beasts, and the mystery of the giant black hand were most likely all in the astralscape of order.

“Let me tell you a secret.” The fiend grinned.

“What?”

“Your sky plunderer race used to be the overlord of the astralscape of order. Like locusts, you went everywhere and seized treasures and nova sources. You all were evildoers that men and gods alike reviled! Didn’t you know that after getting abandoned here? Want to go to the astralscape of order and return to your sky plunderers?”

Tianming frowned. It seemed this fiend didn’t know the sky plunderer race had already been exterminated.

However, Tianming had inferred some things. “My mom and dad probably went to the astralscape of order....”

“So? If you want to go, I know where your nest is!” The fiend’s eyes narrowed.

Those who were too helpful usually had hidden intentions. Tianming decided to beat it at its own game and asked, “Are you certain?”

“Of course. However, you need to fulfill a certain condition to reach the astralscape.”

“Speak.”

Have you noticed when you fly to the sky, roughly to where the Kilostar Domain is, you can feel the pull of the earth, and it gets stronger the higher you get? Where if you don’t control yourself, you’ll fall to the ground?”

“Yes.”

“The higher your cultivation, the greater your ability to overcome the pull. The true meaning of the Ascension stage is to be able to walk into the heavens by overcoming the Welkinforce. You need to become what you all call a god to leave!”

“I’ll be able to reach Orderia if I reach ascendance?”

“Nope! First level ascendants will only be able to reach the Divine Moon Realm. To continue ascending the heavens and reach Orderia, you need to reach the peak of the Ascension stage!”

“I understand.”

So that was the real meaning behind the name. Had Grand Emperor Xuanyuan relied on his cultivation to reach the Divine Moon Realm and find allies?

“Is it impossible to reach the Divine Moon Realm without being an ascendant?”

“Well, if an ascendant carries you up, you can go there. The Ninefold Hell directly went over to the world of chaos to hide, so I’m sure the Divine Moon Realm will send people down. After that, if you gain their favor they may bring you up.”

“The Divine Moon Realm has stellunar source. That’s a real cultivation resource, unlike the spiritual energy of heaven and earth you all use here! With your level of talent, you’ll be unmatched at an outpost like the Divine Moon Realm. It won’t be a problem to go to Orderia in the future.”

Tianming had certain questions after hearing all this. “Why isn’t the Ninefold Hell worried about being hunted by the Divine Moon Realm after entering the Abyssal Battlefield?”

“The people from the outpost are from the world of order. They aren’t natives of the Welkin plane, like you all. Their power comes from the stellunar source and has the distinct properties of order. If they go wild in the Abyssal Battlefield, it’ll be troublesome if they suffer a backlash from the realm of chaos.”

“I see.”

So it turned out Ninefold Hell’s immediate move to the Abyssal Battlefield after being released had to do with his communication.

“Then why isn’t the specter race afraid of the realm of chaos?” Tianming asked.

“They’ve been sealed away for two hundred thousand years. How would they have power above the level of the stellunar source? While they did come from the astralscape of order, they’ve long since been converted to natives of this land.” The fiend sneered disdainfully.

“They come from the astralscape of order?” Tianming was startled to hear of the race’s origins.

“It’s not that incredible. Their Ninefold Hell is obviously a dead star that lost its starcore. I suspect their ancestors were exiled criminals. When their starcore was stripped away, the entire star got pulled down to the Welkin plane and arrived above your continent, then they became the masters here.”

Tianming had to admit that talking to the Archaionfiend was enlightening.

“What is stellunar source and what are starcores?”

“They’re the difference between the astralscape of order and the lower levels of the cosmic aether. The continents of Welkin are the ash and dust from space settling down, or destroyed stars. They were all pulled down by the Welkinforce. Up in the astralscape of order, worlds come in the form of stars like the Ninefold Hell.”

“Just like the Kilostar Domain!” Tianming realized.

“Right. That was a small star that didn’t have a starcore. Starcores are the core of actual starworlds like the Divine Moon Realm.”

“Then the stellunar source?”

“That’s the driving force of a world and its foundation! The stellunar source is considered a lower tier fundamental cosmic force. The really terrifying one is nova source. Nova sources give starworlds the power to resist the pull of the Welkinforce. It’s also a super spiritual energy that provides for the cultivation of all the living things in the starworld. It’s at least a hundred times more effective than your Taiji Peak!

“Let me put it this way. All the spiritual energy in your continents are just remnant energy pulled down from starworlds. The greater races above cultivate by enjoying meat, while you all can only enjoy soup. No, wait, you all do it by smelling faint whiffs....”

Tianming grit his teeth. Fundamental cosmic forces? They sounded like the foundation of worlds, and nova sources and stellunar sources were both two types of it.

“So, nova source is important?” Tianming asked.

“Of course. All the wars fought throughout the astralscape of order’s history were for the sake of nova sources! The victors use fusion formations to devour the loser’s nova source and even destroy their starcore, making it a dead star. The bigger the nova source, the bigger the starworld, as well as the abundance of its available resources. Now you know the purpose of the outpost right?”

“It doesn’t just monitor the continents. It keeps a watch everywhere. Nova sources are consumable, so every time a new one is birthed or a starworld runs out, that means a new war is brewing.”

The fiend stared at Tianming. “The whole reason your sky plunderer race was the overlord of the astralscape of order was because you all could break through fusion formations and steal nova sources!”

#### **Chapter 940 - The Greater Races Under the Sun**

Tianming ignored the Archaionfiend’s taunting. He remembered everything it had said. The words had improved his understanding of the world.

“Li Tianming, you won’t understand the importance of nova sources if you don’t go to Orderia! Orderia is a massive starworld. Its nova source doesn’t only provide for the cultivation of everything inside, but also drives the movement of Orderia. Otherwise, your continent wouldn’t even have light.”

“What does it have to do with our light?” Tianming asked.

“Do you still not get it?”

“What?”

“The so-called Orderia is the sun above your head!” the Archaionfiend said.

Tianming was flabbergasted. For so many years, people had looked up at the moon and sun. However, no one had thought they were the Divine Moon Realm or Orderia.

“The light you all see comes from a nova source. It’s always burning and illuminating everything. As for the fusion formation and those higher races cultivating on the star, your puny eyes can’t catch them. Of course, when you see the Divine Moon Realm’s silvery light, that’s stellunar source.”

“Incredible!” Tianming was sure the fiend wasn’t tricking him, because its imagination wouldn’t be so great.

The Divine Moon Realm was at the top of the lower levels of the cosmic aether. The sun was Orderia in the astralscape of order. And the war for nova sources meant there were other suns out there?

“My gods! The suns that Ying Huo was eating in my dreams... were those nova sources?”

It wasn't something that could be merely described as a monster.

“Don't be discouraged yet, let me tell you more!” the Archaionfiend said.

“I'm all ears.”

“Every place will have geniuses and trash. The Divine Moon Realm and Orderia have stellar source and nova source and countless caeli of ascendants guiding their descendants. So the overall level there is quite high. After all, races that can avoid being wiped out in the astralscape of order will all have shocking inheritances. However, even then, those places will still have many people that aren't ascendants. Throw them here, and they can't return either.”

The fiend squinted at Tianming. “With your current cultivation at twenty, I think your talent will probably be unparalleled in the Divine Moon Realm. Even in Orderia, those who can be ascendants at this age are only apex geniuses. You enjoy the best resources of the Flameyellow Continent, but that's nothing compared to them. It's further proof of how terrifying you are.”

“You have to keep an open mind. They have good conditions, but that's thanks to the glory of their ancestors. Once you ascend, your own heirs will have a better starting point than others. This continent's history probably isn't too long, especially compared to the ancient clans in the astralscape of order with over ten million years under their belt.”

“They can use a million-year-old caelum to cultivate as soon as they're born.”

“But I believe that you'll shine as soon as you enter the territory of order, since you're a descendant of the sky plunderers.”

When it came to cultivation, the difference in inheritances really did cause despair sometimes. Some were born to parents that were rulers of everything, and everything was provided for them. Even if they were a pig, they would become powerful.

However, this was the right way!

After cultivating so hard, why shouldn't people give blessings to their descendants? Hence, a cycle was formed.

The children of the strong would get even stronger and stronger.

Of course, sometimes there were incompetent failures that ruined everything. The world may have been very different if caelum didn't exist. It seemed the Archaionfiend was speaking sense.

Still, why was the fiend being so kind and trying to guide him to Orderia? It was definitely up to no good. However, Tianming already roughly knew everything he wanted to.

Orderia was still too far off for now. He would probably have to become an ascendant to pursue the secrets of his race and chase after his parents.

Tianming shifted his attention back to the Divine Moon Realm and the Ninefold Hell.

“You said that my talent should make me unrivaled in my age group at the Divine Moon Realm?” Tianming asked.

“Roughly. The truly strong clans wouldn’t be playing guard duty.” The Archaionfiend didn’t seem the least concerned about the Divine Moon Realm.

“You wouldn’t be trying to make me arrogant so that I offend the people from the Divine Moon Realm and they execute me, right?” Tianming smiled coldly.

“Wow, aren’t you petty. You’re questioning my gentleman’s heart. All I said was that you were talented. I didn’t say anything negative about the Divine Moon Realm people. Running such an outpost would require at least a peak ascendant or even higher.”

“Hmm.”

The Divine Moon Realm was at least much stronger than the Ninefold Hell. But the critical question was how much support they would deploy.

.....

It was nearly daytime.

As the Archaionfiend said, there was no movement from the Ninefold Hell, and there wasn’t anyone from the Divine Moon Realm appearing. It was strange for there to be such silence, despite their two hundred thousand year grudge.

The specter race had completely dispersed to eat wildbeasts. Their feast would probably last for several days. While violent, the wildbeasts weren’t even a match for humanity. Hunting them would be easy for the more powerful specters.

Although Tianming could now imagine the starry sky much better, he wouldn’t forget to stay humble.

“I don’t have anyone other than my parents to rely on. My path will have to rely on myself. If I want to go to the Divine Moon Realm and experience the world of the stellunar source, I need to at least become an ascendant, unless someone is willing to bring me up.”

Orderia was too far away, no matter how much he wanted the answers to the sky plunderers and the Primordial Chaos Beasts.

“My first target is becoming a god.”

He would only have the right to talk to the specter race if he was strong enough, not to mention leaving the continent.

In truth, the ignorance Tianming would have had if he hadn’t questioned the Archaionfiend would have been detrimental to his growth. He had already seen the continent’s ceiling and been stuck there, unaware of how to progress or what was outside.

An invisible chasm separated him from his parents and the Primordial Chaos Beasts. But now he could at least see it!

The astralscape of order was perhaps where he would find his answers.

