

Necropolis 1291

Chapter 1291: Hang Him Up For Public Display

“Epicseek King, do you have a death wish?” Jin Naluo’s eyes grew bloodshot when he saw the familiar face obstruct him once again and a dense killing intent raged out of his body.

He was like a wild beast that’d lost all rationale. Whoever dared get in his way would be ripped to pieces!

The white-clad Epicseek King jumped in shock; he could clearly sense the brutal savagery threatening to explode from Jin Naluo.

“You want this Luminous King, huh? Sure, I’ll take your key to the Hongmeng Tower in trade. If not, you’ll never harm a hair on his head, not when I’m around!” Epicseek laughed gaily.

He’d fought Jin Naluo in the Multitude Region for an indeterminate period of time. Both of them were peak sixth step kings and the most likely to break through to seventh step in the region. Since Jin Naluo owned the tenth key to the Hongmeng Tower, he would enter it when it opened and vault to the ranks of those incredible beings.

That was why the Epicseek King opposed Jin Naluo at every possible turn. He seized every chance to strike at his rival, such as current circumstances.

The Luminous King had become Jin Naluo’s internal demon. If Epicseek could protect Luminous and use him to chisel a chink in Jin Naluo’s armor, then Epicseek could consign the other to death.

Jin Naluo was in the full throes of extreme fury; his hair and body were on fire and he was almost a walking pillar of flame. There was a type of will similar to the Sanguine Hell among his fire—he’d plainly obtained some sort of legacy from the Sanguine Hell.

The greater Jin Naluo’s strength ballooned, the more he advanced on Epicseek. Piercingly sharp killing intent locked onto the Epicseek and Luminous Kings.

Epicseek paled, but refused to give way. Rays of blue light blossomed from his body and managed to give tit for tat against Jin Naluo’s turbulent fire.

Since both of them were peak sixth step kings, the two of them clashed in Multitude City was a disaster for the metropolis. Not only would the Immortal Pagoda be destroyed, but half of the city would be razed to the ground when they met in battle. This was a struggle far more violent than the contest of supplemental dao between Lu Yun and the Alchemist King.

“Both of you, stop!” commanded a frosty voice. Fearsome power exploded out of the Immortal Pagoda and forced both of them back.

Color drained from their faces and they retreated in unison.

“Who goes there?!” Epicseek jerked with shock. He hadn’t thought that there’d be another powerhouse here who was firmly stronger than him. They’d easily suppressed both him and Jin Naluo.

A seventh step king?

He looked around with an unpleasant expression.

Jinse slowly walked out of the Immortal Pagoda and regarded Jin Naluo and the Epicseek King with eyes like a hawk's.

"Fight outside of the city if you want to fight. My master is still competing with the Alchemist King. If you disturb him, I'll slice up both of you."

The unique aura of a seventh step king swept forward and the two dueling kings retreated again.

"Hmph!" snorted Epicseek and he grabbed the Luminous King, intent on leaving Multitude City.

Jinse slapped him back the next second.

"What do you mean by this, seventh step king?!" Fully resembling a sheet, Epicseek coldly criticized Jinse. "Don't think you can do whatever you want just because you're a seventh step king. This is Multitude City!"

Jinse's lips curved upwards. "This Lewd King is an enemy of my Immortal Pagoda and wishes our complete demise. Not to mention, Miss Bingruo of the Sublime Pavilion died in his hands. Do you still want to protect him, or are you his co-conspirator?"

If this had been ordinary times, Jinse would've flattened both of them with one palm strike. But since she now followed Lu Yun, she'd mellowed out her style somewhat.

"That's right!" The Finepure King stepped forward. "I saw it with my own eyes when the Luminous King snuck into my pavilion and killed Miss Bingruo. Does the Epicseek King want to throw away your illustrious name of a lifetime for this robber of lustful desires?"

"Not robber, but a veritable demon!" Fineheart added. "Don't tell me you haven't heard of the Lewd King! He was an uncontrollable plague upon the Hongmeng back in the day and his infamy worse than even the Ten Valleys of Evil. If you help him now, that makes you his companion!"

The Elysium and Ingenium Kings brought down their auras to pressure him.

Though Epicseek oversaw a large faction and was a true overlord of Multitude Region, Jin Naluo was on their side and there was a seventh step king of the Immortal Pagoda surveying everything. There was nothing for them to be afraid of.

Epicseek's faction wasn't based in Multitude City either. It was located further north in the region, closer to the Endless Reaches. He'd always wanted to gain a foothold in Multitude City and claim part of its wealth. When the Colosseum first appeared, it'd done so by carving up the territories of the Ingenium Gazebo, Elysium Atelier, and Sublime Pavilion.

If the Epicseek King's faction came in for a further cut of the profits, the three original dens of crystal consumption would be suppressed once more.

They had to fight back, if only for themselves.

A variety of expressions flickered through Epicseek's face. Instead of threatening his enemy with the boulder he'd picked up, it was about to smash his own foot instead.

“You piece of shit!” He glared viciously at the Luminous King, brandished his sleeve, and vanished in a streak of light.

Jinse didn’t stop him this time.

Jin Naluo bounded forward and grabbed the Luminous King’s collar, flaying the latter alive with his scarlet glare.

The Luminous King looked like death and offered no resistance.

A multitude of thoughts ran through Jin Naluo’s mind and he took a very deep breath before forcing out, “Killing you, would dirty, my hands. This seventh step eminence, I give over this, Lewd King, to your custody. I trust that he will demonstrate his greatest value in the Immortal King’s hands.”

He stared viciously at the Luminous King once more before throwing the fraudster to Jinse.

Jinse regarded the Luminous King with disdain. “This person is so disgusting that the Immortal Pagoda will not accept him. Let’s take care of him like we did the Blood King. We’ll hang him up for public display in front of our doors.”

She stripped him of his clothes with a wave of her hand and hung him stark naked in front of the pagoda doors. The Blood King to the left and former Luminous King to the right, it made for a unique atmosphere. Likely only the Immortal Pagoda had the courage to display two sixth step kings like this.

Of course, certain sensitive parts of their bodies were still obscured; the sight would’ve been too offensive to the eyes otherwise.

Not only did this move bolster the Immortal Pagoda’s reputation, but it also intimidated the cultivators who wanted to continue making trouble for it. Two sixth step kings already hung in front of its doors, what was the Immortal Pagoda not capable of??

Seeing the Lewd King swinging naked in front of the door, available for anyone to spit and curse at, Jin Naluo gradually found himself able to exhale the huge breath of air he’d taken. In the final moments before his decision, he’d managed to come to the conclusion that simply killing the Lewd King would actually be a blessing for the swine. To have him suffer through punishment and lack the ability to change anything about his situation was the truest justice.

Chapter 1292: Past Misdeeds on the March

The Human and Epicseek Kings were gone, and the Imagination King and Miao were fighting in an unknown part of the void. Meanwhile, Lu Yun’s competition with the Alchemist King was nearing its climax.

The Alchemist King’s cultivation level and strength far eclipsed Lu Yun’s. Though his supplemental phenomenon couldn’t deploy a combat art like the young man’s could, it was still uncommonly ferocious.

This kind of phenomenon was a combination of supplemental dao, mental strength, and Hongmeng qi. It provided the basis of battle between supplemental kings. Their battles were extremely dangerous as the slightest misstep would, at best, result in one crippled through the destruction of their supplemental dao, and at worst, doomed for all eternity when one’s soul flew apart.

The two split their attention between refining pills and directing their phenomenon to attack each other. As aggressive as the Alchemist King's was and despite the superior strength it was bringing to bear, it couldn't rise to the level of deploying combat arts that Lu Yun's was capable of.

"How is this possible, how is this possible?!" Alchemist started howling within his heart. He sent his phenomenon forward in frenzied action, trying to pressure Lu Yun into a mistake. His own fingers still flew rapidly through pill seals without missing a beat.

The Alchemist King's length of experience showed. He was almost immortal since there was no order of time in the Hongmeng. That was more than enough time to temper one's supplemental dao and raise one's power.

If rounded down, the ending digits of the Alchemist King's cultivation tenure would be greater than Lu Yun's age—an age that included Lu Yun's past self in the mythological realm. The Alchemist King's accumulated experience wasn't something that Lu Yun could measure up to.

On the other hand, Lu Yun possessed the Tome of Life and Death and a level greater than the Alchemist King's—the fourth realm! Just this alone elevated him a hundred times over the Alchemist King!

Lu Yun was taking everything into stride even now; the Alchemist King's phenomenon didn't exert the slightest pressure over him. Not even the clashes between the various heavyweights earlier had impacted him.

In fact, he'd surreptitiously incorporated his supplemental dao into the Alchemist King's through the blows of their phenomena. His opponent's supplemental dao was indeed much stronger than Lu Yun's and his grasp of pill dao much higher. The gap between the two of them couldn't be surmounted by time.

Meanwhile, Lu Yun benefited from being at a vastly more sophisticated level than the Alchemist King. He could draw on the other's supplemental dao without giving anything away and derive inferences to excel beyond the source.

His movements gradually became more skillful and unpredictable. They carried a hint of the Alchemist King at first, but Lu Yun slowly expunged Alchemist's flaws and weaknesses from his methods and retained only the essence.

To discard the dross and keep the core.

"What?! He's stealing from my pill dao!" Being a wily old fox, Alchemist quickly understood what was taking place when he saw the changes in Lu Yun's motions. He'd kept a close eye on the young man throughout the refinement process.

"Hmph, how dare that Immortal King blatantly copy me like this?!" Alchemist shook with anger when he discovered that he'd inadvertently become his enemy's teacher. There was nothing he could do about it now as his refinement had reached a critical point. The slightest deviation would mark the failure of his efforts.

He acted with decisiveness that was worthy of his reputation. Destroying his phenomenon, he incorporated it into his cauldron and enhanced his pills with it.

“So what if you’ve learned from my supplemental dao? I gleaned a bit of the secret of combat arts through yours! That is an incredible realm of profoundness, so the tiny bit of experience you leached off me doesn’t matter.” A smile appeared on his face; he’d plainly gained much more than Lu Yun had.

However, he’d overlooked one detail. Lu Yun’s realm was vast and he sorely needed the reflections of distilled experience to support it. Though Alchemist had pried into a bit of what Lu Yun grasped, the little bit he saw was completely inconsequential to the Immortal King.

Lu Yun had easily gained the essence of a lifetime’s worth of experience and traded forgettable skills for it, whereas Alchemist had expended almost all of his energy to digest just a little bit of Lu Yun’s realm. It was more a loss than a gain.

Rumble!

Thunderclouds blew into the skies and a pill tribulation was upon them. Lu Yun and the Alchemist King had completed their pills at the same time; both cauldrons reached the level of summoning a pill tribulation!

Their tribulations were one entity and one combined tribulation. The doubled might covered half of Multitude City with heavy clouds.

How big was Multitude City?

Bigger than all of the first realm and unending without end. A tribulation that covered half of the city was supremely terrifying!

Countless kings lifted their heads and considered the purple-black tribulation clouds with awe. This was a pill tribulation and not a cultivation tribulation. As encompassing as a pill tribulation might be, it wouldn’t drag in innocents, so there was no need for them to worry.

“Immortal King!” Alchemist suddenly called out. “Use your lightning rod on just your pill tribulation, don’t touch mine!”

Though the two tribulations were melded into one, they would still fork into two bolts of lightning to separately attack the two cauldrons.

“Whether a heavenly or pill tribulation, they’re all a result of karmic retribution! When you employ cheap tricks to evade a tribulation, that karmic repercussion remains inside the pill. Whoever takes it will suffer the consequences and be struck with a tribulation in the future!

“Cultivators who use lightning rods to avoid heavenly tribulations are the same! You can run from the tribulation, but you can’t hide from the repercussions. You will suffer that judgment one day and be doomed beyond salvation!” Alchemist took advantage of the tribulation to attack Lu Yun and tarnish his reputation through the lightning rods.

His words had an immediate effect since many cultivators watching the competition, or their descendants, had used Lu Yun’s lightning rods to pass through a tribulation unscathed. According to the Alchemist King, hadn’t they just postponed their tribulation? It would return with a devastating fury when the time was right!

“Alchemist King, you’re just a king of pill dao. No, you don’t even count as one since the Hongmeng Tower gave you the title of ‘Alchemist’ and not ‘Pill’ King.” Lu Yun met the accusation head on. “You say my lightning rod is a cheap trick to avoid a heavenly tribulation, but do you understand refining treasures? Do you understand heavenly tribulations? Do you understand karma?”

“I have roamed the land for a hundred million years and naturally know more than you!” sneered the Alchemist King as he took out a formation disk and set it up around his pill cauldron. The Wild Formation King had given it to him to endure the unusually strong tribulation.

“Karma and tribulations are inescapably intertwined with each other. If you don’t use heavenly lightning to negate the karma found within each cultivator or pill, the disaster it brings in the future will be even more horrifying! Young thing, you are too short-sighted!” Alchemist smirked.

Rumble!

The pill tribulation arrived and crashed down on their cauldrons.

Chapter 1293: Borrowing Dao to Refine Pills

The two pill tribulations combined as one and separated again, projecting roiling thunder and lightning that blasted down in a hail of electricity at the two cauldrons below.

The force of this heavenly tribulation was more than ten times greater than the normal pill tribulation of a single cauldron.

The Alchemist King had set up the Wild Formation King’s formation, and it solidly withstood the thunder and lightning drilling down from the sky. A marvelous connection grew between the formation and the Truefire World cauldron; the lightning was conducted into the cauldron to dissolve the retribution found within the pills.

Alchemist curled his lip—he’d forced Lu Yun into dire straits. If Lu Yun dared use the lightning rod to avoid the pill tribulation, no one would ever consume his pills again.

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“You’ve lived a bit longer than me, but there’s nothing much to talk about when it comes to your experience or knowledge.” Lu Yun materialized a lightning rod with a flip of his hand. It was less than a meter long and sparkled with pale gold light. “Let me enlighten you today on what karma is, what retribution is, and how to resolve them both!”

Craaaaackle.

He crushed the lightning rod a second before the tribulation arrived and threw the remains at the sky.

Hummm.

Bright yellow luminescence emerged from the wreckage and met the heavenly thunder straight on. The harrowing thunder and lightning melted like snow when it touched the bright light and transmuted into pinpricks of light that drifted down.

“This is...” Jin Naluo’s eyes widened. “Heavenly favor?! The heavenly tribulation turned into heavenly favor?! ...impossible!!”

He jumped up with shock and gawked incredulously at the dots of milky-white radiance.

“It really is heavenly favor! How did he do it?!”

Heavenly tribulations and favors were sent by the heavens themselves. “Heaven” referred to the great dao, heavenly dao, and order of all living things in a general sense. When one spoke of heaven and earth, particularly for the first realm, that was what heaven meant there as well.

When Lu Yun first arrived in the Hongmeng and asked Zhuo Bufan if there was heaven and earth here, Zhuo Bufan had pointed above and below him. He’d meant the great dao of the third realm.

Now with a pill tribulation upon them, Lu Yun crushed his lightning rod to release the brilliant splendor inside. It turned the tribulation into favor, not only resolving the retribution within the pills, but also quietly nurturing his cauldron of pills with the strength of the Hongmeng!

Alchemist stared in a daze.

He’d never imagined that this ability would exist inside the lightning rods! This meant that lightning rod users would avoid their heavenly tribulation, not have to constantly fret over its return, and also receive nourishment from the strange light and see their foundations consolidated!!

Cultivators who’d used Lu Yun’s lightning rods relaxed slightly when they saw this development.

Lu Yun had placed a tiny bit of virtuous merit inside his product—the radiant light that everyone saw rise from the remains of the lightning rod and envelop his pill cauldron. When the untamed lightning entered the zone of the yellow illumination, it metamorphosed into gentle trickles that showered down on the pill cauldron below.

Heavenly and pill tribulations were the might of heaven and earth that struck to eliminate retribution. The more virtuous merit that a being possessed, the weaker their heavenly tribulation would be. Certain thresholds of merit summoned heavenly favor instead.

Lu Yun hadn’t known how to utilize his accumulated merit and goodwill before; he couldn’t devour too many tribulations even after combining his Thunder Palmstrike with the merit stored on the Karmic Tree.

It wasn’t until the tree materialized in the chaos and swallowed the rampaging chaos tribulation that he found the proper way of using merit to defuse heavenly tribulations.

His cultivation level had risen since entering the Hongmeng and his grasp of Thunder Palmstrike continued to evolve. Its current iteration was the result of sustained improvement; the incorporation of merit into Thunder Palmstrike talismans meant that it could attract, dispel, and even transform heavenly tribulations into favor.

If anyone else crushed the thunder rod, they would only ruin it and waste the power of merit instead of summoning heavenly favor. But when Lu Yun used Thunder Palmstrike in conjunction with the power of merit, the light of virtue that the two gave rise to instantly altered heavenly tribulations.

The pill tribulation continued, but it converted to heavenly favor whenever it entered the range of the light. At the same time, the forge of heaven and earth began to shrink. Wisps of Hongmeng qi within it sank into the Eight Treasures Return Pills inside and a rich pill fragrance bloomed from the cauldron.

It spread throughout the premises, nurturing all beings within five hundred thousand kilometers and imperceptibly cementing their foundations. While this level of strengthening was nonexistent for kings, it was all too important for cultivators who were yet to reach kingship. It was the equivalent of reforging their foundations.

“Is this really the Eight Treasures Return Pill?” Suspicions began to flourish.

“The medicinal properties within this cauldron are indeed that of the Eight Treasures Return Pill. Changes have occurred in these pills because they’ve absorbed the energy of the realm and received the care of heavenly favor,” tutted a supplemental grandmaster.

“The Immortal King didn’t miss anything—he considered it all the moment he started refining. The forge of heaven and earth and the heavenly favor from the tribulation were all part of his plan.”

“Tremendous, amazing! The Immortal King is a young hero and well deserving of his reputation!”

Many people present had only heard of the Immortal King after coming to Multitude City, but never witnessed his methods. Him borrowing the great dao of the Hongmeng to refine pills was their first glimpse, and what an awe-inspiring display it was!

“As strong as he is, he still loses.” A slightly bedraggled Imagination King materialized out of the void, her face a bit wan. She’d plainly come off worse for the wear in the scuffle of the illusory arts.

“The Alchemist King ensures no leaks occur when he refines pills, guaranteeing that the pill’s medicinal properties and energy are perfectly intact. This kind of pill can be stored for a long time without their effects evaporating in the air.

“The Immortal King’s pills are already discharging fragrance and medicinal properties before they’ve even left the cauldron. His pills will be a pile of consumed dregs before long.

“While his pills may have a marvelous variety of uses, he loses in terms of quality.” She looked at Lu Yun with contempt.

“But Imagination King, you lost the contest between us,” the little fox’s voice rang proudly in the air. She stood next to Lu Yun, very pleased with herself as she looked at the Imagination King.

Chapter 1294: Creation

The Imagination King cut off in the middle of her eloquent speech and brooded darkly. She’d been evenly matched with the Intranse King until the latter suddenly brought out a treasure refined from Mirage Sand.

Not just refined from Mirage Sand, but almost wholly created from the legendary ingredient. There were several hundred kilograms of it in the treasure! Not even supplemental kings used it so liberally, and the little fox crushed her opponent like crumpling a ball of paper when the treasure appeared.

Imagination also finally understood why she'd failed to lure the other out at the Supplemental Convention. She'd used three taels of sand as bait, but what would the Intrace King care about that amount when she owned several hundred kilograms?

It was like an inferior realm cultivator waving three pieces of premium purple crystal in front of the Redbud King. Would the foremost tycoon of the Hongmeng care about that?

Humiliation burned on her cheeks; she'd been met with setbacks at every turn after coming to Multitude City to help Alchemist against the Immortal Pagoda. She'd never encountered so much failure since making a name for herself.

If Alchemist loses again, we'll really have no footing to remain here! Despite the ongoing pill contest, Imagination already wanted to leave.

Thankfully, the Immortal King's accomplishments in pill dao seemed far less than the Alchemist King's—he'd lost the moment the fragrance from his pills spilled out.

She wasn't the only one to think this way, so did many other kings think that the Immortal King had lost. Though they weren't pill dao kings, they understood this bit of common sense.

"The Immortal King is still too young compared to the Alchemist King," lamented the Elysium King. "If he'd had several hundred million years to grow, he would've overtaken Alchemist sooner or later."

"Overtake the Alchemist King? Much easier said than done," the Ingenium King sighed. "He'll have to join the Supplemental Dao Alliance after this defeat and suffer a huge blow to his confidence. He'll find it hard to hold his head high in the future, and the alliance is the epitome of a dog-eat-dog organization. The Immortal King will vanish from public view once he joins."

Most genius supplemental kings pressured into the alliance vanished and dropped out of sight after joining. The Supplemental Dao Alliance remained strong all this time, indomitable like the sun hanging high in the sky.

"So what if the Immortal Pagoda possesses seventh step kings? That's still a nobody in the eyes of the alliance," Ingenium sighed again.

Fineheart and Finepure frowned at each other.

"I keep feeling like we've forgotten something important." Fineheart cocked her head, unable to determine what it was.

"We have indeed forgotten, and it has to do with the Immortal Pagoda," her sister responded calmly. "An unparalleled master has wiped away our memories."

She transmitted the last line instead of saying it out loud. Fineheart nodded and spoke no more.

A cold sneer played on Jin Naluo's face throughout the proceedings. He'd been able to stabilize the situation and retain the tenth key to the Hongmeng Tower all because of one ultimate treasure—the Bridge of Forgetfulness.

He'd already used it to crush a seventh step king who'd tried to ambush him.

At the same time, he suffered from the same concerns that worried Lu Yun. He didn't dare use the bridge out in the open as it would draw attention from the ninth step kings, or even the eleven old freaks stronger than the kings.

Jin Naluo knew full well what the bridge was, and if Jinse hadn't appeared, he would've thought it was something that Lu Yun gained through a fortuitous opportunity. He might have even schemed to take it from Lu Yun.

But after seventh step king Jinse appeared, hailing Lu Yun as her master, that sent Jin Naluo's mind down wild flights of fancy. Thus, he didn't feel that the Supplemental Dao Alliance would be of any threat to Lu Yun.

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Rumble!

Thunder crashed through the air and jagged bolts of lightning dancing through the sky retracted into the retreating tribulation clouds.

Boom!

Boom!

The two pill cauldrons shook—a sign that the pills were ready to emerge.

Flames billowed and swirled over the Alchemist's Truefire World cauldron, wrapping around five sparkling pills that emerged into the world. The golden pills seemed to be sculpted from pure gold; flawless and unblemished, no pill qi emanated from them.

There were pill halos a meter thick around the pills!

Just as there were halos around the sun, so were there halos around pills when their quality reached peak perfection and their potency condensed to an ultimate level. Many in the crowd even glimpsed pale gold clouds gathered in the halo!

Pill clouds!

The medicinal potency of these pills had formed pill clouds!

Pill clouds condensed from the richness of pill halos were as if fluffy white clouds scuttling across a clear sky, illuminated by the blazing sun. This was an ordinary pill no longer, but a divine pill.

Sharp gasps rose and fell through the onlookers. Imagination sneered at the little fox, but her gaze was firmly fixed on only Lu Yun.

"The Alchemist King is the greatest pill master of the Hongmeng alright! Though the Immortal King is also good, he's too young and tried to dash an egg into a rock when he challenged the Alchemist King!"

"Thank goodness they refined their pills at the same time, or the Immortal King's confidence would be brutally crushed after seeing this cauldron of divine pills. He wouldn't dare enter the competition then!"

"Be quiet, the Immortal King's pills are about to emerge!"

Hummmm.

Lu Yun's forge of heaven and earth hummed lowly before disintegrating and melting into the pills within. Eighteen Eight Treasures Return Pills typically resulted from one refinement attempt, which was precisely the number that he had created.

When the cauldron crumbled away and the pills emerged before everyone's eyes, an even more dense fragrance wafted out. It bathed the crowd in a medicinal shower that they couldn't bear to remove themselves from, an enjoyment that extended to the kings as well.

"What is this? Is the Immortal King purposefully diffusing his pill's potency? Does he lack even the most basic knowledge of refining pills?!" exclaimed the Ingenium King, but the remainder of her rebuke stuck in her throat.

The eighteen pills hovered in the air and assembled into one pattern. Waves of heavenly music drifted out of them, as if a song of the land and the most beautiful melody of the great dao. Pastel violet flowers floated down from the sky, circling around the pills in a profound trajectory.

The pastel violet pills seemed to be more like individual minor worlds than pills!

Indeed, they'd broken through the shackles of pill dao to rise to a different kind of marvelous existence. They appeared to be alive and flew to Lu Yun like little fairies, waltzing around him in time with the music.

"They say that when the Pill of Creation is born, the music and flowers of the great dao will welcome it..."

"This... this is creation!" Kings scattered throughout the premises swallowed hard when they saw the pills.

"What??" Alchemist paused. He'd never thought that he'd see the legendary Pill of Creation today! "This is fake, it's not real! It's a product of the Intranse King's illusions! How can any living being refine creation?!"

Chapter 1295: Deterrence of Stellar Light Magneticus

"Impossible, this is completely impossible!" The Alchemist King flung his limbs around wildly and roared at Lu Yun, "You became a supplemental king less than a year ago, you can't possibly refine the Pill of Creation! This is a delusion created by the Intranse King!"

"Some things require innate talent still," Lu Yun sighed with a shake of his head. "Hua Fengwen set foot into sixth step kingship when he became a titled king, surpassing countless kings who'd struggled for endless eons in the Hongmeng.

"In the same vein, my level is far higher than yours, though my tenure is less than a year. I can direct my supplemental phenomenon to deploy combat arts, can you?" Lu Yun snorted with laughter. "As for whether or not this is from the Intranse King, you can ask the Imagination King next to you."

"Alchemist King, we've lost," Imagination heaved a heavy sigh. "The Immortal King is indeed a rare genius of the realm. He rivals Hua Fengwen from a hundred thousand years ago."

When Hua Fengwen reached titled kinghood a hundred thousand years ago, his starting point of sixth step king and six complete dao rules within his body stunned the Hongmeng.

Though latecomers such as the Bloodclad Duke and venerated enforcer were all hailed as geniuses greater than Hua Fengwen, they still viewed that genius as their barometer. Any up-and-coming genius was compared to Hua Fengwen, a sign of the position he still occupied in cultivator hearts.

The Imagination King was the latest to compare a new genius to Hua Fengwen, but her tone was very different. Becoming a supplemental king a year ago and now refining Pills of Creation... the Immortal King could truly be mentioned in the same breath as Hua Fengwen.

One focused on cultivation and the other on supplemental dao—these two were the favored sons of heaven over the past one hundred thousand years. This wasn't a long period of time to Hongmeng denizens, so many happenings were still fresh in people's minds.

It didn't matter what kind of pill the Alchemist King had refined. His defeat was carved in stone after the exhibition of Lu Yun's Pill of Creation.

"I refuse to believe this!" Alchemist suddenly spread his arms wide open and pounced on Lu Yun like a large bird. He released a gush of red flame that coalesced into a divine bird; it also swooped at the eighteen pills behind Lu Yun.

"No! He wants to destroy the Pills of Creation!" The Elysium King jerked with dismay and rushed over to stop the Alchemist King.

Apart from being a formidable supplemental king, Alchemist was also a third step king. Though his battle strength wasn't great, his skill with pills enabled him to instantly kill any other king on his level.

He was wholly focused on destroying the eighteen Pills of Creation! The Ingenium, Finepure, Fineheart Kings, and even Jin Naluo leapt into motion at the same time, wanting to stop the Alchemist King.

He was too fast.

The flaming bird he released was his supplemental phenomenon and it was speedy beyond belief. The sixth step kings caught off guard were unable to reach it in time.

Boom!

An earth-shattering collision rang out after a huge slender hand descended from the skies. It smacked the Alchemist King to the ground and splayed him out unmoving on the dirt.

Jinse withdrew her hand and looked at Lu Yun. "Master, should we hang this old thing up in front of the doors as well?"

"No, please don't!"

"Absolutely not!" The sixth step kings and Jin Naluo almost jumped out of their skin with fright when they heard Jinse's question.

"There are ninth step kings among the Supplemental Dao Alliance. They'll probably crush the Immortal Pagoda as soon as you hang the Alchemist King!" Jin Naluo quickly explained. Though he'd borrowed the

Bridge of Forgetfulness from Lu Yun, he still didn't dare throw his weight around through the land. He only dared ambush a few seventh step kings from the shadows, and it was all out of wariness of the ninth step kings.

He knew full well how strong ninth step kings were. If they made a move, survival for him and Lu Yun would be out of the question. The bridge would be unable to save them either.

Though the bridge was an item of the fourth realm and could deploy its full strength in the Hongmeng, its true spirit was too weak to control its body. That was a fatal weakness.

"Forget it. Take his pills and cauldron, then throw him out of Multitude City." Lu Yun scanned the Alchemist King with an indifferent glance.

He didn't want to provoke the ninth step kings of the alliance just yet, particularly that legendary Dao King. For now, he'd rather have the heavyweights of the alliance show up at his doors in various succession and scheme against him. He didn't want the ninth step kings directly marching against him.

He currently wasn't able to meet them in face-to-face battle, not unless he fully awakened the great dragon of the Redbud Mountain. He'd also have to reach an agreement with the dragon for it to leave the mountain and protect him.

At the moment, all it had attained was a little bit of consciousness. It wasn't capable of anything.

"Understood." Jinse waved a hand, putting away the cauldron and five pills that'd inspired pill halos.

"No! That's my pill cauldron and my pills!!" Alchemist's face was twisted in an ugly rictus; he was almost insane. Defeat at the hands of a junior with less than a year of tenure?! None of his usual urbane demeanor could be found and his dao heart was badly damaged.

Jinse ignored him and threw him out of the city with another wave.

"The Alchemist King wagered his pill cauldron in this contest. All of the eminences present are my witness." Lu Yun raised cupped fist salutes at the various sixth step kings around him.

"The Alchemist King lost the competition but didn't want to pay the forfeit. Don't worry, Immortal King, even if others from the Supplemental Dao Alliance come, we'll stand strong with you!" The Elysium King was the first to speak up. It was a good thing for them that Lu Yun had the courage to break the monopoly that the alliance held.

The Alchemist King losing this encounter and wanting to renege on his bet afterward was already an extremely embarrassing affair. The alliance would be out of their minds and just begging for ridicule if they came with great fanfare and interrogated Lu Yun over it.

"Hmph!" the Imagination King sniffed. "I recommend that the Immortal King and Intranse King join the alliance as soon as possible. When those of the Ten Valleys of Evil knock on your door, they won't be nearly as gentle as we are."

"The Ten Valleys?" Lu Yun's heart skipped a beat and he smiled. "I wouldn't trouble the Imagination King or Supplemental Dao Alliance in this area."

Cerulean blue radiance exploded out of the Immortal Pagoda and rushed for the horizon when he beckoned with a hand.

“Stellar Light Magneticus!!” shrieked the Imagination King and hidden Wild Formation King.

Earth Light Magneticus was already frightening enough and could trap sixth step kings, but there was a world of difference between it and Stellar Light Magneticus.

Stellar Light wasn't something that any cultivator could own—if handled properly, it could slay a ninth step king!

Naturally, it was difficult for Lu Yun to fully utilize its power at his current strength.

“If the ninth step kings of the Ten Valleys come...” He grinned broadly. “Then I'll detonate this Stellar Light Magneticus and go down in a blaze of glory! And don't think I'll be bullied by a ninth step king just because I'm in the superior realm. My cultivation may be humble, but I was capable of refining the Pill of Creation!”

He was scolding the locust while pointing at the mulberry. Rather than threatening the Ten Valleys of Evil, he was actually warning the Supplemental Dao Alliance. He might not be able to fully utilize Purple Stellar Mountain, but he could absolutely blow it and everything to high heaven!

After all, he was a supplemental king who'd refined creation.

The Imagination King shrank in on herself and beat a hasty retreat with the Wild Formation King and other supplemental grandmasters of the alliance. With the mountain of purple crystal on the scene, they would be asking for embarrassment if they stayed further. It was time to report back to the alliance and have the senior executives decide the next course of action.

Lu Yun heaved a slight sigh of relief when the alliance members finally left.

“Noble arcane beast kings, do you still think that I use the crystal core of your kings to refine the Eight Treasures Return Pill?” He turned around and addressed the ten kings.

Prehistoric and the others show their heads with wry smiles.

“We were hoodwinked by the Alchemist King and the others. Please forgive us for our offenses!” the Prehistoric King quickly apologized.

Lu Yun inclined his head and paid no further attention to them. He turned instead to the Elysium King and others. “It is all thanks to your support that I have made it through this matter unscathed. These are but some paltry gifts, I hope you like them.”

Several king level treasures and talismans streamed out of his hands and landed in front of the overjoyed sixth step kings. In the face of the Supplemental Dao Alliance's monopoly, even sixth step signs found it difficult to obtain king level treasures. Lu Yun was showering them with multiple items each, a gesture they couldn't refuse.

If there was anything here that they couldn't use, their confidantes and trusted subordinates could.

As for the Pills of Creation, no one gave thought to possibly receiving one. To refine those pills required the exact combination of a heaven-sent opportunity, geographical favorability, support of the people, and boundless fortune and perfect timing. Who knew when Lu Yun would next be able to refine more after the eighteen of today?

“What about me?” Jin Naluo looked piteously at Lu Yun.

Chapter 1296: Supplemental Grandmaster Puppets

“What about you?” Lu Yun glared. “You and I are allies, it’s only natural that you come help when I need it. You were conspicuously absent when the Immortal Pagoda opened for business, and when the Supplemental Convention began. How do you have the face to ask me for remuneration?”

Jin Naluo fell sheepishly silent.

The Elysium, Ingenium, Finepure and other kings exchanged surprised glances at each other. Jin Naluo and the Immortal King were allies? This was a huge revelation, one that forced them to reevaluate the Immortal Pagoda’s capabilities.

Jin Naluo didn’t represent just himself, there was a massive faction behind him that was more frightening than the seventh step king next to Lu Yun. However, he fidgeted with unease after the Immortal King rebuffed him. ...it would seem that there was more to the Immortal King than they’d imagined.

The Elysium, Ingenium, and other kings took their leave.

A crescendo of noise rose from the hustle and bustle outside the pagoda doors. The Luminous and Blood Kings hung to each side, a brazen display of the pagoda’s might to the rest of the Hongmeng. The Supplemental Convention didn’t end with the departure of the Alchemist and other kings either. On the contrary, it grew more boisterous and more attendees flooded in to participate.

The mountain of Earth Light Magneticus stood tall in the center of the venue. Countless cultivators and arcane beasts had tried picking it up, but a successful attempt remained yet to be seen. No one gave up after their failure as there was a treasure spirit within the mountain. They could still claim the treasure if they could communicate with it and obtain its approval.

The Prime Weapon King had categorically declared that this mountain lacked an owner. Its treasure spirit was pure and innocent, free from any corruption. Even the Immortal King would have to obtain the spirit’s approval if he wanted to own it.

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Though he’d defeated the Supplemental Dao Alliance and gained a pill cauldron that could project a minor world, Lu Yun was in a foul mood—the Tiger Butcher King had died.

The situation of the Starspace Region was more serious than he thought.

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Cities and regions fell to the vicious ghosts every second throughout the Hongmeng. Starspace Region wasn't a large region and its ruler only a fifth step king. To be overcome was its fate; no one would think twice about it.

Lu Yun had sent the Beast King and others solely out of consideration for Zhuo Bufan. The locale didn't matter to him anymore because all of his belongings and people had been moved to Multitude City.

Currently, the Beast King and eighteen others that'd originally served the Colosseum knelt in perfect tidy rows in front of Lu Yun. No one dared to even breathe loudly. They'd all died, then resurrected through the Tome of Life and Death to return to their master's side.

Lu Yun looked expressionlessly at them.

"How did you die?" His tones were frosty not because they'd died, but because the situation in Starspace Region was more serious than he'd thought.

Starspace wasn't that far from Redbud Region and he was friends with the Redbud King now—he didn't want her dragged into this. Not to mention, the Moon King had once attacked the Redbud King before her current expedition.

"It's the Moon King, she killed us all with one move," the Beast King replied carefully. "She's at least a seventh step king now."

Lu Yun frowned faintly. The Moon King had only been a second step king when he met her, but that'd been enough to back the Redbud King into a corner. Redbud had been wary of a great weapon on the Moon King. To think that she'd ascend beyond sixth step in such a short period of time!

"Are you sure that she's a seventh step king?" Lu Yun tried to digest this unwelcome piece of news.

"And more than that," Jinse interjected. "Since she's a ghost king, she can strengthen herself through devouring others and releasing her core essence."

"Releasing her core essence?" Lu Yun blinked.

"There's rumors that the vicious ghosts and wayward spirits in our realm are the original inhabitants of the Hongmeng. Stories say that they all died in a great war and we are just the newcomers," Jinse explained contemplatively. "These original inhabitants were much stronger than us, and the vicious ghosts and spirits left can regain their previous strength by releasing their core essence and devouring Hongmeng inhabitants."

Lu Yun lifted his eyes to the sky above. There was an even vaster world there; it looked like the starry sky, but was a mausoleum and the third realm's true appearance.

In the eyes of those from the fourth realm, the Hongmeng was a giant cage. Though the great dao existed here, along with many other orders, it lacked the order of time. As long as it did so, the third realm would never be a real one.

"It looks like I need to find an opportunity to enter the fourth realm for another look at the Hongmeng." Lu Yun shook his head. "Jinse, can you defeat the Moon King?"

Zhuo Bufan and the Scorch King were beyond saving, but he couldn't allow the Moon King to continue expanding her territory. Once it bordered the Redbud Region, that would put the Redbud King in danger.

Thanks to his arrangements, she was invincible when facing endless numbers of those sixth step kings and below. But when seventh, eighth, or ninth kings arrived, she would still be in danger. Though she'd once declared that she was confident of fighting even Hong after being armed with the mountain's formation... that was just empty talk for amusement.

"I would be confident in my chances if I took the Purple Stellar Mountain with me." Jinse responded after thinking it over.

The Tome of Life and Death had captured the exact circumstances of the Beast King's death. Since her name was written into the treasure, she could peek into that situation and compare it with her own capabilities.

"Very well, take the mountain with you to Starspace Region. Save Zhuo Bufan and the Scorch King if you can, but don't force it if you can't." Lu Yun placed the mountain in her hand with a wave of his own.

"I hear and obey!" Though Jinse worried about her master's safety if the mountain left the Immortal Pagoda, she couldn't defy his orders.

The Immortal Pagoda had instilled fear into the outside world and Supplemental Dao Alliance through use of the Purple Stellar Mountain; if they knew it'd left the premises, they might come for him again.

However, Lu Yun hadn't just obtained a chunk of Stellar Stone Magneticus, he also had a pond of Earth Light Magneticus ten kilometers across, and a boulder of Earth Stone Magneticus half a kilometer wide!

He hadn't brought any of those out yet—while they weren't as threatening as Stellar Light Magneticus, they would also easily provide stalwart defense.

"Beast King, go to Starcloud Region again with Jinse. Let's scare that Moon King," Lu Yun said to the Beast King and his men.

"Understood!"

"If Jinse still isn't the Moon King's match... then I'll send out the Bridge of Forgetfulness," Lu Yun murmured as he looked in the direction of Redbud Region.

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Those of Multitude City naturally detected Jinse's departure.

"What's happened for you to send Jinse out?? Don't you know that you're in a very dangerous position right now?!" A grave Jin Naluo paid a quick visit to Lu Yun.

"Then I'm in a dangerous position... I can't just sit by and let a friend fall into dire straits." Lu Yun was hypothesizing that the Moon King's setup in Starspace Region was for the Redbud King. Starspace wasn't far from Redbud, but it also wasn't near. She wouldn't raise any attention if she made her arrangements there.

Jin Naluo furrowed his brows and didn't know what to say.

"I'm going to need you to keep an eye on the Immortal Pagoda for a while. I've left a hundred supplemental grandmaster puppets here—they can keep everything running smoothly." Lu Yun smiled easily.

"You're leaving too?!" Jin Naluo's eyes went wide. "And leaving the Immortal Pagoda in my care? Aren't you afraid that I'll just take it for my own? ...wait, what did you say? A hundred supplemental grandmaster puppets?!"

This was too incredulous to believe. Puppetry was one of the many supplemental daos, but what in the heavens were supplemental grandmaster puppets?

"We're allies, and is the value of the Immortal Pagoda greater than the key to the Hongmeng Tower?" Lu Yun gently patted his ally's shoulder.

Jin Naluo was a sixth step king and Lu Yun in the superior realm, the difference between their positions couldn't be put into words. However, Lu Yun was also a supplemental king who could refine creation. When he patted Jin Naluo's shoulder, it actually gave the latter a feeling of startled flattery.

Jin Naluo quickly quashed that emotion.

"What are you going to do?" His frown deepened. "Though the Immortal Pagoda is worth less than the key, the key is useless before the last one appears. But even I can't control the impulses of my heart when you mention a hundred supplemental grandmaster puppets..."

"If you want them, take them." Lu Yun shrugged. "I'll just refine more later on."

Chapter 1297: Pressure

Apart from exceedingly few items, everything in the Immortal Pagoda was refined by the supplemental grandmaster puppets. It was also Lu Yun's greatest accomplishment thus far since arriving in the Hongmeng—creating puppets of this level. This displayed mastery almost on par with the eighteen Pills of Creation he refined.

Jin Naluo swallowed noisily and said no more.

"If there's nothing else, I'll be off." Lu Yun rose to his feet and then reminded, "Ah, don't kill that Blood King and Luminous King. Just let them hang there."

Jin Naluo waved an impatient hand.

A tiny ray of purple light flashed across Lu Yun's body, surrounding him and whisking him out of sight. It was the light of a transportation formation.

Jin Naluo sank into deep thought as he stared at where Lu Yun had disappeared.

"The Immortal Pagoda isn't important to him at all. If he wanted to, he could create a dozen Immortal Pagodas at any time, or Demon Pagodas, or Monster Spirit Pagodas.

"...servants, take me to the supplemental grandmaster puppets!"

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Dreamlike radiance flashed across through the air before a young couple appeared.

“Is this Hopeless Major?” Miao looked around and said dazedly, “It’s so pretty, it doesn’t look like a valley of bad people.”

Light dotted an incomparably spacious void around them, like stars decorating the night sky. A marvelous, tantalizing fragrance drifted into their noses.

After dumping the mess that was the Immortal Pagoda into Jin Naluo’s lap, Lu Yun used the transportation formation from Qing Yu to take the little fox to Hopeless Major.

He’d completed refining the army of a hundred thousand half step kings and was here to personally deliver it to his beloved. Being greeted by this backdrop upon arrival was the last thing he expected.

“Where’s Qing Yu?” the little fox murmured.

“Hush!” Lu Yun clapped a hand over her mouth and stuck Stillness Talismans to both of them.

“Empyrean King, I will grant that Hopeless Major prospers more by the day under your leadership and we are much stronger than before!” An extremely grave voice seemed very out of place in this fantastical landscape. “But the Jade King is one of the founding members of the major. We can overlook you emptying the vaults, but Your Eminence must give us an explanation for her disappearance!”

“The disciples in charge of guarding Soul Light Palace said that her soul light suddenly extinguished, then came back to life. That means she died once, to which we look to you for an explanation.”

“That’s right! The Empyrean King must give us an explanation!”

Extremely domineering presences suddenly flared into existence and intersected in the unknown void. These terrifying presences were far in excess of the pressure that Jinse exerted on Lu Yun, or even what Qing Yu exuded!

Ninth step kings!

These were all ninth step kings of Hopeless Major!

Heart in his throat, Lu Yun eavesdropped on tenterhooks. Jinse was Jinse, alright. Though she was only a seventh step king, she was one of the founding members and thus her status and authority were higher than many ninth step kings.

Other founding members were sure to look into her disappearance.

Who would’ve thought that Lu Yun and the little fox would stumble upon this as soon as they arrived in Hopeless Major?

Pain pricked at Lu Yun’s heart to see his dao partner under fire. She had no one she could lean on here. She had to protect the world of immortals, withstand the ninth step kings of the Hongmeng, and endure massive pressure coming from her own faction.

“And, Empyrean King, what of the matter that the Origin lord mentioned last time?” sounded a female voice. “Our two factions would be closer to each other if Hopeless Major was joined to Origin World in holy matrimony. It wouldn’t be difficult to fight the ninth step kings and break the monopoly of the Supplemental Dao Alliance then.”

Lu Yun’s temper flared when he heard this speaker. Miao gripped his hand tightly and percolated a hint of cold aura to prevent him from doing anything foolish. If he appeared at this juncture, the ninth step kings would step on him and Qing Yu would be faced with repercussions that she couldn’t extract herself from.

“That’s right, we’d planned to have the Jade King marry his disciple, the Kaleidoscopic King. But since she is missing because of you, you must resolve this issue!” This was the first voice that’d spoken. “Of course, it would be inappropriate for you to marry into Origin World with your status. We will have that Kaleidoscopic King marry into Hopeless Major instead. He can be a consort, which will not matter in the grand scheme of things.”

“Enough.” Qing Yu raised her voice, but she sounded much more detached than usual, as if she was never-melting ice from time immemorial.

Lu Yun’s heart squeezed painfully.

“I will give you an explanation regarding the Jade King, but whoever dares broach the matter of a political marriage with Origin World will quickly find themselves the bride or groom.” She was majestically remote, her words not to be questioned.

The ninth step kings in front of her frowned. Plainly, none of them truly respected her. The first line of “prospering more by the day under your leadership and we are much stronger than before” was evident sarcasm.

“You are all dismissed,” she suddenly commanded.

“Empyrean King, we would naturally bend the knee if you hadn’t destroyed one of your dao rules when you ascended to kingdom. But you are only an eighth step king and unsuited to rule Hopeless Major!” the grave voice suddenly shouted. “You have no right to sit on the throne even without the issue of the Jade King!”

This was blatant hostility and insubordination.

“You have three days to consider. If you do not voluntarily abdicate after three days and marry the Kaleidoscopic King, then you cannot blame us for forcing your hand. Our ancestor vanished a hundred million years ago and unless she returns in person, a simple command seal is not enough! We go!” The dominating presences vanished.

A wan Qing Yu sank down onto her bed of clouds. She was dressed like a dashing, valiant young man, but there were too many burdens on her shoulders that didn’t belong to her.

After the Jade King’s disappearance, the faction’s ninth step kings immediately ripped apart all pretense of cordiality and wanted her to step down. They also wanted to use her as a tool in marriage.

Scenes like these played out almost every single day. She didn't want to give Lu Yun undue stress, so she never mentioned it to him.

"Little Yu," Lu Yun called out gently.

Qing Yu trembled and whipped her head back, lightly drawing back the ultimate spatial treasure behind her—Star Curtain. Lu Yun and Miao's forms materialized in front of her.

"What... what are you guys doing here?" She was tongue-tied.

The formation that she'd given to her beloved only transported items, things without life force. She'd ensured that it couldn't transmit anything alive as she didn't want to drag Lu Yun into the struggles of Hopeless Major.

"Ah, I forgot that you're a supplemental king. It's a piece of cake for you to modify a transportation formation." She rubbed her head with a smile, then bounded forward and buried her head in his chest.

Lu Yun reached out and hugged her tenderly.

"Shh," he hushed when he saw that the little fox wanted to speak. Qing Yu was already fast asleep.

"She's under too much pressure and in a state of constant tension. I noticed it last time," the little fox transmitted. "I used an illusory art on her just now to send her to sleep."

Lu Yun blinked, then slowly lifted Qing Yu and sat down on the bed of clouds.

Qing Yu was so highly strung that she teetered on the edge of a mental breakdown. Miao had discovered it during her visit, but things had been so rushed then that she didn't have time to do anything about it.

A lapse in Qing Yu's concentration after seeing Lu Yun gave Miao an opening for her illusions. She relieved the girl's mental strain and sent her into a deep nap.

The little fox took a seat next to Lu Yun; all was quiet in the room.

"Miao, what do you think we should do?" Lu Yun suddenly asked, lost. "Should we, should we go back?"

"Go back? Where?" the little fox blinked and transmitted back.

"Back to the world of immortals." Lu Yun hugged Qing Yu close to him. He really was afraid that she would break under this staggering pressure.

Chapter 1298: Immortal Region

"Didn't you bring those Pills of Creation? Give some to Little Yu. That should take her back to ninth step king and take care of everything." The little fox frowned slightly. "Little Yu would never agree to going back now."

Melancholy flitted over Lu Yun's face as he looked upon Qing Yu in deep slumber. It was the first time that he'd realized the person in his arms was this fragile. Even with her being an eighth step king, the overlord of Hopeless Major, and the Empyrean King... she was still a fragile being.

“I don’t want so much pressure on her,” he heaved a sigh. “With great power comes great responsibility—there will be new matters for her to deal with when she becomes a ninth step king.”

“Worst comes to worst, summon someone from the faction you created in the fourth realm. No matter who comes, they’ll sweep the Hongmeng! And don’t talk to me about rules or restrictions. There are people like that in the third realm as well, we’re just trying to protect ourselves,” Miao spoke at a rapid clip.

Lu Yun nodded, relaxing somewhat only when he thought about those in the fourth realm.

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Qing Yu slept for a full day and night before stretching fiercely in Lu Yun’s embrace like a lazy kitten.

“Eh? What are you guys doing here?” She rubbed her eyes and rested her cheek on her beloved’s chest.

“You were going to marry that Kaleidoscopic King if we didn’t come!” he harrumphed. “Here, open up and eat this.”

He shoved the Pills of Certain into her mouth before she could respond.

“Mmph! What did you just give me?!” Qing Yu jerked to full wakefulness.

Pills of Creation that were also Eight Treasures Return Pills could supplement the core essence, enhance strength and cultivation level, and facilitate cultivators to shrug off their fetters and leap a level forward.

Regular Eight Treasures Return Pills were useful only for inferior and common realm cultivators. They were ineffective for superior realm and kings. Once a superior realm cultivator reached the peak of their level, they attracted the Hongmeng Tower and coalesced dao rules to become a titled king, making kings essentially superior realm cultivators.

Ordinary Eight Treasures Return Pills could enhance cultivation and level, but couldn’t increase battle strength or coalesce dao rules... but Lu Yun’s eighteen pills were no ordinary ones! He had refined creation itself!

Perhaps just one of them wouldn’t help Qing Yu advance, but eighteen of them would absolutely help her recover the broken dao rule and return to being a ninth step king.

“Oof!” Tempestuous currents pushed and shoved their way through her body. At the same time, they were uncommonly gentle and didn’t cause any damage with their careening. Instead, they gently nourished her dao rules.

The shattered ninth rule began to repair and reassemble itself through repeated basting from currents filled with spirituality. Eyes wide with surprise, Qing Yu stared at Lu Yun—only inches from her face. He smiled proudly back at her.

Just as she was unwilling to tell him of all the burdens she labored under, he would never display his dejected, lost state to her. He was her most solid support, and she was his greatest bulwark.

Only when everything concluded in either success or failure would the two fully let it all out.

“Is this... a heavenly tribulation?” Lu Yun blinked at a sudden drop in environmental pressure. “Do kings have to undergo a tribulation when they ascend?”

Qing Yu shook her head blankly. “I don’t know... I’ve never seen a king ascend.”

Lu Yun rubbed his face and brought out a dozen karmic fruits, crushing them to release the powerful, yet gentle power of virtue. He activated Thunder Palmstrike with a beckon, summoning the thunder in the air that’d yet to solidify into a tribulation and sent it into Qing Yu’s body as heavenly favor.

“Don’t... don’t resolve thunder tribulations like this in the future!” Qing Yu protested gravely. “It’s enough to dispel the tribulation itself, but when you change it to heavenly favor... all of the karmic repercussions will lie with you.”

“Don’t worry, these repercussions are perfect fertilizer for the Karmic Tree. Devouring them will help it bud more fruit.” Lu Yun grinned easily.

This kind of karmic repercussion and strength of retribution was ideal nutrients for the Karmic Tree. When Qing Yu’s retribution shifted to Lu Yun’s body, the tree instantly consumed it from him.

Qing Yu breathed out more easily, then quietly set foot into ninth step kingship while resting in Lu Yun’s arms. A profound presence bloomed from her the moment she succeeded. Since Lu Yun and the little fox were close by, both of them benefited from perceiving a bit of the mysteries surrounding kingship.

The Hongmeng Tower did not appear—it only did so when beings first ascended to kingship through cultivation strength.

“Not only has my battle strength returned to ninth step, but I’m also stronger than before!” Qing Yu assessed herself with widened eyes. With her current condition, she was on even footing with the old fogs of Hopeless Major! If adding Quiet to the mix, then none of those old farts were a match for her!

“...you just gave me the Pills of Creation!” She suddenly realized what she’d eaten.

Word of Lu Yun refining the Pills of Creation for his competition with the Alchemist King had spread throughout the realm. The Immortal King was now hailed as the greatest pill master of the Hongmeng.

Qing Yu had naturally heard of the occasion as well, but she’d been so preoccupied by the annoying fossils of Hopeless Major that she hadn’t had time to go visit him. Here he was instead, and he’d shoved all of those pills into her mouth!

Bliss blossomed from the bottom of her heart.

“What about you and Miao, since you’ve given me all of the pills?” Qing Yu snuck a quick glance at the little fox, highly concerned that she’d be unhappy.

Miao burst out laughing. “I’m by his side everyday! What do I need Pills of Creation for?”

“Hmph!” Qing Yu sniffed and shoved her head into Lu Yun’s arms again. “I’m occupying your place now.”

The little fox blinked, tongue-tied, while Lu Yun smiled ruefully. He’d dragged the little fox to Hopeless Major as soon as he’d refined the pills because he was worried that certain people might covet them.

The Purple Stellar Mountain could intimidate the Supplemental Dao Alliance, but it wouldn't scare off rogue kings.

"Wait, those old guys gave me three days!" Qing Yu sat up from Lu Yun's embrace.

"It's only been a day." He stroked her hair. "Don't worry, just kill them if they dare come. They'll listen to you then."

If she used Quiet to kill the ninth step kings, they'd become his Infernum and have to take Qing Yu's orders.

"That may be difficult. Ninth step kings can split their dao rules out from themselves and hide in the void. The wily hare has three holes to its burrow, and it's tough to fully stamp them out." Qing Yu shook her head. "I used Jinse's information to counter-ambush the Broadsword King last time, but he still got away from me."

Ninth step kings reigned at the apex of their craft and possessed many stunning abilities. They could split their souls into thousands of tendrils and hide them in different locations, each of them able to cultivate as a separate entity.

Their power wasn't something that could be imagined by eight or seventh step kings. Now that Qing Yu was one of them, she naturally knew the full capabilities of ninth step kingdom.

"But what I mean to Hopeless Major is entirely different after becoming a ninth step king. I now hold great authority, and those old farts will have to think twice if they want to rebel against me again!" Extreme confidence appeared on her face. "But... you still can't expose our relationship. If people knew, then not only would the unsavory sorts of Hopeless Major come for you, but so would the Immortal Region of the Hongmeng!"

"Immortal... Region?" Lu Yun blinked.

"Yes, that's what the ninth step kings call themselves. The Supplemental Dao Alliance is also part of that faction. They're the ones in the Hongmeng who want to seize the world of immortals, and they're behind the destruction of the mythological realm!"

"They're the culprits behind the curses on the immortal dao, the dragon race, and the Dragonquake Scripture. You can't deploy the Dragonquake Scripture in front of their kings no matter what. It's a taboo in the realm because the Immortal Region said so!" Qing Yu quickly babbled out now that she'd collected herself.

"Empyrean King, it's been a day! How go your deliberations?" A loud shout rang in Qing Yu's room before Lu Yun could ask further.

This was her bedroom, so they could only remain outside the door like before. They were limited to releasing their power and surrounding the premises with enormous air currents, levying pressure on Qing Yu in this manner.

She was their liege, a fact that mattered not to them at all.

"It's only been a day, what are you in a rush for?" she frowned.

Chapter 1299: Forcing an Abdication

Immense wills interlaced with each other outside of Qing Yu's room. They built into terrible surges of pressure that strove to crush her. The old farts had noticed some minute ripples from her earlier breakthrough, which was why they paid another visit at this time to probe what had happened.

Being no fool, Qing Yu quickly suppressed her aura as a ninth step king after her ascension. Lu Yun and the little fox were under cover thanks to Stillness Talismans. As the talismans were refined from karmic fruits, even ninth step kings would be hard pressed to discover them if they weren't specifically hunting for the two.

Most importantly was that Qing Yu's room was once Violetgrave's abode. Layered with formations, the ninth step kings couldn't gain access. If they could, they would've married her off to the Origin World a long time ago.

"Hmph! You better think this through carefully, Emphyrean King," hectored the solemn voice. "After the Broadsword King escaped when our ambush failed, the Immortal Region sent their armies after us and will be on our borders soon. If you don't make a quick decision, you'll be the sinner of the entire major!"

Qing Yu frowned without a word; the impressive wills departed in the next moment.

"Look at who's crying wolf!" The little fox thought very little of their visitors. "Those old fossils are so shameless—they're saying something completely different from yesterday. They're just slapping their own faces!"

Yesterday, they'd spoken of Qing Yu leading them to new heights of prosperity, yet today, it was the enemy at their gates.

"Forget it, I'm used to it." Qing Yu shook her head slightly.

"Continuously giving way will only embolden them further," Lu Yun mused. "Let's find a chance to catch them off guard! The weaker you present yourself, the more they bully you."

"Mmhm." Qing Yu nodded. "I'll give them all a surprise in two days!"

"I have five more pills here, take them." Lu Yun extended his hand to reveal five pills exuding hazy halos. Faint clouds drifted among the halos, like they were minor worlds. These were the five pills that the Alchemist King had refined.

"The Alchemist King personally refined these divine pills. Named the Five Elements Qi Pills, all five are required for a complete set. They can enhance a king's power and strengthen one's foundations. He wanted to use this set to recruit the other kings from me, but I ended up taking the pills from him instead."

The Alchemist King had poured his heart and soul into his competition with Lu Yun, refining nothing but the best. Since Lu Yun's Eight Treasures Return Pill would raise a cultivator's level, then the Alchemist King would use the Five Elements Qi Pill to increase a king's foundations.

If Lu Yun had managed to refine a pill of equal quality to Alchemist's, the latter still would've won by virtue of his creation being applicable to kings. He'd never imagined that Lu Yun would refine creation itself. Nothing else mattered after that.

The outcome didn't change the potency of the Five Elements Qi Pills. It was further nourishment for someone like Qing Yu, one who'd destroyed one of their dao rules and wished to return to ninth step king.

Naturally, she didn't stand on ceremony with Lu Yun. Popping the pills into her mouth, she quietly digested their effects. At the same time, she shared everything about the relationship of the Ten Valleys of Evil with the Immortal Region.

She'd planned on discussing this with her dao partner only after he became a king through cultivation strength; Qing Yu hadn't wanted him to be dragged into these affairs ahead of time. Since Lu Yun was now at Hopeless Major, however, it would be untoward to continue keeping this information from him.

The Supplemental Dao Alliance was allied with the Immortal Region!

The alliance's initial monopoly on supplemental dao was targeted at the ten valleys, then gradually expanded to the entire Hongmeng.

The so-called Ten Valleys of Evil weren't really corrupt factions of depraved cruelty; they were factions created by ten unparalleled heavyweights. Their ultimate goal was to watch over the growth of the immortal dao and ensure that it extended from the first realm to the Hongmeng, facilitating the growth of the third realm into something real.

The Immortal Region's origins were more mysterious. They'd seemed to suddenly appear out of thin air, but also seemed to be the combined force of countless ancient factions long rooted in the realm.

Even now, Qing Yu couldn't grasp whether the Immortal Region wished to destroy the immortal dao or control it. Most importantly was that it'd been the Immortal Region who'd forced Lu Qing into the chaos!

The faction boasted of innumerable ninth step kings and was regarded as the legitimate shepherds of the Hongmeng. All those who opposed it were ostracized as demons or unnatural deviants, which was how the Ten Valleys of Evil began.

Despite the wealth of knowledge flowing from Qing Yu, Lu Yun found no mention of Hong, the ancient tombs in the stars, and the legends about the truth of the third realm.

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When Qing Yu swallowed the Five Elements Qi Pills, she calmly refined its power and didn't open her eyes until the third day of Lu Yun's arrival in Hopeless Major.

Ten enormous presences shrouded her room. This tiny piece of the void would've been crushed a long time ago if it wasn't for the formations that Violetgrave had left behind.

Of course, if there was someone marking Qing Yu, then there would be others protecting her.

Three mighty presences furiously battled the other ten. The lines were thus clearly drawn between the thirteen ninth step kings of Hopeless Major.

Ten were against her and wanted to remove her from power. Three remained steadfast to Violetgrave's laws and protected Qing Yu with their lives.

Lu Yun and the little fox changed their appearances with the Shapeshifting Talisman and respectively stood next to Qing Yu as a page boy and girl. His army of a hundred thousand half step kings was fully deployed. Magnificent and awe-inspiring, they drifted in and out of sight in the void.

Rumble!

A giant door in the void swung open to reveal Qing Yu, Lu Yun, the little fox, and the army standing in Hopeless Major.

Misty purple filled the major's sky, like it was an ocean of Hongmeng qi. Floating isles and islands could be glimpsed everywhere, on which roamed exotic beasts and other rare curiosities.

A heavy atmosphere of unsheathed swords and notched bows belied the scene of tranquil beauty. All of Hopeless Major's forces were divided into two camps and tensely facing off against each other.

"Greetings to the eminent one!"

"Greetings to the eminent one!"

"Greetings to the eminent one!" Three ninth step kings and the kings behind them sank on bended knees when they saw Qing Yu.

"You may rise." She waved her hand gently.

"Our thanks to Your Eminence!" Two women and one man—the ninth step kings—kept forceful presences locked on their ten peers at all times.

"Hmph!" The ten snorted when they saw Qing Yu.

"Three days have passed and today is the final day. How has your rumination gone?" The speaker was solemnly imposing and appeared to be an elder. He was the leader of the ten kings and another founding member of Hopeless Major. Once Violetgrave's right hand man, he was the Profound King.

Qing Yu was currently dressed as a man—long ivory robes, a jade ribbon in her hair, and a blue shirt over her robes. It was how Lu Yun dressed in the world of immortals, but since she was a woman, it imparted a heroic bearing to her beauty.

"What a stunning vision. This person is worthy of becoming my main dao partner," tutted a tall man behind the Profound King.

He was the Kaleidoscopic King—the disciple of the ruler of the Origin World.

Origin World had offered marriage and the Kaleidoscopic King was here to present it. He was a young individual and had ascended to kingship at fourth step king, slowly rising through the ranks to his current eighth step. He was a renowned genius throughout the ten valleys.

The Immortal Region once placed a bounty of a million premium purple crystal veins and ten king level treasures on his head, but here he was, still hale and hearty.

All of his attention was on Qing Yu. He'd been very repulsed by this marriage at first, but realized how wrong he'd been when he caught sight of her.

“Making kingship at eighth step? Only such a genius is worthy of me.” He walked forward and looked at her up and down. “So you’re the Empyrean King? Abdicate now and return with me. Origin World will immediately send out troops to rescue Hopeless Major.”

“Blasphemy!”

“Vile spawn!”

“You court death!” shouted the three kings at Qing Yu’s side. They wanted to physically teach him a lesson!

Chapter 1300: Momentum

“Hmph!” sniffed the Profound King before stepping forward and flourishing his sleeve, rebuffing the power from the three kings.

“This is an insurrection, Profound King!” While the man of the three loyal kings wore long black robes, his entire body resembled white jade. White hair, white brows, and even white pupils marked this king, yet he didn’t appear old. On the contrary, he looked like a young man.

“Think carefully, Yin Yang King! Our Hopeless Major teeters on the precipice of doom, and only by agreeing to Origin World’s marriage proposal will we preserve our foundations!” The Profound King sighed with sorrow as he looked at his white-haired counterpart in black robes.

“Hahaha!!” the Yin Yang King threw his head back with laughter. “What a farce! Hopeless Major has stood strong for a hundred million years since the eminent ancestor established our foundations in the Endless Reaches!

“Outsiders cower at our name and revile us as a valley of evil, but we still tower proud and unyielding in the Hongmeng! Yet when trouble stares at us in the face, we respond by marrying off our eminent one for a chance of survival? There can be nothing more ludicrous or comical in all the realm! Profound King, do you seek to become the sinner of Hopeless Major?!”

“Sinner?” Another ninth step king stepped forward from the other side. He sneered, “If it wasn’t for the Empyrean King making the call to attack the Broadsword King of the Immortal Region, would our Netherdark Formation have ended up in their hands? Would we be in the danger that we find ourselves in today??”

“Ruin King!” shouted the Yin Yang King. “If it wasn’t for your eventual refusal to come to our aid and later on getting in our way, would we have failed to kill the Broadsword King?! At the end of the day, all of you are the reasons for our difficulties today!”

Yin and yang qi circulated over the Yin Yang King and his white hair danced wildly with fury. His temper fully roused upon seeing the Ruin King step forward with accusations. Though they’d been on the brink of success with their ambush on the Broadsword King, their efforts were ultimately wasted because of the Ruin King and his cohorts. Not only had they failed, but Hopeless Major’s key weapon—the Netherdark Formation—had been claimed by the enemy.

“Enough!” roared the Profound King. “Empyrean King, you must hand over the eminent one’s command seal today and abdicate in favor of someone more worthy. If not, you force us to take action!”

The already strained atmosphere drew taut with tension at his words.

The Yin Yang King, his peers, and their subordinates took a step forward to hover protectively behind Qing Yu. A hundred thousand puppets also assembled into a marvelous formation in the air; everyone was too distracted to consider where these half step kings had sprung from.

That wasn't important considering the Profound King and nine others were forcing the Empyrean King to step down from her throne!

"And if I don't?" Frost marked Qing Yu's aloof tones.

"If you don't? Then blood will stream through Hopeless Major today," the Kaleidoscopic King answered gleefully. "A clash between the thirteen ninth step kings of Hopeless Major will result in at least a few deaths and multiple casualties. No matter who wins, the major's strength will decline by quite a few levels. If the Immortal Region attacks at that time..."

It wouldn't even take the Immortal Region—the other nine valleys would march on Hopeless Major if anything happened to it and swiftly swallow it whole.

It was evident now that more than the Kaleidoscopic King was in attendance. There were certainly other powerhouses hidden in the shadows.

After the Ten Valleys of Evil gained their name, they instantly became sacred lands admired by many of the greatest villains of the realm. In order to withstand the Immortal Region, the Ten Valleys had to continuously recruit these evil-doers and over time, they began to live up to their moniker.

Curling his lip, the Profound King fully unleashed the unique aura of a peak ninth step king. His blatant display unnerved the Yin Yang King—although he also stood at peak ninth step, he was no match for his peer.

The Profound King was the strongest titan of Hopeless Major and had overseen the faction for countless eons after Violetgrave's disappearance. If it wasn't for Qing Yu, he would be its ruler.

Instead of forcing her out of her position when she appeared, he suffered in silence and bided his time, waiting for Qing Yu to make a mistake. His patience was finally rewarded with the matter of the Broadsword King. Hopeless Major suffered heavy casualties from it and Qing Yu's reputation in the major fell catastrophically.

Add to that the disappearance of founding member the Jade King, it was the perfect setup for the Profound King to close in for the kill with the swiftness of lightning and thunder.

The three days he'd allotted her weren't to help her think. It was time for him to muster all of his strength and troops so he could create the standoff facing her today.

"That's right, you should abdicate, Empyrean King," someone else spoke from his side. "Once there's blood in the streets, disaster will descend upon Hopeless Major and you'll be its sinner for all eternity!"

"Empyrean King, you acted on impulse and attacked the Broadsword King despite being an eighth step king yourself. Hopeless Major suffered heavy casualties that day, and it wasn't because we refused to mobilize! We were impeded by those on the Broadsword King's side. If we'd set out, we would've fallen into the Immortal Region's trap!" The Ruin King stepped forward again.

“Hmph!” The Yin Yang King almost ground his teeth into dust. The Ruin King was a cowardly rat afraid of death, just listen to him spout that righteous crap!

“That’s right, you’re just an eighth step king! By what right are you the eminent one of Hopeless Major?!”

“Though you ascended to kingship at eighth step king and possess boundless potential, that’s just potential! You should abdicate for your own good!”

“An eighth step king is unqualified to rule Hopeless Major!”

“We both gain what we need if the Empyrean King marries the Kaleidoscopic King. Everyone would be happy!”

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Emotions flickered through the Yin Yang King and his two comrades; they were straining under a massive pressure of momentum.

“What should we do?” A king who looked like a young girl—the Acclaim King—paled. She didn’t know what they should do in the face of such general sentiment.

“The Empyrean King is still the eminent one and she holds Hopeless Major’s command seal. She’ll be able to suppress them even if these people want to mutiny!” The Soulmask King—the remaining ninth step king—clenched her jaw. A layer of black smoke wreathed around her body and she constantly faded in and out of sight, like she was a wraith. She rivaled the Yin Yang King in strength.

Without a doubt, the Profound King ranked first in Hopeless Major. Yin Yang and Soulmask ranked second and third, and it was their combined efforts that kept the situation contained.

However, public sentiment of the major was behind him and it was now the people’s will that he become the eminent one.

“Mutiny?” The Profound King chuckled. He turned around and spread out his arms, declaring in a ringing voice, “Then permit me to ask the brothers and sisters of our Hopeless Major, is this woman worthy of being the eminent one of us all?”

“Does she, a mere eighth step king, have the right to lead us against the Immortal Region?”

“She who grievously lost her first battle after taking her position, losing our founding treasure—the Netherdark Formation—in the process?”

“Does such a person qualify to reign from most high?!”

Every single one of his words formed a glyph in the air that crashed into each other with ringing booms, levying brutal pressure on Qing Yu’s heart and soul.

If she’d still been the eighth step king with damaged foundations from three days ago, she wouldn’t be able to withstand such dao notes and would have to abdicate. But not only had she repaired her ninth dao rule, she’d also taken the Five Elements Qi Pills and fortified her foundation. She was still weaker than the Profound King, but not by much.

Looking on darkly, she remained as calm as still water without the slightest shift in expression. Her support stood behind her, and although Lu Yun wasn't strong enough to contend with the Profound King, she felt strangely reassured with him here.

"Empyrean King, abdicate of your own volition if you have any self respect left at all!" The Profound King whirled around, his bearing fully incorporating the hundred million disciples of Hopeless Major.

"Is this what you want?" A tiny ball of light appeared in her hand.

It was the size of a fist with intersecting rays of purple and blue light. They formed the pattern of a yin yang fish—the command seal of Hopeless Major.

Qing Yu smiled. "If you want it, come and get it."

"Eminent one!"

"No!" gasped the Yin Yang and Soulmask Kings.

"No matter." Qing Yu shook her head and opened her hand, allowing the tiny command seal to float around her. "Isn't this what you want, Profound King, so you can rule over Hopeless Major? Come and get it, if you have what it takes."

"Those are your words!!" The Profound King flushed with excitement when he saw the command seal and he reached out to snatch it from the air.