

Necropolis 1341

Chapter 1341: Unable to Refuse After Receiving Gifts

“Take whatever catches your eye, it’s on me.” Lu Yun grinned broadly after taking a look at Li Zhen’s expression. He wouldn’t treat his little fan any less.

“No need, just the ghost-headed blade is enough.” Li Zhen shook his head and caressed his weapon.

“Can I, can I choose a few items?” sounded a bashful voice by Lu Yun’s ears. A blushing Qing Ting appeared next to him, rather embarrassed by her request.

Lu Yun blinked, unable to reconcile the young girl in front of him with the one who’d ferociously faced down the ghost king outside the city.

“Of course!” Lu Yun nodded. “And Li Zhen, go find yourself a set of king grade armor. Sooner or later, your way of fighting like a madman is going to get you killed.”

“My master says that we cultivators should forge bravely forward and be straightforward without compromise. We should not leave any avenue of retreat for ourselves—”

Lu Yun kicked him away before he could finish.

“Your master’s dead, isn’t he?” He rolled his eyes.

“Yes.” Li Zhen’s expression dimmed. If his master still walked the world, Li Quan would’ve never dared openly take his blade.

“What’s the use of forging bravely forward when you’re dead? Things matter only when you’re alive. Eh forget it, what’s the point of saying all this to you? You’re not my son.” Lu Yun casually stuffed another king grade Detonation Talisman into his bag.

The talisman was valued at three hundred thousand premium purple crystals—not a high price since it was a consumable. In the Immortal Pagoda, this kind of talisman was priced at six hundred thousand crystals.

Out of all supplemental items, the great formations were the most expensive. When it came to king grade formations, their prices were listed in terms of crystal veins.

Qing Ting cheered happily and started rifling through the wares. The Azureclad Duke brooded when he saw his sister’s reaction. He asked with a blank look, “Did I commit a mistake in telling my sister to keep an eye on that Champion Duke?”

“Tell Qing Ting to come back, I’ll keep him under surveillance,” giggled the Crimsonclad Duke. “The Champion Duke is young, rich, and generous. He’s all that I could wish for.”

“Forget it, let it be. The lass can do whatever she wants,” Azureclad responded dejectedly. “Is the Immortal King a fool? Didn’t the Trueriver Sect just lose one of their territories? He compensated them with nine thousand premium crystal veins. It’s like he’s afraid the realm doesn’t know he has money.”

“The Immortal King isn’t a fool, but the Haotian Tower is. Everyone knows that it’s the Supplemental Dao Alliance behind them. With the relaxation of the monopoly over supplemental dao, everyone floods

into Haotian Tower for bargains. However, credit for the situation is attributed to the Immortal Pagoda,” Crimsonclad sighed with emotion. “Without the Immortal Pagoda or the Immortal King, those greedy supplemental kings of the alliance would never give up their monopoly. The Immortal King truly is a great strategist who doesn’t bother with trivial matters.”

“I will meet him one day and see if he’s really got three heads and six arms,” Azureclad harrumphed.

“You?” Crimsonclad burst out laughing. “With his emotion formation, you won’t even get close to him. You’ll have to reach the heights of Hua Fengwen from a hundred thousand years ago if you want to challenge him—ascend to titled kinghood as a sixth step king.

“But, there’s already two sixth step kings hanging outside the pagoda doors.”

“Hmph!” snorted Azureclad. “They say that the Immortal King has some connection with the Ten Valleys of Evil. I wonder if that’s true.”

“The ten valleys? That’s not something the likes of you and I can touch. That includes the legendary Immortal Region, ancestral dragon nest at Dragonhollow Mountain, and the internal affairs of the Enforcer Alliance.” Crimsonclad shook her head, after which a bit of hope flashed across her stunning features. “If we become seventh step kings when we ascend to kinghood, we might catch their eye and be invited to join them.”

“Join them? That means you’ll have to bend your knee to another.” Azureclad curled his lip.

“Holding strong to that pride will mean you’ll never see the true Hongmeng. You can make titled kinghood now, but continue to accumulate your strength. Don’t you do so out of similar ambitions to see the real world?” Confidence gleamed in Crimsonclad’s eyes. “Hua Fengwen? He is indeed a genius, but I believe I can surpass him.”

She looked at Lu Yun. If she could obtain that sword and strengthen her foundation, it would increase her chances of ascending as a high level king.

“That sword is mine,” snorted Azureclad.

“You better watch your sister instead. She might run off with the Champion Duke,” Crimsonclad grinned merrily.

“My sister is no fool.” However, Azureclad’s jaw dropped when he looked at Qing Ting again.

A dazzling array of items hung on her body, an exquisite visual feast of a dozen pieces of jewelry, hairpins, jade pendants, and other strange oddities. With his level of strength, he could naturally tell that these items were all king grade defensive treasures!

Their total sum easily exceeded a few billion purple crystals!

Qing Ting had also changed out of her long azure robes at some point and put on a king grade silk dress. Just that dress alone was worth more than ten billion premium purple crystals—one tenth of a purple crystal vein!

“Uh, if this continues... I’d be too embarrassed to take his sword...” Azureclad gaped.

“Flashy new money!” Crimsonclad identified woodenly. “I definitely can’t keep him under watch! I’d be too embarrassed to rob him if he buys me so many treasures as well... but I really want to go!”

Though she was an important figure, she was unwilling to spend ten billion crystals to purchase a beautiful king grade dress.

Indeed, beautiful! As strong as the defensive treasure was, its beautiful lines were what mattered most to female cultivators.

Though Crimsonclad and Azureclad coveted Lu Yun’s Stellar Sword, they were people of principle. It wouldn’t be right to attack Lu Yun after receiving presents from him.

At least, their dao hearts wouldn’t be able to stand up to it.

“No matter, no matter, that’s my sister and not me! It’s my sister who’s accepted his gifts, not me. Not me!” Azureclad recited in monotone. “Wait a second, Qing Ting, what are you doing?!”

He jumped straight up when he saw the evil Champion Duke pick up a king grade flying sword—one of the highest in its category—and shove it into Qing Ting’s arms.

Grinning delightedly, she immediately refined it with her nascent spirit. That sword was worth at least twenty billion purple crystals!

Azureclad felt the world spin around him.

“Eh? Brother, what are you doing here?” Happily refining her new sword, Qing Ting quickly shoved it behind her when she noticed the duke’s arrival. The items she was wearing, however, weren’t so easily concealed.

Azureclad glowered ominously.

“Champion Duke, I want to duel you!” he roared at Lu Yun, feeling like his sister might truly run off with this kid.

Chapter 1342: Black Crystals

Qing Ting was no fool; she immediately realized what was at hand when she saw her brother in full fury.

But... she really couldn’t help herself.

Whether it was on Earth or in the Hongmeng, shopping up a storm was something that women could never resist. Lu Yun had only needed to use a few tricks to fully win over Qing Ting after she was sent to surveil him.

He was at the Haotian Tower today not for himself, but also to take care of the Qing Ting issue.

It’d only taken a few purple crystals.

“We have no need to wait until we defeat the ghosts, I’ll duel you right now!” Azureclad shouted angrily. “Draw your sword, Champion Duke!”

“Brother...” Qing Ting said cautiously.

“Shut up!” He glared at her and continued addressing Lu Yun. “I don’t want your sword after I defeat you, just stay away from my sister!”

Qing Ting was ready to burst into tears; her brother had seriously misunderstood things! She just couldn’t control herself, and besides, the Champion Duke didn’t think of her that way.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen, please quell your anger!” Situ Qing reappeared and stood in front of Azureclad with an apologetic smile. “Azureclad Duke, our hospitality has been inadequate, how about we—”

“It has nothing to do with Haotian Tower. This lecherous scoundrel has designs on my sister! He’s a second Extraordinary Duke alright!” Azureclad hadn’t cared about the jewelry box of items adorning his sister, those were just king grade defensive trinkets. However, everything took on a different meaning when Qing Ting put on the king grade defensive dress and refined a high quality king grade flying sword.

A king grade defensive treasure and flying sword? He didn’t own a single one, much less a rare king grade flying sword!

Situ Qing snuck a careful look at Lu Yun; the latter’s expression was as if before.

“A strong man and beautiful woman is a match made in heaven, what’s wrong with that?” Lu Yun argued.

“Piss off!” Truly angered, Azureclad blasted out with a punch.

Lu Yun utilized the momentum to fly out a window, leaving behind a dumbfounded Li Zhen who’d stood next to him. The latter was now dressed in king-grade heavy black armor.

When Li Zhen digested the development, Lu Yun was already out of sight.

“...damn it, this was a trap!” Azureclad realized something was off when the kid exited the tower entirely. The brat had done this on purpose and spent a few dozen billion crystals to evade Qing Ting’s surveillance!

“Brother, I... I’m not.” Qing Ting looked piteously at Azureclad.

“I know you aren’t, I fell for that kid’s scheme. He used you to provoke me and extract himself from the situation!” he transmitted back to Qing Ting.

“Then do I catch up to him?” she asked quietly when she saw her brother calm down.

“Go on, and don’t fall for his plot so easily this time.” Azureclad breathed out easily.

“You’re the one who fell for a plot! Here, this is for you!” Qing Ting brought out a second king grade flying sword and handed it to her brother. “The Champion Duke’s already paid for it.”

She vanished in a cloud of faint fragrance, leaving Azureclad holding the sword with a rapidly shifting expression. He could tell that his sister had specifically chosen this one for him. It was worth more than the one she’d received and was perfectly suited for him.

It was like adding wings to a tiger with this flying sword in hand; his strength would advance to another level!

Despite his gains, he found himself at a bit of a loss. Not only had that kid gifted his sister a full set of king grade equipment, but the kid had also indirectly given him a flying sword?

“Heh heh, this flying sword comes from the hands of the Prime Weapon King himself. Its name is Dragonlake and it’s worth fifty billion premium purple crystals! If it was the Immortal Pagoda selling it, it’d cost at least one premium crystal vein,” Situ Qing explained merrily.

One small premium crystal vein contained at least a hundred million fang of premium crystals. One fang weighed roughly half a kilogram and was a standard unit of measure in the Hongmeng.

Any premium crystal vein that could be transported was a small one. The large ones were tightly connected with earthen veins and took the form of great dragons. They anchored the fortunes of a locale and were unmovable by regular kings.

“Of course, this is possible because the monopoly over supplemental dao has been removed. If not for that, not even a hundred premium crystal veins could purchase this treasure,” Situ Qing added. For some reason, he quite liked the Champion Duke—particularly the round of compliments the lad had offered for the Haotian Tower.

Azureclad fled with his tail between his legs; he was too embarrassed to remain where he was and he couldn’t bear to throw away the sword either. Though it wasn’t as powerful as the Stellar Sword, the latter wouldn’t be able to hack through it. Azureclad had yet to reach the realm of remaining stoic in the face of great treasure.

Li Zhen recovered as well and quickly left Haotian Tower to search for Lu Yun. He didn’t know either why he doggedly remained close to the duke. Since his clan didn’t like him and he had nowhere else to go in Cloudexit City, he might as well stick with the Champion Duke.

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Outside Cloudexit City.

There was once a vibrant and lush forest here—animals abounded and all sorts of natural treasures could be found within. It was now a desolate wasteland after that battle—traces of war marked the land, as did the corpses of ghosts.

Ghosts had corpses too!

It might be more accurate to call them withered skeletons, or even unextinguished ghostfire. A certain type of black crystal debris was most commonly found on the battlefield.

Lu Yun had killed many ghosts in the confrontation, but none of them had become his Infernum. He’d given up on that goal and was inspecting the outskirts of the city.

“These crystals...” He picked one up. The crystalline residue could be seen everywhere in the Hongmeng after a ghost died. They were as useless as rocks, but a new thought struck him at this time.

A tiny silver flame appeared between his fingers—the flame of order. It was so minuscule that it was almost imperceptible between his fingers. One had to look closely to make out that there was fire there.

Lu Yun placed the black crystal on the tiny flame and saw it consumed without a trace in the next second. He frowned faintly.

“The flame of order hasn’t grown stronger, but a very slight change has taken place. The black crystal was too small, it’s not enough! I need more—the ones here haven’t been preserved very well and they’re already starting to dissipate upon the air...”

It’d been roughly half a month since the first offensive from the ghosts, which meant that the crystals left behind by the ghosts had mostly evaporated. If their crystals could be maintained in a storage treasure or seed storage, that would prevent them from eroding.

These crystals were unique to the Hongmeng as none of the ghosts in the world of immortals or chaos left behind black crystals when they died. The Meteorite King likewise hadn’t dropped these crystals when Lu Yun slashed him to death.

The fact that his presence of hell couldn’t control the ghosts here or that none of them turned into Infernum when they died likely had something to do with them.

“I can have the Immortal Pagoda issue a mission to collect these crystals and trade them for purple crystals!” A sudden idea struck him, but he subconsciously moved half a dozen kilometers to the left when his heart clenched.

Boom!

An enormous streak of sword light rushed through where he’d just stood. It created a crater half a kilometer in length while an indiscernible middle-aged man wielding a battle sword appeared next to it.

Chapter 1343: Armed To the Teeth

Lu Yun was roughly a hundred and fifty million kilometers outside Cloudexit City due to prodding from the flame of order. He frowned slightly at the king whose face he couldn’t make out.

“A third step king?”

“Hahahaha!!” the man threw his head back with laughter. “Champion Duke, how dare you travel outside the city by yourself when you possess great treasure? Today is your execution day!”

He’d wrapped his personal force around his body so that Lu Yun couldn’t sense his aura or make out his face. However, Lu Yun could still tell that he faced a third step king.

“It looks like you’re nobody of any worth if you think the Stellar Sword is a great treasure.” Lu Yun shook his head with sarcasm. When Situ Qing handled the sword earlier, Lu Yun had been very surprised to detect no hint of greed from the steward.

“Hmph, you’re dying today no matter what you say!”

Humm.

Scintillating radiance burst out of his blade and viciously cut down on Lu Yun. This stroke could cleave mountains, part seas, and kill people. They were less than half a dozen kilometers apart, so Lu Yun could already sense the onset of death.

Clang!

Clang!

Azure sword light and black blade light suddenly appeared in the air and blasted the strike away. In fact, they broke it into motes of light!

“What a shameless king to be bullying a half step king!” Li Zhen descended from the sky with the ghost-headed blade on his shoulders, but Qing Ting was even faster than him.

Her sword work flitted at the heights of perfection—particularly after her battle with the ghost king half a month ago. Her strength had increased as well and the blow she’d struck out was on par with one from a first step king.

She could summon the projection of the Hongmeng Tower at any time and become a titled king.

Just like her brother, however, she was an ambitious half step king. They continued to accumulate their strength instead so they could form a few more dao rules when they ascended and be a high level king.

She wielded a king grade sword, wore a king grade robe, and king grade defensive baubles tinkled against each other on her body—she was a walking treasure vault. Naturally, she was wholly unafraid that she faced a third step king.

The king almost vomited blood from anger when he heard Li Zhen’s words.

“So the little girl has come as well! Very well, I’ll take care of all of you together! And you, Li Zhen, hand over your blade!” roared the third step king and fully unleashed his strength. He slashed outward with a straightforward stroke and surrounded the three with snowy blade light.

“It’s the blade work of the Li Clan!” Li Zhen almost expired on the spot from shock. “Third uncle, it’s you! You want to kill me?!”

“DIE!!” was the only response and harsher blade light.

Boom!

The void shook as purple-golden brilliance exploded in the air, decimating the blade light.

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

Rays of purple-golden brilliance exploded one after another and knocked the third step Li king back. Cracks appeared over his high grade battle blade at the same time.

Detonation Talismans.

King grade Detonation Talismans!

Going for three hundred thousand purple crystals a piece, Lu Yun had just bought a hundred of them. They were refined by the Talisman King, but it wasn’t as if Lu Yun’s were any inferior.

Of course, no one knew what was in his seed storage. He could bring out treasures of his own creation with none the wiser.

A dozen Detonation Talismans exploding in short order was difficult for third step kings to defend against. The barrage quickly blew the layer of personal force around Li Zhen's third uncle to smithereens.

Fresh blood drenched him and his arms were bloody stumps. Only a hilt was left of his weapon. He looked blankly at Lu Yun, not understanding what'd happened. Why had a third step king ended up in such straits when hunting down a half step king?

His vital signs were dimming and he was on the verge of death.

"Idiot, you should know that I came out of Haotian Tower since you've been following me all this time. I bought a ton of treasures there, but you still rush headlong at me? Are you tired of living?"

Their scuffle drew significant attention and countless strong minds swept across them. Lu Yun knew that many kings were following him. He'd gone to Haotian Tower not only to shake off Qing Ting, but to teach those kings a lesson.

Though he carried valuable treasure and purple crystal veins on him, he wanted to tell people that he was also armed to the teeth. Kill him for his treasures? They'd have to first assess if they were worthy!

Another talisman appeared in his hand to kill the third step king.

"Champion Duke!" Li Zhen stopped him. "He's, he's my third uncle!"

"He wants to kill you," Lu Yun said with a meaningful look at the young man.

"But he's still my third uncle and my father's younger brother!"

"...fine then, I'll let him off the hook this one time because of it. I won't be as nice if he dares come again." Lu Yun put away the Detonation Talisman.

"Hmm? The last talisman he brought out seemed different from the others. It doesn't seem to come from the Talisman King," murmured a voice in the air.

"This duke visited the Immortal Pagoda before I left ClouDEXIT City, alright?" Lu Yun grumbled with annoyance.

The voice said no more. Everyone recalled that the Champion Duke was a Trueriver disciple, and that the Trueriver Sect was friendly with the Immortal Pagoda.

"Third uncle..." Li Zhen placed a pill in his uncle's mouth, helping the man recover some color in his face.

He looked at Li Zhen without a word.

"This is the Azureclad Duke's younger sister and Coiling Dragon city's little princess. It won't matter if you kill me and the Champion Duke today, but if you harm the little princess, our clan will not be far from extermination," Li Zhen explained expressionlessly.

His third uncle's eyes widened with shock. He hadn't followed Lu Yun into Haotian Tower earlier, so he didn't know what'd taken place.

"I see." He stood up, took a deep look at his nephew, and left with a turn.

"Your third uncle wants to kill the Champion Duke, but you let him go... tsk tsk tsk." Qing Ting looked at Li Zhen with amusement.

He flashed a wry grin back. "I can, I can forgo my challenge to the Champion Duke in return then."

"Challenge the Champion Duke? Do you think you can beat him?" Qing Ting snorted. "Your third uncle's first stroke was fatal, but the duke easily avoided it. It looks like we've all underestimated him."

"I told you a long time ago that I'm really strong, but none of you believed me!" Lu Yun looked at them with fierce self assurance. "How else would I have gained the title of Champion Duke?"

"And who gave you the title?" Qing Ting asked with a smile.

"The Immortal King," Lu Yun answered without missing a beat. What? It was true.

Chapter 1344: Mission Bounty

The Champion Duke fully made a name for himself.

Everyone took him to be a moving treasure box, that whoever killed him could claim the wondrous Stellar Sword and his purple crystal veins. Only now did they realize that their cornucopia of wealth was a bristling porcupine armed to the teeth.

He'd almost killed a third step king with just a dozen talismans. If there was a next time, he was sure to fire back even more strongly!

Enlightenment slammed into cultivators like a bolt of lightning when they witnessed his actions. Given the previous inaccessibility of supplemental dao, there'd been exceedingly few king grade supplemental treasures available throughout the realm. This was no longer the case as such items were readily available in both the Haotian Tower and Immortal Pagoda!

If the Champion Duke could blow up and cripple a third step king with just a few king grade Detonation Talismans, why couldn't someone else do the same??

The talismans cost six hundred thousand premium purple crystals in the Immortal Pagoda, but only three hundred thousand in the Haotian Tower!

It seemed a steep price, but all Hongmeng kings carried at least a dozen to a couple hundred premium crystal veins on them. Apart from the crystals they needed to cultivate, they could trade the rest for king grade treasures and be similarly outfitted!

Thus, a new mass of cultivators rushed for the Haotian Tower and Immortal Pagoda.

The Immortal Pagoda welcomed the increase in demand. Lu Yun had refined five thousand supplemental grandmaster puppets before he left, making them out of materials from Origin World's vaults. Though Jin Naluo had taken his first batch of one hundred, that didn't matter.

An endless supply of supplemental treasures streamed through transportation formations from the Immortal Pagoda in Multitude City to the one in Cloudexit City.

Naturally, the Haotian Tower fearlessly met the challenge as well.

Though the Supplemental Dao Alliance had exercised a monopoly for countless years, their supplemental kings never stopped refining treasures. Everything they completed was stored in warehouses, collecting dust like trash.

Relaxing their grip on the market was a chance to clean out their overladen shelves of nearly forgotten king grade treasures.

Cloudexit City rose in prominence and increasing numbers of people wanted to charge into Starspace Region to do battle. The Immortal Pagoda suddenly issued a mission at this time.

In order to strengthen the Hongmeng's resolve against the ghosts, the Immortal Pagoda would award great sums of purple crystals to any brave warrior who killed a ghost!

With crystal residue as proof, one chunk of inferior crystal could be traded for a common purple crystal. A chunk of common ghost crystal could be traded for a premium purple crystal, and a chunk of premium ghost crystal could be traded for one fang of premium purple crystal!

If one killed a ghost king and obtained their crystal core, they could trade that for a premium crystal vein!

The information came from the Immortal Pagoda's headquarters in Multitude City, shocking all of the third realm!

In their age-long conflict with the ghosts, Hongmeng beings had always taken a passive approach. They reacted only when invaded, and supplemental kings had concluded after innumerable eons and experimentation that the enemy's crystal residue was useless. They were like burnt food at the bottom of a pan, unwanted and undesirable for use even when paving a road.

The Immortal Pagoda's announcement raised Cloudrain morale enormously and motivated cultivators who were indifferent about the ghosts. Filled with drive, they set out for various battlefields in the realm.

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"What is that Immortal King doing?! Isn't he afraid of hollowing out Redbud Mountain??" Shenyu stood on the rooftop of Haotian Tower and silently regarded the Immortal Pagoda across the way.

Lu Yun was present on its ninth floor and flashed back gleaming teeth set in a brilliant grin.

"I'm your ancestor when it comes to buying popular support. Keep copying me if you dare!" mouthed the bean soldier Lu Yun.

"Though my Immortal Region possesses deep pockets, our purple crystals aren't meant to be depleted like this." Shenyu shook his head wryly. "You win this round."

He dared to sell all of Haotian Tower's wares at half price compared to the competition because they were unused surplus to begin with. For the supplemental kings, these items were negligible dross that they'd forgotten ever existed.

Selling them would make them more useful since the alliance would gain purple crystals instead.

In the same vein, Shenyu couldn't bear to follow his competition and purchase those useless ghost crystals.

"Is the Immortal King buying popular support, or has he unraveled the mystery of the ghost crystals?" Shenyu frowned faintly. "Those ghosts aren't regular ghosts, their existence violates the order of life in the Hongmeng. The ghost crystals are their core essence, so any being that lives under the Hongmeng's order of life is unable to refine them.

"Forget it, who cares about him? So what if he's found a way to refine the ghost crystals? There's no end to the ghosts of the Hongmeng—even the big dragon in Redbud Mountain can't withstand this rate of depletion. Trading purple crystals for ghost crystals is a surefire way to a quick death." Shenyu smiled when his thoughts traveled to this point, an expression echoed by Lu Yun across from him.

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The idea of tremendous profit stirred the passively defending Cloudexit City into proactively striking out. Seven kings mounted an expedition into Starspace Region, conducting seven operations and reaping several tens of billions of ghost crystals.

Laden with their war spoils, they arrived at the Immortal Pagoda and sent the crystals orbiting around the building with great fanfare.

"Hahaha, wonderful!" laughed the Skyfall King. "You are the first to return for the mission's bounty! There are a combined fifty-three billion, seven hundred million, nine thousand and three hundred sixty-three ghost crystals here, as well as two king grade crystals. The Immortal Pagoda will trade three premium crystal veins for them!"

He waved a hand and used his sleeve to collect the glittering ghost crystals dancing through the sky. Three premium purple veins rushed out in response and landed in front of the seven kings.

Their eyes widened at the generosity.

"Our thanks, fellow daoist." They quickly stowed the crystal veins without undue pleasantries; three premium crystal veins were also a small fortune to them. They hadn't known how true the pagoda's bounty was, so they'd refrained from penetrating too deeply into Starspace Region. Their ghost crystals were gleaned from several rounds of battle on the outskirts of occupied territory.

Who would've thought that the Immortal Pagoda would gift them nearly an entire crystal vein extra because they were the first to respond to the mission? What a pleasant surprise and demonstration of the pagoda's determination!

Thus, more and more cultivators left the city to rush into Starspace Region. Hongmeng cultivators had once killed ghosts to temper their cultivation or save themselves. Now they did so to earn crystals!

Ghost crystals were an important resource for Lu Yun to nurture his fire of order, so he approached it from a no-expense-spared mindset. Of the thirty million crystal veins that the Redbud King had given him, he'd given ten million to Qing Yu for the Hopeless Major cultivators to use. The remaining twenty million all became mission bounty.

He could collect enough ghost crystals to strengthen this flame if it took all of his wealth!

When the last shard of the fifty-three billion ghost crystals were carefully fed to the tiny flame of order, the ephemeral flame jumped slightly and seemed to be a bit more real than before.

Chapter 1345: Ghost Tomb

The Immortal Pagoda immediately became the center of Cloudexit attention when it issued the mission and associated bounty. Never-ending goodwill streamed to the building from all directions, converging on the Karmic Tree in hell.

Fruit instantly blossomed in aureate glory on its almost bare branches. Tianqi's tree also developed in a healthier direction; flowers of merit bloomed over its smaller branches. Tianqi's cultivation level was currently at peak eternal overlord and he wasn't far off from becoming a sovereign of the chaos.

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A hundred thousand black robed enforcers had come to Cloudexit City to bolster the Enforcer Alliance's prestige, but the Immortal Pagoda's stunning bounty thoroughly overshadowed their might!

As irritated and angry they might be, there was nothing the enforcers could do about it. The pagoda's actions were selfless and for the greater good. Exchanging valuable purple crystals for unusable ghost crystals? That was just throwing money into the sewer.

And yet, the mission spurred Hongmeng cultivators to take proactive action and even stoked passion in arcane beasts. Many arcane beast kings could be sighted in Cloudexit City these days.

Lu Yun didn't return to Cloudexit City; he continued journeying along the border of Clouduin and Starspace Region. The ghost crystals that the Skyfall King collected were transported to him through the Tome of Life and Death.

Faint silver flashed through his eyes as the nigh illusory flame of order finally condensed into a wisp of true fire after consuming more than fifty billion ghost crystals.

Though the wisp was thinner than a thousandth of a strand of hair, it was still a bonafide flame.

"It took fifty billion ghost crystals and two from ghost kings to temper my flame of order to this degree. If I want it to become a lively fire and then form the hell of order... I won't be able to do so even if I empty out Redbud Mountain," Lu Yun murmured to himself. "But my judgment was correct. If I become a titled king now and coalesce my dao rules, this wisp of order will be consumed by my dao rules and integrated into them. I won't be able to walk that path anymore.

"Therefore, I can't become a king before it fully evolves."

"What are you talking about?" Li Zhen shoved his head next to Lu Yun's.

“Many of the Immortal Pagoda’s experts are in ClouDEXIT City now, why aren’t you cozying up to them? Why follow me?” Lu Yun asked with resignation instead of answering the young man.

“Because I’m afraid you’ll run off! Little princess Qing Ting is also following you, why don’t you lecture her too?” Li Zhen harrumphed.

“I’m different.” Qing Ting drew herself up proudly. “My brother told me to follow him, and I can also protect him.”

“I can protect the Champion Duke too!” Li Zhen grinned lopsidedly. “My third uncle taught me the clan’s ultimate move—Dragonslay—before he left. Once I master the technique and deploy it with my ghost-headed blade, I might be able to fight kings!”

“The two of you, protect me? I might be the one protecting you when trouble arrives.” Lu Yun casually dispatched a roving ghost and put its crystal into his seed storage.

There were many ghosts here and though they didn’t travel in packs, they frequently appeared out of nowhere.

Qing Ting sent out her king grade flying sword instead of responding, directing it to sweep through the air like a scythe of death. Li Zhen busied himself with practicing his new technique with his blade.

Lu Yun half rolled his eyes at the two and fell silent as well, looking to Starspace Region in the distance.

The Meteorite King didn’t drop any crystals when I killed him. He comes from the mausoleum in the skies, which means that the Moon King and related ghosts have different origins. He mused over the situation at hand, comparing the differences between the Meteorite King and their enemy.

“But what is the Moon King trying to do? Redbud Mountain is the foremost dragon of the realm, so it’s no surprise she’s scheming after it, but what is she trying to do now?”

“...hang on!” Lu Yun’s expression shifted with shock and he frowned at the shadowed Starspace Region. “The region’s layout is beginning to change into that of a tomb’s! It’s the layout of... a... ghost tomb!”

He shuddered in spite of himself. Humans had human tombs, immortals had immortal tombs, and ghosts had ghost tombs.

Ghost tombs weren’t meant to lay their dead to rest. It was their home and a place to breed more ghosts. Ordinary ghosts didn’t require one, and based on Lu Yun’s calculations, neither did a ghost king like the Moon King.

“The Moon King is summoning a mightier ghost king! We can’t let her succeed, or the dozen regions around Starspace will be annihilated!” Lu Yun looked a bit sick at the implications.

The ghost tomb had yet to fully take form. Once it did, Starspace Region would immediately become the nest of all ghosts in the Hongmeng and give them roots in this realm.

The Moon King’s long laid plans most likely culminated in this ghost tomb. Perhaps her machinations on Redbud Mountain were just a decoy so that the heavyweights of the Hongmeng wouldn’t pay attention to Starspace Region.

Indeed, the strongest heavyweights at Cloudexit City and nearby cities were only a few sixth step kings.

“Once the ghost tomb forms, it’ll be a piece of cake for the Moon King to conquer Redbud Region. We have to stop her! ...hmm? They’re back!”

Hummm.

Cerulean blue radiance soared into the sky within Starspace Region and killed all of the ghosts in its path. It came from a towering mountain of intersecting blue and purple. Waves of sword aura emitted from it, sweeping through a hundred million kilometers like a gigantic whirlwind.

The turbulence traveled all the way to Cloudexit City, several billion kilometers away.

“That’s... Purple Stellar Mountain of the Immortal Pagoda! Isn’t it supposed to be in Multitude City? When did it go to Starspace Region?”

“So the Immortal Pagoda sent its people to the region a long time ago!” General astonishment reigned at its appearance.

The mountain was uncommonly heavenly and flared with the sword qi of Stellar Light Magneticus. Jinse held it aloft, protecting Hua Fengwen, Dusksnow Morningstar, and a bedraggled Zhuo Bufan within.

There was no one else alive inside the region apart from them.

The Beast King and others had died, resurrected, and reentered Starspace Region countless times. Lu Yun couldn’t be bothered to send them back in after a while. After all, their resurrection through the Tome of Life and Death consumed karmic fruits.

Thus, the Beast King and other kings had returned to the City of Immortals to continue expanding its territory.

“That’s Jinse, the seventh step king of the Immortal Pagoda!” Someone immediately recognized her when she emerged from Starspace Region.

“Ghosts!!” Zhuo Bufan suddenly turned around and howled, “If I don’t destroy you and take revenge for my father, I, Zhuo Bufan, swear that I am less than human!”

Chapter 1346: Giving Up Bow and Arrow

Zhuo Bufan was as pale as a sheet and his hair disheveled, his eyes red with grief. There was no sign of his customary good-for-nothing air to be found—a dense atmosphere of bleak desolation wrapped around him.

The Scorch King was dead and his two elder brothers also gone. His father’s forces had disintegrated and he no longer had a backer. He was all alone in this world.

Before his death, the Scorch King had maneuvered his dao rules to protect Zhuo Bufan. If it wasn’t for Jinse arriving in the nick of time with the Purple Stellar Mountain, the duke wouldn’t have lived much longer either.

When they emerged safely from Starspace Region, uncontrollable despair burst forth from Zhuo Bufan’s heart. The cultivators of Cloudexit City fell silent.

“The Extraordinary Duke is a thing of the past with the fall of the Scorch King.”

“Zhuo Bufan is just Zhuo Bufan, he’s a duke no longer. He might make it to kingship if his pain transforms into motivation and he throws himself into cultivation though. Apparently, he’s close with the Immortal King.”

“What a shame about the Scorch King. He insisted on walking the path of the scorching sun and refused to break through, keeping himself at second step king. If he’d been willing to give it up, he might’ve been the strongest king in Starspace Region.”

Lamentations flowed out of the city; no one delighted in the king’s death. Even those who once scorned Zhuo Bufan refrained from jeering at him.

“Hold on!” someone exclaimed. “That’s Jinse of the Immortal Pagoda, Dusksnow Morningstar and Zhuo Bufan of Starspace Region. Who’s the fourth person? His aura is stronger than sixth step—he’s a seventh step king!”

“Who is he? Is there another seventh step king at the Immortal Pagoda?!” Many pairs of eyes scanned Hua Fengwen.

He no longer resembled a doddering old man—he was back to his dashing, heroic self. Hua Fengwen had regained his dao heart through countless rounds of battling for his life.

“He looks very familiar... he’s... Hua Fengwen!”

“That’s right, it’s Hua Fengwen! So he went to Starspace Region and became a seventh step king there!”

“Heavens! It’s only been a hundred thousand years. He ascended to seventh step king during this time!” gasped cultivators in ClouDEXIT City.

A hundred thousand years was sufficient for him to rise from sixth step king to seventh step? He’d only become a titled king a hundred thousand years ago!

Most kings still struggled with stabilizing their cultivation level after a hundred thousand years. But not only had the long-vanished Hua Fengwen stabilized his, he’d broken through to become a high level king!

No wonder he was the foremost genius of the Hongmeng—he well and truly deserved the title!

When the Kaleidoscopic King, disciple of Origin World’s World King, became a titled king, he’d only been a fourth step king. His level was two steps lower than Hua Fengwen, but his master and resources were much superior. In comparison, Hua Fengwen only had a regular sixth step king to learn from.

His reemergence in public view at this time stunned the realm.

Dusksnow Morningstar was still a half step king. There was no sign of disappointment or anger on his face, just the same quiet calm as if the depths of still water.

The four headed straight for the Immortal Pagoda when they entered town. Whether it was Dusksnow Morningstar or Zhuo Bufan, both had nothing to their name and the only place they could find succor was the Immortal Pagoda.

“Dusksnow Morningstar!” The Purpleclad Duke suddenly appeared in front of the genius. “Starspace Region is no more and Starspace City destroyed. What are your plans now?” he asked lowly.

“The Immortal King at the Immortal Pagoda will take me in,” Dusksnow Morningstar responded expressionlessly. He didn’t pause, plainly not wanting to have anything to do with the duke if he could help it.

When Starspace Region came under attack, cultivators from all over had come in support. They fearlessly charged in to locate friends and family, even if they were no match for the ghosts.

But the Purpleclad Duke never appeared on the scene.

One word exchanged with the duke was one word too many for Dusksnow Morningstar.

Purpleclad frowned faintly, he knew what was running through the genius’ mind. It wasn’t that he hadn’t wanted to rush to Starspace’s aid, but that vestiges of the Starspace King’s power had flung him back the moment he approached the region.

This was why he was still alive and safeguarding Cloudexit City.

Dusksnow Morningstar didn’t know about this, nor did he want to know. All he knew was that Starspace Region had fallen and his loved ones devoured by the vicious ghosts. Some had turned into vicious ghosts themselves—he’d had to cut those down with his own hand. He was now a withdrawn and taciturn fellow, a reaction at the opposite end of the spectrum compared to Zhuo Bufan.

“Senior Hua, I’d like to learn the way of the sword,” he suddenly said to Hua Fengwen.

“I’m not that much older than you, so just use my name.” He looked at Morningstar. “Have you decided?”

“Mhmm.” Morningstar nodded. “The venerated enforcer says I’m suited for sword dao, as does the Bloodclad Duke. During a critical moment in a previous battle, I would’ve died if I hadn’t deployed the sword technique that the venerated enforcer taught me.”

He was a bow and arrow cultivator, but the path he’d walked for millions of years had been less useful than a single sword technique when faced with unending hordes of ghosts. That’d finally swayed him.

“It’s not too late to set foot on your proper path,” nodded Hua Fengwen. “I’ll help you find a master when we reach the Immortal Pagoda.”

“...understood.” Morningstar wanted to take Hua Fengwen for his master, but he didn’t mention it again when he heard the king’s response. Hua Fengwen was also a sword cultivator, and a very strong one at that.

“It’s not that I don’t want to teach you, it’s that I can’t,” the king explained. “The Dragonrise technique that you deployed exceeds my grasp of sword dao. If I teach you, you’ll never rise beyond the limits of that stroke.

“The one who invented it is also part of the Immortal Pagoda. It would be a hundred times better than me being your master if he’s willing to teach you.”

Hua Fengwen naturally knew that Lu Yun was the inventor of the technique. When Dusksnow Morningstar used it to defeat the Bloodclad Duke, Miao had identified it on the spot.

His subsequent travels with Lu Yun through Multitude Region and escape from the lost ancient city left him with a deep understanding of how astonishing Lu Yun was. How else would he be willing to follow the young man, given his publicly recognized status as the foremost genius of the Hongmeng?

Just for a vow he'd made to a nebulous rescuer? Lu Yun had said a long time ago that if Hua Fengwen wanted to leave, he could leave.

"Alright!" Light dawned in Morningstar's eyes and the deathly morose atmosphere around him lightened somewhat.

"Master has agreed," Jinse abruptly said. "But you're a tiny step away from becoming his disciple. He will teach you when you comprehend this sword diagram and find your own sword dao on it."

She sent a tiny tendril of thought into Morningstar's mind with a point of her fingers. Gravity overtaking his face, the half step king sank into the profound scope of sword dao.

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"Dusksnow Morningstar, Zhuo Bufan, you two are the Starspace King's troops. The Starspace King was a king of the Enforcer Alliance, so I ask you now, are you willing to return to the alliance?" A black robed enforcer suddenly descended from the air and shouted at the two.

Though Morningstar had trained beneath the Starspace King, he wasn't part of the Enforcer Alliance. Zhuo Bufan, however, was an executive of the alliance.

"Forget it, my position of executive and title as the Extraordinary Duke are longstanding jokes in the Hongmeng. I'm not going back. It doesn't matter to the alliance anyway if I'm part of it." Bereft of his usual cockiness, everything seemed meaningless to Zhuo Bufan now.

Of course, the black robe wasn't here for him. He only wanted to talk to Dusksnow Morningstar. The latter was absolutely strong enough to be an executive.

"I already said that I'm part of the Immortal Pagoda now." Morningstar stopped and looked up at the enforcer, most of his attention on the sword diagram.

Chapter 1347: A Bunch of Ants

The black robed enforcer nodded and left with a turn.

Apart from the Purpleclad Duke and Enforcer Alliance, numerous consciousnesses messaged Dusksnow Morningstar in private, making all manner of promises and inviting him to join their faction.

He ignored them all.

His current level of strength entitled him to be hailed as a titled duke in his own right. When a titled duke ascended to kingdom, their minimum starting point was second step kingdom, if not third step.

In sharp contrast to all of the attention on Morningstar, no one dared reach out to Hua Fengwen. He was a seventh step king! The strongest out of all the visiting factions to ClouDEXIT City was sixth step

king. If they invited someone such as him to join their faction, they would be welcoming a forefather back to lord over them all.

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“Why aren’t I this popular?” Li Zhen and Qing Ting remained by Lu Yun’s side when they returned to the city. Li Zhen was incredibly jealous and admired the attention directed at Dusksnow Morningstar. He was beginning to doubt his existence—his grandmother didn’t care for him and the rest of the family elders couldn’t be bothered with him. Even his third uncle had tried to kill him!

His father sending him to the Enforcer Alliance a hundred thousand years ago was the best proof of his clan’s apathy for him, but the final straw was that the alliance hadn’t wanted him!

“I’m sure there will be people eagerly approaching you if your entire clan spontaneously died,” Lu Yun said with a half smile.

Li Zhen sank into deep thought.

“He’s not seriously thinking about it, is he?!” Qing Ting’s jaw dropped. “He put on such a show to save his third uncle earlier...”

“No, I actually think that no one would want him even if all of his kinsmen died,” Lu Yun chortled.

Li Zhen:

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Jinse and Hua Fengwen’s arrival at Cloudexit immediately changed the city’s landscape of power. They were the only seventh step kings in the city’s defensive line—make that the entire region.

Zhuo Bufan also elicited close interest. He was summoned in front of the city’s movers and shakers to give a detailed recounting of the matters of Starspace Region.

Up until this point, the outside world’s understanding of events in Starspace was based on scattered reports from the few cultivators that managed to escape. No one knew any specifics.

“I’m not too sure either.”

Jinse and Hua Fengwen weren’t present in the city lord’s manor. The Cloudruin King—a fifth step king—sat in the head seat. There were two other sixth step kings present apart from him—one from Coiling Dragon City in Azure Dragon Region, and one from Blazing Phoenix Region.

The Cloudruin King was the ruler of Cloudruin Region and the master of its core essence. This was why he sat in the head seat.

Zhuo Bufan wasn’t flustered to meet heavyweights that he’d normally only hear of. He shook his head. “The ghosts arrived very suddenly and we learned with equal abruptness that the Moon King is a ghost king. After she killed the Starspace King, the ghosts breached the city. If it wasn’t for my father and two brothers laying down their lives to save me, I would’ve died as well.”

“Did you see the Moon King?” Cloudruin frowned with displeasure. This account was similar to the ones from those who’d escaped the region. There was nothing noteworthy.

“No.” Zhuo Bufan shook his head again. “But I know that the Moon King killed a sixth step king with one move!”

The first to attempt a rescue wasn't Jinse, but the Beast King. The Scorch King had still been alive then and he'd identified that the Beast King was a sixth step king. And then... the Moon King executed him with one move.

Though Zhuo Bufan hadn't seen the Moon King with his own eyes, his father had clearly called out the name. Scorching Sun City fell after that; the Scorch King fled through the city with his three sons. Danger beset them on all sides and numerous ghost kings surrounded them in the end. The king and his two elder sons had defended Zhuo Bufan unto death, making it possible for him to hold on until Jinse arrived.

“Killed a sixth step king with one move!” Cloudruin and the others gasped sharply.

Cloudruin was a fifth step king and had a long ways to go before he reached sixth step. His strength paled in comparison to the late Starspace King's.

“But the ghosts of Starspace Region don't look to be as disorderly as it seems to us. They move with purpose and organization, working together on something.” Zhuo Bufan stood up and waved his hand, forming a water curtain to show a scene of numerous ghosts busying themselves with a kind of structure.

“A ghost nest! These ghosts want to build a ghost nest!” exclaimed the Mountain King, the sixth step king from Coiling Dragon City. He was a veteran sixth step king who was renowned through the Hongmeng and a pillar of Coiling Dragon City.

Despite his imposing stature, he began trembling like a frightened girl.

“What?! They're building a ghost nest!!” The other sixth step king from Blazing Phoenix Region also rose with alarm. “When the nest is completed, several hundred regions around Starspace Region will turn into ghost regions!”

The ghost tomb in Lu Yun's eyes was the ghost nest they spoke of.

“The Enforcer Alliance! We can only rely on them now!” Cloudruin spoke with despair. “The stories say that their Retribution Region is a destroyed ghost nest. Only their heavyweights can pacify Starspace Region!”

“But it's also said that they're already suppressing a ghost nest. That's a true entrance to the ghost world and they can't leave it...” The kings on the scene milled around with panic.

It would be an unmitigated disaster once the ghost nest took shape. They would have nowhere to run to and could only await death.

“If the ghosts want to build a nest, we'll just prevent them from doing so. What are you lot afraid of?” rang out a slightly mocking voice.

Green radiance flashed through the air as Hua Fengwen appeared next to Zhuo Bufan. He surveyed the kings in front of him with unconcealed contempt.

A bunch of ants.

Though he'd recovered his dao heart, these people were all still only ants in his eyes—including himself.

"The Immortal King's Purple Stellar Mountain is in the city. Jinse and I used it to safely bring Zhuo Bufan and Dusksnow Morningstar out of Starspace Region. If we have enough people with us, we can destroy the ghost nest being built!

"Who among you is willing to brave the region again with me?" Hua Fengwen smiled as he swept a glance at the sixth step kings of Coiling Dragon and Blazing Phoenix City.

"You and Jinse are seventh step kings, it's an easy task for you to bring two people out of Starspace Region. The Moon King can kill a sixth step king with a single move, she's plainly a terrifyingly high level ghost king..." The Torch King of Blazing Phoenix City answered unsteadily.

"Be frank if you're a coward, don't give me all those excuses," Hua Fengwen snorted with laughter.

"Ah, Senior Hua Fengwen was still a sixth step king when he first arrived in the region. I witnessed with my own eyes his breakthrough to seven step kingship when he fought the ghost kings," Zhuo Bufan suddenly remarked.

"What??" That sent another flickering of expressions through the crowd.

Chapter 1348: A Hundred Thousand Enforcers

Hua Fengwen left with Zhuo Bufan before the various kings in the city lord's residence could react.

"Zhuo Bufan doesn't have the skill to record what happened in Starspace Region. That water curtain came from Hua Fengwen," the Mountain King said coolly as he sank back into his seat. "He had Zhuo Bufan tell us this not to marshal us for action in Starspace Region, but to make sure we're ready for what's to come.

"The ones who will take action is the Immortal Pagoda."

The others hadn't heard what Hua Fengwen said when he entered the hall, but the Mountain King had heard him clearly.

A bunch of ants.

He was just here to notify them of future events so that when confusion erupted, they wouldn't ignorantly throw their lives away.

"That's right, who knows how many high level kings are present at the Immortal Pagoda if they've already fielded Jinse and Hua Fengwen? Perhaps the pagoda is the spokesperson of an incredible heavyweight in the realm."

"It's said that there's a connection between the Immortal Pagoda and Ten Valleys of Evil."

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News of the ghosts building a ghost nest spread like wildfire throughout Cloudexit City. Everyone discussed it with fear and apprehension. If it wasn't for the six billion kilometers around the city being

sealed off and the certainty of meeting ghosts if one ventured out, many cultivators within the city would've fled for safety.

Before they could react, the one hundred thousand black robed enforcers that'd arrived at the city a few days ago uniformly rose in the air and rushed out of Cloudexit.

They returned in orderly formation nearly four hours later and marched up to the Immortal Pagoda.

"How wondrous, enforcers!" The Skyfall King met them at the door with loud laughter. "Slaying eleven first step ghost kings while you yourselves are superior realm cultivators, you are the enforcers of the Hongmeng alright! The law and order of our realm lies in your hands!

"Here are ten purple crystal veins!"

Ten premium crystal veins sparkling with hazy light took to the air like ten dragons when Skyfall waved his hand. They circled majestically in the air over Cloudexit City.

"Our thanks to the Skyfall King!" Their leader collected the crystal veins with a beckon.

The city boiled over with excitement and the general air of fear and apprehension immediately settled down. A hundred thousand black robes had taken down ten ghost kings! What kind of battle strength was this?!

One had to know that though kings were also superior realm cultivators, they were ones who'd coalesced their own dao rules and were connected to the great dao of the realm. They were entirely different from superior realm cultivators. Even ghost kings possessed dao rules of ghost dao within them.

A hundred thousand black robed enforcers had charged into Starspace Region and killed ten ghost kings without losing a single one of their own. This was unheard of!

"What's there to be afraid of when it comes to the ghosts? Their ghost crystals can be traded for purple crystals at the Immortal Pagoda!" someone suddenly laughed heartily. "The ghost nest is a mountain of gold just begging for us to dig up! Immortal Pagoda, prepare your crystals! This daddy's going to get me some ghosts!"

A third step king shot into the air and hurtled into Starspace Region.

"Black robe enforcers, a-ten-shun!" their leader called out sternly. "Follow me back into Starspace Region to kill ghosts!"

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

Black waves of qi blasted outward from each enforcer's body. On the move once more, they departed Cloudexit City. They were regaining their lost glory with this operation.

They weren't the only ones—the entire city clamored to head out and hunt ghosts, sweeping away the stifling atmosphere of dread and hopelessness that'd blanketed the city.

“From today onward, ghost crystals will not be limited to the exchange of purple crystals. Those who don’t want purple crystals can instead trade for pills, talismans, treasures, formations, and other supplemental items of equivalent value!

“The Immortal Pagoda will open branches in the one hundred and thirty-six cities on the border of Clouдруin Region. They will all sell supplemental treasures and accept ghost crystals for exchange!

“The Immortal Pagoda will further send out one hundred and eight sixth step kings. Led by seventh step kings Jinse and Hua Fengwen, the contingent will counterattack Starspace Region and destroy the ghost nest!”

Announcements flew rapidly out of the Immortal Pagoda, culminating in the news of one hundred and eight sixth step kings entering Starspace Region!

This last announcement scared everyone witless. One hundred and eight sixth step kings?! It didn’t matter whether Multitude Region possessed so many—and they didn’t—how and where had the Immortal Pagoda gotten so many kings to follow its banner?!

What kind of background did the pagoda possess?

Over the course of the next month, Starspace Region nearly exploded from the inside. The ghosts that’d been calmly building the ghost nest came under attack at every second. Any ghost kings beneath third step kingdom were instantly decimated by Principal Nineheavens Talismans. Ordinary ghosts turned to dust before they even had a chance to approach cultivators.

Three thousand ghost king crystals were delivered to the Immortal Pagoda during this time, and three thousand premium crystal veins flowed out to the various kings of the Hongmeng. A near infinite number of ghosts beneath kingdom died as well, their value worth almost a dozen premium crystal veins.

The Immortal Pagoda carried on with throwing its wealth around and turned no visitor away. All sorts of supplemental treasures streamed out of it to the rest of the realm.

After a while, ghost crystals even started becoming another type of currency in the Hongmeng. However, they were difficult to store as they easily evaporated when not held in seed storage or storage treasures.

Ultimately, their inability to be used for cultivation nipped the burgeoning trend in the bud.

One thing out of the Immortal Pagoda’s control was whether anyone killed another for their reserves of ghost crystals, or outright robbed someone else’s spoils. At the end of the day, it was more efficient to rob someone of their purple crystals.

Robbers were robbers everywhere they went. They would steal purple crystals or any other treasure they could lay their hands on, if not ghost crystals.

But no matter what, though the Immortal Pagoda incurred hefty financial losses with their mission for ghost crystals, they reaped a sterling reputation in return. They were far more beloved than the Haotian Tower now and cultivators much more willing to shop there out of gratitude.

Although the Haotian Tower was tempted to imitate their competition, they ultimately couldn't make up their minds. Trading purple crystals for ghost crystals was no different from just giving the purple crystals away.

What they didn't know was that, out of the throngs of customers in their halls everyday, many came from the Immortal Pagoda. They purchased items from the tower, then turned around to sell them at double the price or trade them for ghost crystals in the Immortal Pagoda. As long as the shut-ins running Haotian Tower might've lived, they really didn't know how to do business. They were absolutely no match for Lu Yun.

Though Shenyu discovered signs of this arrangement, he refrained from adjusting Haotian Tower's prices. With the Immortal Pagoda being viewed more favorably than the tower already, no one would purchase from them if they increased their prices.

"Sir, what should we do?" In the Haotian Tower of Multitude City, some kings from the Immortal Region hovered around Shenyu with anxious expressions.

"Human King, take the cultivators who were once part of the Colosseum and head to Cloudexit City. I know you're a disciple of Origin World, it's been gravely injured and secluded itself in the Qi Sea. The Immortal King did that to them, so you should know what to do." Shenyu swept the Human King with a faint glance.

"Sir, the Immortal Pagoda killed my third brother and hung my second brother in front of its doors. Of course I know what to do," the Human King took a deep breath. He knew about Haotian Tower's background, but with Origin World plainly having abandoned them, he followed steadfastly at Shenyu's side.

"Go on then." Shenyu waved his hand. "Turtle King, go with the Human King. Kill Hua Fengwen and Jinse if you run into them." [1]

"I hear and obey," intoned an elder with a round face. He was an eighth step king!

Chapter 1349: The Hell of Order

The Human King arrived with valiant fanfare at the head of a host of kings; the eighth step Turtle King was among them. Their goal for this trip was to kill ghost kings and harvest incredible wealth from the Immortal Pagoda. They didn't want supplemental treasures, they only wanted purple crystals. They would empty out the pagoda!

Even the Dao King couldn't refine the ghost crystals, it was impossible that an Immortal King wet behind his ears had found a way to use them!

In their eyes, this was just the Immortal King buying popularity and swaying the will of the people.

At some point, one hundred and eight forts had risen at the border between Starspace and Cloudrain Region. The hundred and eight kings from the Immortal Pagoda hadn't entered the occupied region. Instead, they'd planted a hundred and eight purple crystal veins in the ground and then crafted purple crystal cannons on top of them!

Purple crystal cannons were a variation on the immortal crystal cannons that Lu Yun had created in the world of immortals. These were modified for greater power and firing range. They could pierce through almost all of Starspace Region—weapons of war in substance and name.

The moment the cannons were completed, rays of piercing purple splendor shot into Starspace and blasted the incomplete ghost nest into smithereens. Furious howls echoed from Starspace as multiple high level ghost kings charged out. But every time they showed their face, a stroke of sword light cut down on them.

The Acclaim King hefted the king grade flying sword that Lu Yun had refined for her and lounged languidly next to Jinse. She yawned lazily with boredom.

“There are so many ghost nests like these in the Hongmeng, so why is the eminent one so preoccupied with this one, eh? It’s just a Starspace Region, so what if we lose it?” The true expert in residence at Cloudexit City was the Acclaim King—a ninth step king of Hopeless Major.

The one hundred and eight sixth step kings that the Immortal Pagoda had sent out also came from Hopeless Major.

“And what do you know?” Jinse snorted. “Starspace is close to Redbud Region and all of the purple crystals we currently use in cultivation come from Redbud. Losing that region would be real pain and the ghosts of the realm would strengthen at least ten thousand times over!”

While others might be afraid of the Acclaim King, Jinse didn’t think much of her. Jinse was once a founding elder of Hopeless Major and her tenure eclipsed Acclaim’s, despite wielding a weaker cultivation. She was now an eminent Infernum and her name written in the Tome of Life and Death!

“Alright, alright,” sighed Acclaim and flourished her sword again, executing a newly appearing seventh step ghost king. A ghost crystal fell into her hand, to which she tossed it to Jinse.

Jinse immediately sent it to Lu Yun when she caught it.

Hua Fengwen listened to their conversation indifferently. In his eyes, ninth step kings were just bigger ants.

The appearance of one hundred and eight purple crystal cannons threw Cloudexit City into an uproar. The destructive abilities of one cannon was on par with the full strength of a sixth step king!

Planting a premium crystal vein into the ground and using it as the catalyst to absorb the boundless energy of the realm was a stroke of brilliant workmanship!

Many people wanted to purchase a cannon, but when the Immortal Pagoda priced it at ten thousand crystal veins each, all would-be purchasers were promptly scared off.

Ten thousand crystal veins?? Even high level kings would find it hard to spend that much money. However, the cannons safeguarding the border made it possible for more cultivators to enter Starspace Region and hunt ghosts.

“Eh? That’s the Turtle King of the Immortal Region. What’s he doing here?” Acclaim’s eyebrows rose with surprise when she glimpsed the newcomer.

Having fought the Immortal Region for countless years, she knew their powerhouses like the back of her hand. Though the Turtle King was only an eighth step king, he stood at peak eighth step kingdom and wasn't far from ninth step.

"He's here for me and Hua Fengwen," Jinse said coldly. "Stay hidden and don't come out. If he dares put another foot forward, I'll handle him."

"You?" Acclaim blinked.

"I'll ascend to eighth step kingdom if I kill him!" Frosty killing intent glinted in her eyes.

Jinse had been stopped at peak seventh step king for endless eons. This was supposed to be the limits of her potential, but her name was written in the Tome of Life and Death now.

Infernum with their names entered in the treasure were strengthened by it, instead of seeing their potential restricted. She was fully confident of slaying an eighth step king, even if he was at the peak of his level.

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Lu Yun went into closed door cultivation in Cloudexit City. Instead of returning to the Immortal Pagoda, he found a random inn and began refining the ghost crystals streaming to him from a variety of sources.

When the ghost crystals were devoured by the tiny order of flame, they transmuted into motes of silver light and melded into the fire. After it consumed the high level crystal that Jinse sent over, it trembled and exploded with dazzling silver radiance.

Silver tendrils like wisps of hair appeared in the surreal flame of order, becoming the only tangible existence within the fire.

Lu Yun's body turned a bright silver as well. Ripples of order undulated out from him and were blocked from spreading further by a formation he'd sent up ahead of time. When the silver radiance slowly faded away, a tiny hint of silver sparkled in his long black hair.

"I need three hundred and sixty-five more tendrils like this before I can return the flame to its origin and help it become its own entity, a real fire!

"It needs to devour more ghost crystals if it wants to grow stronger. As for the hell of order..." Lu Yun regarded his conclusion with displeasure. "But these ghost crystals are obviously not part of the order of life in the third realm. That's why the flame of order can ingest them and use them as nutrients. It... would seem that the more an existence violates order... the stronger it is... and the more useful it is to the flame.

"Those imprisoned in the hell of order should be entities that violate the nature of order. This flame of order... is more accurately called the hellfire of order!" Lu Yun murmured to himself.

If he used his own resources to cultivate order, the flame that he nurtured would just be a special type of fire. It would be able to immolate ghost crystals, but not absorb nutrients from them or give rise to the hell of order.

There was no fire of order in the realm, which was why his hellfire of order could be simply shortened to the fire of order. His fire was based off of the conceptions of the other five hellfires.

When he comprehended the existence of order, the other five hellfires immediately sketched a prototype of that hell and summoned a mold for its hellfire, planting it into Lu Yun's body.

All he needed to do was to continue to nurture its growth and strengthen it until it recreated the hell of order.

"There must be greater existences that violate order in the Hongmeng. That's who the Enforcer Alliance hunts down, so I'll pay them a visit after I pacify Starspace Region and help Dragon Butterfly get her ancestral blood!" Lu Yun outlined his plans for the near future.

Chapter 1350: If You Want to Slay a Dragon, You Must Become a Dragon

Pacify Starspace Region? Lu Yun was naturally confident of doing so.

The ghost nest needed mammoth quantities of qi if it wanted to be truly established. What existed in the Hongmeng wasn't enough, which was why the Moon King had to conquer Redbud Region and access the boundless trove of purple crystal mines beneath it.

The ghosts in Starspace had never thought of expanding elsewhere—it would be a completely meaningless undertaking. Their only goal was to complete the ghost nest, and they needed to devour the greatest dragon of the Hongmeng to do so!

Thus, there was no other way forward for the ghosts other than to fight Clouduin Region to the bitter end. However, skirmishing with nearby regions or cities would be useful in the meantime. Destroying their defenders meant converting more ghosts and an inexhaustible source of soldiers.

As numerous as the ghosts in Starspace were, they weren't truly infinite.

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"Champion Duke, so this is where you're hiding out, you brat! A real man should be meeting the enemy in combat, shedding blood and sweat on the battlefield, but you've huddled in here like a turtle!" Li Zhen found Lu Yun as soon as the latter walked out of the inn's cultivation room and swooped in to level a vicious glare.

"Um..." Lu Yun blinked. He'd cultivated for a month in the inn's seclusion chamber, proving impossible to find during this time. Thus, Li Zhen had thought that he'd run away.

Li Zhen's aura was more dense than before and a violent air shot through it. He'd obviously entered Starspace Region multiple times over the past month to fight the ghosts. There were more treasures among his equipment now, clearly a result of collecting numerous ghost crystals and increasing his wealth.

"Do you know that a large army attacked us seven days ago—there were even high level ghost kings among them! It wasn't for His Reverence the Immortal King coming in person and beating back the ghost kings, they would've overrun Clouduin!" The exasperated Li Zhen fired off at a rapid pace. "How could you hide from such an important battle?! You're the scum of our generation and the definition of

dishonor!” Spit flew from his mouth in fervent denouncement and he nearly sprayed it over Lu Yun’s face.

“Huh? His Reverence... the Immortal King?” Lu Yun paused. “His Reverence?”

“Ain’t that right?!” A worshipful expression smoothed out Li Zhen’s features. “Well, we generally use that honorific for the elderly, so it’s not quite right here—the Immortal King is a gallant young man! His commanding presence emphasizes his lionhearted poise, and on that day, he only needed to wave a hand to lay down a formation that vaporized all of the ghosts that rushed into the city!

“His Reverence then waved another hand to annihilate the incredible high level kings!

“His third gesture exterminated the army that’d attacked us!” Nearly tangible hearts and stars beamed out of Li Zhen’s eyes. Others in the inn corroborated his account.

“W-what?” Lu Yun was completely lost. He’d focused on refining the ghost crystals over the past month and deducing the way to cultivate the hell of order. He didn’t know about the great battle seven days ago.

Most people staffing the Immortal Pagoda were his Infernum and wouldn’t disturb him when his cultivation reached a critical point. But... what was this about the Immortal King appearing in person?

How come I don’t know that I’ve gone out to meet the enemy?

Destroying all of the attackers with three moves... he could do that if he deployed supplemental arts with all of his strength. But if he did so, he’d become a public target. Not only would the ghosts seek to destroy him, but so would some of his own kind ambush him from the shadows.

Those like the Haotian Tower, for instance.

Is it the little fox? Or is it Little Yu? Lu Yun shook his head gently, rather confused. It wasn’t until he contacted Jinse that he understood what’d taken place.

Qing Yu had given orders to enhance the Immortal Pagoda and Immortal King’s reputation. They were to build up his renown and esteem until he became what he was in the world of immortals— master of the sacred land of all!

Therefore, the little fox had projected Lu Yun’s image through her own formations of illusion and thrown out three king grade offensive formations in a row, shattering the ghosts’ major offensive.

After refining fifteen hundred kilograms of Mirage Sand, her illusory skills could no longer be described as simply magical. She was already stronger than Shenyu—he wouldn’t be able to see through her illusions now even if he was here in person.

Not to mention, she’d stayed safely in Multitude City throughout the commotion, controlling her formations from afar!

Those two little girls have collected a small army of new fans for me, no wonder the Karmic Tree’s gotten taller. Lu Yun smacked his lips. “I didn’t join the battle because I’d reached a critical stage in my cultivation. Ah, yes, where’s the little lass? Why don’t I see her?”

He looked around, but didn't see Qing Ting. She'd followed him like his shadow during this time in Cloudexit City; Li Zhen hadn't known that he was cultivating here, but she had. So where was she now that he was out?

"Qing Ting... she's injured, very seriously. She almost died!" Li Zhen responded in a muffled voice. "His Lordship the Azureclad Duke's taken her back to his faction's camp to recover."

Lu Yun read a trace of something different from his tone. "Does this have something to do with your brother, Li Quan?"

"...yes." Li Zhen nodded. "Qing Ting was fighting a ghost king that day when Li Quan ambushed her."

"Hahahaha," Lu Yun chuckled. "Qing Ting is the little princess of Coiling Dragon City, which happens to be the overlord of your Li Clan, no? Li Quan dared ambush her and the city didn't exterminate your entire clan?"

Li Zhen's hand clenched tightly around the hilt of his ghost-headed blade.

"Ambush Qing Ting?" rose a jeering voice. "If it wasn't for me extending a helping hand, little princess Qing Ting would've died to the ghost king. Now you two twist things around and say that I ambushed her?"

It was Li Quan, and his eyes were firmly fixed on Li Zhen's weapon. Greed wafted off of him at every moment. His move had been concealed very well that day—apart from the few who noticed his actions, everyone thought he'd saved the girl.

As furious as the heavyweights of Coiling Dragon City were, they weren't at liberty to openly take him to task. They were in special circumstances, and the great battle seven days ago with a dozen high level kings had terrified them all.

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"Skyfall, go to the Coiling Dragon City camp and give them a creation grade healing pill for the little princess," Lu Yun transmitted to the Skyfall King.

"Understood." Skyfall started, then quickly carried out his orders.

After Lu Yun returned to the Immortal Pagoda from Hopeless Major, he'd used that ephemeral flame of order to refine a few more creation grade pills. Most of them were healing focused, and he carried a few of them on him.

Qing Ting and Li Zhen had put their lives on the line to protect him when the third step Li king attacked. Though Lu Yun wasn't afraid of third step kings, he committed the display of friendship to memory.

"Li Quan, is it? Son of the Li patriarch, huh?"

Whoosh!

A cerulean blue flying sword appeared in Lu Yun's hand—the Stellar Sword.

“Don’t! You’re no match for him!” Li Zhen shouted with alarm to see Lu Yun draw his sword. Though the Champion Duke had some skills to his name, he was far weaker than Li Quan! Li Quan was the clan’s greatest expert beneath titled kinghood and a notable genius of Coiling Dragon City.

Azureclad wouldn’t have silently swallowed the matter of his sister’s injury otherwise.

“Hahahaha!!” Li Quan threw his head back with laughter. “You see that, everyone? He drew his sword on me first, he has only himself to blame now that I kill him and take his sword!”

Whoosh!

Li Quan’s battle blade flew out of its sheath—king grade, refined by the Prime Weapon King of Haotian Tower. Before anyone could react, he brought it down on Lu Yun’s head. Dragonslay! The ultimate move of the Li Clan!

“Li Zhen!” Lu Yun roared. “Look closely at the true essence of your clan’s Dragonslay technique!”

Hummmm.

The Stellar Sword transformed into a ray of cerulean sword light as he took a step forward and slashed outward.

“A dragon bloodline runs through the Li Clan’s veins and the dragons view you as traitors because of this technique. If you want to slay a dragon, you must become a dragon!

“Slay!”

Aouuuuuu!

A piercing dragon croon echoed in the air alongside Lu Yun’s stroke.