

Necropolis 1581

Chapter 1581: That So-Called Destiny

Sitting in the Disordered Hell, Mo Yi nodded with all seriousness.

Lu Yun:

He had no idea what to say to that.

“Wait, you called Mo Yi little sister? And that she traveled through space and time?” he questioned with surprise.

“Didn’t she tell you about that?” Ah Zhi looked strangely at him. “Mo Yi... Well, since she hasn’t told you, I won’t tell you.”

Ah Zhi seemed about to say something, but cut herself off. Mo Yi sat quietly in the Disordered Hell.

“So, someone’s modified your memories?” Ah Zhi suddenly asked.

Lu Yun nodded, unsurprised by the question. He’d probably been under her surveillance the moment he set foot into sect grounds.

“That means you have the potential to access sequence.” A rare moment of lucidity seemed to grip her and Ah Zhi jumped down from the enormous spider web. She came up to Lu Yun and patted his shoulder.

“I can’t see your destiny,” she said quietly. “Not only can I not see it, but I also can’t see the fates of those who’ve come in contact with you—Xing Wuliang and Xing Shenzuo.”

“Destiny?” Lu Yun blinked. Cultivators gave up believing in fate early on in their journey. The path of cultivation was to defy the heavens and rebel against life, to reign supreme as their own master. Who would believe in destiny, given that?

...wait!

His expression shifted, thinking of the countless reincarnation loops. Were those the destiny that Ah Zhi spoke of?

He’d broken free of the cycle and seen it for what it was. His future was completely different from before and he was now an anomaly in the repeats. Endless reincarnation with everything already set in stone—that seemed to be destiny. Ah Zhi could see it, but she couldn’t see Lu Yun’s.

For Lu Yun, every step he took now was the future.

“It looks like Fuxi was right to choose you and I can leave the Star Sect in your hands.” A merry Ah Zhi yawned hugely. “I can’t be bothered to run such a massive place, it cuts into my sleep time.”

Lu Yun:

“There was a Mount Buzhou in the original Hongmeng as well, is it this one?”

“Yes, this is the one. I’m not a creature of the original Hongmeng though, but one under the new order. However, I can see that order is dissipating from the Boundless Planes, which is why I’m helping them,” Ah Zhi said seriously. “Your modified memories have something to do with that missing order.”

When Lu Yun asked Xing Shenzuo about Ah Zhi’s identity, she’d been the one answering through him. How would Xing Shenzuo know what epoch these august personages came from?

“And you call Mo Yi your little sister,” Lu Yun mumbled.

Mo Yi:

“That I can’t tell you why. Mo Yi... heh heh, she’s not alone, she has a senior sister in the world of immortals. But that senior sister has been... hehehe,” Ah Zhi giggled.

Lu Yun was suddenly reminded of a person—a nun that Mo Yi had indeed called senior sister. She’d disappeared mysteriously at some point; it looked like she’d perished.

“She was hauled back because she revealed the reason why I call Mo Yi my little sister.” Ah Zhi smiled mysteriously.

“She was... hauled back? So she’s still alive.” Lu Yun was becoming extremely confused.

“She’s as good as dead,” Mo Yi finally said in the Disordered Hell. “She was hauled back to the original Hongmeng and most likely died in that great battle.”

Lu Yun:

“So who modified my memories?” He changed the subject. Mo Yi’s response had answered all of his questions for now.

She wasn’t someone from the original Hongmeng who’d survived its demise—she was a time traveler, just like Fuxi, the little fox, Ah Zhi, and God had traveled from the great wilderness to the world of immortals.

Life always finds a way. Since she’d conducted herself with care in the world of immortals and followed its rules, never setting a single toe out of bounds, she’d successfully assimilated into the world and become a being under the immortal dao.

Her senior sister hadn’t done the same and had been retrieved by the guardians.

“I don’t know, sigh. Fuxi and the others had to repair my modified memories before I could access sequence.” Ah Zhi stretched lazily and hopped back onto the web. “Then I leave the Star Sect to you...”

“Wait!” Lu Yun hastily stopped her. “Don’t give it to me! I have something bad on me that will probably bring down disaster on the sect! It might even spell the end of the Star Sect!”

Ah Zhi lifted her head to look at Lu Yun, her eyes a glittering expanse of the night sky.

He took the opportunity to closely study them as well—they weren’t the ones in Xing Wuliang’s eyes. His curiosity satisfied, Lu Yun brought out the withered wood with a flip of his hand.

“Jinx.” Ah Zhi cursed when she saw the wood and sat up in a huff.

“Um... Yun Zhongzi’s broken free of the Tomb of the Hallowed Emperor, he can do the job?” Lu Yun offered quietly.

“Yun Zhongzi? He can’t.” Ah Zhi curled her lip. “He’s so indecisive and thinks too much. When he’s done thinking, the opportunity will have passed him by. If it wasn’t for him being so wishy-washy, the Hallowed Emperor would’ve taken out the Imperial Seal long ago. None of the other troubles would’ve resulted.

“Ah forget it, I’ll just have to work a bit harder and keep looking after the Star Sect,” she yawned mightily. “Why is my life so difficult? But... heh, this is just as well. It seems that my destiny has undergone some changes as well.

“That jinx... Hurry up and get rid of that wood or you’ll be the death of me.” Ah Zhi leveled a glare at Lu Yun.

He grinned ruefully back. “I have to keep it for a little while longer. It’ll be useful one day. ...so am I your disciple now?”

“Psht, you’re Fuxi’s disciple. You can have everything he left here.” Ah Zhi pointed a large sum of books into existence; they promptly buried Lu Yun.

These were the secrets of the original Hongmeng that Yun Zhongzi had mentioned, including the numerous ways of using the Dragonquake Scripture.

Down in the Disordered Hell, Mo Yi frowned at the books. She didn’t want Lu Yun to obtain them too early. There were many in the fourth realm who wanted the Dragonquake Scripture and they’d be able to glean certain clues from Lu Yun if he practiced these.

That was why she hadn’t told him as much as people thought she would.

As for Yun Zhongzi, he wasn’t in the same camp as Lu Yun. Though they were all from the original Hongmeng, he had his own plans and preparations. While their goals were the same, their methods were different.

Taking the Jade Pure One for his master in the great wilderness had been outside their expectations, and he didn’t know that Ah Zhi of the Star Sect had allied with Fuxi long ago.

etvolare’s Thoughts

Aha, I wonder how many of the layout within a layout and tomb within a tomb is a result of them crossing paths? I could’ve sworn there were a few occasions in which someone’s plans got messed up by someone else, but neither really had evil intent.

Chapter 1582: Walking Misfortune

While many’s end goals might be the same, their methods to reach said goals could be completely different. Such was a difference in ideals, analysis, and judgment.

Yun Zhongzi’s ideals differed from Fuxi’s, so he withheld many things from Fuxi—such as the Hallowed Emperor’s sacrifice and how he would gain the Imperial Seal. In the same vein, Fuxi kept many things to himself—such as the Star Sect and Ah Zhi.

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“Since you’re walking bad luck, I can’t give you the Star Sect. Hmm... how about this, you’ll be a regular inner disciple unfavored by all. No one wants you as a true disciple.” Ah Zhi winked at Lu Yun. “I’ll take care of things with Xing Shenzuo, he’ll know to keep his mouth shut.”

Lu Yun nodded with a wry grin.

“I actually do want him to take you for his disciple, but if he does, he’ll die in a grisly fashion.” Ah Zhi swept a glance at the wood in Lu Yun’s hand. “Thanks to you.

“And, you can’t stay in the sect for too long. Get out as soon as you’re done learning, or you’ll make me part of your burial goods too! And how dare you put little sister Mo Yi in your inner world? Aren’t you afraid of cursing her to death too?” Ah Zhi started muttering inaudibly.

“That’s not my inner world, it’s the Disordered Hell,” Lu Yun chuckled ruefully. So he was now walking misfortune to Ah Zhi.

“The Disordered Hell?” Ah Zhi blinked. “Disorder and order oppose each other—the Disordered Hell is the hell to suppress disturbances in order. You succeeded?? But it’s a little early for that, you haven’t gotten the Imperial Seal yet!”

“Who knows what fate has in store sometimes,” Lu Yun chuckled. “The Imperial Seal isn’t necessarily a desirable treasure either. Maybe it’s more frightening than the withered wood.”

Ah Zhi’s pale purple brows furrowed together and she tapped two slender fingers twice in the air. Two strands of unknown substance began vibrating.

“You’re right... the Imperial Seal isn’t necessarily desirable... If you get it... You might...” Her voice trailed off.

Fate... the thirty-three reincarnations that Lu Yun had seen were fate. Everything was predestined and they were in the thirty-fourth loop. He’d strayed from the previous trajectories, changing his destiny and potentially the outcome of this cycle.

While Ah Zhi could see certain things, she didn’t have the power to change anything.

“Alright, you are dismissed. Keep that withered wood safe, perhaps it’s not the source of misfortune after all.” Ah Zhi vanished the mountain from Lu Yun’s sight with a wave of her hand.

He returned to Xing Shenzuo in an instant.

“How was it? Did Her Sovereign Majesty take you for her disciple?” he quickly asked, expecting that Lu Yun would suddenly appear in front of him at some point.

“Feng Feifan is an ordinary inner disciple of the Star Sect from this moment on. No one is allowed to take him as a true disciple. You better forget everything you know about him,” Ah Zhi’s voice reverberated in Xing Shenzuo’s ears.

The man's expression shifted slightly before returning to normal. He was no fool—this kind of proclamation by the only sequence expert in the sect meant that Feng Feifan was far from ordinary. But naturally, he wouldn't pursue the matter further.

"Since you are only an inner disciple, you have no right to remain at Shenzuo Mountain. You may go." His expression immediately turned aloof and he flicked his sleeves.

"Understood." Lu Yun reacted as an inner disciple would, offering a cupped fist salute before backing away.

A smile crept across Xing Shenzuo's face when Lu Yun left. The Sovereign King hadn't erased his memories, so he still remembered the young man's origins and strength. That meant Xing Shenzuo's status within the sect had greatly increased.

"Xing Shenzuo, I bestow upon you the divine weapon of sequence, Starweaver. You can use the net to temporarily access sequence," Ah Zhi's voice sounded once more in his ears.

"Thank you, Your Sovereign Majesty!" Xing Shenzuo was overjoyed.

"But you should stay away from Xing Chen even with the weapon. She can still beat two of you with one hand behind her back." Ah Zhi said no more after another huge yawn.

Xing Shenzuo's expression fell and he hastily expressed his understanding.

Xing Chen was Xing Lang's master and the first Nihil World Sovereign in the sect, also the strongest supplemental grandmaster. She was very famous in the known expanses of the Boundless Planes. Apart from Ah Zhi, she was responsible for half of the sect's enormous reputation.

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Xing Wuliang had been stripped down to a pair of underwear and was hanging by the entrance to Shenzuo Mountain. Xing Lang held a leather whip and lashed his victim's naked body whenever the urge struck him.

Xing Wuliang's eyes had rolled up into the back of his head and he'd fainted dead away. The various disciples of Shenzuo Mountain were frightened out of their wits, unable to leave despite wanting to. They could only huddle off to the side and watch their mighty and brilliant senior brother be hung up like a trussed chicken.

"You've finally come out, kid. Eh? Xing Shenzuo didn't take you for his true disciple?" Xing Lang paused with surprise when he saw Lu Yun walk out of the mountain residence. He could naturally tell that Lu Yun's soul force was ninth level, a mark of his great potential given his young age. If it'd been his master Xing Chen on the premises, he would've immediately taken the young man.

Lu Yun had changed his clothes and wore the uniform of an inner disciple. Inner disciples had the right to remain on the World Star, but they were leagues apart from true disciples.

"Senior Shenzuo has his own considerations for not accepting me." Lu Yun smiled faintly. "Senior brother Xing Lang, it might be nice to show some restraint. Senior brother Wuliang has become a grandmaster, so isn't it over the line to treat him like this?"

“Grandmaster?” Xing Lang swept a glance over Xing Wuliang and shook his head. “He has the soul force of a grandmaster without the requisite mentality. He’s just a fake grandmaster. Maybe I can beat some enlightenment into him and he’ll become a real one then!”

“In contrast to him, I think junior brother Feifan seems more like a real grandmaster. How about it, want to join my faction and become my master’s true disciple?”

Smack!

Xing Lang swung the whip in his hand and crashed it across Xing Wuliang’s back.

He came awake with a shrill yelp.

Lu Yun rubbed his forehead and chuckled ruefully, “Senior brother, eh, um, senior sister... Senior Xing Chen only takes female disciples, no?”

Xing Lang was plainly a girl in men’s clothing. Lu Yun had only needed to briefly employ formula dao to determine that her faction’s disciples were also all girls.

“Xing Lang is a girl?” Xing Wuliang’s jaw dropped.

Smack!

Came another lash of the whip.

“You’re right, master has no male disciples. But there’s always an exception and if you are willing, I’ll go ask master to take you in,” Xing Lang responded.

etvolare’s Thoughts

Someone.... correct me if I’m wrong... but wasn’t Lu Yun’s first replica... Xing Chen?!

Chapter 1583: On Orders To Be Friendly

“I was beaten by a girl??” Xing Wuliang’s eyes rolled back once more and he fainted dead away. He didn’t hear any part of Lu Yun and Xing Lang’s conversation, just the “senior sister” honorific and Xing Lang’s frank admittance.

“If you don’t agree, I’ll hang you up and beat you as well,” Xing Lang added when she read Lu Yun’s expression. “As the foremost senior brother of the Star Sect, I have the authority to punish any junior brother or sister. But since you’ve revealed my gender and let many junior brothers know that they were beaten by a girl all along, their dao hearts will likely suffer for it.”

“There’s no hierarchy when it comes to learning, and there’s no talk of gender either. So what if we’re beaten by a girl?” Lu Yun grinned. “Did your master never tell you that men and women are equal?”

Xing Lang looked strangely at Lu Yun. Though there was no inherent patriarchy in the fourth realm, it seemed to be tradition that women were the weaker gender. Their status was lower than men’s by default, so it was very odd to hear Lu Yun speak of these notions.

“It’s not that I’m not willing to learn from Senior Xing Chen, but that she won’t dare to accept me.” Lu Yun smiled and changed the topic.

“My master won’t dare accept you?” Xing Lang frowned and her expression took on an intently listening cast before clearing up. “Alright, I see. Mm, let it be known that my name is Xing Lan, not Xing Lang, and that I am the foremost senior sister of the Star Sect from this moment on. Anyone who does not accept this can come challenge me!”

She reverted to her regular voice and whirled around with flair after another glance at Lu Yun.

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News of foremost senior brother Xing Lang of the Star Sect being a girl spread rapidly through the World Star, the World Plane, and several other planes around it. This was a very important personage in the Boundless Planes—to think that she was actually Xing Lan, a girl?

“So what if our senior brother’s turned into our senior sister?”

After a brief uproar in the Star Sect, nothing else came of the revelation. Xing Lan’s master Xing Chen was an unusual woman and most importantly, the Star Sovereign King—the strongest of the sect—was also a woman.

In comparison, it didn’t seem noteworthy that Xing Lan and all of the disciples on Xing Chen Mountain were all women.

However, the other female disciples of the Star Sect quickly suffered broken hearts. The male disciples of the sect came alive with roaring energy and rushed to Xing Chen Mountain to declare their affections. An entire mountain full of girls??

Xing Chen Mountain was the foremost mountain in the World Star and Xing Chen the first Nihil World Sovereign and first supplemental grandmaster of the sect. If they could become dao partners with any of her disciples, the lucky man could shave off several thousand years’ worth of effort!

Of course, none of this had anything to do with Lu Yun. He’d chosen a place on the World Star to establish his residence and began studying what Fuxi had left him.

Fuxi hadn’t taken anything from the original Hongmeng to the great wilderness. That would’ve given his enemies easy access to destroy the knowledge. After all, there were multiple parties laying out conflicting plans for the Central Hongmeng.

If the final legacy of the original Hongmeng appeared there, it would’ve been completely rooted out and erased. Since the original Hongmeng had been eliminated by accident rather than by the times, its combat arts and methods were more powerful than what was available in the new epoch.

That stemmed from the fact that the original Hongmeng could suppress order, but there was nothing that could keep order under control in the new epoch. Hence, order was slowly dissipating from the Boundless Planes.

As of now, Lu Yun could deploy the Dragonquake Scripture and its most powerful methods—the Dragonsearch Invocation, Dragonshift Method, and Dragonspike Litany. Apart from those, there were also tremendous combat arts within the scripture that were key to accessing the scripture’s most powerful attacks.

Lu Yun carefully read every line of Fuxi's legacy, studying each character over and over again. The exact Dragonquake Scripture that'd once destroyed the original Hongmeng was also among them.

"Junior brother Feifan, junior brother Feifan!" someone called to him, shaking him out of his reverie.

"Hmm?" Lu Yun lifted his eyes to see Xing Lan outside of his nameless abode.

He'd chosen a barren location at random on the World Star for his home. It was a very remote locale that saw little foot traffic; not even Xing Wuliang knew where Lu Yun was at the moment. But somehow, Xing Lan had found him.

Lu Yun put the books away and walked out of his residence. His visitor had returned to wearing female clothing and was dressed in a long black robe. Her hair was tied up with a ribbon and she was extremely beautiful. Her looks was underscored by a certain manly grace, giving her a particularly heroic appearance.

"So you're hiding out here, junior brother Feifan," she giggled when she saw Lu Yun.

"Eh? What brings senior sister here?" he asked with confusion. He could clearly sense a certain emotion from Xing Lan—she was carrying out orders. She obviously wasn't interested in him, did her master want something from him?

"My master has ordered me to be friends with you." Xing Lan spread out her hands with resignation. "Junior brother Feifan, your soul force is ninth level, right? But your mentality seems to have reached grandmaster, so you should be focusing on how to break through with your soul force as well," she quickly added, perhaps regretting her candor.

Lu Yun held his forehead. I think I understand why she's here.

As a walking sack of bad luck, he could be the death of those around him at any given time. But Ah Zhi had said that his destiny had changed, that whoever came in contact with him would also see their destinies changed.

Lu Yun hadn't told her about the endless reincarnation cycles, so she didn't know the meaning of the destinies she saw. But as a powerhouse who'd set foot into sequence, she possessed her own judgment and intuition.

Xing Chen was the strongest Nihil World Sovereign of the sect and had the right to speak frankly with Ah Zhi, so here Xing Lan was.

"Since my mentality has reached grandmaster, it doesn't matter what level my soul force is at." Lu Yun shrugged carelessly.

"No, it's very important!" Xing Lan corrected solemnly. "We Star Sect disciples all cultivate soul force. The qualifications to join us depends on one's potential in supplemental dao and soul force. Do you know why?"

Lu Yun started, then quietly operated formula dao. It didn't take long for his expression to turn unpleasant.

“The beings of the Boundless Planes, whether in the known or unknown expanses, cultivate the power of ‘nothing’. The peak of nothing is... well, nothing,” Xing Lan murmured. “The Star Sovereign King says that nothing is the absence of everything, including order. The more beings cultivate it, the weaker order becomes until finally, the Boundless Planes will just... poof! Disappear.”

“They’ll dissolve into a place of disorder, possessing only rules and no order, a region impossible for life to survive... But soul force is a true and tangible strength that’s completely different.”

Lu Yun blinked and Mo Yi froze in the Disordered Hell.

“It seems Ah Zhi... has found the reason why order is disappearing?” Mo Yi shot to her feet as the floating Dao King drifted down to her side. Both of them were quite agitated.

Chapter 1584: Bud and Flower

“...so what if we’ve found the reason?” the Dao King sighed dejectedly. “The known and unknown expanses all cultivate ‘nothing’. The only solution to our problems is still to create an even bigger world to dominate the planes and become the source of order.”

“That is true.” Mo Yi drooped and sat back down.

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“In the Star Sect’s eyes, soul force is true strength that is tangible. The sect only ever looks at soul force when accepting disciples and only takes supplemental grandmasters,” Xing Lan explained seriously. “So it would go against the grain of what the sect stands for if junior brother doesn’t cultivate your soul force.”

Lu Yun frowned slightly with a nod. Still, he didn’t think much of this. He had the six hellfires in his body, not soul force or “nothing”. On his first trip to the fourth realm, he only possessed the hadal hellfire. He’d discovered then that when his true cultivation level reached the fourth realm, the hellfire would gradually give way to the power of “nothing”.

But now that he’d completed the Disordered Hell and the six hellfires were in his body as a combined whole, they’d expelled the power of nothing that’d crept into his body.

There were only two types of strength in his body now—hellfire and soul force.

But hellfire shouldn’t be manifested in the fourth realm.

“Thank you for your pointers, senior sister,” Lu Yun chuckled when his thoughts traveled here. “I will make sure to train my soul force well.” He turned back to his residence.

“Eh? I say...” Xing Lan blinked and called out to him.

“Is there something else, senior sister?” Lu Yun scratched his head with confusion.

“I’m here already, shouldn’t you be showing me some hospitality?” Xing Lan said with some irritation.

Annoyances from the sect had followed after her gender reveal. Many genius disciples of their generation, and even ones of the previous, came to curry favor and fawn over her. Now that she was in

front of Feng Feifan's residence, how dare he not fulfill his duties as a host and pay much attention to her?

"Senior sister Xing Lan!" Lu Yun turned around with a solemn look. "I have heard of the happenings in the sect after your true self was revealed. Many famous true disciples regard you as their goddess. If I invite you in, they'll come and raze my abode tonight!"

Xing Lan paused. While there weren't many who had their eyes set on her, there was still a sizable number of people. Indeed, they were all true disciples and, in fact, the head disciple of their various masters.

Lu Yun had hidden his identity to focus on cultivating in the Star Sect; he didn't want any trouble. He knew why Xing Lan was here—Xing Chen wanted to borrow him to change her disciple's fate.

However, he didn't want his peace broken on account of a woman.

Change fate?

He'd only raised a tiny wave out of a big river. He had no idea what lay in store for his future, so how would he be inclined to help someone else change theirs?

He transported into his residence after speaking and sealed off the front door with eighteen restrictions, focusing on training his soul force.

Xing Lan stood with her jaw dropped in front of her junior brother's door, finally leaving with a rueful chuckle.

"He probably thinks women are trouble... I think women are trouble." She turned herself back into the appearance of a man with a shake of her body.

A slight shift took place in her thoughts. Whether it was Xing Lang or Xing Lan, man or woman, weren't they all her? Why be caught up in appearances?

Should she present herself as a woman just because everyone knew her gender? She was Xing Lan!

"Junior brother Feng truly lives a carefree life." Xing Lan left with a leap into the sky. "Ah, I've gotten fixated on things again. What does it matter what I look like? It's all for other people's eyes. What the heck do I care about other people? I'll just hang them up for a beating if they gossip about me."

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The door to the nameless residence cracked open and Lu Yun poked a head out, sighing with relief to find his doorstep empty.

"She's a hard one to read and seems to like hanging people up for a beating... If she ever did that to me..." He shook his head slightly.

"There is no unified great dao in the fourth realm." Mo Yi walked out of the Disordered Hell and sat down next to Lu Yun.

"Hmm?" He blinked at her sudden appearance. The Disordered Hell couldn't curtail her freedom; she was only there because she wanted to be.

“The immortal dao will be assimilated by the endless nothing once it enters the fourth realm, becoming just a minor dao in the boundless fourth realm.” She took a seat on one of his cushions and propped her chin up with her hands. “Perhaps my line of thinking was wrong before—I wanted to recreate the original Hongmeng to suppress the fourth realm’s orders.”

“Why not just build a great dao in the fourth realm to fight the boundless nothing?” Lu Yun asked.

“Some daydreams should just stay as daydreams. Not even powerhouses who’ve opened nine doors of sequence can do that.” She looked at Lu Yun. “Not unless you reach the level of the one who holds all of existence in their hand and created the endless reincarnation cycles.”

Lu Yun fell silent. Whether it was reaching that level or recreating the original Hongmeng, both were impossible for him at the moment.

“There’s no need to have the original Hongmeng appear again,” Mo Yi continued. “There is a seed of nothing in the Central Hongmeng as well as creation seeds. It can continuously manifest order and incorporate the seed of nothing into the immortal dao. If we have the immortal dao traverse the fourth realm after that, we can have it create a world of immortal dao.

“If that world is strong enough to suppress the orders of the fourth realm, that will prevent us from dissolving into nothing.”

“How do we go about doing that?” Lu Yun understood her intentions. Someone else must control the seed of nothing for her to craft the solution this way.

“Disseminate dao in the fourth realm and have formula dao bud and flower here,” Mo Yi responded after some thought. “Formula dao was created by the Dao Sovereign. If it flourishes here, that’s the equivalent of immortal dao taking root here!”

“Alright!” Lu Yun agreed without hesitation. He’d wanted to do the same thing, but hadn’t done so because of the withered wood on him. If he recruited disciples in the fourth realm, that would probably bring disaster down on his head. “Should I exile the withered wood into time now?”

Chapter 1585: Creating a Fake

The fourth realm was different from the Hongmeng. Qing Yu was present in the third realm, so she could guide the immortal dao from the world of immortals through the chaos and into the Hongmeng.

The fourth realm, however, was too big.

A tiny immortal dao entering it was no different from the hair of an ox drifting into the fourth realm. There needed to be the seeds of immortal dao here—formula dao!

Formula dao could meld with the immortal dao and could also be its own dao, not to mention that it was the creation of the Dao Sovereign herself. It could completely assimilate into the fourth realm and be available for fourth realm denizens to cultivate.

Once formula dao blossomed in the fourth realm, it could facilitate immortal dao from the Hongmeng to travel into Boundless Planes.

And a world of immortal dao...

Inspiration struck Lu Yun.

Order!

The world that he could access through the method of nothing was the order of time. In a similar vein, immortal dao could also create a world of order in the fourth realm, one that belonged solely to it. The seed of nothing that it contained could become the spring of order and suppress the fourth realm, becoming the fountain of order for both the known and unknown expanses.

The caveat to that was that Lu Yun must pass on his dao and teach formula dao to others. But with the withered wood on him, he was a walking portent of doom and misfortune. It wasn't a problem if one only got to know and interact with him, but if one stayed after forming karmic ties... one would eventually be cursed to death on account of Lu Yun.

He was currently in the fourth realm to sever his ties with the Hongmeng. Therefore, he would have to exile the indestructible withered wood first if he wanted to pass on dao.

"Haven't you wanted to know what it is?" Mo Yi walked up to him with her hand outstretched.

Lu Yun brought out the wood from the Tome of Life and Death and handed it to her. She paused when she accepted it.

"Is something wrong?" he asked with concern.

"You've seen for yourself over the past thirty-three cycles that the withered wood is supposed to stay on you," Mo Yi responded.

"Right, except it was the Thunderstruck Wood then, not the withered wood," Lu Yun frowned.

In the past loops, he'd used the thunder and lightning found inside the wood to absorb heavenly tribulation and release lightning, thereby paving the road for his rise. He'd found the wood inside the Imperial Seal.

But this time, the wood had been with Longshan Yin—now Di Yin.

Lu Yun could tell that Di Yin hadn't possessed the wood for long, but he'd still managed to almost cause the end of Dragonmountain Clime. Even his invader, Revered Rednote, had nearly become the Divine Fire World King's steed.

When Yun Zhongzi almost obtained the Imperial Seal, the Tome of Life and Death had prevented him from succeeding. That was when the withered wood had left the seal.

The emperor of the original Hongmeng hadn't died with his domain's demise, but later perished in the Broken Primeval Plane with the dawn of the new epoch. It'd been that final battle that'd broken that plane and given it its name.

If Lu Yun's guesses were correct, the Thunderstruck Wood's power had flared to life in those years of mayhem after the original Hongmeng shattered and induced fear in countless beings. Having secluded himself for recovery and thinking of ways to restore his kingdom, the emperor eventually came forth once more and attempted to suppress the withered wood with his seal.

However, the wood had proven too strong to be overcome and the emperor himself was cursed, killing him and the remnants of his subordinates from the old epoch.

Once the Thunderstruck Wood escaped from the Imperial Seal, it sought out the emperor's only bloodline in the fourth realm—Longshan Yin.

The demise of the Di Clan in the Hongmeng, falling into the Curse King's traps when moving to the world of immortals to protect the immortal dao, and the elimination of the clan in the first realm was also likely a result of the withered wood.

Although the overlord of Ice had discovered the wood's existence, he couldn't take action himself. He could only create a method of nothing and refine a pair of hammers that could access sequence, giving them to the Divine Fire World King.

If the world king could become a Nihil World Sovereign, he would obtain the method of nothing concealed in the hammers and thus exile the wood into time.

And now, the withered wood that sparked fear from sequence experts lay quietly in Mo Yi's hands. She, however, regarded it with a perplexed gaze and raised a confused look to Lu Yun.

"What is it?" he quickly asked upon seeing the wrongness of her expression.

"Um... are you sure this is the wood that you obtained?" Her slender eyebrows were tightly knitted together and her expression growing odder.

"That's it, I wouldn't be mistaken." Lu Yun nodded.

"But the curse on it... and the resentment it carries from the original Hongmeng... are... gone?" Mo Yi held up the palm-sized wood to her eyes for close scrutiny.

A long period of mayhem and madness existed between the fall of the original Hongmeng and the establishment of the new epoch. The withered wood repeatedly erupted with activity during this time, rampaging through the lives of living beings and wreaking havoc on any survivors from the original Hongmeng.

Gradually, experts began to access sequence and exile it to the worlds of sequence. But every time, the wood would rip free from the world of sequence and continue deploying terrifying curses. Finally, a great powerhouse solved the problem by exiling it into time.

That still didn't prove to be a permanent solution. The wood would reappear at certain intervals to plague the world. Finally, the emperor of the original Hongmeng personally suppressed it at the beginning of the new epoch and ended everything.

But now, the terrifying curse and malice on the withered wood were gone?

"You put it..." Mo Yi's expression flickered rapidly and she fell silent.

After staring fixedly at it, she reached out a hand and ignited a black flame on her fingertips. The flame seemed to howl and shriek with boundless malice.

Lu Yun quickly grasped what had happened and what Mo Yi wanted to do. He deployed the Tome of Life and Death to seal off the area.

Mo Yi sent the flame of resentment and bitterness over the wood, helping negativity seep through the item. The dissipated resentment seemed to be back.

“Alright, you will carry this withered wood on you and spread formula dao throughout the fourth realm!” Mo Yi handed the wood back to Lu Yun, a great weight off her shoulders.

“Aren’t we creating a fake like this?” Lu Yun cackled.

“That’s right we are. We’re going to pull the wool over those bastards’ eyes because I know who made it!” Mo Yi nodded. “This withered wood was once part of the divine tree that supported the original Hongmeng. Your Karmic Tree is a branch of the divine tree.

“You cannot exile the wood or destroy it because it’s the divine tree’s only remaining core essence. The tree can be recreated if it exists—a wish that the original emperor once held when he wanted to suppress it with the Imperial Seal.

“This withered wood is a mountain of poisoned gold to powerhouses of the original Hongmeng. They know they’ll die because of it, but they can’t resist its allure. That old fart Yun Zhongzi didn’t tell you the truth because he carries a bit of ulterior motives toward the wood as well.

“What a shame that the original emperor also fell into those bastards’ trap and eventually died for it, his dao scattered to the winds,” Mo Yi sighed. “I only hope that our fake can fool them.”

“Who’s them?” Lu Yun’s heart pounded with alarm.

“The Curse King and those behind him,” said the Dao King as he walked out of the Disordered Hell.

Chapter 1586: Argent Snow

It wouldn’t be an easy or swift task to impart dao in the fourth realm. If a great dao wished to leave its mark, it would have to weather layer upon layer of obstacles and challenges to win such a privilege.

Most importantly was that formula dao was a known path. Though it only circulated in the world of immortals and chaos, there were many arrangements from fourth realm powerhouses in those realms.

Lu Yun’s identity would be exposed as soon as formula dao appeared in the fourth realm.

But for the sake of his grand scheme to come, he had to do this. Though his current destiny was different from the previous thirty-three cycles, he was still, at best, just a tiny wave. A tiny, tiny wave in a vast and boundless river.

If he failed, this insignificant wave would return to its previous form and his destiny would revert to its “proper path”—sitting alone in the void, keeping company the gradual decay of the immortal dao.

He never wished to experience that kind of loneliness and despair again.

His so-called enemies were just obstacles on the path to his goals. Who they were didn’t matter. He’d eliminate them all even if they were the masters of heaven!

.....

Mo Yi and the Dao King returned to the Disordered Hell. This time, Lu Yun fully severed the connection between that hell and the outside world. Since Ah Zhi had been able to discern Mo Yi's existence, that meant other sequence experts would be able to do the same.

Thoroughly shutting off the passage between the Disordered Hell and the fourth realm meant that sequence experts could no longer see Mo Yi, but that the two could still leave through the exit to the world of immortals. That egress led to Lu Yun's kingdom of hell and other locales.

However, Mo Yi and the Dao King showed no signs of leaving.

"Since I am to impart dao, then I need to popularize formula dao. But I need to make sure that I take things one step at a time and not be in a rush." Lu Yun sat down in his nameless residence and stroked his chin, debating his next steps.

"I need to first train my soul force to its maximum—at least grandmaster level. Mm, there's a spirit herb in the Star Sect called the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus that can immediately propel my soul force to grandmaster level."

Out of the bundle of books that Ah Zhi had given Lu Yun, there were both Fuxi's legacy from the original Hongmeng and some tomes regarding the sect. One of them mentioned a soul force treasure called the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus.

It was similar to the Profound Nineroot that he'd eaten before—highly beneficial to soul force and could enhance the soul force of supplemental cultivators. The lotus was superior to the root and could propel ninth level soul force into grandmaster level.

However, very few within the Star Sect made use of outside forces to reach grandmaster. Supplemental cultivation was the process of training both soul force and mentality. Take Xing Wuliang, for instance. He had the requisite soul force but not the proper mindset, so he was unable to compel the second form of Horizon's Edge.

Lu Yun stood up when his thoughts traveled here and walked out of his abode.

"Are you junior brother Feifan?" A clear voice sounded as soon as he set foot outside.

Lu Yun looked over to see a handsome man in blue robes wielding a silver staff roughly a meter long. The smiling man inclined his head at Lu Yun, but a certain degree of menace threaded his emotions.

The newcomer was no friend.

He was a powerful supplemental grandmaster and a Void World King. What caught Lu Yun's eye, though, was the short silver staff in his hands.

A soul weapon!

That was the hallmark of fourth realm supplemental grandmasters—only they had the right to own a soul weapon. It was both a weapon and a symbol of status.

Soul force was required to activate it. To supplemental grandmasters, soul weapons were far more important than connate treasures. Even Xing Wuliang's Horizon's Edge was nothing compared to a soul weapon.

But to ordinary cultivators, soul weapons were trash.

"Junior brother is not yet a grandmaster. The sect will naturally bestow a weapon upon you when you reach that level." The blue clad man smiled gracefully when he noted Lu Yun's stare.

"Feng Feifan greets this senior brother. What brings you to my humble doorstep?" Lu Yun was slightly confused.

He hadn't come in contact with anyone else at the Star Sect apart from Xing Wuliang and Xing Lan. He couldn't possibly have made enemies already, could he? But it was undeniable that the man was here with less than kind intent and grasping a weapon.

"I am Xing Heng of Mochou Mountain." The man remained smiling. "I hear that junior brother Feifan is from the Eastern Planes?"

"So what if I am?" Lu Yun frowned, but still nodded. "Doesn't the Star Sect overlook backgrounds when accepting disciples? Am I to be discriminated against just because I come from the Eastern Planes?"

He couldn't be bothered playing games with this man and erupted in feigned outrage.

"A great event has occurred in the Eastern Planes as of late," Xing Heng ignored Lu Yun. "A Nihil World Sovereign has come out of the Central Hongmeng, which is a forbidden place in that cluster. I wonder if junior brother has heard of this?"

"What?!" Lu Yun's eyes widened when he heard the question. A Nihil World Sovereign from the Central Hongmeng? Wasn't that him?

There were exceedingly few people who knew his true strength—was the Spacetime King behind this?

No, the Spacetime King was a smart man. After Lu Yun and the overlord of Ice let him off the hook, he wouldn't pursue another karmic tie and cause further trouble. Thus, there had to have been someone else present when Lu Yun reverted to his Nihil World Sovereign self.

"What does it have to do with me that a Nihil World Sovereign has emerged from the Central Hongmeng?" Lu Yun asked calmly, regaining his composure.

"It is of grave importance that a Nihil World Sovereign has come from that area... Any Eastern Plane denizen is to be interrogated. Apologies for the offense, junior brother." Xing Heng waved his silver staff and summoned silver snowflakes from the void. They came imbued with a strange power and sealed off the premises.

Argent Snow.

One of the eight great soul weapons of supplemental grandmasters.

One hundred and eight pieces of silver snowflakes drifted around them, each of them the size of a palm. They formed a cohesive whole in the air—a formation that didn't seem like one, a boundary that wasn't quite one.

Lu Yun felt wisps of arctic air gather from the surroundings, but didn't panic. He flipped his hands over and materialized golden and blue orbs in his hands.

Hummmm.

The Water Virtue and Metal Virtue Orbs erupted at the same time. The worlds of water and swords intersected with each other, watery ripples oscillating over golden swords and slamming into the snowflakes.

Chapter 1587: The Luminaries

Mochou Mountain that Xing Heng hailed from was the closest mountain to Shenzuo Mountain; the two mountains were on good terms.

After Xing Wuliang returned from his trip, Xing Heng called him over and obliquely asked him a significant amount of questions. Given Xing Wuliang's deep trust in the other, he wasn't on his guard and told him everything he'd learned. He also asked Xing Heng to take good care of Lu Yun.

Xing Heng was a true grandmaster and the head disciple of Mochou Mountain. Given Lu Yun's lack of patronage in the sect, he could avoid wasting effort in futile endeavors if Xing Heng took the young man under his wing.

Hence, Xing Wuliang never imagined that Xing Heng would come to capture Lu Yun as soon as the former entered closed door cultivation. Due to Xing Wuliang's deep understanding of Lu Yun, Xing Heng brought out his strongest ace as soon as he made a move. His soul weapon, Argent Snow, manifested an attack of one hundred and eight snowflakes.

The snowflakes collided with Lu Yun's two worlds, yet remained on their course.

Lu Yun swiftly retreated, his expression tensing.

"Give it up, junior brother Feng." Xing Heng's body drifted in and out of the snowflakes. "Soul weapons are the most optimal weapons for supplemental cultivators. They're superior to connate treasures. Your treasures will not pierce through my Domain of First Snowfall."

His smile slipped off his face and he continued coldly, "I will request you come with me, junior brother. If you continue to refuse, then things will get ugly."

Within the domain, Lu Yun's forehead was furrowed tight. The one hundred and eight snowflakes had cut through his two worlds. This was a method of attack that he'd never seen before. It wasn't a combat art or cultivation method, but something else that he couldn't quite explain.

He suddenly very much wanted a soul weapon of his own. Xing Heng was just a Void World King, but he'd instantly broken both of Lu Yun's connate worlds as soon as he deployed his weapon.

"Am I undergoing interrogation from the Star Sect, or from someone else?" Lu Yun asked calmly while putting his two orbs away.

“You ask too many questions, junior brother.”

Whoosh!

Snowflakes flurried into the air and turned into three hundred and sixty-five flakes. A light breeze swept by and churned them toward Lu Yun, like they were sword qi.

They were infinite times more terrifying than sword qi.

Each snowflake was a world unto itself—ethereally light, yet also weighty beyond belief.

Lu Yun’s face darkened.

“So it would seem that those who wish to question me have nothing to do with the Star Sect?” he sneered. “Senior brother, you are one of the foremost disciples of the Star Sect, yet collude with outsiders to question fellow disciples. Can I consider this an act of betrayal?”

“How dare you!” Xing Heng grew irate and waved his hand, sending the three hundred and sixty-five snowflakes toward Lu Yun’s head.

Boom!

A massive roar sounded from the void as his attack was bounced away. A hand probed out from the Domain of First Snowfall and grabbed Xing Heng’s collar.

Lu Yun appeared in front of him. Xing Heng’s eyes grew wide and he stared at Lu Yun, not sure of what to do.

“Don’t you want to ask about the Nihil World Sovereign from the Central Hongmeng?” A smile slowly crept over Lu Yun’s face. “At your service. Why else do you think no Nihil World Sovereign in the sect would take me as their disciple? It’s because I am one myself.”

The color drained from Xing Heng’s face.

“When have you ever seen an inner disciple create his own residence in the middle of nowhere?” Lu Yun threw Xing Heng to the side. “Out with it, who sent you?”

Xing Heng mulishly sent his jaw.

“Not spilling the beans, are you?” Lu Yun cocked his head at the other. “Then I’ll take you to the Star Sovereign King. The sect obviously values you since you have a soul weapon, but you’ve betrayed the Star Sect...”

Xing Heng’s expression changed when he heard the words “Star Sovereign King”, but neither did he believe that this newly recruited Nihil World Sovereign had the right to an audience with her august majesty.

The Star Sovereign King was a pillar of the Star Sect and the only one who’d set foot into sequence. Even Xing Heng’s master, founding elder Xing Mochou, didn’t have the right to speak to her.

“Her Sovereign Majesty does not need to be bothered with such a trivial task,” sounded an aloof voice from the other side. A young girl dressed in black had appeared behind Lu Yun at some unknown point.

She looked roughly seventeen years old, her frosty features framed by silver hair, and she was practically expressionless.

“Sovereign... Sovereign Chen!” Fear flashed through Xing Heng’s eyes to see the newcomer.

Xing Chen!

The first Nihil World Sovereign of the Star Sect!

“Greetings to Sovereign Chen.” Lu Yun turned around and raised a cupped fist salute.

“You and I are both Nihil World Sovereigns, there is no need to stand on ceremony.” Xing Chen nodded at him, then turned coldly to Xing Heng. “Speak, who’s behind you?”

Xing Heng had harbored a tiny bit of hope that Feng Feifan had infiltrated the Star Sect, that no one in the sect knew who he was. But Sovereign Chen’s appearance completely shattered his delusions.

He’d never imagined that simply following orders to interrogate a suspected Eastern Planes denizen would land him in such hot water. It seemed that he’d provoked the ultimate mastermind behind it all.

“Sovereign Chen!” he rasped out. “This person is a Nihil World Sovereign from the Central Hongmeng! He nurses ulterior motives for joining our Star Sect!”

“The Star Sect cares not about identity when we recruit disciples. They are one of us if they abide by the law and do their duty after joining the sect. Not to mention, the sect is not at odds with those from the Eastern Planes or Central Hongmeng.” Xing Chen leveled Xing Heng with an arctic glare. “But to offer your allegiances elsewhere after joining the sect or collude with other factions in the Boundless Planes is betrayal that should be punished by death!”

Xing Heng lost all hope.

“Speak, who is it behind you?” Xing Chen asked once more. “I can spare you for now if you answer honestly.”

Xing Chen took a look at Lu Yun before answering, “The Luminaries... I’ve joined the Luminaries.”

“So it’s them.” That was a very unwelcome revelation for Xing Chen. The Luminaries self-styled themselves as the rulers of the known expanses and wanted to dominate the Boundless Planes like the original Hongmeng of the last epoch. They wished to be the ultimate sovereign of the realm.

But those of the Boundless Planes had grown used to freedom. Why would they willingly return to the rule of another?

The ones to seal off the Eastern Planes and target the Central Hongmeng was this organization that called themselves the Luminaries.

The Star Sect didn’t have much of an opinion about them and didn’t plan to join them, but wouldn’t be enemies with them either. However, the Luminaries stretching their hands into the Star Sect was blatant provocation.

“Why don’t we play along?” Lu Yun suddenly smiled. “Have Xing Heng take me to the Luminaries and see what else we might gain.” He continued when it appeared that Xing Chen wouldn’t agree, “Xing

Chen is the head disciple of Mochou Mountain. If even he's been turned, so it's possible that there are others in the sect who have also turned traitor."

etvolare's Thoughts

Oh this be good, I wonder who else has been?

Chapter 1588: Nine Floors of Treasury

"You want to borrow the Star Sect's power to antagonize the Luminaries, don't you?" Xing Chen saw right through Lu Yun's intentions and dismantled his plan. "The sect will not involve ourselves with the conflicts of others."

She waved a hand and left with Xing Heng.

Lu Yun rubbed his nose. Xing Chen was certainly a decisive character and left no room for discussion whatsoever. Brief contemplation, however, quickly provided the reason for her behavior.

She knew his identity and how he'd broken free of his destiny. She'd wanted Xing Lan to stay by his side for a while and indirectly alter her destiny as well. However, he'd shut his door in the girl's face.

Xing Chen... seems to have a bit of a temper. She'd purposefully taken Xing Heng away when she discovered the situation here.

Lu Yun chuckled ruefully, not minding the matter. The Luminaries was worth keeping a watchful eye out for, but his primary goal for the moment was to disseminate dao.

"The Tome of Life and Death exorcized the resentment and curse from the withered wood, which means I'm no longer a walking sack of misfortune." Lu Yun stared off in the direction that Xing Chen had departed in. "But that isn't very reassuring either. Who knows what might happen to the book after it's digested such a terrifying amount of bitterness and curse? I should probably stay away from forming deep relationships for a while.

"Let's find a Principal Seventh Rank Lotus next and raise my soul force to grandmaster level." He headed in the direction of Mount Buzhou.

The mountain was situated in the center of the World Star. Last time, it'd seemed that Xing Shenzuo had brought Lu Yun to Mount Buzhou when he'd actually done so under Ah Zhi's control.

"Wait." Lu Yun suddenly stopped. "The pair of eyes in Xing Wuliang's pupils isn't Xing Chen's either. Who's borrowing his eyes to observe the Tomb of the Hallowed Emperor?"

If it wasn't Ah Zhi, Xing Shenzuo, or Xing Chen, it would seem that powerhouses abounded in this sect. He hadn't even been able to determine how many Nihil World Sovereigns were present.

"I need to get my hands on a soul weapon after my soul force reaches grandmaster level." Lu Yun continued making his way to the mountain.

Mount Buzhou was incredibly large. He'd visited Ah Zhi's residence on his prior trip; the sect's treasury was located on the same mountain. Since the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus was an incredibly precious spirit root, it should be stored there.

The Star Sect's treasury was a massive tower nine floors tall. Each floor was a real world. It wasn't under heavy guard, just protected by its own rules. People could access the floors they had clearance for and would be blocked from entry if they weren't authorized.

If there came an enemy so strong that the rules couldn't hold them off, death would be the only ending for any sect heavyweights that rushed to it. Ah Zhi had set the rules; simple Nihil World Sovereigns couldn't break them. Only someone who'd set foot into sequence like her could force them open.

Lu Yun smoothly walked in without challenge.

"That's strange... why does it feel like I've been to someplace similar before?" He found his surroundings oddly familiar when he observed the first floor.

Treasures and natural ingredients abounded on the first floor; connate treasures were dumped in piles like trash. He almost thought that he'd returned to the world of treasures Yun Zhongzhi had created in the Tomb of the Hallowed Emperor.

Such was the accumulation of the entire sect throughout its long and illustrious history. However, Lu Yun wasn't gazing upon the wealth, but the world that comprised of the first floor. He found it so very familiar, like he'd once been here.

"When did inner disciples have the right to enter the treasury?" A surprised voice sounded in Lu Yun's ears. He turned around to see a young girl dressed in blue robes, sizing him up with curious bright eyes and gleaming teeth.

There was more than one treasury in the sect and each one was open to disciples. But this was the Mount Buzhou treasury; only genius disciples or sect elders had the authorization to enter. This treasury ordinarily saw very little foot traffic, so it was quite an unusual sight to see a regular inner disciple visit.

The young girl was also a supplemental grandmaster, but her cultivation level was only at the true nihil realm and she was very far away from World Manifest. Despite that, Lu Yun was highly surprised to discover that her soul force was more than ten times stronger than Xing Heng's.

"Who are you? I don't think I've seen you around before," she asked when she saw that she had Lu Yun's attention.

"Inner disciple Feng Feifan greets this senior sister." Lu Yun raised cupped fists.

"So you're Feng Feifan! You're the one who shut his door in senior sister Xing Lan's face!" the girl blurted out.

Lu Yun's cheek twitched with awkwardness. So that had become the story of him not inviting Xing Lan inside? It seemed to eliciting a sizable repercussion.

"That's me." Lu Yun nodded.

"I'm Su He, a true disciple of Xing Chen Mountain. Xing Lan is my senior sister," the young girl introduced herself with a smile.

"Su He?" Lu Yun paused. "That's strange, all of the other true disciples have Xing as their surname. So why do you..."

“Because I’m a World Star native,” Su He chuckled. “People born on the World Star are disciples at birth. We don’t need to change our names even after we gain a master.

“Ah, yes, junior brother Feifan, you’re in a lot of trouble. Senior brother Xing Lingkong says he’s going to teach you a lesson after you turned senior sister Xing Lan down!” the girl continued gleefully. “Senior brother’s always known that senior sister is a girl and fell in love with her a long time ago. He won’t let you get away with insulting her.”

Lu Yun held his forehead.

“Do you know where the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus is?” He couldn’t be bothered with these things.

“The Principal Seventh Rank Lotus? It’s on the eighth floor, but only elders have the right to enter. You...” Su Heng trailed off; Lu Yun had already vanished.

“He’s really gone to the eighth floor?” She blinked with incredulity. “They say that senior brother Xing Wuliang brought junior brother Feng Feifan back from the Eastern Planes. There’s a lot of people in the sect who’ve joined the Luminaries... they probably want to do something to him, don’t they?”

“Senior brother Xing Lingkong...” Su He blushed when she thought of the handsome, dashing, and princely senior brother.

“Eh? Wait wait, he really entered the eighth floor? How?” Her jaw dropped when Lu Yun didn’t return to the first floor. “He’s not martial uncle Xing Shenzuo’s bastard son, is he? And the martial uncle didn’t accept him as a disciple because he didn’t want to start gossip...” The girl’s mind roved in wild flights of fancy.

Chapter 1589: The Principal Seventh Rank Lotus

On the eighth floor of the treasury, Lu Yun’s cheek spasmed when he heard Su He’s muttering. The little girl had quite an imagination! He put it out of his mind and was quickly entranced by the world on this floor.

An enormous herb garden in a lush, green landscape thriving with life met his eyes. Birdsong filled the air and flowers waved in the breeze. An endless expanse of plants came into view no matter which direction he turned in.

This herb garden was quite different from other ones he’d seen before. The usual gardens of other locales were man made, enormous fields in which everything was laid out according to various categories.

The garden on the eighth floor of the treasury retained a natural style. Everything was permitted to develop as they would and all herbs were allowed to grow according to their inherent characteristics. No effort had gone into specifically mapping it out.

“Although carefully maintained herb gardens result in better and more growth from their specimens, they also cause the plants to gradually lose some of their most essential qualities,” Lu Yun murmured. “Every spirit root has its own spirituality. Their medicinal effects are secondary, what is most important is their spirituality! If restrained against their innate inclinations, their unique spirituality will slowly fade away.”

If the usual herb gardens were denoted as a collection of carefully cultivated plants, then this one was wholly free range.

“But why is there a familiar feeling in the surroundings? It’s like these worlds...” Lu Yun cocked his head and thought for a while before his eyes brightened. He took out the Army Pagoda from his seed storage.

“Aha, it’s just like the nine floors of the Army Pagoda.” He finally recalled where he’d seen these worlds before—they were the exact same as the ones in the Army Pagoda!

“Since God created the pagoda, did he create this treasury too?” he mused while looking around.

“This is the inner world of the Profound Pagoda.” The king soldier of the Army Pagoda awoke and took a look outside the first floor of the tower.

“The Profound Pagoda?” Lu Yun blinked. “One of the eight great soul weapons of supplemental dao?”

“Correct.” The king soldier nodded. “The Army Pagoda is actually a Profound Pagoda as well, and it was created by the God Sovereign King! After he took it to the Central Hongmeng, he modified it into a cultivation treasure to train his juniors.”

The Army Pagoda used to be a powerful soul weapon, but since the supplemental cultivators of the Central Hongmeng didn’t practice soul force and the path of cultivation in that realm was full of traps, God had changed it to be a major treasure.

In its current form, the Army Pagoda lacked the offensive capabilities of a soul weapon and possessed the attributes to help cultivators train. The king soldier and others were just puppets commanded by the treasure’s rules. They were God’s subordinates in life; he’d saved their true spirits after they died in battle and sent them into the pagoda to become treasure spirits.

The tower’s offensive abilities now relied on the king soldier and his men.

As for defensive skills—the tower had been forged by God. Even though it wasn’t a soul weapon anymore, it was still durable enough that it could negate most attacks with just its body.

“We are also in a Profound Tower. Though it’s not quite on the level of the Army Pagoda, a powerful Sovereign King turned it into a strong treasury after injecting it with order,” explained the king soldier after he inspected the eighth floor. “Do you want to revert the Army Pagoda back into a soul weapon?”

“No.” Lu Yun shook his head. “If it does, then the cultivation rules within will dissipate and all of you will disintegrate, won’t you?”

The king soldier blinked, then nodded.

“The Army Pagoda is ranked first out of the eight soul weapons. If you encounter an overwhelming enemy, you can burn the one hundred and nine of us to return the pagoda back to its origins.” The king soldier still told Lu Yun the way despite receiving an answer in the negative.

“I won’t need to. When my soul force breaks through to grandmaster level, I’ll just claim Argent Snow.” Lu Yun put the Army Pagoda away.

While the pagoda was ranked first among the soul weapons, that didn't mean it was the one most suitable for him. Perhaps traces of God's power still remained inside, but most importantly, he couldn't bear to consign the king soldier and others into oblivion.

Meanwhile, he'd already witnessed Argent Snow's strength and its manner of attack was closer to sword qi. In contrast, that was more suitable for his style. While soul weapons had their own ranking, the user was the most important. Soul weapons drew upon soul force for their battle strength. The stronger it was and the deeper the understanding of dao, the stronger the weapon.

The prerequisite for using any soul weapon was grandmaster level soul force.

Lu Yun's current soul force fell short, despite being able to summon the second forms of several connate treasures. The Principal Seventh Rank Lotus was here, so he refocused on the task at hand and started looking for it.

Given how boundless the herb garden was and the cornucopia of spirit roots present, very few visited this floor in ordinary times. Star Sect disciples usually visited the other treasuries if they wanted spirit herbs.

"There!" A smile curved his lips. Formula dao easily pointed out every spirit root to him.

Seven lotuses floated in the center of a pond roughly six hundred meters across. As its name indicated, the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus was a seventh rank spirit herb. It consisted of seven colors and was extraordinarily nutritious to the soul of living beings.

Cultivators would see an explosive increase in their soul force if they devoured it. Since Lu Yun's soul force had reached ninth step, eating one of them would enable him to break through to grandmaster.

"But... it's a bit of a pity to just eat it. Let me see what kind of pills can be refined from it." He operated formula dao once more to determine a proper pill recipe.

He'd also extensively studied The General Principles of the Star Sect Pills and Spirit Herbs. Though the lotus was recorded in its pages, there were no pill recipes that incorporated it. That meant the sect currently possessed no method to refine the lotus or any recipe related to it.

Thus, Lu Yun employed all of his pill dao knowledge to simulate the various combinations possible with the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus.

"Got it!" He opened his eyes with a smile after six hours. "I'll call it the Principal Seventh Rank Pill. Not only will it help ninth step soul force cultivators reach grandmaster, it'll also help those whose mentality is lacking—like Xing Wuliang—become a true grandmaster!"

He stood up and reached for one of the lotuses in the pond.

"Stop, you ignorant fool!" An urgent voice rang out as power surged out of the void, rebuffing Lu Yun's hand.

Chapter 1590: An Old Man With a White Beard

Caught off guard, Lu Yun was almost sent flying. He hastily took a few steps back and focused his eyes on where the strength had come from.

A barefoot elder dressed in white clothing with a white beard and hair came sprinting from another direction.

“You, you, you!! Where did a thief like you come from??” He wore a white linen outfit and his hair and beard were in disarray. His clothes were slightly disheveled, his hands and feet covered in dirt. He’d likely been working in another part of the garden earlier.

The elder huffed and puffed at Lu Yun, then walked on air to the pond to closely scrutinize the Principal Seventh Rank Lotuses. He breathed a sigh of relief when he saw that they were fine.

“Where are you from, kid, and how dare you come to the Eighth Treasure World to steal herbs?!” He turned and roared at Lu Yun.

“The Star Sovereign King herself set down the rules for this place, so I naturally have the right to pick herbs if I am here. What talk is this of stealing?” Lu Yun frowned.

“Do you know what the Eighth Treasure World is?!” the elder sneered when he heard the answer.

“Isn’t it just a world of herbs?” Lu Yun blinked.

“That is true enough, but many of the flora that grow here are the last specimens of their kind in the Boundless Planes. A bunch of us old fogies went to great pains to collect them from various corners of the realm so they could be planted here.” The old man took a deep breath to calm his nerves. “None of the spirit herbs here have seed stock, so it’s highly likely that the lotus you were about to pick is the last seven that exist in the known expanses!

“One plucked is one less!

“If I see things correctly, you want to use the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus to raise your soul force and become a grandmaster, don’t you? You’re so young, yet you focus your mind on shortcuts instead of cultivating. If you become a grandmaster with this mindset, you won’t have the mentality of one and that is all you will amount to in the future!” he furiously lectured Lu Yun.

There was nothing for Lu Yun to do but to be swept along with the old man’s emotions and nod in agreement. He wasn’t inclined to disagree, either.

The old man was a powerful Nihil World Sovereign on par with Xing Shenzuo, but his soul force was incredible and more than a dozen times stronger. He was even stronger than Xing Chen!

Plainly, he was a founding elder of the Star Sect and a truly mighty supplemental grandmaster. His current tones reminded Lu Yun of his late master on Earth. It was the same note of exasperation at a rebellious young Lu Yun who wasn’t living up to his potential.

“This junior will commit the senior’s teachings to heart.” Lu Yun raised a cupped fist salute to the old man.

That stopped him in his tracks and he looked Lu Yun up and down. Here was a young man of modest age, but already at ninth level soul force. Though he wore the uniform of an inner disciple, the old man didn’t see anything wrong with that.

Exceptions were the rule in the Boundless Planes, and plenty of them existed in the Star Sect. Some inner disciples were marvelously talented with remarkable potential. They had the right to access the eighth level of Mount Buzhou's treasury and hadn't taken a Nihil World Sovereign for their master not because they weren't wanted, but because no one was qualified to teach them. It was only a matter of time before characters like those became Nihil World Sovereigns themselves.

The white-bearded old man hadn't had a master in his youth either. Though many Nihil World Sovereigns had given him pointers, they'd all been his fellow daoists in the end.

"But senior, this junior wishes to pluck a Principal Seventh Rank Lotus not for personal consumption, but to attempt a pill refinement. This junior has created a pill recipe that uses the lotus as its principal ingredient," Lu Yun added on after a pause.

"Huh?" The old man thought he'd misheard. He dug in his ear with an index finger and asked, "What did you say?"

"This junior wants to refine a pill with the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus," Lu Yun responded solemnly.

"Do you know who I am?" The old man's face fell.

Lu Yun frowned slightly. Tigers and dragons abounded in the Star Sect, there were plenty of fearsome Nihil World Sovereigns. Some disciples in the younger generation were already at that level—a sign that this was a very different part of the realm as compared to the remote backwaters of the Eastern Planes.

However, he was here to focus on cultivation, study the Dragonquake Scripture, and peruse the many heritages of the original Hongmeng. He didn't plan on becoming close with the sect members, so he hadn't gotten to know the powerhouses of the faction. Naturally, he didn't know who this old man with a white beard was.

"This junior does not know," he answered truthfully.

"No wonder you dare voice such brazen talk in front of me," snorted the old man. "I am the Alchemist Sovereign."

"Feng Feifan greets Senior Alchemist Sovereign." Lu Yun bowed.

Alchemist Sovereign:

"I am the first of pill dao in the Star Sect, the beholder of pill dao!" the sovereign huffed when he saw Lu Yun's expression remain the same.

"Junior Feng Feifan greets the beholder of pill dao." Lu Yun bowed again.

Since the Star Sect focused on supplemental dao, there were numerous disciplines and subdivisions within the sect. But no matter where one went, pill, treasure, formation, and talisman dao always reigned supreme. Thus, they had their own beholders.

They functioned similarly to the deans of various schools in the Dao Academy in the world of immortals. The Alchemist Sovereign was second only to Ah Zhi in the sect; he outranked Xing Chen.

“What do you have to say for yourself since you know I’m the beholder of pill dao?” the Alchemist Sovereign demanded coolly.

“This junior humbly requests that Senior Alchemist Sovereign bestows a Principal Seventh Rank Lotus so that I may refine a pill.” Lu Yun lifted his head and looked the old man in the eye.

The Principal Seventh Rank Lotus frowned.

“Did your teacher not tell you that it is impossible to refine a pill with the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus?” His tone was growing unfriendly. While he didn’t know what this Feng Feifan was thinking, he’d tried refining pills from the lotus before and always failed.

The Star Sect had once possessed thirteen Principal Seventh Rank Lotuses. After seven billion years of attempts, only seven were left. He’d also tried to reform its medicinal properties and just use those characteristics in refinement, but he’d still failed.

“But this junior has derived a pill recipe for the lotus, which is why I have come for it.” Though Lu Yun remained respectful, a hint of pride colored his tone. He was proud of Qing Yu, that her formula dao could theorize even treasures of the fourth realm!

“Since you have derived a pill recipe, why not use the principles of medicinal properties reformation to create the lotus’ characteristics and use that in refinement?” An amused note entered the Alchemist Sovereign’s question.

“Senior,” Lu Yun responded seriously. “The Principal Seventh Rank Lotus is a spirit root. This junior can simulate its medicinal properties and even reform it, but I cannot coalesce its spirituality. An herb without spirituality is no spirit root, and will never be the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus.

“This junior’s pill recipe needs the medicinal properties, theory, and spirituality of the lotus as its foundation. All are necessary for success.”

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