

Necropolis 1301

Chapter 1301: Netherdark Rises

The Profound King brought his full strength to bear with his first move. The command seal of Hopeless Major was an ultimate treasure that exceeded the limits of kingdom. It could fully control the major, and Violetgrave had taken it with her when she left.

Though the faction cultivators knew of its existence, they'd never seen it with their own eyes. Qing Yu had become the eminent ruler of Hopeless Major simply because she'd brought it back with her. Upon Violetgrave's departure, she'd left standing orders that whoever returned with the command seal would be the ruler of the faction.

Sadly, she'd been gone for so long that disciples now didn't even know of her existence. The Profound King forcing Qing Yu to abdicate really did speak of a rebellion.

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Rumble—

Nine magnificent dao rules exploded from the Profound King and shook the skies of Hopeless Major. Alarming amounts of Hongmeng qi gathered from all directions and solidified on the rules, forming a hand as large as a world that slammed down on Qing Yu.

Not only was Qing Yu and the command seal within its grasp, but so were Lu Yun and the little fox behind her.

The Profound King didn't know who they were and he'd never seen them before. But they deserved death since they'd suddenly appeared with the Empyrean King. After he obtained the command seal, he would marry that blasted king off to Origin World and step on the other ninth step kings who'd defied him, refining all of the bastards into puppets.

"Hmph!" Qing Yu snorted when she saw that the Profound King included Lu Yun and the little fox in his attack.

She pressed forward and condensed a fearsome aura around her, releasing nine purple-golden dao rules from her body. They rammed upwards at the large hand like nine pillars running all the way to the heavens.

"How is this possible?!"

"Nine dao rules!"

"The Empyrean King is a ninth step king!" The sight took Hopeless Major by storm. Their eminent ruler was also a ninth step king!

She'd ascended to kingdom not that long ago and started her journey at eighth step king. That'd already caused a great sensation throughout the major and the Immortal Region, but now she was in ninth step kingdom!

When she'd become a titled king, everything had taken place in her body. Thus, no one knew that she'd broken one of her dao rules to retreat from ninth step to eighth step.

The Yin Yang, Soulmask, and Acclaim Kings were equally dumbfounded by the sudden display of power. They were loyal to Violetgrave and thus adhered to the rules that she'd left behind. However, Qing Yu's strength had always been an underlying worry. An eighth step king would not be able to keep Hopeless Major in check; this kind of rebellion was a foregone conclusion.

The trio secretly put in enormous effort to retain a portion of control, thereby preventing the entire major from rising up against their liege when the Profound King demanded her abdication.

Who would've thought that Qing Yu would show them the strength of a ninth step king at this point!

The Hopeless Major disciples standing behind the Profound King began to waver. They aligned themselves against the Emyrean King only because she was an eighth step king. Though there was only one step difference between eighth and ninth, it was the difference between heaven and earth.

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"You're a ninth step king?!" The Profound King was dumbfounded when his hand slapped painfully at Qing Yu's dao rules, but he quickly recovered and leered, "So what? You're still going to step down from your position today!"

He was the strongest ninth step king in Hopeless Major, how would he possibly shrink away from clashing against a chit of a girl who'd just become king? It didn't matter that she was also a ninth step king!

RUMBLE!!

His aura expanded forcefully from his fully refined dao rules; they came down on Qing Yu with overwhelming, destructive momentum. Purple-golden radiance flared from her rules and the Profound King's hand proved unable to shake them.

"What? This isn't possible!" The Profound King's leer slid off and was replaced by disbelief. Though he wasn't utilizing combat arts, deployment of his dao rules at full strength was enough to crush an ordinary ninth level king.

But currently, everything he did was having no effect.

"Nothing's impossible," Qing Yu mocked and looked at him calmly from the center of her dao rules.

"Die!" Infuriated by her equanimity, the Profound King withdrew his dao rules and deployed a boxing method, punching out at the girl. This move didn't mean to capture her and take the command seal, it meant to kill her.

"How dare you!"

"Thieving bastard!" The Yin Yang and Soulmask Kings roared with fury and charged up to stop him.

"Stand down!" Qing Yu shouted and leapt forward with a punch of her own to meet the terrifying attack.

Boooooom!

A part of the void collapsed, destroyed by their collision. Qing Yu stumbled three steps backward while the Profound King remained in place, staring at her with incredulity. The Empyrean King had been in poor positioning for that blow, but she'd only taken three steps back!

"You must be a spy from the Immortal Region, here to overthrow our Hopeless Major! You've killed the real Empyrean King! She would never be my match otherwise, not with only ten years of kingdom." He bit his words out frostily and locked his gaze on Qing Yu. "Fellow daoists, work with me to take down the enemy!"

"No one shall move!" The Yin Yang, Soulmask, and Acclaim Kings uniformly stepped forward with a yell.

"No matter." Qing Yu waved a hand. "Anyone who doesn't wish for my rule can try whatever they wish today. I'll beat all of you into submission! But, I will show no mercy if fellow daoists of Origin World join the fray."

Her look at the Kaleidoscopic King felt like a bucket of cold water dumped over his head. He shuddered despite himself.

He dared covet her for a dao partner when she was an eighth step king; it didn't matter if he took her by force. But now that she was a ninth step king and could go toe-to-toe with the Profound King, he didn't dare think twice about her anymore.

That would simply be nursing a death wish.

"Die, spy of the Immortal Region!" The Profound King leapt into action and stuck firmly to his story that Qing Yu was a spy.

Having been titled the "Profound" King, his methods were complex and abstract. Brimming with endless mysteries, his combat arts and techniques were the peak of perfection.

"This spy sent our founding treasure, the Netherdark Formation, to the Immortal Region and now wants to consign us all to death. I will reveal your duplicity to all today!" His ferocity increased as he spoke.

"Get her!" The Ruin King locked eyes with certain people and made their moves as well.

Some of the remaining ninth step kings in their camp hesitated. Their primary concern all this time had been the Empyrean King's lack of strength. Now that she was a ninth step king and possessed the command seal, she absolutely had the right to be their eminent ruler. There was nothing to be gained in being enemies with her.

It wasn't an unforgivable crime that she'd lost the Netherdark Formation; the Major's true foundation was the command seal. It meant far more to the faction than a formation.

As for the Profound King's claim that she was a spy... Well, she was a spy if he won, and he was a joke if he lost.

The Ruin King and two others stepped forward to join efforts with the Profound King. Four ninth step kings occupied the cardinal directions and their power shook the heavens, ripping through the void to create spatial storms.

These storms were more terrifying than Earth Light Magneticus since they could crush an eighth step king to pieces. Ninth step kings, however, wouldn't be affected. Dao rules intersected by their side and projected one great combat art after another. They careened through the turbulent void and attacked everything they encountered.

Qing Yu was no match for four kings acting in concert. Continuously forced back, she nonetheless remained calm and methodical, refraining from falling into disorder.

"Fellow daoists, do you see this? The Empyrean King shows no weakness when attacked by four kings. She's not like a newly ascended king at all, she's definitely a spy from the Immortal Realm!" the Ruin King suddenly cried out.

This swayed many more people and the intention to join the fight spread throughout the crowd. The Yin Yang and Soulmask stood like door guards, firmly preventing the situation from boiling over. Their liege was at her absolute limit; she would immediately fall if another ninth step king fought against her.

"Since you say I'm a spy of the Immortal Region, I'll use the power of Hopeless Major to defeat you! Netherdark Formation, rise!"

Hummm.

Chapter 1302: Scroll of Shepherding Immortals

Qing Yu flung her arms wide open and released two rays of blue and purple light. They crisscrossed in the air, blossoming with fearsome power to force the Profound, Ruin, and other kings back.

The Netherdark Formation!

Blue and purple energy suffused the skies, repairing the turbulent void and returning it to its previous appearance. With blue as dark and purple as nether, the two combined into transparent netherdark power that draped over Qing Yu. Her strength grew explosively to more than ten times stronger.

Wham!

She lifted a hand and materialized nine dao rules towering as nine pillars, suppressing the Profound King and his cohorts.

"The Netherdark Formation?? How is that possible?!"

"Didn't we lose it because the Broadsword King took it?" The formation's appearance raised a furor throughout Hopeless Major.

Instead of using the major's command seal, Qing Yu triumphed over her enemies with the lost treasure.

"The formation was neither overwhelmed nor lost that day." Ice lined her voice. "I played along when the Ruin King's reinforcements didn't come and said that the formation was shattered and its diagram lost. I wanted to lure in the kings of the Immortal Region with my supposed weakness and destroy them altogether.

"But rather than dupe their kings, these traitors made their moves instead." Qing Yu regarded the captive kings with a chilly look.

“Hmph!” The Profound King set his jaw and refused to respond.

“Fellow daoist Profound King is a traitor? It is suspicious enough that the Empyrean King comes from unknown origins, but now you want to harm Hopeless Major’s foundations! As a good friend of Hopeless Major, I will not tolerate this lawlessness!” The sky darkened and a massive diagram dropped from above, bearing down on the Netherdark Formation. A young man dressed in long red robes appeared in its center.

“Origin World, the World King!” Qing Yu regarded the newcomer unpleasantly.

This was an internal matter of Hopeless Major, but the World King was here with Origin World’s ultimate weapon, the Nineworld Origin Diagram!

The Nineworld Origin Diagram was similar to Hopeless Major’s Netherdark Formation—an unparalleled formation diagram from their founding ancestor. Both of them were on similar levels of power, and most importantly, the World King was far stronger than the Profound King. He stood firmly at the apex of ninth step kings.

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“Empyrean King, you said earlier that you wouldn’t show mercy if an Origin World disciple became involved. I’m here to see just how merciless you can be!”

Rumble!

The Nineworld Origin Diagram exploded into nine worlds assembled in a massive formation, rivaling the Netherdark Formation. This provided enough breathing space for the Profound King and others to slip out of their constraints and resume glaring viciously at Qing Yu.

“The Immortal Region has the Netherdark Formation, I saw it with my own eyes! It appearing in our major now is proof that the Empyrean King is one of their spies!” shouted the Ruin King.

“Don’t worry, fellow daoist! Watch me take down this Empyrean King and return clear skies of peace to Hopeless Major!” The World King laughed heartily as the projections of the nine worlds overlaid on his body. His strength rose explosively and the Nineworld Formation unfurled in majestic splendor, dispelling the power of the Netherdark Formation.

“Empyrean King, you can try using your command seal to attack my diagram. Let us see what will happen!” he called out.

Qing Yu brooded ominously. Not only was the Nineworld Origin Diagram fighting her own formation to a standstill, it was using the Netherdark Formation to entangle with the void of the major. If she used the command seal to attack the enemy’s treasure, that would be the same as attacking Hopeless Major.

Backlash from her actions would land on her; the command seal was the void of the major and the core essence of Hopeless Major’s strength. No matter what she did, her attacks would rebound onto her through the command seal. Her only choice was to give up the seal.

“Formation, rise!” shouted the page boy behind her.

Hummmmm.

A hundred thousand puppets acted in unison, combining their strength to induce a marvelous change. A tiny, imperceptible crack appeared in the connection between the Nineworld Origin Diagram and the void.

It was minuscule, but enough to sever the connection between the two. Any formation had its flaws and the Nineworld Formation was no exception. It would've been a tall order if Lu Yun had wanted to exploit its weaknesses in ordinary times, but when the formation intertwined with this part of the void, it gave him an opening.

Additionally, his supplemental dao had been baptized and enhanced after his refinement of creation. Added to that Qing Yu's return to and his subsequent immersion in the presence of ninth step kingdom, that meant he was now much stronger than before.

Thus, he was able to use a hundred thousand half step kings to set up the Thousand Obliteration Formation of the Six Royals and furiously attack the flaws of the Nineworld Origin Diagram, shoving it the tiniest bit aside.

"What?!" Though the World King was startled, he remained composed and pointed at Lu Yun. "Die!"

Terrifying force exploded from his finger and loomed over the page boy like a world. Qing Yu sent the purple and blue command seal to Lu Yun with a wave of her hand, rendering the World King's attack ineffective.

Whoosh!

Brilliant sword splendor cut through the sky.

Quiet, unsheathed!

Kicking up a resplendent spray of sword light through the air, Qing Yu brandished the sword and charged the World King. She couldn't use the Netherdark Formation at the moment, and neither could he use his treasure. The two would meet each other in battle with the most direct method.

"Very well! Today, this seat shall heft the greatest genius of the Hongmeng and see how much you're worth!" The World King laughed and pulled out his personal treasure—another painting scroll.

They clashed in mid air.

"The Empyrean King used the command seal to protect those two ants! She cares a lot about them!" The Profound King wasn't part of this battle. Alarm had rung in his heart when Quiet appeared; if the Empyrean King had attacked him with that sword before, he'd be gravely injured with just a few strokes.

"Those two ants aren't regular people, they're supplemental kings! The one hundred thousand half step kings around us aren't living beings, they're puppets! Puppets with the battle strength of half step kings!" shrieked the Ruin King. "And those two ants can control them to affect the Nineworld Origin Diagram! Take them, take them! Control their minds for our use!"

"Right, take them!" The Profound King took a deep breath and walked up to Lu Yun and the little fox. A contorted smile crawled across his face. "Little things, bow down and submit to me right now. I will help you immediately become kings through cultivation if you dedicate your lives to my usage. Otherwise, you will be doomed to the deepest pits of hell and never be reincarnated!"

He was already attacking the command seal as he spoke.

Wham!

The void shook, the command seal shook.

Up in the sky, Qing Yu frowned and wanted to turn back, but the World King dogged her footsteps.

“Distracted during our battle? Do you want to die, Empyrean King?!” Roaring with laughter, the World King split his scroll into ten million copies, each overflowing with piercing killing intent. They flew around like light from a flying sword, cutting through everything in their path.

“Yin Yang King!” she raised her voice.

“Understood!” Yin Yang, Soulmask, and Acclaim shot forward, determined to take Profound and Ruin’s lives.

“Yin Yang King, do the three of you want to die?!” Profound regarded the three irately. Though the World King couldn’t pierce through the command seal, Profound had served a long time under Violetgrave. He knew how to subdue the command seal, and success was within reach when these three jarred him out of victory.

Neither did the Ruin King and other three idly await their deaths. They met their peers in battle when the three shot over.

“Piss off!” Soulmask howled and detonated the black mist around her into vicious ghosts. They sent the Ruin King flying while she aimed a longsword at the center of Profound’s forehead.

He had to give up on taking the command seal and focus on defending himself.

“You’ve destroyed my Scroll of Shepherding Immortals!” A sudden furious snarl came from the air.

“Scroll of Shepherding Immortals?!” Lu Yun and the little fox looked at each other, reading shock in each other’s eyes.

Lu Yun quickly looked up at Qing Yu and the World King in mid air—at the painting scroll that Qing Yu had sliced right through.

Chapter 1303: Nineworld Origin Cannon

A Scroll of Shepherding Immortals!

There was a Scroll of Shepherding Immortals in the world of immortals as well!

When Fuxi traveled through time from the great wilderness and arrived in the world a hundred thousand years ago, he’d taken on the identity of Human Celestial Master Zhang and used the core essence of God to draw a painting.

Someone then separated the painting into three—Panorama of Clarity, Portrait of Emptiness, and Profile of Harmony—and depicted the origin of the divine race. Legends spoke of the Panorama of Clarity being able to return the underworld’s tomb keepers to their core origin and escape the fetters of the underworld.

The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals had been made whole a long time ago and was with the little fox, but Qing Yu had also just sliced through one?!

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“The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals?” Qing Yu brought her sword to her side with a snort of laughter. “You have only the form of the scroll and no treasure spirit, what kind of silly Scroll of Shepherding Immortals is that? If you don’t hurry along and get out of here, World King, I’ll cut you down where you stand.”

Zing!

Her sword rang piercingly and flared with killing intent. The Profound and Yin Yang Kings below halted and jerked their heads up to regard the weapon in her hands.

“Quiet!” The World King stared fixedly at it. “This was once the ultimate treasure of the Di Clan, to think it’d be in your hands!”

As the ruler of Origin World, his breadth of knowledge was wide-ranging and he recognized the treasure at first glance. In their heyday, the Di Clan had commanded the winds and rains in the Hongmeng to the point of being a third pillar of the realm, alongside the Immortal Region and Ten Valleys of Evil. They’d suddenly departed from the third realm several hundreds of millions of years ago, descending to the world of immortals to protect the immortal dao.

That provided an opening for the Immortal Region and Ten Valleys of Evil to scheme against the clan and almost resulted in their complete annihilation.

Later on, they became Jin Naluo’s pawns in the world of immortals. He set up a Blood Sea after collecting their fragmented souls so he could bring in the real Blood Sea.

Radiant white splendor erupted from Quiet like white chains; they snaked around Qing Yu to form a layer of sword light clothing. Her strength was completely one with the sword and rivaled the Profound King’s.

“You’re getting ahead of yourself to think you can kill me with just an ultimate treasure,” sneered the World King. With the destruction of his Scroll of Shepherding Immortals, it would be throwing the handle after the ax if he didn’t walk away from this encounter with something gained.

Whoosh!

Qing Yu bounded into the air and viciously slashed down at the Nineworld Origin Diagram in the air.

“Vile spawn, how dare you harm Origin World’s ultimate treasure?!” The World King roared wrathfully and hastily brought the tattered remnants of the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals forward. He blocked the blow, but that ruined the scroll beyond repair.

He threw the fragments aside with a dark laugh. “Fine, I’ll leave immediately if you can take my next blow!”

Whoosh!

The Nineworld Origin Diagram suddenly broke free of the Netherdark Formation and Hopeless Major void. Turning horizontal, it expanded even bigger and drew nine strangely shaped holes in the sky.

Qing Yu's eyes widened and she slashed Quiet through the air, redirecting the Netherdark Formation into rays of intersecting blue and purple light. The command seal of Hopeless Major scattered plumes of brilliant radiance that floated down protectively around Lu Yun and the little fox.

Lu Yun frowned; having observed the battle for so long, he recognized what the Netherdark Formation was. It was the outward expression of hell's power in the form of a great formation. It was missing one critical component—the fires of hell!

Unbidden, he deployed hellfire from his body and melded it into the formation.

Humm!

The Netherdark Formation came alive and transformed into a thirty-six ranked lotus flower with purple and blue petals.

Sword in hand, Qing Yu perched in the center of the flower with a stately and august bearing. Her strength grew rapidly once again.

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

Nine detonations sounded from the holes created by the Nineworld Origin Diagram and pulses of terrifying power wafted through the openings. First to travel through were ripples of nine colors that scattered in all directions.

“Empyrean King, if you can take a hit from my Nineworld Origin Cannon, I will leave immediately!”

“Nineworld Origin Cannon!” Yin Yang and Profound screamed with one voice.

“Are you crazy, World King?! Do you want to destroy Hopeless Major?!”

“Stop, stop immediately!”

They disengaged from their struggle at the same time to rush the World King, but the Nineworld Origin Cannon was fully activated. They were swept aside by the terrible ripples and couldn't draw near at all!

RUMBLE!!

An enormous explosion rocked the void, sending through a searing blast of light that turned Qing Yu's face ghostly white. She was calling upon the formation's full power and hellfire had perfectly integrated into it, but it was insufficient to block the incoming blast!

The founder of Origin World had certainly been someone on par with Violetgrave in status and strength as the two were of equal repute. This Nineworld Origin Cannon was Origin World's strongest military strength.

If in ordinary times, the two valleys would be evenly matched and it would be impossible for one to triumph over the other. But right now, the World King had aimed the cannon at the heart of the Netherdark Formation!

Destructive power had already spread throughout the formation and Qing Yu stood at the vanguard, withstanding the brunt of the attack.

She turned back and looked at Lu Yun, who answered her with a smile. He waved a hand and flashed an image of a tremendous bridge with a desolate air through the void, bolstering the Netherdark Formation.

KABOOM!!

A huge mushroom cloud rushed for the horizon. The blast that contained enough power to level Hopeless Major was... blocked, then dispersed.

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"It held! The formation thwarted the Nineworld Origin Cannon!" Profound viewed the dissipating waves of energy with astonishment.

"The eminent one... is the holy ancestor's handpicked successor alright! She holds a mandate from Hopeless Major itself!" Yin Yang gaped to find himself still alive. He'd been ready to die, but Qing Yu really had withstood the cannon—the greatest weapon in the Ten Valleys of Evil!

"Impossible, impossible!" The World King scanned the scene with disbelief. He had called forth a blast at full power because he was ready to destroy Hopeless Major, but the Netherdark Formation had rendered the blow ineffective!

"...fine, this matter is over since you've withstood a hit from my Nineworld Origin Cannon. We take our leave!" The World King waved a hand, wrapped up the Kaleidoscopic King in his grasp, and streaked into a long tail of light to leave Hopeless Major.

"You throw Hopeless Major into disorder and attack us with the Nineworld Origin Cannon, then want to leave with just a casual word?? I think not!" Qing Yu's robe of sword light lit up into a beam of indistinct radiance. She shot into the sky and cleaved down on the World King's streak of light.

She was furious.

The Nineworld Origin Cannon was the final trump card for that faction, and the last time it'd been fired up was when the Immortal Region threatened the Origin World's borders. On the verge of complete defeat, the previous ruler activated the cannon to inflict severe casualties on the Immortal Region's armies, winning enough time for the other nine valleys to come to Origin World's aid.

This time, the World King fired it up in the heartland of Hopeless Major for a land grab!

If it wasn't for Lu Yun's timely summoning of the Bridge of Forgetfulness from Jin Naluo, Hopeless Major might've really been wiped out of existence.

Sword light of snowy brilliance cut through a hundred million miles of empty space and sliced through the World King's vanishing tail of light.

A heart wrenching scream rang out, and a spray of vivid red blood accompanied a pair of human legs plummeting out of the radiance.

“Empyrean King! How dare you cut off my legs!” the World King keened.

If Quiet cut through a part of the body, that was the equivalent of severing a karmic relationship. The removed legs would never recover, as if they’d never existed in the first place. No transformation or shape shifting method would make one whole again.

It was an incredible shame for the vaunted ruler of the Origin World to lose his legs!

“What about your legs?!” Qing Yu roared and sent out another burst of white radiance from Quiet. It arced into the rapidly receding streak of light that was almost out of Hopeless Major territory.

A severed arm fluttered down from the sky.

The World King didn’t dare say anything more, he focused his full strength on making good his escape.

Qing Yu stood in the air with Quiet upraised; she suddenly turned back and looked at the Profound King, Ruin King, and two other ninth step kings who’d fought with them.

“I... yield,” sighed Profound. “May the eminent one flay or execute me however you’d like.”

All thoughts of rebellion fled their mind the moment Qing Yu blocked the blast from the Nineworld Origin Cannon. After she cut off the World King’s legs and an arm, they didn’t even dare consider the possibility of escaping.

Qing Yu considered them quietly.

“You are founding elders of Hopeless Major and the old subjects left behind by the Eminent Violetgrave. How could I possibly kill you?” she heaved a heavy sigh. “Go back to whatever you should be doing.”

The Profound and Ruin King looked at each other, dumbfounded. Things were over? Just like that? The Empyrean King wasn’t going to punish them?

The Profound King opened his mouth and closed it again, not sure of what to say.

“Profound King, you and your cohorts ushered the wolf into the house today and almost ruined Hopeless Major. Yet the eminent one, mighty and benevolent as she is, still spares your life. Express your gratitude at once!” roared the Yin Yang King with a step forward.

“Our deepest and most humble gratitude to the eminent one for not taking our lives!” The other six ninth step kings that’d been in the Profound King’s camp quickly fell to their knees. They’d started wavering almost as soon as the fighting broke out and weren’t going to wait for the four ringleaders to make up their minds.

“Our deepest and most humble gratitude for the eminent one’s forgiveness.” The Ruin King and other two sank to their knees, followed by all of the other kings and disciples of Hopeless Major.

Only the Profound King was left standing. He looked at Qing Yu, then slowly hung his head without a word.

Chapter 1304: Metal Potentate

“Are we really letting them off the hook just like this?” The Acclaim King was rather disgruntled. Though no tangible or lasting damage had resulted from the massive commotion, every step had been fraught with danger. The slightest misstep would’ve doomed them all—not just Qing Yu, but all of Hopeless Major had teetered on the brink.

The Yin Yang King tugged on her sleeve and shook his head, signaling for her not to speak.

“Your Eminence, though you have left, your chosen successor is not someone we can fathom. I... yield.” The Profound King suddenly deflated and sat on the ground with his knees bent. All of his lofty aspirations and ambitions melted into the air in this moment.

Resentment would’ve brewed if Qing Yu had killed or punished him. He was the foremost king of the major, after all, and had fought side by side with Violetgrave. A touch of haughtiness and conviction had always lingered at the bottom of his heart.

Even if Qing Yu possessed the absolute strength to defeat him, she never would’ve won him over.

But after all was said and done, she neither killed nor punished him, merely saying that they should all “go back to whatever you should be doing.”

That smashed his last bit of pride and assurance.

He yielded, he ceded control, he accepted her rule.

The domineering momentum that’d draped around him broke apart, nothing worth considering in front of the magnanimity that Qing Yu displayed.

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Origin World.

Heavily injured after Qing Yu cut off three of his limbs, the World King threw down the Kaleidoscopic King upon returning to his territory and shut himself away. He would attempt to regain his lost legs and arm.

All of Origin World grieved.

They’d thought that this was the best timing to annex Hopeless Major, but their eminent ruler had somehow burst forth with the might of a ninth step king. Not only did she suppress the rebellion, but she struck back at the World King as well!

The Kaleidoscopic King regarded his master’s closed door cultivation locale with an ominous expression.

“Sire.” A third step king approached him and said hesitantly, “I recognized the two children that were at the Emyrean King’s side today.”

“Oh?” Kaleidoscopic came back to his senses with a blink and regarded a young man in white robes.

“Though they changed their appearances, the gifts of my race can see through to their soul. They’re the Immortal King and Intranse King of Multitude City!”

The young man in white was the Windcall King!

“My duplicate of lust died to the Immortal King’s order of time, and my duplicate of wrath died from anger after repeated humiliation by the Immortal Pagoda. I would recognize them anywhere.”

The Windcall King’s race was quite extraordinary; being extremely sensitive to the ripples of souls was one of their innate gifts. Therefore, he’d recognized Lu Yun and the little fox even though they were disguised by Shapeshifting Talismans refined from karmic fruits.

His duplicate of greed had joined the Origin World and was his only remaining self. He used to possess other duplicates of wrath, fixation, and lust.

“Immortal King? The one who refined creation?” The Kaleidoscopic King frowned. “No wonder the Empyrean King suddenly ascended to ninth step kingship. If she took all eighteen Pills of Creation, that could indeed elevate her to ninth step king overnight.”

“Sire, we can use this!” the Windcall King pressed. “The Immortal King is at odds with the Supplemental Dao Alliance...”

“No need.” The Kaleidoscopic King shot his head. “Hopeless Major will suffer heavy losses after today and fall immensely from grace. Though my master is gravely injured, the overall strength of Origin World remains intact.”

The Windcall King looked on with wordless surprise.

“Hopeless Major has always been the weakest of the ten valleys because it does not have an eminent ruler. The Profound King is the closest to being one, he is highly respected and well beloved. After his failed coup, the Empyrean King will kill or imprison him!” A cold smile played on the Kaleidoscopic King’s lips. “With the standings of the Profound and Ruin Kings, the consequences will be great once they suffer punishment. Other kings will sympathize with one of their own and Hopeless Major will dissolve in complete disorder after multiple sides pull away at it!

“That Empyrean King is strong enough, but she lacks a worthy reputation for acceptance by the entire faction. Heh heh heh, a girl still growing her hair out dares step into the shoes of an eminent ruler? Her death wish wasn’t an ordinary one!”

In the Kaleidoscopic King’s eyes, it was inevitable that Qing Yu would face insurrection after assuming the position and that Origin World would march on them. Her reckoning after the fact was sure to be swift and furious. Why, if he were in her shoes, he wouldn’t tolerate recent happenings either!

The Empyrean King was too young, and as the ringleader, the Profound King would certainly die.

“All we need to do is sit here and wait.” Kaleidoscopic sneered. “Of course, we should also look into the Immortal King. The Colosseum is still in Multitude City, correct? Tell them to investigate whether the Immortal King and Intranse King are still in the city.”

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“That’s it? That’s seriously it??” Miao paced in irate circles. She couldn’t understand why Qing Yu had so easily let all the instigators off the hook. The Profound King had almost ended Hopeless Major today!

“What else can we do?” Lu Yun smiled. “We didn’t lose anything and actually walked away with the primary body of the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.”

He materialized the three sections of the ruined scroll with a wave of his hand. Though Qing Yu had hacked it to pieces, the little fox possessed a copy as well. Hers was a hundred million times weaker, but if they incorporated it with these ruined fragments, they would be able to restore the scroll to heights greater than its former glory.

There were countless ties between the two Scrolls of Shepherding Immortals.

Qing Yu nodded. She’d wanted to kill the Profound and Ruin Kings at first, but stopped at the last possible second when Lu Yun transmitted his objection.

He’d begun living his second life after arriving at the world of immortals, and it was now his third life after reabsorbing his past self. Though no one he’d encountered in any life rivaled the old farts of the Hongmeng, multiple experiences of life, death, and reincarnation bestowed a particular clarity to his thoughts.

They came together as many opinions on numerous matters—something that the ancient fossils who sought to stay alive at all costs lacked. There was tremendous terror between life and death, but also tremendous fortune. He’d absorbed both instances of this fortune.

He materialized a pill cauldron the size of a world with another wave of his hand; it was the Truefire World that he’d won from the Alchemist King. Lu Yun had tempered it anew with the fires of the five hells and baptized it with power of virtue and the Tome of Life and Death. The Alchemist King’s nascent spirit brand on the treasure was thoroughly washed away, and now it belonged to Lu Yun.

“Miao, give me your scroll. I’m going to see if I can combine the two and return them to their true form.”

The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals had originally belonged to Qing Yu, but after her curse was broken and she became the dao sovereign, the scroll was given to the little fox. Lu Yun and Qing Yu had both discovered that only when Miao used the scroll could it be deployed to its greatest power.

“Alright!” The little fox lit up and fished out the dust-laden scroll, handing it to Lu Yun.

He threw both of them into the pill cauldron without hesitation and used its power to refine them.

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Multitude City.

A man of indeterminable age strolled down the streets wearing loose long robes of pale gold. He was tall and lanky, both of his arms casually tucked behind his back. He drifted rapidly down the streets, seemingly part of this world, but also very distinct from the creatures that inhabited it.

“Immortal Pagoda? This is the place.” He stopped in front of the pagoda’s doors and smiled meaningfully at the signboard overhead.

He vanished on the spot, reappearing on the ninth floor of the pagoda.

Jin Naluo was overseeing Jin Gushen's cultivation. The former realized that Lu Yun was in trouble when the Bridge of Forgetfulness abruptly separated from him, but he wasn't unduly concerned. He'd fully refined the tenth key of the Hongmeng Tower and no one could take it from him by any means possible. It wouldn't make a difference even if he was killed.

Thus, the bridge didn't matter to him anymore.

He spent his days summoning his confidantes to the Immortal Pagoda and integrating them into the pagoda's staff. When Lu Yun was absent, this building was Jin Naluo's!

Jin Gushen occupied a special position among the staff as Jin Naluo knew that Lu Yun had overthrown the Colosseum for his friend. That once great faction had been razed to the ground for Jin Gushen, so Jin Naluo made sure to give him pointers in moments of free time.

"Hmm?" Jin Naluo raised a brow at the pale golden shadow that'd suddenly appeared in front of him.

A terrifying presence weighed down on him before he could speak; he felt like a fly caught in amber. Thick, cloying fear rose from his heart.

A ninth step king?

Only ninth step kings could exert this kind of pressure.

"Little fellow, are you willing to take me as your master?" The gold-clad man chuckled merrily at the terrified Jin Gushen.

"Release Senior Jin Naluo first!" Jin Gushen shouted instead. This stranger was here for him!

Jin Naluo felt the weight lighten and he sagged bonelessly to the ground.

"Senior, are you a ninth step king?" Jin Naluo asked gingerly after swallowing noisily.

"A ninth step king?" The stranger smiled. "You could say that." He turned to Jin Gushen again. "My name is the Metal Potentate, and you and I have a shared affinity. Are you willing to take me for your master?"

Jin Gushen looked at Jin Naluo for guidance; the latter thought rapidly—I've never heard of this name before, but he's definitely a ninth step king!

"This is your fortuitous opportunity, what are you looking at me for?" Jin Naluo forced some bravado into his voice and laughed awkwardly. "This senior is a ninth step king, the strongest of the Hongmeng! If the Immortal King was here, he'd raise both hands in support for him to be the senior's disciple!"

The Metal Potentate inclined his head. "If that Immortal King refuses, I'll beat him to death."

Chapter 1305: To Sound Out

Jin Gushen jerked with alarm and he bowed before the Metal Potentate. "Disciple Jin Gushen greets the master!"

There had been threatening hints in his new master's tone at the end. Jin Gushen was no fool, he would never put Lu Yun in a dangerous situation.

A smile crossed the Metal Potentate's face and he waved a hand, vanishing with Jin Gushen in a shimmer of golden sparkles.

Jin Naluo stood up slowly, his expression changing rapidly. Lu Yun and Miao had jointly set up the great formation of the Immortal Pagoda. Not only was the emotion formation part of it, but so were many layers of other illusory formations. However, the Metal Potentate had walked in without triggering anything!

His casual mention of beating the Immortal King to death hadn't been an offhand remark, he really was ready to kill Lu Yun. And yet, the emotion formation had still lain inert!

It would seem that the Metal Potentate was far more complicated than a ninth step king.

"But Jin Gushen has nothing to lose by gaining such a strong titan for his master. Another mighty expert might join the ranks of the Immortal Pagoda before long, and I should never offend such a person!" Jin Naluo breathed out a long sigh of relief. "Hmm? The Human King? What's he doing here?"

The emotion formation of the structure shifted with agitation and Jin Naluo sensed tremendous spitefulness arriving at their front door—someone from the Colosseum.

"Human King, are you here to die?" Having suffered through the Metal Potentate's suppression, Jin Naluo found a perfect punching bag for his humiliation the moment the Human King walked in through the doors.

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"The Immortal and Inrance Kings are in Hopeless Major?" The Human King concealed his tracks and focused all of his efforts on burying the tendril of hatred deep within his heart. Thus prepared, he set out for the Immortal Pagoda.

At his cultivation level, he could perfectly disguise his emotions. However, the Blood King hung at the front doors to the pagoda!

When the Human King saw his brother of a hundred million years hanging naked in the breeze, a trophy for someone else to strut around with, his mentality wobbled and released a tiny ripple of emotion.

The emotion formation instantly picked up on it, but the king reacted equally swiftly and drew the flicker of malice back into himself, then nonchalantly set foot into the Immortal Pagoda.

"The Windcall King is only a third step king. Though his talents are great, he could very well be mistaken about the identities of those two. On the other hand, if the Immortal and Inrance Kings aren't currently in the Immortal Pagoda, then it's highly possible they're in Hopeless Major." The Human King rapidly considered several possibilities.

It was the end of the road for the Colosseum. Since he was the only sixth step king left in it, the fifth and fourth step kings of the faction were starting to look elsewhere. Most important was that the majority of its territory was the venue of the Supplemental Convention. The assembly frothed with activity everyday as countless experts surged in, trying to pick up the mountain of Earth Light Magneticus.

Even seventh step kings were giving it a try. That the Human King could steady his emotions to the point of entering the Immortal Pagoda was quite incredible.

“These two kings are elusive personages even during normal times. What can I do to feel them out? The Stellar Light Magneticus protecting the pagoda is used to deter the seventh, eighth, and ninth step kings. It won’t be used against a mere sixth step king like me, would it?” The Human King’s heart began to pound. “No matter, I have a formation disk that the Wild Formation King gifted me. I’ll be able to leave in a flash!”

Wild notions sprouted in the wake of fury and a crystal core appeared in the Human King’s hand—the core of an arcane beast king. A sixth step arcane beast king.

A supplemental king had engraved glyphs for detonation within it that endowed it with the power of a sixth step king’s self detonation.

Humm.

A terrifying pressure hung in the air the second he brought out the arcane beast core. The emotion formation didn’t activate, but a large hand descended from above.

“Who is that?!” Courage and reason abandoned him. Though the hand wasn’t at seventh step kingdom, it was far stronger than the Human King and infinitely close to breaking though. It wasn’t Jinse, but someone else!

“How is this possible?? There’s another heavyweight in the Immortal Pagoda, who is it?!” Alarm, dismay, and fear chased each other through his face. He’d dared pay a visit because of word from his subordinates that someone had seen Jinse at Starcloud Region—a region newly fallen to the vicious ghosts.

She wasn’t at the Immortal Pagoda, but someone else had taken her place!

“Jin Naluo!” Realization was quick to dawn and the Human King sent his will to the formation disk. But he discovered with great shock that... Jin Naluo was crazy!

The man used almost his full strength and slapped down on the Human King like a clap of thunder so fast, there was no time to plug one’s ears. He crushed all of the would-be attacker’s strength, power, and thoughts in one single move.

The Human King laid flat on the ground like an enormous meat patty.

He wouldn’t be this weak under regular circumstances. Though he still wouldn’t be a match for Jin Naluo, he would at least be able to put up a fight.

However, he was situated in the Immortal Pagoda! This was the home base that Lu Yun had painstakingly built. Bolstered by all of the formations in the building, Jin Naluo was infinitely close to seventh step kingdom!

He’d used almost full strength in this blow to vent some of the annoyance from the Metal Potentate’s bullying. If he hadn’t been standing in the Immortal Pagoda, he would’ve reduced everything in a hundred million miles to dust.

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“What’s going on?!”

“Why did the pagoda suddenly attack a customer??”

A dazzling array of products filled the first floor, attracting an immense number of shoppers. Jin Naluo suddenly slapping one of them to the ground caused an uproar in all of the cultivators.

“Take a look at what he’s holding.” Lu Yun materialized following a sigh.

“Hmm? Is that the core of a sixth step arcane beast king?” A supplemental master gasped when he took a closer look. “There are numerous glyphs etched within... it’s a Detonation Talisman! Using a crystal core of this level to create a Detonation Talisman... does this person want to kill us all?!”

Shock and panic gripped the crowd. Lu Yun drifted down from the air and whisked away the Human King’s disguise with a wave of his hand.

“The Human King!”

“It’s the Human King!”

“The Human King from the Colosseum, he’s here again!” Exclamations rose and fell as understanding dawned for many people.

“The Human King is very impressive to be able to repress his emotions enough to slip past the emotion formation.” Lu Yun sighed, “What a pity that he underestimated the formation and thought that just entering the building would be sufficient.

“The Colosseum has set itself against the Immortal Pagoda many times. Everything is settled now that the lead troublemaker is under arrest. Not to worry, everyone. Even if the Detonation Talisman had taken effect, my pagoda’s defensive formations would ensure that absolutely no harm comes to you.”

Lu Yun sent away the flattened Human King and talisman with another wave of his hand.

Not everyone greeted the turn of events with relief. Some forcefully repressed the waves of emotion in their heart and soundlessly slipped away.

Jin Naluo stared dumbly at Lu Yun’s back, then shook his head fiercely. This was Lu Yun in the flesh, but the boy had left the pagoda and handed over all of the formations to him.

Yet, that really was Lu Yun! It wasn’t a puppet that’d suddenly appeared.

“Don’t think too much on it, the Colosseum is one of Origin World’s pawns. The Human King is under orders to investigate if I’m still in the pagoda.” Another Lu Yun appeared behind Jin Naluo.

“You...” Jin Naluo had no idea what to say.

“Mm, I know what’s happened to Jin Gushen. The Metal Potentate is one incredible titan who should at least be stronger than ninth step king. It’s a wonderful thing that Brother Jin has him for a master, it’s something to be celebrated!” Lu Yun smiled.

“What. the. heck is going on?! You are you, but you’re different from you!” Jin Naluo felt like his brain was exploding and tried to prevent that by grabbing Lu Yun’s shoulders.

“It’s just a little trick on par with a replica,” Lu Yun chuckled.

This was the method of the bean soldiers.

Chapter 1306: Origin World Comes Knocking

Eyes widened accusingly, Jin Naluo glared at Lu Yun.

“Then why’d you dump this mess in my lap? Use one of your replicas to run the Immortal Pagoda!” he snapped.

“It’s not like you haven’t gained anything for your efforts.” Lu Yun grinned. “You’ve used the pagoda’s resources to temper your Bloodpool Mountain and increased the strength at your command by thirty percent. Look at you being all put out when you’ve benefited this much.”

Jin Naluo wordlessly shut his mouth.

“I’ve taken the bridge back, but you’ve pretty much fully refined the key to the Hongmeng Tower. You won’t die if you don’t go looking for death.” Lu Yun’s replica turned back into a tiny soybean with a shake of his body.

Jin Naluo rubbed his nose. “So the little guy who once threatened me into an alliance is now able to lecture me to my face? ...but my Bloodpool Mountain has indeed grown stronger, heh. I need to keep this tangible benefit close to me.”

He started cackling with satisfaction; he hadn’t been on the short end of the stick with recent events.

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Hopeless Major.

Five hellfires blazed fiercely in the Truefire World cauldron, replacing the flame that’d previously powered it. After devouring the cauldron’s original fire, the flames of the Sanguine and Abyssal Hells began to resuscitate and truly take shape.

It appeared that apart from being a tremendous pill cauldron, the Truefire World also possessed the ability to nurture flame. Even hellfire could be nourished into recovery within it.

The two Scrolls of Shepherding Immortals gradually melded into one through Lu Yun’s continuous efforts. Rays of gentle light emanated from it, casting the scroll with incomparably holy light.

“It’s the presence of God!” murmured the little fox when she looked upon the changing scroll. “What is God’s background? What does he have to do with the Hongmeng?”

Qing Yu frowned slightly and thought over the matter.

“God is now a guardian of the immortal dao. Of the former nine sacred lands in the chaos, the four origin sacred lands... No, not origin. The character they used is a homophone for ‘qi’, which was their proper name. The four qi sacred lands entered the great wilderness through the origin divine—er, qi divine, and stole God’s opportunity.” She started speaking at a more rapid clip. “God wasn’t behind the five Exalted Divines either. They were created through another outside force to dominate the divine race!

“The four qi elements and cycle of five elements have always opposed each other, each striving to establish themselves as the legitimate building blocks of life. The qi divine and the five Exalted Divines on the altars have always fought over rule of the divine race.”

She stopped at this point; none of this was a coincidence.

“The nine sacred lands of the chaos... are the pawns of the nine inconceivably powerful existences in the Hongmeng.” Lu Yun suddenly opened his eyes and exhaled a breath of putrid air. “If my guess is correct, the Metal Potentate who took away Brother Jin is one of the nine!”

With the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals in a new prototype form, Lu Yun speculated that it wasn't a dead treasure, that it'd once been alive and a heavyweight of the fourth realm just like Quiet.

It'd suffered heavy injuries and fallen to the Hongmeng, whereupon the World King found it. But since it wasn't complete, it couldn't deploy its full strength and Quiet had easily cut it apart. Its two halves coming back together made it the true Scroll of Shepherding Immortals and an ultimate treasure that rivaled Quiet.

However, its treasure spirit had completely vanished, so it lacked the spirituality that Quiet possessed.

Qing Yu knew all this, which was why she'd said that this scroll only possessed the form. The lack of its treasure spirit meant that it would always remain incomplete.

“God was once the treasure spirit within, a titan of the fourth realm!” Lu Yun breathed out slowly.

“I have another speculation,” Qing Yu spoke after brief contemplation. “The ten experts who created the Ten Valleys of Evil have all vanished. I highly suspect that God created Origin World.”

“The gods of the five elements and gods of the qi elements should all be descended from God's power. Also, the nine worlds within the Nineworld Origin Diagram should be five from the cycle of five elements and four from the four qi elements!”

Having personally experienced the Nineworld Origin Cannon, Qing Yu was able to use formula dao to determine the energy structure of the Nineworld Origin Diagram.

Lu Yun nodded in agreement.

“There are eleven titans in the Hongmeng beyond ninth step king, perhaps they have something to do with God as well,” the little fox added. “The Metal Potentate you just mentioned, for instance.”

“Reporting in to the eminent one!” The Soulmask King's voice suddenly traveled in from outside the door.

“Yes, Soulmask King?” Qing Yu quickly stood up. The Soulmask, Yin Yang, and Acclaim Kings had stood firm by her side in her time of need and protected Lu Yun and Miao. She would never neglect them and personally greeted the Soulmask King's abrupt visit.

Soulmask scrupulously abided by her duties and didn't become arrogant from the show of favor. On the contrary, her expression was very grim.

“Origin World is here again and demands that you return the World King’s Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.”

“I haven’t kicked in their door for what they’ve done, but here they are again! Do they really think I’m such an easy target?!” Qing Yu flew into a rage. They were back for a second round when she was yet to bring a reckoning down on Origin World?? She almost burst out laughing from anger.

“Ahem!” Soulmask coughed and continued with resignation, “They probably think you executed the Profound King and punished those who rebelled. To them, Hopeless Major is falling apart. They don’t know that you pardoned him and won over everyone instead. We are now more united than ever before.

“Ninth step Autumn King of Origin World arrived a while ago to poach our Daredevil King. Daredevil fooled him and trapped him in the Nethersoul Formation instead.” Soulmask repressed her amusement.

The Daredevil King was one of the ten who’d rebelled, but later felt remorse and didn’t attack Qing Yu with the Profound King and others. If Qing Yu had truly wanted to pronounce a sentence on him, he wouldn’t deserve death. However, he’d be harshly punished, stripped of his authority, and locked up.

Instead, he remained as daredevil as his namesake, as if nothing had happened.

General sentiment had been that Qing Yu was only pardoning them on the surface, that she’d take action against them in secret. But when things remained quiet in the major after so many days, the insurgents fully relaxed and fell under Qing Yu’s banner.

“The Autumn King?” Qing Yu started, then nodded. “Keep him there for now, don’t let him get away. As for the Origin representatives... send them off with some random paintings.”

Lu Yun had returned the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals to its origin and erased the World King’s nascent spirit brand. What lunacy was this about handing it back?

“Random paintings?” Soulmask blinked rapidly. “They say that if it’s not the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals, they’ll impose sanctions on Hopeless Major along with the other valleys.”

“Let them.” Qing Yu didn’t care at all.

“Your Eminence, I think this is the time for us to display our might,” Soulmask countered. “If the World King can bring the Nineworld Origin Diagram to our heartland, why can’t you take the Netherdark Formation to theirs?”

Chapter 1307: Nethersoul Formation

Qing Yu blinked at the Soulmask King’s words.

“Though the Ten Valleys of Evil are birds of a feather in opposing the Immortal Region, the other nine have watched us covetously since our last eminent ruler fell. They seek to devour us at any possible moment.

“If it wasn’t for you appearing out of thin air, Hopeless Major would be in real danger! We also have the matter of the previous eminent one’s death to avenge as well!” Deep hatred seeped into Soulmask’s tones.

Prior to Violetgrave's disappearance, she'd appointed one person to be her successor—the first eminent ruler of Hopeless Major. He had been an exceedingly powerful individual, stronger than the current World King and the undisputed strongest heavyweight in the valleys. His vision had been ahead of his time and he'd wanted to consolidate the ten valleys into one.

Though that would enable them to fight the Immortal Region as a single coordinated entity, none of the other nine wanted to lose their autonomy or be at the behest of others. Thus, they hatched a plot to lure the Hopeless Major ruler into an Immortal Region besiegement.

Their age-old enemy was of a similar mindset and sent out ninety-nine ninth step kings to meet them in battle. Assembled in a grand formation, they targeted only Hopeless Major's ruler and ultimately refined him alive.

The harrowing battle resulted in the Immortal Region losing a dozen kings and the precipitous fall of Hopeless Major's status after it. Though the other nine didn't trouble them on the surface post engagement, they constantly suppressed their peer from the shadows.

If it wasn't for the incredible resources left by their late ruler, Hopeless Major would've ceased to exist a long time ago.

When he walked among the living, there'd been thirty ninth step kings among the major's ranks. Only thirteen existed in the present day as the rest had either died or fled. Those who were left were staunchly loyal to the major, even the Profound and Ruin Kings.

The Profound King had welcomed the World King only because he wanted to use the other to eliminate Qing Yu. Once he grasped the reins of power and held the command seal, he would use it to defy the World King and expel the outsider.

It was a plan to set his enemies upon each other and then emerge victorious over them all. Instead of the World King arriving as a regular tiger, however, he came as a crazed one!

Lu Yun had monitored everyone's emotions earlier through the Karmic Tree, which was why he'd directed Qing Yu to show mercy.

If the Profound King and his cohorts had been beyond redemption, Lu Yun wouldn't mind gaining a few ninth step king Infernum. However, thwarting his considerations was the Soul Light Palace in Hopeless Major.

A king's passing extinguished their soul light. Hopeless Major would no longer trust them after they died, even if the light flared back to life. This was to prevent outsiders from controlling their kings and inflicting heavy losses on the major.

It was for this reason that Jinse remained by Lu Yun's side since becoming an Infernum and didn't consider returning home to help Qing Yu. That possibility was out of the question because her former peers would no longer trust her.

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"You're right." Qing Yu nodded. "I should pay a visit to Origin World. Their ruler showed up uninvited with the Nineworld Origin Diagram and fired off the Nineworld Origin Cannon in the center of the major."

Now they ride roughshod over us in our own home? If I continue to remain unmoved, they'll be emboldened by my reaction.

"Send their representatives away however you can. After I take care of the Autumn King, I'll make my way to Origin World. Here's a hundred thousand half step king puppets—go set them up in secret."

She placed a tiny ball of light in the Soulmask King's hands; it contained the puppets that Lu Yun had prepared for her.

"This is..." Soulmask's eyes widened. These were the half step king puppets assembled in formation that day! They'd forced the Nineworld Origin Diagram apart from the void of Hopeless Major so the eminent ruler could strike back.

Of those in the major, Qing Yu was closest to the Soulmask King. While they didn't share all of their thoughts with each other, they were close confidantes. Qing Yu had given her the supplemental treasures she'd received from Lu Yun and in return, Soulmask had never let her down.

Now that Soulmask received the hundred thousand half step king puppets, she was almost overwhelmed with bliss. With this army in hand, Hopeless Major had the capacity to counter attack the Immortal Region!

Though kings abounded on both sides, it was cultivators beneath kingship that fought on the battlefield.

"Alright, you are dismissed." Qing Yu waved at Soulmask.

"Understood!" Soulmask cupped her hands around the ball of light with glee, thinking nothing of the Origin World representatives.

They were here only because they thought the situation was unstable in Hopeless Major, that as domineering as the Empyrean King was, she was deserted by all of her followers. They didn't consider that she might have pardoned the rebels, or that the Profound King had lost all of his influence due to various factors.

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A king with black hair and a black beard snarled with outrage in the middle of green soulfire. He was the Autumn King from Origin World.

"Daredevil King, I came to save you out of the goodness of my heart, but you ambushed me instead! You're an ungrateful and heartless snake!" Grief-stricken fury filled his tones.

"Autumn King, you came to Hopeless Major to sow discord. Keeping you here and not killing you on the spot is already a show of extreme mercy," snorted the Daredevil King.

Daredevil was a young man who looked very uncanny. His two eyes glittered like emeralds and an eerie light twinkled out of them. This was plainly an exceedingly evil king, one who lived up to the major's name.

"Daredevil King, do you think I don't know the limits of your abilities? You would've killed me a long time ago if you could manage it! Heh, I'll have you begging for death when I get out of here!" A scholarly air

exuded from the Autumn King and a bamboo scroll hovered over his head, cocooning him in safety from the terrifying soulfire.

“You should quickly defect to Origin World if you know what’s good for you! That Empyrean King is just a girl wet behind the ears and doesn’t know how to read a situation. If she can execute the Profound King for insurrection, she’ll do the same to all of you who defied her. It’s just a matter of degree and time!” the Autumn King roared with laughter. “Daredevil, don’t you know that the hour of your death is staring you in the face? Hopeless Major will be breached sooner or later, and you’ll die first to your half-baked eminent little girl!”

“Shut up, bastard! Keep your mouth clean about Her Eminence!” Daredevil cursed and stoked soulfire to greater heights with a wave of his hand. However, the Autumn King’s book was too strong for the fire to touch him.

It wasn’t just empty talk when he said that he could get out.

Hummm.

The Nethersoul Formation trembled as jade green soulfire leapt with newfound passion, purple radiance peeking out within it.

Rumble!

The scroll over the Autumn King’s head was sent flying by the purple-green mixture, and soulfire flooded into his body.

Chapter 1308: Inviting Humiliation

The Nethersoul and Darkyin Formations were the two grand formations of Hopeless Major, second to only the Netherdark Formation. They were derived from their namesake, the Netherdark Formation.

As the supervisor of the Nethersoul Formation, the Daredevil King revealed to the Autumn King that he wanted to defect to Origin World with it. Thus, the two entered the formation to subdue it together.

Daredevil activating the formation as soon as they set foot inside took the Autumn King completely off guard. He was trapped, but remained alive since the formation was incomplete without the major’s command seal. It couldn’t release its full power.

Though Qing Yu was newly arrived in Hopeless Major, comparatively speaking, she wasn’t a complete greenhorn. She could easily sense danger lurking in her surroundings and the unfriendly gazes watching her every move, so she’d never partitioned out the power within the command seal.

She’d be signing her own death warrant if she did so.

Power descended from the command seal and made the Nethersoul Formation whole, enabling it to unleash its entire strength. Its soulfire condensed into dark purple souls that furiously gnawed away at the Autumn King’s soul.

The Autumn King wailed and shrieked, having no way to withstand the formation without his bamboo scroll.

Qing Yu and the little fox arrived at the banks of the formation.

“Greetings to the eminent one!” Daredevil quickly dipped in a bow.

Qing Yu’s strength was acknowledged by all after she defended against a blast from the Nineworld Origin Cannon and severed three of the World King’s limbs. With her leniency over pursuing the insurrection and lack of punishment for Hopeless Major veterans, it raised her popularity to new heights within the faction.

“Mhmm.” She waved a hand for him to relax. “Well done, Daredevil King. I now give you full control and authority over the Nethersoul Formation. Use it to refine all of the replicas that this Autumn King has stashed away outside.”

“Understood!” Daredevil was dumbfounded by the turn of events. He was just an overseer, so command over the formation had never lain in his hands. He directed thirty percent of the formation’s power at most.

With the eminent ruler giving him full control, he grasped real authority and his status in the major would rise tremendously.

Apart from Qing Yu, the strongest within Hopeless Major were the Profound, Yin Yang, and Soulmask Kings. The remaining kings were evenly matched, but there were still differences among their prestige and standing. He would shoot ahead of the others now that he commanded the Nethersoul Formation, and he would also receive more cultivation resources.

Most importantly was that the Nethersoul Formation was one of the crucial major formations and it was connected to a third of the rest of the major’s factions. Daredevil’s strength would be bolstered by it in turn, giving him sufficient support to be on even footing with the three strongest kings.

Of course, this was a reward for his successful ploy in trapping the Autumn King. Thus honored for his accomplishment, Daredevil bent his mind to refining his quarry.

Ninth step kings possessed countless replicas and hid them in any conceivable spot as failsafes against the final end. However, one could use the king’s body as a medium to refine all of the replicas if there was a strong enough formation as a container.

That was how the Immortal Region had killed the last Hopeless Major ruler. A grand formation of ninety-nine kings had suppressed the eminent ruler and refined all of his replicas and contingencies.

The Nethersoul Formation was also equipped with the same ability.

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The main palace of Hopeless Major.

The Turtledove and Windcall Kings stood with their hands behind their back and sniffed superciliously at the disorganized Hopeless Major disciples below. Things were just as the Kaleidoscopic King had said, on the brink of collapse. Many people scuttled around with strange expressions and unsteady mindsets, plainly thinking of defecting.

The Turtledove King was a seventh step king that would be as lofty as the sky in any other part of the Hongmeng. As elusive and mysterious as dragons, a seventh step king could sweep through tens of thousands of regions and be the overlord of them all.

But in a place like the Ten Valleys of Evil and the Immortal Region, while they weren't as common as cabbage, they were very ordinary.

"Hopeless Major, your eminent ruler destroyed our great treasure—the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals. We don't need your compensation, just the remnants of the scroll." The Windcall King assumed a regal stance as he scanned the faction's territory with a greedy look. In his eyes, all of this would belong to Origin World before long.

After receiving guidance from Origin World, the personality flaws in Windcall's duplicate of greed were almost imperceptible. If he could recover the faction's dignity in Hopeless Major, the Kaleidoscopic King was sure to reward him with more treasures and help him become a regular person.

He might even be able to regain his other three duplicates.

Windcall raised his chin higher when his thoughts traveled here; the Turtledove King nodded approvingly to himself. There was nothing more humiliating for Hopeless Major than a third step king swaggering around their land.

Messengers were always spared in war, not to mention that Origin World and Hopeless Major were still allies in name.

"Pfft, it's just a ripped up painting. We also have your World King's legs and arm, do you want to take those back with you as well?" jeered a first step king walking up to them. He looked Windcall up and down and snorted, "Well? Do you want a package deal with the legs and arm?"

"Bastard!!" Windcall and Turtledove cursed. How dare Hopeless Major mention this again?! They were on the verge of destruction and still dared anger Origin World? Weren't they afraid of Origin World calling the other valleys together and swallowing them whole?

"Hahaha!!" the first step king belly laughed. "Swine of Origin World, our eminent ruler just cut off the legs and an arm of yours and defeated your Nineworld Origin Diagram. You have incredibly thick skin coming back to throw your weight around!

"We haven't gone to you yet to demand an explanation, but you come wanting those fragments! Do you think Hopeless Major is a pushover?!"

"Bah! If you weren't still our allies in name, the two of you wouldn't be walking out of Hopeless Major today!"

"Hoi, they have to leave behind their legs and an arm at least, no?"

"So... the same as the World King then?"

"Hahahahaha!!" Countless cultivators exploded into laughter, mocking and insulting the Turtledove and Windcall Kings with all their might.

Hopeless Major had repressed its feelings for too long!

After all these years of being besieged on all sides, Qing Yu's sudden heroism with injuring the World King and nullifying the Nineworld Origin Cannon directed morale to soaring heights. This dream-like victory felt surreal, which was why there was a peculiar atmosphere drifting through the major.

The Turtledove and Windcall Kings had gravely misunderstood general sentiment.

Chapter 1309: Death Tribulation

All of the high level kings and even second and third step kings of Hopeless Major remained quietly out of the limelight. Raucous catcalling rose from a few first step kings and ordinary disciples yet to reach kingdom.

Yet, this modest force alone was sufficient to force the Windcall and Turtledove King back. They retreated uncertainly, dark scowls on their face.

"Turtledove King and Windcall King! I recognize you two!" a third step king suddenly called out. "You accompanied the Kaleidoscopic King to Hopeless Major the day our eminent ruler displayed her invincible prowess. You saw her negate the Nineworld Origin Cannon and cut off three of the World King's limbs!

"You dare show your face now because you think the Emyrean King will punish us for our insurrection. You think she'll kill a swathe of disciples to establish her might, that our internal affairs are a chaotic mess and we're about to fall apart!" This third step king had also betrayed Qing Yu that day, and he'd been prepared to be sent to the gallows when battle was lost. Who would've thought that their eminent ruler would casually dismiss the uprising and carry on like nothing had taken place?

Here he stood after so many days—receiving a daily allotment of premium purple crystals, eating various high level pills, and being assigned king grade treasures. This had never happened in the previous Hopeless Major!

It seemed that everything had changed after the Emyrean King showed her true power and suppressed the revolt.

Neither were her supporters or those who'd simply abstained from the rebellion disgruntled by her leniency. They'd all served Hopeless Major and fought the Immortal Region for a hundred million years. While not all of the major's disciples were as close as brothers and sisters, they were, at the very least, friends. If Qing Yu killed the insurgents, they would mourn the death of their own.

The Ten Valleys regularly infiltrated each other with spies, but it was very difficult for the spies to climb to positions of importance. The ninth step kings were very perceptive and examined the tiniest things; they didn't trust even resurrected kings, much less tolerate the presence of spies. Thus, everyone in the highest echelons of power was a trusted comrade.

"Let me tell you something!" The third step king stepped forward with a shout. "Her Eminence the Emyrean King of Hopeless Major is benevolent and kind—she pardoned our crimes long ago! Today marks the day in which Hopeless Major rises again, and it's time for you petty bandits who once meant us harm to pay the price!"

Turtledove and Windcall looked at each other with shock. There was nothing wrong with Hopeless Major's internal affairs! The Kaleidoscopic King had underestimated the Empyrean King's charisma and daring judgment!

Most important of all was that she displayed domineering strength superior to the World King. Though she borrowed certain power from her territory, that was no matter. If the situation was how the third step king said, that Hopeless Major was about to rise, then this was a very unwelcome development.

After all these years, they were accustomed to a weak Hopeless Major being their vanguard and cannon fodder. The smallest member of the ten had no choice in the matter since they lacked a sufficient powerhouse at their helm.

Their rise overnight meant that the interests of the Ten Valleys of Evil needed to be reallocated and most crucially, they keenly remembered their old ruler's death.

This can't be allowed to continue further, I must bring word of this back. The others don't matter, but Origin World must be ready! The Turtledove King whirled around and yanked the Windcall King with him to leave.

A magnificent power swooped down from the sky and locked onto the two of them.

"Since you have come, fellow daoists of Origin World, why are you in such a hurry to leave?" the Soulmask King's voice rang in the air. "Our eminent one feels deeply sorry for having ruined your great Scroll of Shepherding Immortals and has secluded herself to repair it. When her attempts are complete, Her Eminence will call on Origin World to tender her personal apologies!

"Men, arrange quarters for our guests and make sure they have a good time!" She enunciated "good time" with particular articulation.

The cultivators lining the main palace hall were swift to grasp her meaning and escorted the two visitors out. Color drained from Turtledove and Windcall's faces when they heard that the Hopeless Major ruler would be paying a personal visit to their home.

Meanwhile, Qing Yu was utilizing the time formation disk that Lu Yun had given her to speed up time within the Nethersoul Formation. The Autumn King's replicas, strands of consciousness, and other contingencies were swiftly refined through the void.

Thick fear overpowering all other emotion, Autumn was almost out of his mind with panic and dread.

"They're all gone! Your Eminence, do we kill him now?" Emerald light glittered brightly in Daredevil's eyes.

"Not yet, killing him now will cause Origin World to be their guard. I'm still planning to pay them a visit." Qing Yu waved off the suggestion with a faint smile. She reached out and plucked the Autumn King from the formation, stuffing him into her storage treasure.

Naturally, he wanted to self detonate and was quickly prevented from doing so. Lu Yun lacked a ninth step king guardian; Qing Yu would fully relax once the Autumn King became his Infernum.

"The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals is complete!" Lu Yun's voice suddenly echoed in Qing Yu's ears. "The little fox is about to break through, bring her back and stand guard for her!"

“Alright!” Qing Yu beamed and grabbed the little fox without a word of explanation, flashing back to her room.

As opposed to her room, it would be more accurate to describe it as a minor world, one that Violetgrave had once resided in. It’d been completely closed off after her departure; not even the previous eminent ruler had set foot in it.

Qing Yu had gifted the scroll to the little fox after she had no use for it and it’d melded with Miao’s nascent spirit. Now that the two scrolls were combined and returned to their origin, the most immediate benefit that the little fox received was ascending to kingdom through cultivation level!

“...oh! I’m about to become a titled king through cultivation!” A gobsmacked little fox finally realized what was going on. “Oof! Yeah, that’s happening!”

Purple light barrelled out of her body and pierced through the minor world, shooting out of Hopeless Major. Everyone in the faction looked up at the beam of resplendent purple light.

Rumble!

The Hongmeng Tower arrived. Instead of a projection, it was the actual tower!

Its replicas numbered in the thousands and they could appear anywhere in the third realm at the same time. The one visiting Hopeless Major, however, was the primary tower!

Beams of light melded into the little fox’s body to forge her dao rules.

“Miao, be careful not to ascend straight into ninth step king! You’ll be hit with a tribulation, ah... wait, the tribulation’s here!” Qing Yu looked around with alarm.

Indeed, the little fox was also a ninth step king as soon as she ascended to kingdom. Nine dao rules soared to the heavens and tunneled into the earth, as if nine pillars holding up the sky.

Their part of the world suddenly darkened as an immense shadow descended upon them, so foreboding that it choked the breath out of their bodies.

There were no tribulations when cultivators ascended to kingdom, but starting off at ninth step king attracted a death tribulation!

Eyes wide open, the little fox summoned the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals to her from the Truefire World cauldron and sent it circling around her.

“That’s not enough, what is it? I can’t even begin to think of resisting it, it’s so strong!” She was completely solemn with no traces of her usual levity to be found.

Lu Yun also released the Bridge of Forgetfulness, but the bridge found nothing out of the ordinary!

“The only way out of this is to destroy one of your dao rules,” Qing Yu murmured. She suddenly raised a streak of sword light and charged the shadow in the sky, buying time for the little fox.

Chapter 1310: The Cause Is in the Present, the Effect Is in the Past

Lu Yun saw everything clearly. The enormous shadow shrouding their region wasn't a heavenly tribulation or any other kind of tribulation, but some sort of living entity. It was a life form so powerful that it boggled the mind.

It seemed to reside in another plane, but could also entangle with the Hongmeng great dao to create the misconception of a tribulation.

There was a legend in the third realm that ascending to titled kingdom as a ninth step king was forbidden. Anyone who violated that rule would die.

Qing Yu had run afoul of it when she became a titled king and had had to destroy one of her dao rules before the entity would depart. If it wasn't for Lu Yun's Pills of Creation and the Alchemist King's divine Five Elements Qi Pills, she probably would've never returned to ninth step kingdom.

Having become one with Quiet, she raised a streak of snowy sword light and slashed at the thing in the air. In return, a pitch-black hand seemed to reach through space and swooped down on the little fox.

Qing Yu's stroke passed right through the hand.

Miao looked on with gravity; she was unwilling to destroy one of her dao rules in this fashion. The Hongmeng Tower was still present over Hopeless Major and infusing her with indistinct rays of purple energy, but it didn't seem to detect the enormous life form threatening the ascending king.

"Miao, break one of your dao rules!" Lu Yun shouted, releasing five hellfires and the Tome of Life and Death.

The flames dyed the air black. Since Lu Yun's main fire was the pure black flame of the Hadal Hell, the other four also turned black when affected by Hadal hellfire. Bolstered by the Tome of Life and Death, the five hellfires managed to hold off the terrifying dark entity for a moment.

"No!" the little fox cried out stubbornly. "There's got to be a way out of this that doesn't involve destroying one of our dao rules! Lu Yun, you'll be a ninth step king as well when you ascend. Little Yu was alone when she broke through and had no other choice available to her, but there's three of us now. There has to be a way!"

"And if I can't figure it out, you can give it another try!"

"Little Yu, come back! Let me!" Dreamlike radiance blossomed from Miao's body, draping her with gentle illumination. "You and Lu Yun operate formula dao to see what the solution is. I have the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals buttressing my strength, it won't be able to do anything to me for a while!"

Miao spoke at an increasing clip. "This is for Lu Yun!"

Qing Yu paused with indecision. "Then destroy one of your dao rules if you find yourself faltering. It'll retreat after you do so."

"Okay!" Miao nodded firmly.

Hummm.

Countless little foxes appeared in the air with endless dao rules, all of them ascending to kingship at the same time!

The Hongmeng Tower seemed to sense the abnormality and abruptly worked in tandem with the little fox, creating thousands of copies of itself! This was too far-fetched for anyone to imagine—the Hongmeng Tower was helping a Hongmeng denizen withstand an enemy?!

Lu Yun gaped at the scene.

“We need to hurry and find the solution to resolving all of this. If she can’t hold on, all she has to do is destroy one of her dao rules!” Qing Yu quickly pulled her beloved back to the task at hand. She’d fought the black entity to the bitter end last time, destroying one of her dao rules only when she was about to die.

She’d battled alone then, lacking even treasures to help her. As marvelous as the command seal was, it was completely ineffective when it came to this kind of challenge. Thankfully, the little fox possessed the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals for protection and help from the Hongmeng Tower to deceive the entity.

Lu Yun snapped back to attention and quickly called upon formula dao, working with Qing Yu to determine the right answer to their conundrum.

Though the immortal dao wasn’t present in the Hongmeng, neither were Lu Yun and Qing Yu their former selves. Their cultivation had bounded ahead, qualitatively improving their formula dao as well.

In its current iteration, the formula dao could break away from the immortal dao and stand on its own. Two spots of light flashed in the void and came together, deducing everything about the scene in front of them.

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“Why are you helping me? Why did you change my title when I said I wanted to change it?”

“You seemed to have helped my soul force replica in the past too!” Miao’s countless illusory selves tilted their heads at the same time and looked up at the numerous towers.

She’d been a regular white fox of Qingqiu Mountain in the great wilderness until Hongjun enlightened her and gave her the creation seed. She’d then advanced step by step until she became the monster celestial master of the celestial court in the great wilderness.

She was the first monster spirit to reach the chaos realm and was regarded as the monster spirit ancestor.

However, the little fox had never discovered anything special about herself. Apart from the creation seed always hidden in her body, there really was nothing that set her apart from others. Even the passages she’d created that led to the past and future were from the creation seed. It wasn’t one of her talents.

Of the last point, Lu Yun had been mistaken in thinking there was more to the little fox than met the eye.

For the moment, Miao ignored the horrifying entity destroying her illusions and considered the tower in the air.

The Hongmeng Tower was an inconceivably supreme existence to all life in the third realm and represented all of its great daos. Yet, because of some indecipherable reason, it was here in its primary body to help her.

Someone at the little fox's cultivation level saw things with a clear mind. She might understand the current situation if she was the reincarnation of a certain heavyweight, or if her soul force replica achieved incredible wonders in the distant future, or if she would shake the heavens and move worlds in her time. After all, she was stepping into ninth step kinghood as soon as she became a titled king!

But to the best of her knowledge and perception of her senses, she was still the same fox that she'd always been. She wasn't the reincarnation of any legendary personage and her future self wouldn't accomplish anything amazing. At least, it wouldn't reach the fourth realm.

"The cause is in the present, but the effect is in the past." A gentle will suddenly exuded from the tower and trickled into her mind.

Miao shrewdly sensed something... familiar about it.

Indeed, there was an unexplainable feeling of familiarity, like it was someone she was once very close to.

But who?

"Is it Lu Yun? No, this seems to be a woman. It's not Little Yu, so who is it?" She shook her head gently, still remaining on high alert. She'd continued to create illusions all this time, ones that were no different from her primary body after the Hongmeng Tower enhanced them.

The black entity suddenly lost its patience and exploded with power, vaporizing all of her replicas with a burst of black ripples.

Only her primary body stood by itself under countless images of the tower.