

## PARAGON 921

### Chapter 921: By NinestarSainthall's Laws

Severed!

The Soul Saint King's lime-green eyes were exuding exuberant spiritual light, sensing the connection between his Mystic Soul and the Mystic Ninestar Unity Array. It was hard to describe this particular feeling he felt as he tried to actively interface with the overall array or its individual formations.

The Mystic Ninestar Unity Array was still active, evident by the vibrant rays of light and rumbling power, but all his orders and commands were seemingly ignored. A vague, disconnected sensation swept his senses. It would be a gross understatement to describe the current Soul Saint King, one of the top three Earthly Saints of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, as confused and lost.

The concept of severing an individual from their geographically constructed array wasn't a foreign concept. It simply meant that one had to damage their spiritual strength or destroy the control key within their possession. There was also the direct, violent, overpowering method of outright destroying the formations.

However, the last method was clearly not deployed here with the nine Solar Stars remaining lively and effusing copious amounts of energies and essences. As for the other two, he was unharmed and the control key was in his possession, refined inside his Mystic Soul, so it was unable to be stripped from him without crippling him first.

"..." The Soul Saint King observed the army of Ascended beings and his expression grew abnormally dark and gloomy. Before, he and everyone else was too focused on the events unfolding, the battles of Earthly Saints, the capture of these masked assailants, and then his arrival. But now, they all examined the 1,000 Ascended beings led by a dragonhead helmet wearing, skeletal warhorse riding Earthly Saint! After making his move that seemed to level out the playing field, they became the center of everyone's attention!

Sun Li, Huoyan Liulan, Lady Clearwind, and Han Yuhei were all deeply shaken! 1,000 Ascended beings! The mortal youth riding atop an ancient, extinct beast with the strength of a Demi-Mortal Lord had the means to call forth 1,000 Ascended beings! Furthermore, they were all exuding dense battle intent, slaughter intent, various ethereal intents, and a unified aura that could shake the mind and weaken the spirit.

It was daunting, to say the least.

Yet the question on everyone's lips was simply: How?

While the others were Earthly Saints, absolute powerhouses in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, they were all well-known figures that had established themselves for thousands of years. They had public connections and irrefutable history that interlinked each of them in some way, but they recognized not a single Ascended being's aura!

Unlike before, the War Commander and the rest didn't come off as Wei Wuyin's incarnations, but independent existences that felt somewhat strange, yet still true cultivators. They had Mystic Souls or

Mystic Cores. They had Spiritual Strength, Mental Energies, Physical Energies, and Intent. The only strange thing was that none of them had a tangible life aura. True cultivators, not true living existences.

Wei Wuyin hadn't used any of his own energy or War Souls to fuel these Spirits of War this time around. The Nexus War Flag, upon 100% refinement, had its own battery of prepared energy that was currently fueling their existence. You can say that this energy was a rechargeable battery that Primary Soul Light and War Souls can be converted to generate. It was named Forged Soul Energy.

It felt like a mixture of Essence of War and Soul Energy. The former was extremely malleable, capable of taking the properties of any type of will that integrated within it. The latter was something that even Earthly Saints had no control over, except those who've reached the Primary Soul Light, to which only a portion was genuinely Soul Energy, the majority composed of Light and Spirit Energies.

"Who trained this army? Cultivated them?" Lady Clearwind was the most stupefied out of all of them. Her information network wasn't the greatest, and there were many things she was ignorant of, and for a mortal that was barely above 50 years of age to have genuine Ascended beings at his beck and call was extremely abnormal, but a mysterious army should be completely impossible.

The one responsible for this army must be an Ascended being of incredible strength and means.

Wu Yu made sense; his legend stemmed from long ago and had a lot of unknown history, but his talent was definitely prodigious after attracting the King of Everlore's interest. Thus, there was little doubt that he was on the verge of reaching Earthly Saint. His decision to become Wei Wuyin's Alchemic Knight is a little surprising, but not impossible if he was a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist. It's not as if Wei Wuyin was the first Mortal Sovereign Alchemist with an Earthly Saint level Alchemic Knight.

"It seems it must be true," Sun Li said darkly. A grunt sounded out beside her. It belonged to a captured Earthly Saint, who seemed to be a rather talkative individual as they tried to speak. Sun Li gave the masked Earthly Saint a glance before giving them a heavy slap that spun them around thrice. They fell silent instantly.

The Soul Saint King might be a little confused, but he wasn't panicked or horrified. In fact, he still floated calmly within the Dark Void, his demeanor exuded an aura of total control, brought solely about his own personal strength.

However, he had also noted the army that had ascended long ago, including their numbers. He inspected their cultivation base: 1 Earthly Saint, 6 Demi-Mortal Lords, 43 Soul of Mysticism, and 950 Mystic Stars. This was an astonishing line-up, all with astonishing strength and auras.

However, facing this line-up, the Soul Saint King hadn't batted an eye before and he wouldn't now.

Wei Wuyin noted the calmness in his stance and facial expression despite the sudden act of Zhan Zheng severing his access to his all-powerful Starfield Array, removing a staunch reliance of his. A surge of uneasiness slipped in mind and permeated within his Sea of Consciousness. And when those lime-green eyes turned to him, deliberately neglecting the army of 1,000 Ascended beings before him, the uneasiness grew.

"Your means are arcane, your rallying power..." the Soul Saint King briefly swept his glance towards each Earthly Saint present, including his subordinate who hid her true strength, continuing with a wisp of

mirth: "...is exceptional. I must say, you've intrigued me. However, if your confidence stems from these toys of yours or this little trick, you're truly just a child unaware of his circumstances."

Toys?!

The term caused the various Earthly Saints to stare at the army with spiritual light. They had their suspicions, but they couldn't outright verify it.

"Uhm!" The masked Earthly Saint that was smacked by Sun Li squirmed a little, as if saying: "See! I was right!" Yet no one understood what they meant before or now. Everyone's attention was all gathered on the army of 1,000.

"Puppets?" Huoyan Liulan frowned as she questioned. However, Faye Liying shook her head and replied: "Puppets lack all signs of life, they are unable to emit lively Intent, an expression of living will, borne out of our Souls connections to the Daos of this world." She was an Earthly Saint, her knowledge comprehensive and rich, so she instantly refuted that possibility.

"If not puppets, then what?" Huoyan Liulan grew further confused as her senses inspected the army before her.

In truth, they shouldn't be focused on this, but none of the Earthly Saints felt a sense of urgency. They knew that the Soul Saint King wouldn't try to claim their lives, so their demeanors and actions were quite relaxed. They were mere spectators at this point for the conflict between Wei Wuyin and the Soul Saint King that was unfolding. What they do will depend on these two beings that had set up a thorough trap for Trueborn and another who acted as a nominal leading representative of the Ninestar Sainthall based on intelligence and strength.

Wei Wuyin's eyebrows wrinkled. The War Talisman was an existence that originated from the Nexus Battlefield's Champion's list, and it was tremendously profound, revolving around concepts of souls that even Earthly Saints hadn't grasped an inkling towards. It was shocking that the Soul Saint King had an inkling of their true nature.

While he was likely unable to pinpoint their origins, he could determine they were toys, beings under his will and control. When it came to this, Wei Wuyin's uneasiness grew.

Then, Wei Wuyin's heart and mind throbbed with a pulse of realization. With slightly widened eyes, he inspected the Soul Saint King, and instantly realized how he was able to determine this difference. The uneasiness began to gradually dissipate.

With a faint smile, Wei Wuyin said: "I hadn't thought that the Soul Saint King would live up to your name, tapping into the profundities of Primary Soul Light. A true talent, it seems."

The Soul Saint King's brows furrowed ever-so-slightly. It seems that Wei Wuyin's words had pricked a point in his heart.

The others were confused. Primary Soul Light? They were aware of Primary True Light, but Primary Soul Light? What was that? There wasn't a single Earthly Saint present besides the Soul Saint King and Zhan Zheng that wasn't completely baffled by this term. Even the masked Earthly Saints, if one could glimpse behind their concealments, would find them with curious expressions.

Wei Wuyin inwardly nodded; his assumption was correct. The Soul Saint King understood principles of Primary Soul Light, and thus could determine that the 1,000 Spirits of War were all refined by Wei Wuyin's Primary Soul Light, and thus weren't genuine existences such as them.

"Enough." The Soul Saint King seemed to be on the brink of losing his patience. Wei Wuyin and all these Earthly Saints had disregarded his face, stomping on the rules of the Ninestar Sainthall, treating him and his organization like nothing while capitalizing on his absence. In fact, he was told to stand aside and allow it by a youth? There was no need to continue this game with a mere mortal. Even if he belonged to some great force from beyond, he had an inkling of the truth of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, and a certain sect's core purpose, so he wasn't afraid of any consequences.

"Surrender yourselves, You'll all be dealt with by the Ninestar Sainthall's laws; if you resist, I will use lethal force, and I can not ensure your lives." The Soul Saint King threatened, his voice rippling with tremendous power that shook the nearby fixed space.

The expressions of the Earthly Saints brought here by Wei Wuyin all became grim. They were currently unsure what to do. While they were willing to concede to the Soul Saint King, they didn't-

Before their thoughts could be completed, Faye Liying flew forward. She directly surrendered!

Chapter 922: No More Patience

Everyone's expressions drastically changed! The former Soul Rising Saint had given up without fighting! One must know, they outnumbered the Soul Saint King by six times, and they all felt the weakening of his aura after the strange Earthly Saint of Wei Wuyin had taken action! But she had surrendered.

Her eyes were lowered, and she allowed herself to be sealed by the Soul Saint King's mystic power. She was as weak and useless as those masked Earthly Saints at this point. With her beside him, including the Reversion Substitution using Earthly Saint, he now had two in his control.

The others were now met with a choice.

They looked at Wei Wuyin, who had a frown defining his entire expression. Their minds were circulating heavily. It was best to surrender and allow nature to take its natural course. They'll suffer some financial losses, but Trueborn would've still suffered some heavy losses to their infrastructure with these masked Earthly Saints in captivity, and Yue Songli was safe.

The goals they were tasked with have been completed.

Moreover, they all knew this was the most likely outcome. With none of them dead from the battle, this was the best outcome.

Suddenly, Huoyan Liulan followed with the corpse of the masked Earthly Saint. She had surrendered too! As the granddaughter of the ruler of the Hexaflame Starfield, she knew her safety was guaranteed. Furthermore, she would profit immensely from all this.

Two Earthly Saints surrendered!

The Soul Saint King gave Huoyan Liulan a brief glance with some depth to it. He already felt a headache from this woman. However, he sealed her nonetheless.

Their actions perplexed Wei Wuyin. Did they think he wouldn't fight the Soul Saint King or simply that he was his match? Moreover, what if he was a member of Trueborn? Their actions were...surprising...

"Have Pavilion Master Ma come later," Sun Li said to Wei Wuyin before she, too, flew towards the Soul Saint King! Left and right, these Earthly Saints surrendered!

Their original advantage of six to one had been dropped to three to one.

Wei Wuyin found Han Yuhei, who merely smiled and flew closer. His choice was obvious, if Wei Wuyin would resist, so would he! He had long since decided to become his Alchemic Knight to the best of his ability. Stating his stance here was an unforeseen yet miraculous opportunity to establish his baseline of loyalty.

Lady Clearwind was a little anxious. Wu Yu had left, and if he was here, she would be more confident in standing with Wei Wuyin. As an 8th Runic Ascendant, he was a powerful Earthly Saint. He wouldn't yield before the Soul Saint King without a fight in her eyes.

However, she was the least secure one here. The Soul Saint King might want nothing more than to get rid of her, dissecting her starfield for its resources and turning twenty-two into twenty-one. She was deeply conflicted.

Wei Wuyin wryly smiled, "At least let me try." He couldn't help but lightly chuckle at their actions after Soul Saint King declared his attitude. If they resist, he would kill. If they didn't, they would be dealt with peacefully. How domineering!

However, he didn't fault their choices. After all, the Soul Saint King was a part of the Ninestar Sainthall—he wasn't a single entity as it seemed here. He could definitely summon the eight remaining Soul Monarchs, they might be on their way right now. Moreover, who knew what other hidden strength they possess or the ire of the Ennea Hall Alchemic Saint they might receive for this.

Their initial objective was completed already. They fought and defeated Trueborn's Earthly Saints, securing Yue Songli's safety, and captured those attackers. They didn't sign up to be an enemy with the Ninestar Sainthall. Lady Clearwind was clear of this too, as a ruler of her Starfield, her actions could be construed as an act of war, breaching a few rules.

The fact she was conflicted was a sign of her unyielding will. Wei Wuyin could tell why Wu Yu fancied her.

In truth, Wei Wuyin hoped War Commander Zhan Zheng's leveling of the playing field, his line-up of six Earthly Saints, an army of a 1,000 Ascended, and his highly-built imaginary reputation would be enough to force the Soul Saint King to reconsider his position. If anything, he might act and force everyone into a fight.

However, it seemed the Soul Saint King's prestige wasn't so insignificant nor was his intelligence or patience after receiving Wei Wuyin's disrespectful attitude. He still firstly sliced off Wei Wuyin's strength, showing his actual strength.

This was why he couldn't help but chuckle at it all. In the end, he heaved a sigh.

This sigh was Lady Clearwind's sign to surrender. Directing a heavy and solemn gaze towards Wei Wuyin, she flew towards the Soul Saint King and allowed herself to be sealed away. Her handling was far more heavy-handed than the others, her seals fortified with extra effort. She felt unimaginable discomfort as she openly glared at the Soul Saint King.

The others' seals were merely perfunctory. They could, with some effort, break out of their shackles. But hers was as harsh and cemented as the masked Earthly Saints.

Kree.

Bai Lin let loose a faint clarion cry, her golden eyes felt a tinge of disdain towards these Earthly Saints. While there were intricacies and layers that she hadn't fully understood, she knew the significance of surrendering without a fight.

How pathetic.

Wei Wuyin caressed Bai Lin, mentally sending: "They aren't my actual strength. This reminds me once again that my own cultivated forces, not bound by obligation and a sense of inferiority, will always be the most reliable." He had long since known that temporary strength was just that—temporary.

The fact that his goals were fulfilled was enough. However, he looked at the sealed masked Earthly Saint in the Soul Saint King's possession. Whether it was his Void Bloodline or the War Commander's senses, that Earthly Saint would've been his.

With a shake of his head, he pointed towards the Earthly Saint. "All these Trueborn scum belong to me; hand him over and I'll let this matter go." Wei Wuyin still had to project strength, so he did.

Moreover, every last Trueborn life was a possible burst of Karmic Luck. He could already feel through his Bloodline of Sin that some of them were drenched in sin. They would definitely give him a hefty amount of Karmic Luck. Moreover, he couldn't rely on the Soul Saint King on killing these Earthly Saints or permanently imprisoning them, so he had to do so himself.

He refused to return any of strength to Trueborn. The feeling of them being his greatest obstacle was still there, seething within his heart. He had to eliminate them for now especially since this move was very overt of his inclination towards the organization.

The Soul Saint King's eyes sharply narrowed, releasing an imposing aura. "Hand over all those who dared to target my Domain and subordinates, they'll be brought to justice by the Ninestar Sainthall's laws. Same as you." It seemed that the Soul Saint King wasn't intending to leave anyone free, including Wei Wuyin!

"Bring me to justice?" Wei Wuyin innocently pointed at himself, blinking a few times, seemingly genuinely confused that the Soul Saint King wanted to bring him in.

The Soul Saint King's patience was incredibly wearing thin, his Mystic Aura began to accumulate. He was primed to take action! He didn't want to argue with a mortal youth, even if they had two Earthly Saints under them. It was best to wrap all this up quickly. He might even be able to gain answers as to Wei Wuyin's origins, whether it was actually connected to the King of Everlore. Of course, if he was, then he wouldn't suffer any punishment.

Han Yuhei, the sole living Earthly Saint by his side, also matched Soul Saint King's rising Mystic Aura. It was clear that he was ready to fight against the Soul Saint King at a moment's notice.

"Well, I-" Just as Wei Wuyin was about to speak, the meter of the Soul Saint King's patience had run out. With a step, his figure grew ethereal as he vanished. Han Yuhei's nine-colored eyes shrunk instantly as he exploded with mystic power as he rushed forward.

"-don't thi-" Wei Wuyin was still mid-sentence when several bright explosions erupted here and there!

"-nk you ha-" Wei Wuyin finally stopped. His silver eyes shrunk instantly as a hand was reaching towards his face, exuding extreme power. It was enveloped in unfathomably powerful light energies that scorched his corneas. If it wasn't for his Eye of Immortality, he would've been instantly blinded!

At this exact moment, another hand was clasped tightly around the arm holding the light-effusing hand! The grip was extremely solid! Unmoving! But as Wei Wuyin's eyes followed the owner of that light-effusing hand, he discovered a pair of lime-green eyes and a familiar face.

Soon, the entire scene was grasped by his spiritual senses.

Han Yuhei's throat was violently grasped to the side, held by the Soul Saint King's other arm, and the Guardian of the Elements was dangling powerlessly to the side! He seemed barely conscious. As for the hand that had stopped the Soul Saint King's other hand, it belonged to none other than a heavily armored figure. The Legion Commander! Zhan Zheng!

He had come in clutch, stopping the Soul Saint King's swift assault that exceeded Wei Wuyin's and Bai Lin's reactions!

Aghast, Wei Wuyin was finally exposed to the might of the truly elite Earthly Saint! It was far, far, far, no...FAR beyond his ability!

The Soul Saint King gave Zhan Zheng a side-eye, a wisp of shock in his gaze. "You have some streng-"

Wei Wuyin didn't even hesitate or bother listening to the Soul Saint King, using the last remaining bits of his void force to run! He conjured a Void Portal around him, sending him far, far away to the furthest limits he could!

The Soul Saint King's pupils contracted slightly.

Fled?

Escaped?

However, the Soul Saint King's eyes instantly fixed on Wei Wuyin and Bai Lin's figure that was hundreds of thousands of miles away, soaring away through the Dark Void while trying to escape beyond the borders of the Ninestar Starfield!

WOOSH!

A meteoritic fist smashed towards the Soul Saint King's face!

Chapter 923: Realization & Recognition

BOOM!

A single, deep, ear-rupturing explosion swept the Dark Void! The ears of all those in the range of tens of thousands of miles felt their eardrums throb violently, threatening to burst! While the Dark Void was a vacuum of space, the force generated shook the fabric of fixed space, causing the sound to be carried by space itself!

The captured masked Demi-Mortal Lords shrieked, screamed, and squealed as they were thrown back by the resulting shockwave. Without their powers beyond Mortal Limits, they were like tiny insignificant leaves before a grand storm—powerless.

Uncontrollably, they tumbled and clawed for support. Fortunately, the Spirits of War acted. They waded through the shockwaves with practiced expertise, soaring through the Dark Void's chaos to retrieve each of their captives with their Demi-Mortal Lord level Battalion Commanders at the lead.

The Earthly Saints were aghast, their expressions distorted as they shielded themselves with wards of mystic power. They resisted the incoming force yet it did little to subside the shock in their hearts. Each of their eyes were glued to the scene before them. Wei Wuyin's swift escape aside, the ongoing conflict between giants of their cultivation world was attention-grabbing.

A single punch.

A single punch!

The mysteriously strange Earthly Saint of Wei Wuyin, called a toy by the Soul Saint King, had launched a single fist! The attack was incomparably swift, at the closest range imaginable for Earthly Saints, essentially point-blank, yet its target was...

The Soul Saint King stood in the Dark Void, his hand that had clasped Hab Yuhei's throat had adroitly changed direction and purpose, placed directly before his face, and solidly clasped a heavily armored fist in his hand radiating seething light.

He stopped it!

And from the calm expression on his face, his unchanged stance, the seemingly unaffected Mystic Aura, it was done with absolute ease! This wasn't what brought their attention to them to the zenith, but the sheer power contained within that single punch!

Han Yuhei had regained himself the moment the Soul Saint King had let go, and he was an expert that shouldn't be underestimated. He intended to strike at the Soul Saint King, his palm had been fully prepped to slam out a fierce counteroffensive, yet when fist met palm, his body rippled from the ensuing power and he was rocketed away!

Han Yuhei couldn't resist the sheer force as he tumbled away like a helpless spider in a thunderstorm. Swept away, he was unable to regain his balance for ten thousand miles, and as he did, he spurted out nine-colored blood with bulging, bloodshot eyes. His Mystic Aura was at an all-time low in intensity. He barely kept himself upright!

That fist contained enough power to shatter solar stars! It was clear that this strange Earthly Saint in their eyes held nothing back and possessed unfathomable strength that vastly exceeded their own!



The Soul Saint King and War Commander stayed where they were for three full seconds, a time for Earthly Saints that could be perceived as an eternity, yet they stayed in that position for that long. Suddenly, the Soul Saint King's eyes unleashed radiant spiritual light that was abnormally blinding!

For a fraction of a fraction of a second, the Earthly Saints covered their eyes instinctively! Their refined eyes beyond Mortal Limits did little to protect them from the searing pain of that radiance. Additionally, most had been sealed off and unable to muster their spiritual power to unleash Ocular Spells!

Boom! Boosh! BOOM!!

Amidst their blindness, a series of explosions erupted that caused their clothes to flutter, their hearts to tremble, and their senses to quiver.

Outside the battle range, Wei Wuyin was riding Bai Lin who was beating a hasty and swift retreat. His heart was pounding fiercely as his mind was permeating endlessly with blips of that radiant hand that threatened to claim his freedom. It overwhelmed his senses so much that the pupils of his eyes manifested a replica of the scene in the form of a spiritual image.

At the moment, Wei Wuyin's entire back was drenched in cold sweat. He closed his eyes with tremendous force, circulating his cultivation base of four Astral Souls to counteract his seeded trauma before it erupted into a permanent part of his psyche. If that happened, he would have a deep fear forever towards those with power.

If this set in, all his plans and goals would be reshuffled and likely yield far less potential than before. He couldn't allow himself to fall into cowardice—not now, not ever.

Eden's roots thrummed with mental power. Within his Sea of Consciousness, his memories of facing the Wall of Heaven emerged, drugged up by these roots. The first memory was when he was at his greatest despair of fear, hopeless of the future, uncaring of the present, and yielding to circumstances and fear.

It was his first time seeing a cultivator facing their Astral Tribulation, and how unyielding they were in the beginning, slowly decaying into a defeatist state that inevitably led to their deaths. An example of how the fearless can become fearful

It didn't stop there as he kept reliving moments that helped shape, define, and reinforce his Heart of Cultivation.

When he first arrived at the Myriad Monarch Sect.

Su Mei's strange and deadly Astral Tribulation that almost caused him to lose her.

Every single Astral Tribulation he had overcome.

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His glorious crowning as the Ascendant Emperor of Neo-Dawn by millions, roared by billions, and acceptance of trillions!

Conquering the Second Calamity of Hell!

Facing Tiangou!

Fearlessly glimpsing at the Heavenly Daos!

Traveling through time!

Many of these core memories had only loosely shaped his Heart of Cultivation, yet to settle in through a moment of reflection and realization, but this moment, they had all integrated into his Heart of Cultivation with the utmost thoroughness.

With closed, trembling eyelids, Wei Wuyin clenched his teeth and softly whispered his older brother's name. Shortly after, he opened his eyes, revealing a pure, untainted pair of silver eyes that shone beautifully. He had regained himself, abolishing the seed of fear that threatened to overtake his heart and senses.

Bai Lin had been flying away at top speed, blazing a flaming trail that showed off her exceptional speed. She was equally as shaken by the proximity that the Soul Saint King had reached without her being able to react. However, she wasn't like Wei Wuyin, an existence that was questioning their decisions and beliefs in themselves, but one that felt a surge of powerlessness within her.

If it wasn't for Wei Wuyin, she would've been captured twice by others! Her memories of being left alone for a decade, forced to survive, acting as another's battle beast, and hiding from others kept surfacing in her heart.

When she was captured by strange men, brought to a mountain that housed the Beast-Taming Sect, and had to wait for Wei Wuyin to save her. Or when she wasn't fast enough flying away from that strange devouring wall phenomenon that Wei Wuyin called the Wall of Heaven. If it wasn't for Wei Wuyin risking his life, losing his memories as a result, she would've died that day.

A rousing rage flared within her golden eyes, igniting flames that kept intensifying. Her speed explosively grew as if initiating a boost, and she took off even faster than ever before.

So...so VEXING!

Despite being so much, much stronger than Wei Wuyin, everything from revenge to her own life still needed to be handled by Wei Wuyin. How pathetic was that? Was she his partner in the sky or his pet in distress?!

Strength!

She needed to get stronger!

Stronger!

Wei Wuyin had regained his sense of self and felt the leaking emotions emitting from Bai Lin. It was hard for him to properly console her at the moment, his own mental state still consolidating.

In fact, this might be good for them both. Wei Wuyin was operating on a stage far beyond what his age and cultivation base should allow, yet he was doing so. It was always a risk, and being more aware of the substantial possibility of this risk should bring them to a newfound reality, grasping their situation more firmly.

After all, he had deliberately antagonized with the Soul Saint King, unwilling to compromise. He had almost forgotten that he was surrounded by beings of an entirely different existence from him. Back there, there wasn't a single being at the mortal level except him, and he was conversing and trying to manipulate these beings to his will, as if the player of a chessboard. Others would deem that as insanity in action, delusional and overreaching.

Unfortunately, time wasn't on his side...

He no longer looked back, eyeing the border of the Ninestar Starfield instead. At the border, three Earthly Saints were observing with varied expressions. Ma Zheng's gaze had been fixated on Wei Wuyin. He seemed slightly pale in that face. The paleness was due to concern and anxiety rather than internal wounds, and Wei Wuyin realized this with a warm heart.

The two Imperial Monarchs, Tian Muyan and Yang Chaoyue, were also waiting next to him. Their eyes shifted from Wei Wuyin and then to the fight between the Soul Saint King and War Commander Zhan Zheng. The intense battle was hard to take one's focus away from, and Wei Wuyin didn't fault them for this at all.

Ma Zheng hurriedly retrieved him after he exited the Ninestar Starfield, exerting his protective spiritual sense in a discreet manner to ensure the Imperial Monarchs didn't try anything ill-intended. Without Wu Yu by his side or protected by oath, this was the most vulnerable state that Wei Wuyin was in. He refused to allow others to take advantage of it.

They didn't speak, merely exchanged knowing gazes that they both deeply understood.

Ma Zheng didn't know why Wu Yu had been sent away after the Soul Saint King had arrived, but it almost led to Wei Wuyin's immediately capture in his eyes. He felt as if he should've been there. If he was there...

Unfortunately, he couldn't enter the Domain without triggering all of the passive formations within the Mystic Ninestar Unity Array. He would be besieged by endless attacks that he couldn't stop. Even War Commander Zhan Zheng was unable to deactivate the array, merely sever the connection with the Soul Saint King.

Fortunately, it wasn't designed to activate passively against enemies already within the array, if it was, wide-spread destruction that might obliterate entire Domains could be deliberately triggered through some external schemes.

Bai Lin faced towards the Ninestar Starfield, her eyes fixated on the battle too. But within those fiery eyes of hers was a seething desire that threatened to spew out to engulf the world.

Chapter 924: Soul Saint King's Offer

Boom! Boom! Boom!

A series of rampant, devastatingly concussive explosions rang throughout the Dark Void. Intense shockwaves swept across the Soul-Saint Domain, even the Shattered World Moon's orbit was forcefully pushed into retrograde.

BOOM!!!

A final, ear-splitting, heart-shaking, and mind-stirring explosion erupted in the Soul-Saint Domain. The resulting consequence was waves of gorgeous light, both off-white in color, and it dazzled the eyes of all the ignorant denizens of nearby planets and lunar satellites. These humans, beasts, and plant life were unaware just how close they were to total annihilation.

The beings causing such phenomena were deliberately avoiding harming them, actively dissipating any excess power that might leak that could cause the cessation of all life that they knew and cherished.

All of the Soul-Saint Domain's fixed space shook with vigorous intensity, reminiscent of a Void-Quake. Cataclysmic!

Two figures finally separated, bringing a conclusion to their epic brawl at close-quarters. Separated by a few thousand miles, the two observed their opponent with calm, steady, and mighty eyes. While one gaze carried compelling authority and the other contained a forceful dominance, neither lost out in terms of power.

The Soul Saint King's eyes grew increasingly narrow, fixating heavily on the War Commander's figure. They had exchanged a total of 1,300 blows, all at close-range, relying on their Mystic Power and Physiques, yet he was unable to eke out any advantage.

It must be said, in a few exchanges, the Soul Saint King wholefully dominated the Guardian of the Elements, Han Yuhei, and held him like a hapless chick awaiting its fate, yet the War Commander was capable of resisting him for over a thousand moves. That said, the Soul Saint King had held off on using any arts or spells for fear of the inevitable casualties that would follow. If he took it a step further, the entire Domain could collapse.

'This strange being of that mortal is quite terrifying,' the Soul Saint King honestly thought. While he hadn't used much strength, he felt the exerted strength of the War Commander's blows, and it rivaled a 7th Runic Ascendant of top-notch grade, and its skill in close-range combat was prodigious. The War Commander's tactics made it very difficult to seek out any advantage to deliver a decisive blow while in these mindful restraints.

Every defensive action, every offensive strike, even the counters were all extremely calculated and precise, unhesitating in execution and totally faultless, defusing all aggression or forcing an outright response that had to be met. Not a single one of its blows were non-lethal, and if connected, the Soul Saint King knew that he would at best stave away certain death, and always suffer severe injuries.

With such tremendous pressure, the Soul Saint King could only watch the slow-moving Wei Wuyin escape beyond the borders of the Ninestar Starfield. If one were to call him frustrated, it would be an understatement of this entire year. When has a Demi-Mortal Lord or a Mortal had the privilege of escaping from his clutches? Or the clutches of any Earthly Saint?

Perhaps only Ma Zheng could achieve such titanic feats.

Irrked by the War Commander's effective tactics and combat instincts, the Soul Saint King was forced to accept that this matter would have to be tabled for now. With his acute battle sense, the Soul Saint King realized that with his desire to avoid casualties, holding back his true strength, there wouldn't be an end to this in the foreseeable future.

"I'm truly curious how you exist. But, I'll shelf that mystery for another day. Take your army, leave the others behind, and go—I won't extend this courtesy again." The Soul Saint King offered an escape route, taking a step back. The action was surprising, but considering their location, the Earthly Saints all concluded that this was the best course of action for all parties.

If the Soul Saint King had the Mystic Ninestar Unity Array, then this would be swept perfectly without any delays. Unfortunately, the Soul Saint King hadn't used that power, so clearly the strange Earthly Saint that was the War Commander had performed an arcane art that severed that advantage at its core.

"..." The War Commander's eyes through his helmet remained entirely unchanged, merely observing the Soul Saint King silently.

"He's strong!" Han Yuhei coughed out roughly as he leaned on Sun Li's shoulder. Her support allowed him to remain upright, and from his extremely pale expression and nine-colored bloody nose, one could tell he had suffered severe internal injuries. Despite saying those words, Han Yuhei was embittered; unable to contribute and defeated despite his best, he felt a splash of cold and wet reality on his face.

As a 4th Runic Ascendant, a being that was regarded as 'elite' by the starfield, he had never experienced such a depressing series of events before. Firstly, he had lost to Wu Yu, someone he hated with a boiling passion, wanting nothing more than to crush him beneath his feet, despite having the full support of his sect and two other Earthly Saints.

Then, he saw Ma Zheng, from the brink of death, ascend to the Earthly Saint. While he wasn't exactly certain of his precise runic state, he knew it was beyond his.

Afterwards, there was this War Commander and an army of 1,000 Ascended beings.

And now, the Soul Saint King, regarded as one of the top three Earthly Saints within the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, where those scholars debated whether he'll one day reach that level or was already at that level, had revealed himself as vastly superior! Moreover, he was defeated without the Soul Saint King using any armaments, arrays, arts, or spells, just a raw expression of Mystic Power sent him off.

He felt it when it impacted his flesh and bones—without arts or spells, the exertion of power exceeded Wu Yu's, even while in his 3rd Grand Transformation!

A clear-cut indication that the Soul Saint King was a level beyond Wu Yu even in his strongest transformation! How disgustingly horrifying was this?! All those years Han Yuhei had referred to himself as an 'elite', showered in praise of being amongst the best, carrying himself with unyielding pride, yet it had all been crushed in less than a year. Only a year.

All things considered, it must be stated that Wu Yu was a recently ascended Earthly Saint who had barely consolidated his foundation over the last year. The majority of his life was spent in the Desolate Dagnet Region, a dilapidated region without a Mystic Radiance Belt, containing a scant, almost insignificant, amount of ambient mystic essence. The fact he could become an Ascended at all was a result of astounding talent, the King of Everlore, and obscene luck.

As for the Soul Saint King, he had lived, thrived, and fed on the ample resources, rare treasures, and environmentally superior Grand Cyclic Stellar Region for over ten thousand years, where he stood at the

peak of the Ninestar Sainthall for thousands of years, enjoying all the high-level benefits that came along with such a prestigious position and status.

It was undeniably unfair to compare the two, yet Han Yuhei was unable to stop himself from doing so subconsciously.

Why?

Because the Soul Saint King, the Hallmaster of the Soul-Saint Domain's Sainthall, elected leader of the Ninestar Starfield, was also an 8th Runic Ascendant!

Just like Wu Yu!

"If Hallmaster Soul Saint wasn't concerned about us, the living citizens of his Domain, or the starfield's orbital condition, that strange existence of Wei Wuyin's wouldn't have lasted this long," Faye Liying, the former Soul Rising Saint, flatly stated her belief. She had surrendered unquestionably and without resistance for a reason! She fully knew that the Soul Saint King, even without the Mystic Ninestar Unity Array or reinforcements, was unmatched!

Even if they all teamed up in a valiant show of robust defiance, siding with Wei Wuyin, they would all lose. It would be no different than that strange being fighting against the three masked Trueborn from before. And from the level of power shown thus far, it was clear to all who heard her that she wasn't wrong! The Soul Saint King deserved his reputation as one of the top three Earthly Saints of the ENTIRE Grand Cyclic Stellar Region!

Han Yuhei weakly clenched his pale fist, his expression becoming slightly unsightly knowing the implications of her words. A disheartening truth that was like a nail, driven further into his heart with every passing second. Wasn't he willing to risk it all, serve a mortal, all for the sake of exceeding his limits? To grasp true power like this? This further instilled into him the desire to seize every opportunity he could!

Sun Li heaved a soft sigh, feeling Han Yuhei tremble ever-so-slightly with self-realized, anger-igniting reality of his life. Unfortunately, it wasn't that Han Yuhei was weak, but that the Soul Saint King was too strong!

"That's strange..." Lady Clearwind squirmed in discomfort as she voiced with a tinge of peculiarity. After being sealed so thoroughly by the Soul Saint King, unlike the others, she had to speak verbally. The others couldn't hear her in the Dark Void due to its unique characteristics, so they had to pay attention to her lip movements to understand her. Fortunately, they were observing everywhere their limited spiritual sense allowed due to the Soul Saint King's mercy, and her actions caused some of their focus to shift to her.

"What's strange?" Huoyan Liulan asked. She had only done so because she too felt a strangeness as well, but she couldn't quite pinpoint it.

Those who hadn't paid Lady Clearwind any mind decided to focus on her after Huoyan Liulan decided to involve her.

She didn't keep them in suspense as her lips moved, outright pointing out: "The dragonhead Earthly Saint doesn't seem to be at a disadvantage, and while the Soul Saint King is fearful of causing harm to the Domain and its inhabitants, does it seem like it also is fearful? Also, I can't-"

"Can't tell how many Mystic Runes it possesses?" Huoyan Liulan interjected, interrupting Lady Clearwind. Lady Clearwind harrumphed in dissatisfaction, but her actions did little to garner any response. If Wu Yu had seen it, he might think it was a little cute, yet the others took to discussion immediately. They had even forgotten Lady Clearwind's first point.

"Mystic Runes? Wait..." Sun Li was hit with that realization as well, noticing that the dragonhead Earthly Saint was using mystic power that was abnormally strong, yet there were no Mystic Runes being summoned. However, they could tell the tremendous power contained in each blow, enough to injure or outright defeat them if connected.

Baffled by the absence of Mystic Runes, they looked to each other to see if those beside them knew an answer to this conundrum.

Did the Soul Saint King not notice this?

"Maybe it's because of its unique existence. It could have Mystic Power but no Mystic Runes, lacking Awakened Mystic Intent, like certain non-living puppets. The Soul Saint King did call it a toy." Han Yuhei reasoned despite his weak state.

"But...that doesn't make sense," Lady Clearwind instantly refuted. Unfortunately, she was unable to engage in their discussion after they began to communicate through the fast-exchange of spiritual sense. Fortunately, the others also thought it was a little outrageous! After all, they could all feel its Awakened Mystic Intent.

How peculiar!

"..."

Resuming the confrontation between War Commander Zhan Zheng and the Soul Saint King...

"Is this how you want to play it out? You don't have long; the other Soul Monarchs of my Sainthall will arrive soon. I won't repeat this offer again. I strongly recommend you take it." The Soul Saint King's expression grew increasingly dignified, his Mystic Aura seething with each syllable spoken. At the end, he was a raging storm of immense power, capable of bringing forth the end of entire worlds with a mere thought.

"..." Despite it all, Zhan Zheng remained abnormally calm, unbothered by the threat of reinforcements or the tremendous storm brewing before him.

"Your choice." The Soul Saint King acknowledged the lack of response with a shake of his head, pity growing in those lime-green eyes of his.

Having given out this offer solely due to Wei Wuyin's escape, not wanting to destroy his little toy and teach him a lesson. He was left with no choice. Unwilling to give up these trespassers, the decision was decided for them.

Chapter 925: Setting the Stage

Amidst the rising tensions, a woman hovered in the Dark Void with an ashen face, unleashing a gargantuan, moon-encompassing Mystic Ward with all her might. The woman actively protected the Shattered World Moon, ensuring no harm came to it or the living beings that inhabited it—including her daughter, the original cause for all this ensuing chaos.

Yue Lixiang was currently speechless. The entire event had begun with an abrupt and unexpected assault by Trueborn fielding several Earthly Saints, all masked, all powerful, and all determined. She was driven to a corner immediately, injured and desperate. While she fought valiantly to protect Yue Songli, unwilling to lose her daughter again, it was only a matter of time until she collapsed in defeat.

It was far beyond her expectations.

By the grace of the heavens, the enigmatic youth that had shaken the stellar region recently, Wei Wuyin, heroically arrived with fierce reinforcements that were beyond reproach. As a mere mortal, he showed astonishing rallying strength, fielding seven Earthly Saints and maybe more to dominate these would-be kidnapers in spectacularly swift fashion.

The situation reversed instantly.

Those vile Earthly Saints lost, killed or captured. It was clear that Yue Songli was used as bait, a realization that made her aware that this young man's actions wasn't fueled solely by a single-minded desire of love to protect her. However, Yue Lixiang felt she wasn't in a position to complain.

Yet the situation hadn't ended then. The Soul Saint King himself descended onto the scene, initiating the starfield-wide array, establishing unquestionable dominance before all those present. But even that was overturned swiftly by the youth's forces.

An unexpected conflict began between the enigmatic youth of ever-rising reputation and the elected leader of the Ninestar Sainthall! A face-off between a mortal and an Earthly Saint was unimaginable. The former stayed abnormally calm, insisting here and there, giving very little to no face to the other, while the latter was uncompromising and forceful.

The situation continued to develop and Wei Wuyin was forced to escape, leaving behind his army of a 1,000, a strange Earthly Saint, and the captives. That was sudden but an expected result. The true unexpected occurrence was his successful attempt, a tale of the ages—a mortal escaping an Earthly Saint.

Now, two unbelievably powerful Earthly Saints from both sides were facing off, seemingly about to clash to unleash their strongest strength! Yue Lixiang didn't know what to do. She should, by all rights and obligations, assist the Soul Saint King in subduing all dissidents and threats.

The very act of fighting against the Soul Saint King in their territory was against the laws established by the Ninestar Sainthall. She was only able to remain pseudo-neutral due to the Soul Saint King not giving out any direct orders.

However, it was hard to decide what she would do should those orders come in. On one hand, Wei Wuyin had acted with incomparable swiftness, subduing the assailants before she suffered fatal harm or her daughter was snatched away. A feat that should make him a staunch ally of their Ninestar Sainthall and herself. If the Soul Saint King was relied on, her life might've been forfeit and her daughter in the



clutches of others before he could even arrive. Moreover, who knew what other cards Trueborn had yet to play knowing this possible outcome?

On the other hand, the Soul Saint King was her direct superior. She wasn't disloyal by any means, and her concealment of her cultivation was solely born out of self-preservation. She couldn't leak out this information through any channel or medium. If she had, it was possible certain Heavenly Seers could find a chink in her protective spells, figuring out her breakthrough.

Although it was the slightest of chances, if she was discovered, Trueborn surely would've fielded even stronger forces, and she wouldn't have been able to delay them for any period of time. The consequences would've been unimaginable. She had made the right choice.

Conflicted, she was only able to observe like the rest. She could only hope that the ongoing situation would de-escalate soon. Yet as it continued into the six hundredth exchange, a peaceful resolution felt increasingly unlikely.

Unfortunately, her indecision couldn't last! The Soul Saint King had sent her a spiritual transmission, her eyes widening as a result. She slightly clenched her two fists, but replied nonetheless with a nod of assent.

The message? An order.

The order? To activate the hidden protective planetary formations that would ensure no casualties in the case of an internal conflict or civil war! A drastic action highly indicative of the Soul Saint King's intentions.

As an established force with beings that could crumble entire starfields, the Ennea Hall Alchemic Saint had hiddenly invested a significant amount of wealth to install protective formations within the planetary core of each planet, lunar satellite, Secret Realm, and World Realm. It was only meant to be unleashed in a few cases.

An invasion by the Aeternal Sky Starfield.

A betrayal leading to internal conflict by a single, powerful member. A coup d'etat.

Or a full-blown Civil War.

The Ennea Hall Alchemic Saint's foresight ensured that an event like Rainbow Sky wouldn't ever happen. Not everyone was aware of these hidden formations, only the sitting leader of the Ninestar Sainthall, elected by all, and his most trusted subordinates. It was clear that the latter was solely due to the Soul Saint King's intentions, and showed how heavily he trusted her.

Even at a time like this, where her cultivation base had been hidden from him, he still trusted her enough to give her this task. She knew the result, but she wasn't able to refuse. Yue Lixiang was obligated to protect the starfield and the Soul-Saint Domain she served.

With a calming breath, the two Earthly Saints had already launched their eight hundredth blow at this point. She looked at her World Shattered Moon, her emotions roiling in her heart. She could only hope that Wei Wuyin was adequately prepared to secure his forces.

In her eyes, she already felt that Wei Wuyin was a suitable candidate to marry her daughter, becoming her husband after entering the Mystic Ascendant Realm. Considering how Yue Songli always measured him with the others, and how he'd always come out ahead in these comparisons, despite only meeting a single time, it was quite clear her feelings. The mark left behind by his existence was recognizable from a billion miles away.

This meant, from Yue Lixiang's standpoint, those loyal forces of his were also hers. An exciting prospect. A little selfish thinking, but she was confident that her daughter's beauty wouldn't lose out to anyone, and her talent was desirable. A man like Wei Wuyin wouldn't be able to resist.

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With those beliefs in mind, she acted!

By the 700th shockwave of catastrophic power, only stymied by both sides unwillingness to involve innocents, the planetary arrays were slowly revving up. The usage of 'slowly' was very loose, as the exchanges of these Earthly Saints occupied in milliseconds. When it reached 1,300, the two separated, and the planetary formations were primed to be fully activated.

The Soul Saint King then gave out his offer! Leave, take your men, leave the captives, and be gone from here! He was taking a step back despite already having prepared a suitable battlefield. Yue Lixiang found this quite shocking. The Soul Saint King rarely compromised.

Perhaps it was Wei Wuyin's means or the War Commander's frightening strength that could match him in a melee, but he had decided to do so! A sign of cautious respect.

Alas, the War Commander's response was not positive or negative, not considering his offer at all! Left with no choice, the Soul Saint King could only set his preparations into effect.

Whirr! Whirr!

A strange whirring sound began to emanate throughout the Dark Void. All present, all living beings, everyone could feel the faintest of vibrations emitting outwards from their surroundings! All the protective formations were activated! Spheres and domes of condensed mystic-grade energies that would shock Earthly Saints began to encompass these planets, lunar satellites, Secret Realms, and World Realms.

These bodies of masses or settlements of fixed space hadn't moved away, but their movements had all perfectly stilled. Set in place, they became unmoving objects that Earthly Saints would find immensely difficult to move or penetrate. It was quite clear that the amount of wealth invested in these formations was absolutely disgustingly high, yet it was being used here!

Amidst this whirring sound, the army of 1,000 kept and protected their captives and retreated in an organized formation with an even pace that lacked in trace of panic. They didn't escape far, but left the two Earthly Saints a vast expanse of hundreds of thousands of miles of territory. United, they formed a strange cubic barrier of Mystic Power. Together, this barrier would be equally or even stronger than those planetary formations.

The observers were in shock seeing the planets, lunar satellites, and areas of fixed space begin to emit exuberant mystic-graded energies.

"What's this?!" Faye Liying was actually startled by this reveal, her heart raced at the reveal.

"The Soul Saint King is going to get serious," Sun Li dazedly said.

Woosh!

Yue Lixiang arrived before them, giving them and the captive temporal rat of an Earthly Saint a look before waving her hands and shooting off into the Shattered World Moon's protective formation with them all in tow! She was frighteningly swift and gave them no time to seek answers.

Safe and sound, the battlefield was totally clear!

While the Soul Saint King readied his various protections, the War Commander Zhan Zheng was in his own thoughts. No one knew that he was actively cursing Wei Wuyin to the limits. Not just him, the skeletal warhorse beside him was even more harsh in its selection of words.

'Unnecessarily troublesome; that mortal should've just summoned all my men at once. This could've been dealt with and over with minimal casualties. In a battlefield, what were planets or realms? But no, no innocent casualties, he says. Don't reveal all your trump cards without reason, he says. Don't cause wanton destruction, he says. Mortals.' Zhan Zheng was a full sentient Spirit of War, and he was filled with boundless experience and his own opinions. In his head, Wei Wuyin would have launched an immediate assault summoning all 10,000, and subduing the Soul Saint King while acting with extreme prejudice.

After all, it was clear the little mortal was questioning his loyalties and allegiance.

Unfortunately, he could only advise. He knew his place in the hierarchy of their relationship and would never overstep his bounds, a true general that was loyal to the one who wielded his soul. Even if he wanted to rebel, Wei Wuyin's Primary Soul Light had refined him. While he couldn't or wouldn't truly die from being destroyed by anything less than an Ascended Saint, if Wei Wuyin died, he would inevitably perish as well after a period. A fail-safe to ensure his continued loyalty to the one who wielded the Nexus War Flag.

Wanting to sigh, yet finding it not in his nature, he could only agree with Wei Wuyin's plans. After Wei Wuyin had escaped, negotiations not even kicking off, he only had to wait until the Soul Saint King compromised or set a battlefield for them.

Witnessing the protective formations activate, he no longer needed to hold back. It was extremely tiring using low-levels of his mystic power and his raw physical strength and prowess to match an 8th Runic Ascendant. And this mystic power was mostly used to ensure the minimization of shockwave fallout. How annoying.

If the group of Earthly Saints learned of this, specifically Lady Clearwind and Huoyan Liulan, the strange feeling of theirs would have a disgustingly horrific answer! The War Commander was simply using his physical strength!!

The Soul Saint King was unaware. He began to act.

With a wave of his hand, from his Internal World, he summoned a golden long sword with nine silver solar stars etched on its blade from top to bottom. It was gorgeous, elegant, and emitted an aura that faintly pierced through the limits of Mystic-Earth grade.

A quasi Mystic-World grade Armament!

An unbearably sharp sword light emanated from its edges! It could instill awe in the hearts of countless experts!

Yet strangely enough, neither the War Commander or Skeletal Warhorse seemed impressed. He didn't bring out any weapon, merely clenched his two armored fists, and began to exude his true, unrestrained Mystic Aura!!!

The entire world stilled.

Chapter 926: World At War; RadiantLight!

Power.

A concept so profound, so varied, that its meaning changes based on who you asked. The power of choice; the power of many; the power of love; the power of wealth—it can go on without end.

But, the greatest undeniable power to beings who cultivate was strength. The strength to destroy, to suppress, to traverse the world freely, to claim lives, to decide your own terms in life, to pursue freedom, to grasp love, to provide, to protect loved ones, to do EVERYTHING. In the eyes of cultivators who seek the next stage of cultivation, their personal desires might be varied, profound, or vile, but the concept of power was this.

So, why did cultivators seek power? Seek out strength?

Han Yuhei was frighteningly pale, suffering injuries internally and mentally. A cold, uncomfortable truth had splashed his mind, lowering his body temperature, inflicting uncompromising damage to his psyche, yet he was always firm in his goals and next step, never retreating from it for a single moment.

To obtain greater strength!

As an Earthly Saint in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, few would be able to understand how such a powerful being who could sweep the lives of quadrillions with little effort still sought after more.

Almost nine thousand years ago, Han Yuhei was a mere lad barely off his mother's milk, favored by his cousin who dominated the lands of the Myriad Yore Continent. A bright-eyed, energized youth ready to tackle the world, even if it was as small as a flat continental earth.

One day, as that young, strapping youth, he saw a battle far beyond his previous imagination. A single battle started it all.

A trio of beings protected the world with their all against the ravenous, carnivorous, and vicious scaled beasts known as Dragons. That day Han Yuhei was exposed to power far beyond Mortal Limits, and felt as if his small world would collapse.

He realized how tiny he was on that day. How insignificant his strength was. But most importantly, his life changed as he felt a power that far exceeded his imagination. A desire manifested as a seed, germinating in his mind, rooting in his heart, and growing continuously. It drove him to seek greater and greater heights. To grasp what he believed was true power.

He had thought that after reaching this height of an Earthly Saint, he would never feel like that again—a sense of difference so massive that his imagination had never considered it before. Especially as an Earthly Saint, an existence regarded by quadrillions as one of the 'strongest' in the stellar region.

Yet, fate would decline him this mercy. It would open his mouth, grab his heart, and stuffed it in with an unforgiving disregard. He once again felt tiny, as insignificant as when he was a young mortal watching gods fight against gods, as if he was rediscovering what it meant to have power—true power.

...as the world went still.

The War Commander no longer held back his Mystic Aura, fully unleashing it. Zhan Zheng was not an ordinary Earthly Saint nor an ordinary Ascended being. He had a body meticulously crafted by beings far, far beyond the Mystic Ascendant Realm, beings that understood the Soul.

He was the expression of the ultimate artificial Ascended, one with profound knowledge of War, instincts, and raw intelligence that greatly exceeded many living beings. Wei Wuyin had yet to truly grasp the concept of value that 1,000,000 War Souls possesses. To him, it felt exceptional, but also insignificant. A strange contradiction due to its limitations, not even having knowledge of the Realm of Sages.

The various things he acquired from the Battlefield and Nexus Battlefield had yet to manifest in any tangible way. At best, it granted him an Earthly Saint. It was a consequence of time, of a division of focus, and largely due to his own ignorance. While Wei Wuyin's mindset vastly exceeded even those beings who forged the War Commander, exposed to the Hell, Heavenly Daos, and mysterious existences like Fuxi, it didn't mean he understood the weight it carried.

At least, not fully.

Even if the frog in the well knew of the Solar Stars beyond the sky, it didn't diminish the grand ingenuity or exquisite elegance of the well itself or the vastness of the sky.

The War Commander was the result of the beings who lived beneath the sky. As such, when his Mystic Aura pulsed outwards, a degree of Mysticism that had yet to be fully understood by those of this stellar region exploded outwards that stilled the world.

The Soul Saint King's eyes contracted to its limits!

Zhan Zheng exuded his Mystic Power, fueled by his Spirit of Cultivation—A Mystic War Soul! A byproduct of merging a War Soul with a Spirit of Cultivation! Yet, it didn't stop there.

The dragonhead War Commander's physique emitted pounding roars of war, shouted of battle, instilling a sense of bloody slaughter, valiant deaths, and absolute cruelty of the battlefield into their Mind's Eye, threatening to breach and influence their souls in its madness!

At the moment, while releasing no fantastical lights or roaring forces, the War Commander seemed to transform into a War God!

WORLD WAR PHYSIQUE!

With a single breath, he caused the eyes of the Soul Saint King to gradually grow increasingly bloodshot. An unsteady and vicious intent leaked out of his body, threatening to descend into the madness of war!

Suddenly, Chaos Mana of the Dark Void itself began to become wild! It crashed against the celestial bodies' atmospheric protections, smashing against the protective formations again and again as if possessing a mind of its own. From this Chaos Mana, faint silhouettes formed that held weapons of war that violently fought against each other and everything else!

Millions, no, billions of billions of varied beings from ghastly beasts to armored warriors manifested. They fought against each other, no allies, only enemies.

Light distorted. Various colorful lights flared out as if the entire light spectrum seemed to plunge into a reckless battle against each other. Extreme chill of the Dark Void and extreme heat of the nine Solar Stars began to clash, condense and formed intense areas of their divisions!

Space twisted! The gravitational forces of the celestial bodies seemed to be at odds with the gravity emitting from the vast Dark Void. In the depths of the sealed region, a supermassive Black Hole seemed to rile in ferocity. Almost everyone, even the Earthly Saints, hadn't noticed that the celestial bodies were being pulled just a little bit closer to the center and the celestial bodies, such as planets and Solar Stars, were abnormally active and fighting against it!

Fight!

Fight!!

FIGHT!!!

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A war of the entire world began!

The changes were freely observed by all living beings in the Ninestar Starfield as they remained unaffected. They looked to their neighbors, feeling the abnormality occurring, a wisp of fear in their hearts. They were unaware that they were spared from this influence of Laws.

"Huuuu...haaaa!" The Soul Saint King forcefully closed his eyes, regulating his breathing as he soothed his turbulent Mind's Eye with his Primary Soul Light Energies. Unlike others, he had grasped the profundity of Soul Light after coming across a fragmented Nascent Soul mutated by a strange environment. After recklessly refining it during his Astral Core Realm days, it allowed him to comprehend Primary Soul Light and thus greatly helped him to reach his current level off its boundless benefits.

The War Commander silently observed the Soul Saint King. 'The mortal was right; this Ascended human has grasped Primary Soul Light.' His reaction was lukewarm, no praise or surprise. However, he never underestimated his enemies, allies, or any stranger, a mindset instilled into him by his purpose—for war. A small rock by a small man can take down a giant. This was a concept that he fully understood.

The Soul Saint King opened his eyes, a wisp of solemn awe swam within his lime-green irises. The phenomenon currently happening was fully in his senses, but he knew they were mostly harmless. While these manifestations fought in the Dark Void, formed by Chaos Mana, they held very little strength. As for the distortions of space and light, as an Ascended being, how could these things affect him?

However, he'd never seen such a terrifying physique before.

It was downright terrifying!

Zhan Zheng wasn't given the title War Commander without reason. His foundation was formed using the basis of the Warring Soul, Triumphant World Method, the Peak-Earth grade Cultivation Method that allowed one to gain a War Soul as their Spirit of Cultivation, forming the Peak-Level War World Physique using its unique star force.

Of course, the strength of the War Commander didn't stop here. But his current strength was limited by his initial cultivation base, the Fourth Stage of the Mystic Ascendant Realm, the Earthly Saint Phase, as it meant the true beginning of one's journey as a Mystic Ascendant!

The world had gone from still to rampant, and Zhan Zheng's Mystic Aura and Physique was the cause, but his strength was now in full view of everyone! The Soul Saint King had jumped from one surprise to another!

His eyes once again contracted as he sensed the Mystic Runes swirling around this strange being!

One...

Two...

Four...

Six...

Nine...

**NINE!**

**NINE!!!**

All Nine Mystic Runes served the War Commander, swirling around him with a hectic behavior as if they were clashing against each other. At times, one or two Mystic Runes would shatter! Then, they'd reform instantly using each other's pieces, and somehow grew even more radiant. And they clashed against each other again!

This process was as if his Mystic Runes were in constant war against each other, and this process strengthened the durability and stability of each and every rune. After all, they were pounding against each other with feral-like ferocity, elevating the War Commander's Mystic Aura, but very few of them actually shattered!

Instantly, the Soul Saint King realized that this was a unique auxiliary method in effect. A method beyond his understanding. He would never dare purposefully destroy his Mystic Runes. They were

expressions of his Mystic Strength and destroying one meant a portion of strength was lost, requiring copious amounts of Mystic Essence to repair!

While it took a lot to reach this point, the entire moment from Zhan Zheng's unleashing to now required only a few milliseconds of time!

The Soul Saint King brandished his long sword, the quasi Mystic-World grade armament! The nine Solar Stars seemed to respond slightly, causing three of the nine silver solar stars etched into the sword's blade to emit a gorgeous golden radiance.

Fearless!

Nine Mystic Runes?

A powerful physique?

It mattered not!

The Soul Saint King was not a coward! With his sword in hand, he charged!

His own Mystic Soul was pushed to its limits, revealing all its unique characteristics! A Spirit of Cultivation of Light! A Radiant Light Mystic Soul!

With the Radiant Modifier in effect, his innate light energies were several times stronger than average, actively refined by his other energies, so as he strengthens his four fundamentals, his innate light energies would be automatically enhanced! Additionally, his Primary Light Source was naturally four times larger even without products such as Wei Wuyin's Neo-Dawn Soul-Sea Elixir or similar products! He had four times the limit of storage of his Primary Soul Light, an already transcendent-grade light source!

With his Mystic Light Soul, his core energies of his power were light! As such, these two parts of his cultivation were extremely synergistic when combined! The light energies refined by the Soul Saint King was effectively twelve times greater than those of his cultivation base!

With this, his speed was prodigious! His flow of energies? His attacks? His reactions?

**EVEN FASTER!**

The other Earthly Saints gawked as the Soul Saint King vanished in a splash of explosive light—a light-type Movement Art! He arrived before the War Commander, sword-in-hand, in almost an instant and slashed!

Chapter 927: Exceptional Combat Instincts

Shiing!

The Soul Saint King's sword was mind-blowingly swift. It bore down upon Zhan Zheng with gargantuan might and vibrant radiance, yet the War Commander remained unfazed, unhesitant in his counter. With a gentle step back with his left foot, the fixed space at his feet solidified so much that a curving continent of solid space formed for thousands of miles beneath his soles.



Despite that step being backward, it was not an act of retreat, but a means of reinforcement! With the newly solidified space as his foundation, Zhan Zheng lifted his right arm to block the Soul Saint King's strike.

An epic clash of metal on metal thundered! Zhan Zheng blocked with solely his armored hand, not being forced back a single step!

Soul Saint King was stunned. His attack harnessed a tremendous amount of his mystic power, exhausting enormous levels of mystic energies, yet this strange being had taken it in stride! More importantly, he reacted perfectly without a single delay!

As a cultivator with a Radiant Light Mystic Soul, his greatest asset was his speed. With his Primary Soul Light as the core of his light properties, it wouldn't be an understatement to say that he was the fastest cultivator throughout the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region!

A heavy pride that had never been shattered amongst those of equal cultivation. Until today...

Despite the surprise, the Soul Saint King's assault didn't skip a beat. With a twist of his hands, he unleashed a diagonal slash as a follow-up! The wake of this slash could shatter planets, disrupt fixed space, and blind ghosts and demons!

Zhan Zheng kept his footing solid, using his left arm to parry this sundering strike! Another thunderous collision of metal versus metal erupted. There was a serenity within every move of his, graceful, patient, and precise. The two blocks seemed simple, but at this close-range, it was like a mortal trying to react to lightning descending!

Even the Earthly Saints watching was unable to see the two strikes and guards occur!

'He's fast!' The Soul Saint King was taken aback yet again. If the first strike could be blocked through prediction and anticipation, then the second block required equal reaction speed alongside adequate moving speed. After all, they were way too close!

However, he was more startled by the staunchness of this strange being's armor. There was no formation inscribed on it nor did it emit any unique properties. It seemed to just be raw materials refined as an armor, much like a mortal's. Yet this armor could defend against his Ninestar Radiant Sword!

Even Zhan Zheng's Mystic Ward was unable to protect himself, being sliced through with ease. Baffled yet cautious, he needed to test the limits of this armor's defenses, so he integrated a stronger offensive tactic, exhausting an even greater degree of mystic power to launch a third strike! This slash was accompanied by an explosive spin, threatening to bisect Zhan Zheng!

A distinct intent leaked out of his blade, sharp and swift!

Awakened Sword Intent!

Zhan Zheng's eyes glinted for the first time since witnessing Soul Saint King unleash his Sword Intent. The sharpness of this attack had a high likelihood of penetrating his armor forged from Essence of War, having Mystic-World grade defenses, if he was careless.

Fortunately, his combat instincts and very nature refused to allow that. With a calm breath, he tapped into his World War Physique's innate power and roused his Mystic War Soul, riling up the war power within him! He formed a thin wall of solidified space as a third layer of defense, like a third skin wrapped around his body.

Inverse World Prison - Spatial Armor!

The Soul Saint King didn't relent at this strange application of Mysticism.

BOOM!

A tumultuous explosion of forces erupted, scattering the billions of nearby Chaos Mana manifestations. These manifestations roared out in the face of this catastrophe as if subjected to their true end, unwilling and unyielding. Unfortunately, they dissipated all the same despite their violent defiance.

The Soul Saint King's sword was embedded into the Spatial Armor's torso area, releasing sharp, incising light that violently pierced into it. Yet the thin silver armor kept fluctuating with endless ripples that refused to die out. If one looked closely, they would see the sharp blade pushing a millimeter into it and then being pushed out by a millimeter as well!

It was as if the Spatial Armor was a raging series of waves and the sword was a creature attempting to swim against the current. For every step forward they took, they would be pushed a step back!

The Soul Saint King's sword was unable to follow-through, hindered at the thinnest of margins. The elected leader of the Ninestar Sainthall's eyes narrowed sharply witnessing this defensive measure. He easily deduced that this strange being was continuously generating thin walls of spatial energy and kept his sword at bay. However, the thinness of each layer was extremely, extremely great. A single millimeter of distance was roughly 10,000 Spatial Layers!

Even with his Sword Intent empowered slash, he was unable to gather enough strength to slice through it all in one go, and with his momentum seized, a stalemate would be forced upon him. Unwilling to enter into a battle of attrition against his opponent, unaware of the extent of his energy reserves, he hurriedly released an explosive output of mystic power, separating himself from Zhan Zheng.

In a flash of radiance, the Soul Saint King appeared over twenty thousand miles away, his sword held tightly within his right hand.

The War Commander only ceased the Spatial Armor's endless tides, stabilizing it at a few tens of thousands of protective layers. With three layers of defenses, he seemed like an impregnable fortress that could not be sieged. With firm stableness, the War Commander had placed himself in a strong position.

The Soul Saint King's grip tightened. Those three attacks exhausted more mystic power than the 1,300 exchanges before. The fight between experts were often extremely exhausting, relying on their strongest attacks to deal the swiftest of injuries or outright death. An early advantage was the best advantage!

However, he found himself unable to eke out any advantage given his speed, despite forcing a close-combat situation that was incredibly favorable to his strength. It was as if this War Commander knew exactly how to fight against speedy opponents.

Firstly, he established himself in an unmovable position. If his opponent couldn't abuse his speed and attack from all angles while he's forced to react and defend, then that would neutralize an advantageous tactic.

Secondly, he had powerful armor to block strikes and used the most steady, less complicated move to defend.

Thirdly, when the strike could've threatened his layers of defense, he used a strange art that forced a battle of attrition, using numbers to defend against absolute power.

The reason why the third was absolutely brilliant was that it specifically countered the advantages of his Radiant Light Mystic Soul! As someone who comprehended Soul Light and grasped terrifyingly powerful light energies, his flow of energies and utilization of energies was unmatched.

Typically, if an Earthly Saint could gather 40% of their strength, he was able to gather 100% in the same time span. It was why even Han Yuhei was unable to face him. Whether it was his offensive tactics or defensive prowess, Han Yuhei should not be underestimated as an Earthly Saint far stronger than his Runic Ascendant State suggests, yet the Guardian of the Elements was unable to bring forth his greatest degree of mystic power to defend or attack.

The disadvantage was absolute.

He was promptly dealt with, suppressed, and unable to resist! A hapless chick awaiting slaughter within a few exchanges.

However, this Spatial Armor delayed and continuously supplied energy through never-ending ramping, effectively canceling all of these advantages. Just the fact that this was only used after his Awakened Sword Intent came into play meant this strange being had a very clear understanding of power output and his limitations!

The sheer combat sense displayed in these decisions were astonishing!

The Soul Saint King would be praising it with a grand applause if it wasn't being used against him. Instead, he felt an urge to puke.

At this point, a reprieve was established and the Earthly Saints watching could finally grasp the scenes unfolding before them. Those with acute senses of combat instantly realized what had happened!

Faye Liying, who was fully aware of the Soul Saint King's powers, was in awe, her mouth wide enough to fit an egg. It was unbecoming for an Earthly Saint, but the response was involuntary!

When the Soul Saint King got serious, she expected this fight to be over in the first two exchanges! After all, the battles between elite experts were oftentimes extremely short due to energy and power output concerns.

Yet this strange being of Wei Wuyin's matched him without moving being pushed back a single inch!

As for the others who couldn't grasp in the finer details, they were equally in awe, no, even more so! The three strikes unleashed a shockwave of destructive might that pushed almost all the planets and lunar satellites far out of freaking orbit! They were hugging the borders of the Ninestar Starfield piled

together, some even slammed into each other, only remaining unharmed due to the Ennea Hall Alchemic Saint's protective preparations!

How fortunate they were!

How devastating was this?!

Without those preparations, these two would have destroyed the entire starfield! At least, the planets within. The Solar Stars remained unmoved, their Mystic Radiance Belts released auroras of light that enveloped them. The Solar Stars of the Ninestar Starfield all had their innate defensive mechanisms, drawing power from their own Star Cores.

The strength of their defenses wasn't something mere shockwaves could breach, even from two terrifying Earthly Saints.

The Legion Commander of 10,000 Ascended, Zhan Zheng, had steadied his position intelligently, remained silent and emotionless throughout. When the Soul Saint King retreated, the War Commander thought to himself, '8th Runic Ascendant—lacking Oceanic, Radiant Light Mystic Soul, Radiant Soul Light, Mid-Level Physique, average levels of Spiritual Strength, low-level Application of Mysticism, and quasi Mystic-World armament with peak Mystic-Earth grade inscribed formation—limited by energy requirements.'

The assessment was concise and perfectly accurate, especially the Mystic-Earth grade inscribed formation on the Radiant Ninestar Sword! Its innate flaw was that its full strength required too much energy, and the Soul Saint King could only ignite all nine solar stars using his Mystic Ninestar Unity Array!

Powerful, but reliant.

It wasn't a threat in his eyes.

There was a famous quote about war, said by an ancient sage of unimaginable wisdom. It said: "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."

Versed heavily in the Dao of War, these words were thoroughly ingrained in his spirit. At the start of the battle, he knew only himself.

Now, he knew his enemy.

With a wave of his hands, a spear with a black finish and a crescent blade attached was summoned. With a forceful grip, he held it in his hand and his entire aura began to undergo an intense change!

Chapter 928: Reinforcements!

"Nin-nine...NINE RUNES!" On the Shattered World Moon, three figures were gathered at the edge of the protective shell erected by the mystic-graded protective formation. The alluringly rich color of sky-blue gave the moon a unique beauty, a combination of water and wind energies that diffused all incoming disasters.

Of the three, one was left with their mouth gaping as they observed the ongoing battle and world-shaking shockwaves, feeling like a pinball that was sent to the edges of their starfield. This person was an Ascended being and could acutely sense the vigorous Mystic Intent and various Mystic Runes circulating around both parties from a vast distance, even distinguishing them.

It was none other than Song Yunhai, the father of Yue Songli, and proud cultivator at the Soul of Mysticism Phase. His current facial expression wasn't out-of-place amongst the other observers. In fact, it was relatively tame. After the high-speed exchange between the Soul Saint King and Zhan Zheng settled down, they began to digest the immense power of both parties in abject awe and fear. Some hollered hysterically, others prayed to the heavens, and a few even thought the world was ending, taking their lives swiftly to avoid any pain.

If it wasn't for these protective formations, the entire starfield would've met their end at these two's hands. Perhaps only the nine Solar Stars that were proudly strewn across the starfield would remain standing. What type of beings could cause such catastrophic events?!

These cultivators were usually powerful and respected, and most had simply accepted it as a matter of course. After all, since being at a higher cultivation base meant being stronger, it was typical for the highest cultivation base in any cultivation society to be treated with the greatest degree of respect and reverence, but bearing witness to their godly might left them deeply shaken down to their souls.

When the concept of 'beyond' Mortal Limits became popularized with a deeper understanding of the Mystic Ascendant Realm's stages, few could conceptualize the power this realm would bring or what feats they could achieve. Now, two Earthly Saints at only the fourth stage of the Mystic Ascendant Realm were unleashing cataclysmic, world-ending might!

"Nine...runes..." Yue Lixiang whispered softly as her eyes slightly widened with dreadful shock. As an Earthly Saint, she fully understood what nine Mystic Runes meant. A being that has comprehended all Ways of Mysticism, reaching the limits of Awakened Mystic Intent, and harnessing unimaginable powers!

It was similar to a cultivator gaining insight into an Apex-level Intent of the Material Dao! The Soul Saint King's talent was unquestionable, reaching the 8th Runic Ascendant State. This was acceptable. When Wu Yu's Runic Ascendant State was revealed, it shook the hearts of everyone who heard it, lending heavy credibility to Wei Wuyin's mysterious background.

Now, this strange Earthly Saint of his also had nine runes!

Han Yuhei's eyes quivered endlessly. His decision was right! Wei Wuyin, even this strange Earthly Saint, had the ability to reach the 9th Runic Ascendant State. This meant Wei Wuyin definitely had means to allow cultivators to transcend their initial foundation! After all, it was extremely difficult to bypass their natural Runic Ascension.

Han Yuhei reached the 4th Runic Ascension as a Soul of Mysticism Phase cultivator, and had entered the Earthly Saint Phase as a 3rd Runic Ascendant, yet after thousands of years, he could only reach the 4th Runic Ascendant State. Despite his talent and means, he still found it extremely difficult to take a single step forward.

Yet Wu Yu, a cultivator who had a 7th Runic Ascension, had become an 8th Runic Ascendant at the Earthly Saint Phase immediately! This was one of the greatest reasons why Earthly Saints gathered around Wei Wuyin like flies. Moreover, they had very little idea how to transcend the Earthly Saint Phase, so they could only focus on improving their mystic foundation to grow stronger.

Thus, Han Yuhei's emotions were all cascading downwards as he felt his actions of seeking out Wei Wuyin was absolutely correct!

Those outside the starfield, the two members of the Imperial Clan—Imperial Monarch Tian Muyang and Sky Monarch Yang Chaoyue—and Ma Zheng were observing the ongoing clash with varied expressions.

As for Wei Wuyin, under Ma Zheng's protection, he was making calculations as his visual senses were connected to Bai Lin.

The two Imperial Clan Monarchs found themselves shaken so deeply that their hearts were trembling intensely. The strange Earthly Saint of Wei Wuyin was a 9th Runic Ascendant! A being strong enough to fight against the Soul Saint King, one of the top three Earthly Saints in the entire Grand Cyclic Stellar Region!

What did this mean?

Wei Wuyin, a mere mortal, wasn't just a Mortal Sovereign Alchemist with a mysterious backing, no, he was a cultivator that wielded the strength of two unfathomably powerful Earthly Saints at his beck and call, Wu Yu and this Earthly Saint!

Adding his ancient Fire Phoenix, his connections with the Golden Life Pavilion, and that army of 1,000 Ascended beings, he seemed to be more and more frightening by the minute. Moreover, he had launched an offensive on trueborn, dealing them terrifying losses with a calculated ambush gathering many elite figures, including the Imperial Clan and a leader of a Starfield!

They had so, so many questions!

Wei Wuyin had heavily furrowed brows as he observed the high-speed fight through Bai Lin, feeling that the might of these Earthly Saints were absurd. Their shockwaves sent entire planets flying across hundreds of thousands of miles without being able to resist. If it wasn't for the protective formations, those planets would've all exploded, collapsed, or been sundered by these shockwaves.

He felt relieved that he told Zhan Zheng not to act haphazardly. But his furrowed brows weren't due to their might, but contemplation about how he should proceed. After using 8,000 War Souls, the Nexus War Flag's Spirits of War were upgraded. At least, some of them.

The War Commander's current strength wasn't enhanced by the 8,000 War Souls, but simply his base power fueled by the preloaded soul energy of the War Talisman. If he wanted, he could field a stronger army. He was just deciding...if he should.

WOOSH! WOOSH! WOOSH!

Just as his thoughts reached this point, Ma Zheng and the two Imperial Clan Monarchs turned their heads to observe three comets of blazing light approaching with stupendous speed. They took less than a second from being in view in the distance to arriving about a few dozen miles from them.

They were all wearing exquisite attires, each with their own distinct colors and symbols that defined them as Soul Monarchs of the Ninestar Sainthall! For example, the Soul Rumble Saint and Soul Falling Saint was present!

The source of this content is Freewebnovel.com.

The former was a heavy-set man with a glorious black beard that touched his chest, full and healthy. He was bald yet his features were extremely handsome, especially his eyes that projected world-rumbling strength. His attire was tight-fitting, and his muscles underneath were well-defined, indicative of terrifying physical strength.

The latter was an old scholar man wearing a taoist robe, very similar to the Golden Life Pavilion. His eyelids were tightly closed and gave a strange feeling as if he knew all and saw all.

The last arriving member was a giant male that stood at three meters in height, absolutely towering over the others, and his build was equally as impressive. He seemed to be born from muscles and might, exuding endless vitality that shook the surrounding space with his every breath.

Wei Wuyin's mind stirred with interest. This giant bore extremely strong resemblance to the titan race. The only difference was that he seemed to be a full-on giant, but the titan race was more natural, more like larger versions of humans.

He heavily reminded him of a little meat-head that couldn't stop following him in Red Dove City. The thought of this person instinctively formed a slight smile on Wei Wuyin's face. Then, a wisp of emotional sadness swept his heart.

Where was that meat-head?

Wei Wuyin's thoughts aside, the newly arrived Soul Monarchs all had expressions that were vigilant as they observed the Imperial Clan Monarchs and Ma Zheng.

The old scholar stepped forward after glancing at the bundled planets at the edge of the starfield. If it wasn't for the Ennea Hall Alchemic Saint's formations deliberately preventing these planets from escaping the starfield, who knows how far they would've traveled. Planetary meteorites in the making!

"Is the Imperial Clan declaring war against our Ninestar Sainthall?" The old taoist's words were calm, as if it lacked any urgency or seriousness to the topic of war.

Tian Muyang gave a wry smile as he looked towards Wei Wuyin. Wei Wuyin had expertly navigated their oaths, allowing them to help without helping. It was a strange loophole that few would've been able to discover. Moreover, they acted against Trueborn, no member of the Ninestar Sainthall.

Now, standing before the three Soul Monarchs, he was unable to really explain himself. As for lying, what good would that do?

Yang Chaoyue was merely a Sky Monarch of the Imperial Clan, so she remained silent on the topic. In truth, they didn't need to answer. It's not like the Ninestar Sainthall would dare declare war against the Imperial Clan. That said, she glanced at Wei Wuyin, curious if they should stop the Soul Saint King from getting reinforcements. However, that would definitely be pushing their oaths to the edge unless they handled it perfectly.

Perhaps this mortal youth had other tricks in his bag. She was more and more intrigued by Wei Wuyin's existence with every action he took.

Ma Zheng had similar thoughts as he just awaited Wei Wuyin's response. If given the order, he would unhesitatingly hold back the three Earthly Saints. While he never considered himself a soldier of another, it was in his best interest to protect his investment that had already yielded him unimaginable gains.

The Soul Monarchs subtly felt the three Earthly Saints with absurdly high statuses all defer to the mortal youth riding majestic avian creature.

Was that the Fire Phoenix?

Regardless, that was strange in and of itself. They couldn't help but give this youth with a rich mortal aura a deep look over. A Realm Lord? Silver eyes? Wasn't this just like that...wait! Was this...Wei Wuyin?!

As for the man in question, Wei Wuyin finally exited out of his nostalgic thoughts as he turned towards the Ninestar Starfield. But before he could say anything, the Ninestar Starfield's border walls began to ripple. The border of the starfield was demarcated by a sphere of faint light that was barely visible to Ascended beings and outright invisible to mortals. However, through Bai Lin, he could feel the changes.

"Shit!" The Soul-Falling Saint's heavy body shivered as he no longer bothered with the two Imperial Clan members, Ma Zheng, or Wei Wuyin. He shot off with mind-blowing speed into the Ninestar Starfield. The others gave Wei Wuyin a brief glance and then shot after the Soul-Falling Saint.

Before Wei Wuyin could react, they had already entered, so any possible attempts to stop them were ended before it could begin. Wei Wuyin, however, wasn't bothered by this. He never intended to stop them or risk breaking Mythical Oaths of his allies. Doing so would definitely complicate things to a tangled state.

Back to the main show, the War Commander and Soul Saint King stood in direct opposition. The Soul Saint King's expression was dark and gloomy, feeling an urge to snap something in half. He had exhausted a tremendous amount of mystic power yet his opponent had calmly handled his attacks with ease.

"Oh?" The Soul Saint King's eyes lit with bright, excited radiance.

"..." Zhan Zheng also felt the arrival of three Earthly Saints—reinforcements of the enemy. Either Trueborn or the Soul Saint King, it didn't matter which, but that they were here. This would definitely cause other Earthly Saints to feel a form of heavy pressure, but the War Commander had already determined his course of action, and he wasn't alone.

"Men! Intercept!" He shouted two words that caused the manifestations in the Chaos Mana to grow wilder, more ferocious, slaughtering and dying at faster rates. Those two words contained incredible power, and the 1,000 Ascended beings of his roared in compliance. As a unit, they prepared themselves!

Even if it was gods, ghosts, demons, or devils, they would fight without hesitation!

The Soul Saint King sneered. Did this strange being really think his measly army was capable of stopping his allies? He was about to say 'pointless sacrifice', but his words were stuck in his throat as the War Commander tightly clenched his right fist! Suddenly, the entire world began to tremble.



Without warning, darkness engulfed the entire starfield!

## Chapter 929: Two Strikes

The descent of darkness, advent of light, and raging roars of war, chaos, and slaughter. It was as if the darkest hell had arrived, plunging the entire starfield into a never-ending, all-encompassing night!

Horri-fying.

The hearts of all viewers thumped in panic, and some outright screamed hysterically enveloped in their fear of this unknown. Light was a constant to the lives of many in a Starfield of nine Solar Stars, and only artificial light and calculated rotations brought about a night, but even this 'night' was brighter than night. As such, when the darkness engulfed their visual senses, it was an understatement to say panic was their response.

It was madness. Unpredictable madness.

The Soul Saint King's words had been stuck in his throat when darkness fell. An unimaginable degree of shock pounded his heart and mind with relentless force. He was unable to control his natural response, gawking in awe and disbelief!

The Soul Saint King, one of the strongest figures of the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, was stunned into a stupid expression!

And the War Commander was the cause! With his halberd in hand, Mystic Aura flaring strongly, and his eyes revealing a chilling light through his helmet's slits, Zhan Zheng had violently clenched his empty fist.

All rays of light veered in his direction, drawn uncontrollably to his right fist. It kept flowing into his palm. Light rays of millions of millions of miles encompassing the entire Ninestar Starfield from border to border in every direction were gathering!

Those at the Astral Core Realm and higher could still perceive the world through their Spiritual Sense, but it felt disorientingly odd. Like a human familiar with observing the world in rich, vibrant or dull colors suddenly began to see only in black and white shades. The absence was so glaring that it shook their minds to a state of absolute pause.

"Wh-what?!" Sun Li screamed! What was this? What type of power was this?! What...the... flying fu-

"All the light is being attracted to it!" Han Yuhei pointed out disbelievingly. Despite witnessing the exact action, he found it extremely difficult to accept. Should an Earthly Saint be able to do this?! What mystical art can absorb all the light of a starfield in less than a single breath?!

"...Light..." The Soul Saint King whispered to himself. Suddenly, his eyes contracted and his expression dramatically changed.

"Oh no!" Those words barely left his lips as he tried to retreat. However, the War Commander was a step faster. Pressing against the solid space that acted as his footing and foundation, Zhan Zheng pushed off with explosive might. He was like a roaring tiger, leaping at his prey!

With prodigious speed worthy of an Earthly Saint, he rushed towards the Soul Saint King! His entire body was glowing with a radiant light, pure and untainted, and it caused him to seem like the only light in a

world of absolute darkness. An exceptionally beautiful streak of light was all everyone could see, illuminating their hearts and minds.

The Soul Saint King's eyes shrunk considerably. Without hesitation, his Radiant Light Mystic Soul pulsed with tremendous power. His light power surged throughout his body in a profound manner, interacting with his meridians, rousing and bolstering the internal Mystic Runes within his body, and he, just like Zhan Zheng, emitted a bright radiance. However, it was clearly weaker than Zhan Zheng's radiance!

How could he compare to an entire world's light energies! Somehow, Zhan Zheng had converted the entire starfield's light energies to his strength! This wasn't outrageous at all. The Radiant-type Mystic Rune, a portion of Awakened Mystic Intent, allowed the control of ambient mystic-graded light energies, including absorption and refinement. The issue was the scope.

The scope was unimaginably massive!

For an extremely short period, the War Commander had reached speeds exceeding what the Soul Saint King could accomplish! Baffled, the Soul Saint King could only watch as Zhan Zheng approached with his crescent-blade halberd in hand, his fist glowing brightly, and his eyes emitting an icy-chill.

Using this strange art, the War Commander had forcefully raised his speed beyond the Soul Saint King! As one of the fastest, if not the fastest Earthly Saint in the Grand Cyclic Stellar Region, the Soul Saint King was absolutely floored. Instinctively, he brandished his Ninestar Radiant Sword, emitting his Sword Intent to its maximal extent. He was readying a counteroffensive!

Unfortunately, the Soul Saint King swiftly came to the realization that as the War Commander grew closer, his radiance was diffusing from his body, drawn to the War Commander's glowing fist with uncontrollable fervor.

'SHIT!' Immediately after the thought, The Soul Saint King felt the overbearing gravity engulf his body, redirected from the entire world and solely pressed against him. When the War Commander opened his hand, opening into a palm, and directing it to face the Soul Saint King, he knew he was royally fucked.

His opponent hadn't just exceeded his speed!

This strange Earthly Saint held a BLACK HOLE in his hand! It formed an event horizon within his palm, and while extremely beautiful, it was something that vastly exceeded his current imagination of understanding. How could a cultivator hold a black hole?!

If he knew that Wei Wuyin, a mere mortal, actually contained a black hole within his body, he would be absolutely stupefied. Even if he met a Black Hole in the vast Dark Void, he would have to avoid it at all costs. This was especially so if it was a black hole formed from a mystic-graded Solar Star's collapse.

The Soul Saint King soon felt himself gradually slowing down. The gravitational force emitted from the black hole was growing stronger as the distance closed; he was unable to escape it! Furthermore, all his light-attributed mystic power was drawn in the very instant he tried to counteract its effects through circulation.

If frustration was an image, it would be his current expression.

Countered!

Countered!

COUNTERED!

A single move had defeated his entire cultivation base. But the danger wasn't just that, the War Commander had already arrived before him, the black hole in his palm mercilessly gathering all of his light power. The distance and speed at which their actions were occurring, the Soul Saint King was no longer able to muster any other response, whether it was a Spiritual Spell or Mystic Art, he was unable to find the time after wasting so much.

A battle between experts was often taught to be extremely fast, decided in a few exchanges. The Soul Saint King believed this, applied this, and claimed many victories because of this, and this type of battle was where the Soul Saint King thrived in.

Yet he was now forced to face the same fate as his past opponents.

Who was this Earthly Saint?

WHO THE HELL WAS WEI WUYIN?!

Those were his last thoughts before his Mystic Ward was impacted by a two-strike combo.

The first, a hyper-charged halberd strike. It pierced his Mystic Ward and deflected his Ninestar Radiant Sword, the last line of the Soul Saint King's defense, with a violent thrust, entering his center of mass, and exiting through the other side in a splash of glowingly white blood that effused an alluring brilliance. For a second, the emissions felt as if a river of light was about to be born.

The second strike was presided by a twist and yank of the halberd, latching the crescent blade to the Soul Saint King's spine, pulling him into a closer range as the War Commander of a Legion slapped the black hole towards the Soul Saint King's chest and crumbling Mystic Ward. The black hole's event horizon was the gathered energies of light from both the starfield and the Soul Saint King's light power, returning it all onto him!

The impact wasn't explosive.

Instead, there was a spine-chilling dull sound followed by a harsh, heavy grunt of hellish pain!

A burst of blindingly glaring light erupted that caused everyone to go blind, mortal and Ascended. Not even Spiritual Sense could peer through the light.

The light lasted for an entire two minutes!

At the end of which, it was clear who had claimed victory.

While that was going on, two minutes prior, in the heart of darkness, 1,000 Ascended met three Earthly Saints in battle!

The three Earthly Saints, the Soul Rumbling Saint, Soul Falling Saint, and lastly, the giant of a man, the Soul Martial Saint, were all rushing at full speed to the Soul Saint King, seeking to reinforce his position and regain control of the situation.

But their rush was blocked by an army of Ascended that took them by surprise. These 1,000 Ascended beings divided themselves expertly into three units of roughly three hundred in number, each led by two Demi-Mortal Lords, who were exuding an exceptionally bloodthirsty aura befitting soldiers of a thousand battles. Their gathered Mystic Aura cascaded towards the Earthly Saints.

The Soul Monarchs glanced at each other, seeing the shock in each other's eyes, but reacted nevertheless. The Mystic Aura served as an effective interceptor. If they bone-rushed through it, they could suffer injuries. They were unified in their split-second decision, segregating and deciding to swiftly deal with these lesser Ascended beings with extreme prejudice.

They each had appalling levels of killing intent within their eyes as they acted. And when they acted, they acted swiftly! A rare show of respect and urgency. When the entire starfield trembled, and subsequently descended into total darkness, they knew they needed to deal with this situation with the greatest swiftness imaginable!

"Don't hold back!" The Soul Martial Saint roared out as he clenched his gigantic fist, exuding tremendous physical strength that distorted fixed space.

The other two had already agreed, not needing this reminder, but they knew about the Soul Martial Saint's close relationship with the Soul Saint King and skepticism surrounding all these events. He was definitely the most invested in the Soul Saint King's safety, not trusting them to give their all unless they knew they may suffer later should they not.

They could only sigh in their hearts. But they listened; they held nothing back!

They firstly used their greatest advantage as Earthly Saints! Spatial Powers! They sought to entrap these Ascended beings into World Prisons, and then deal them a devastatingly charged blow that could eradicate them entirely.

However, with shocked expressions, their World Prisons collapsed as quickly as they formed. The World Prisons broke into fragments of solidified space and were pulled to the Legion Commander in the far-off distance. It would be a mistake to label their current thoughts as astonished!

However, the Soul Falling Saint suffered the worst. He executed Spatial Shift alongside his World Prison, traversing through fixed space through immersion, and he felt the unimaginably terrifying levels of attractive force the Legion Commander was outputting! Just as half his body entered, he screamed in abject horror!

The old taoist, the Soul Falling Saint, broke free with a burst of mystic power! But just barely. When he escaped, the fear and trepidation within his aged eyes was at an all time high, likely never reaching such limits before in his long life. He couldn't help but look at his tattered right sleeve where a whole freaking arm once was.

Unfortunately, he was unable to process this loss as a combined force of over three hundred Ascended struck! Together, they formed a gigantic sword of white light surrounded by violet-colored gas. It sliced towards the Soul Falling Saint with mind-boggling speeds!

The other two were better off, but they were forced to face the combination of the other squads. The Soul Martial Saint faced a fist clad in steel, its knuckles layered in golden spikes. He clenched his fists and lobbed several forceful punches that shook space!

The Soul Rumbling Saint was faced with a sanguine flame the size of a tiny-sized planet. He was overwhelmed in moments, engulfed entirely. The bloody stench was sickening.

Three battles took place that were shocking yet the focus of almost everyone that could perceive through the darkness was concentrated on the Soul Saint King and War Commander's clash!

#### Chapter 930: Sent Away

The discharge of blinding light was overwhelming. The entire starfield was flooded, so much so that the nine Solar Stars felt dim in comparison. Despite this, the thunderous sounds of fighting were ever-present, from the raging howls and screams of those Chaos Mana manifestations to the secondary battlefield's frenzied exchanges.

The three Soul Monarchs were forced to face their respective opponents in this tumultuous environment.

The one-armed Soul Falling Saint used his remaining arm to halt the incoming gigantic sword with violet-colored gas effusing outwards. He steadied his breathing, furrowed his brows, and strongly thrust out his hand to clash with its edge! The sword was directly stopped after he was pushed a few hundred feet back, and his eyes glinted with a murderous light.

The strength of over 300 Ascended beings, with only two Demi-Mortal Lords, was definitely not an easily dismissed topic, but towards the Soul Falling Saint, a 3rd Runic Ascendant—Mana, Spirit, and Spatial—it wasn't much. This was especially so considering the majority of this squad consisted mostly of Mystic Star Phase soldiers.

Still, his eyes were slowly widening as he remained in contact with the sword. The violet gas began to swirl around him, and before he could react properly, it wreathed around him and penetrated his Mystic Ward as if it was non-existent. The violet gas was like a slithering snake that bore into his pores. Surprised, he hurriedly exerted his mystic power to repel the sword thousands of miles away before circulating his mystic energies to dispel any foreign material.

The gigantic sword had fine cracks laced throughout it. From its outward appearance, it seemed to be barely held together by the efforts of those within it.

"Poison?" He couldn't help but voice out his question as he proceeded to aggressively abolish all the invasive violet gas that entered his body earlier. The Soul Falling Saint was appalled after an extremely brief period of time. While the poison gas had been thoroughly destroyed, his internal organs had suffered gradual decay and his meridians were damaged!

What type of poison was this?!

His eyes lifted to inspect the gigantic sword with thunderstruck eyes. If that poison had occupied his body for just a few minutes, he would surely have died. Moreover, his entire body felt numb, so he hadn't noticed the extent of the internal damage until after he eradicated it and had time to inspect himself.

Who were these people?!

The Soul Martial Saint had suffered very little after the World Prison debacle, directly engaging in a fierce melee against a disembodied fist with spiked knuckles. He was far better off than the Soul Falling Saint, his expression absolutely baffled as he observed the 300 or so Ascended beings that were beaten and defeated.

They had taken three of his fists before their strange Combination-Link Spiritual Array was destroyed. The Demi-Mortal Lords of this group were highly resilient, and their armor was forged from peak Mystic-Earth grade materials. Even he found it difficult to damage this grade of armor without exerting immense strength.

However, those three fists caused both of his knuckles to be drenched in hot, golden-red blood. The rich, vigorous, and powerful yang energy emitted from his blood was unmistakably of the highest-quality.

"Those spikes contain a strange intent..." The Soul Martial Saint was unable to pinpoint what type of Intent it was, but he knew it was terrifyingly unique, and it reflected damage. When he threw out his fist, he saw himself behind the gigantic fist coming at him with killing intent.

Mirage? Mirror? Reflection?

Regardless of what it was, it was abnormally odd.

The Soul Martial Saint had won; the 300 or so Spirits of War couldn't muster any strength, seemingly entirely exhausted. However, they all stood together, weapons in hand, eyes fixated on the Soul Martial Saint, emitting an unyielding will. They were not done!

As long as they had life in their souls, they would fight!

Hurdled together, they were about to launch a last desperate offensive. The two Demi-Mortal Lords were even preparing to detonate their Mystic Souls.

The Soul Martial Saint's brows furrowed heavily, heated emotions within his heart rising. Such spirit! Such hot-bloodedness! Before overwhelming power, the will to fight until death was extremely rare. Who trained these elite soldiers?

They definitely weren't deathsworn, but genuine soldiers of war that believed that tomorrow might not be promised, but it was definitely worth fighting for. As long as you fought, you had the chance to grasp it. The blazing will had caused the Soul Martial Saint to hold off obliterating all these soldiers out of admiration. As a 4th Runic Ascendant—Mana, Oceanic, Spatial, & Infusion—he was far too much for a mere 300 or so Ascended beings to handle.

The Soul Rumbling Saint was still within the flaming ball of sanguine flames. There wasn't even a hint of a shadow of his existence. It was hard to determine his fate. However, none of the Earthly Saints were worried about him.

While the Demi-Mortal Lords of the War Talisman were of exceptional quality, they were still Demi-Mortal Lords. Even with the help of the other soldiers constructing a united Combination-Link Spiritual

Array, otherwise known as a Union Arrays, they could only hold off these Earthly Saints using their unique means. A decisive tactic to buy time.

Nothing more, nothing less.

The Soul Martial Saint looked over to the blind radiance with a gloomy expression. It was still ongoing for so long. A wave of concern swept over his heart as he looked at the Soul Rumbling Saint's last position, now occupied by a tiny planet-sized ball of sanguine flames. A glint of rage flitted through his pupils.

This bastard!

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An urge to strike at the ball of sanguine flames swelled within him, but he held himself back. Without Spatial Arts, it was hard to securely isolate these Ascended soldiers. He decided to ignore them. He waved his hand towards the defeated squad before him, sending them flying uncontrollably through the Dark Void. Without hesitating, he explosively shot towards the point of origin of the blinding light.

He soon faded into its brilliance.

The Spirits of War all looked crestfallen at falling in their duties to intercept, unable to buy a little more time. But then, a powerful, world-rending sound that roused their spirits resounded!

Neigh!

A horse's neigh was followed by an explosive impact. From the blinding radiance, a figure rocketed out with speeds several times faster than they entered. A stream of golden-red blood was left in their wake, floating gorgeously in the Dark Void.

A series of clacking hooves sounded out and the Skeletal Warhorse emerged from the blinding radiance.

"Urgh!" The Soul Martial Saint had his muscular chest caved in, an imprint of a horse's hoof on his upper-right torso. It burned with black-colored flames at its edges. He touched his chest as blood leaked from his lips, absolutely astonished by the terrifying power behind that attack.

What type of ungodly beast was this warhorse? Why was it a skeleton? Was it a demon? A beast? What the actual...

Despite all the confusion and questions, the Soul Martial Saint knew that he couldn't allow himself to be distracted. He exerted his power and tried to use Time Reversion, but as he tried to revert the damage to his internal organs, he discovered there was a strange force from the blinding radiance that was siphoning his time energies. Not just light or spatial energies, but time energies were also affected!

Taking a deep breath, he used his mystic power to execute standard healing tactics, using life-based yang energies to facilitate. However, the black flames seemed to target and devour his yang energies, forcefully growing stronger. Like a spontaneous explosion, his actions caused him to be engulfed in black flames.

"What?!" He didn't outright scream, but he shouted in horror. What the hell was this black flame?! All these beings seemed to be using tactics or means far beyond their understanding! For over a minute, he

tried everything he could to disperse the flames, but was only capable of starving it off from harming his physical body through raw mystic-graded physical energies of his physique.

"Enough!" A powerful shout soon swept the entire Ninestar Starfield. It was domineering and unquestionable in authority, a byproduct of thousands of years of ruling experience.

"He's alive!" Faye Liying exclaimed as she recognized the voice instantly. It was the Soul Saint King! Moreover, it wasn't weak or faltering, so he was definitely not harmed!

The three Soul Monarchs all halted their actions.

The Soul Falling Saint was dodging the gigantic sword, refusing to come in contact with the violet gas, and while he tried to deal with them, he had been poisoned once more, so he was much more cautious after.

The Soul Rumbling Saint's unseen form suddenly manifested as a shadowy figure in the blazing inferno, and a powerful soundwave echoed out that shook the flames, dispersing it until the 300 or so Ascended beings were revealed. Their armors were cracked and their Mystic Aura was pathetically low. Their mystic power mostly exhausted, the Soul Rumbling Saint used the least amount of effort to disperse their trap. It was clear this was his tactic as he was entirely unbothered, carrying a casual smile on his face filled with triumph.

Neigh!

The Skeletal Warhorse stomped its hooves and the black flames attempting to swallow the Soul Martial Saint receded in the blink of an eye. The giant of a man was unharmed, except his clothes that were burnt to a crumbling crisp, revealing his nude body and well-defined, bulging muscles.

The blinding radiance soon dispelled itself, revealing the Soul Saint King's domineering figure. His clothes were undamaged, he wielded his Ninestar Radiance Sword proudly, and his posture was impeccable. It was as if he wasn't injured in any way, a figure of invincibility as before.

Those lime-green eyes of his swept the entire Ninestar Starfield. "I've allowed this foolishness to continue long enough. All of you, BEGONE!" He brandished his Ninestar Radiance Sword. Streaks of light shot out from it that encapsulated the 1,000 Ascended beings, sending them away as comets of light into the far-off distance. It was in Wei Wuyin's direction!

After handling this in a single action, the Soul Saint King gazed in the direction of the Earthly Saints that had accompanied Wei Wuyin. "Including you all," he coldly said as he waved his sword again. Similar streaks of light shot out and enveloped all the Earthly Saints and sent them away too, expelling them out of the Ninestar Starfield!

None of them remained.

Not even the Trueborn captives.

If one were to look closely, the Demi-Mortal Lord captives were also sent out alongside the Earthly Saints in the flurry of light comets. It seemed the Soul Saint King was wiping his hand clean of it all!

The flag that was wielded by the War Commander had mysteriously vanished, no longer severing the connection with the Mystic Ninestar Unity Array.



Yue Lixiang, Yue Songli, and Song Yunhai were shaken. Did the Soul Saint King...kill that armored Earthly Saint?! Was that it?

The Soul Saint King's lime-green eyes stared in the direction of Wei Wuyin. Those two minutes were recalled by him, and his heart trembled. In the end, he could only heave an internal sigh as he suppressed the severe injuries he suffered. With a heavy breath, deeply concealed, he flew towards the three Soul Monarchs.