

Necropolis 1601

Chapter 1601: Explosion

“You... didn’t use your full strength earlier because you wanted to hit me with the stick?” The Argent Snow spirit looked mournfully at Lu Yun.

“Well, you can’t really say that. I did indeed use the full strength of the condition I was in.” Lu Yun brandished his weapon.

One thousand and eighty snowflakes oscillating with the same ripples circled around him. They were silver instead of their usual snowy white, more resembling streaks of silver light.

“Why are you so fixated on smacking me to death?” The spirit felt rather aggrieved. He’d faced countless challengers over these endless years, but never had he met such an unusual one.

Though he was a spirit of the rules, he’d long developed his own thoughts. He still followed the rules after forming his own mind, but would sometimes pay special attention to challengers with high potential like Lu Yun.

The eight soul weapons had become the mainstay of supplemental cultivation. Any strong supplemental cultivator trained with one and the stronger they were, the more it benefited the spirits that materialized from the rules.

At a certain point, it was even possible that they could evolve into true living beings.

“Have I not been good enough to you?” The spirit’s plaintive voice raised a layer of goosebumps on Lu Yun’s arms, despite soul force replicas not possessing goosebumps.

“You killed me two hundred and thirty-four times.” Lu Yun held up a few fingers. “While I’ve joined the Star Sect, no one’s gotten the better of me in the sect yet. My temperament is insufficiently tempered and there’s no way I don’t want revenge after you offed me so many damn times. A shadow would remain over my heart otherwise.

“Clubbing you to death twenty-six times is satisfying, but not enough! Since my old tactics won’t work this time, I’ll use them again after I break through to the supreme realm and enter the twenty-eighth level.”

Lu Yun grinned broadly. “Since you’re not a real life form, there’s actually something in it for you when I smash you to death. It’s useful for cultivating your emotions and making it easier for you to feel something so you can form soul parts.”

“So I should be thanking you instead?” The spirit’s face darkened.

Lu Yun nodded with all seriousness, then suddenly darted forward and crashed the stick onto the spirit’s face. This blow was different from the previous ones—it was accompanied by silver snowflakes and ripples.

This was a soul force attack from Argent Snow, one that’d reached great perfection.

Hummm.

The one thousand and eighty snowflakes drifting through the air suddenly gusted forth like a blizzard and smashed down on the spirit of Argent Snow.

He remained stoic and his weapon also moved forward, aiming for Lu Yun's head.

Bam!

Two Argent Snows collided together in a tangle of snowflakes and ripples. Even the blizzard was cut into two and crashed violently with itself.

Lu Yun stalked forward, his stick targeting only the spirit's head. The latter slowly backed up, a wry smile appearing on his face.

"What happened to not hitting my head?" he complained.

"This is different. I didn't use soul force when I hit you before, but this time, I'm hitting your head with Argent Snow's soul force attack. It's totally different." Lu Yun shook his head, finally in touching distance.

However, the intertwined snarl of snowflakes and ripples churned him to death before Lu Yun could land his blow.

"Eh, I didn't actually hit you, so that didn't count." He put his weapon away with a smile.

"The meaning behind your last attack did indeed reach perfection for Domain of First Snowfall and hinted at the Domain of Glorious Snowdrift." The spirit reappeared, but was shaking his head.

"However, you defeated me with the Domain of Glorious Snowdrift, so you haven't comprehended the ultimate realm of the first domain."

"I've never cultivated Argent Snow's heritage, how am I supposed to understand it?" Lu Yun quirked his lips. "Cut the crap and give me the legacy for the Domain of First Snowfall."

"The legacy for the Domain of First Snowfall is within the Three Thousand Soul Daos." Cunning flashed through the spirit's eyes and he continued with a smile, "The great soul weapons are based off of and derived from it. If you wish to rival or surpass the creators of the eight great soul weapons, you will find your path in the Three Thousand Soul Daos.

"If you only wish to retrace their footsteps, then I can give you the legacy for the Domain of First Snowfall."

"Are you shitting me?" Lu Yun narrowed his eyes. "I want the legacy for the first domain of Argent Snow."

"Oh? You wish to forsake your future then?" A mysterious smile appeared on the spirit's face.

"You want me to forge a new path when I don't know what it's supposed to look like?" Lu Yun regarded the spirit as he would an idiot. "The forebears laid the path for the convenience of those to come. No matter what decision we make, we do so with consultation of their experience and knowledge. Why mine ore for crafting when the bell is right in front of you?"

“If I don’t try out their path to see what it’s like, how am I supposed to pave my own? With pure imagination?”

“It looks like I need to hit you a few more times to beat some sense into your brain. You’re already a blockhead as a spirit, so you’re not going to make that smart of a living being either.”

The spirit of Argent Snow shook his head; he’d once delivered a similar ultimatum to other geniuses, but it was the first time one of them refuted him like Lu Yun.

“Hang on!” Lu Yun blurted out when he saw a strange expression cross the spirit’s face. “You haven’t... delayed someone’s dao, have you?”

“Huh?” the spirit floundered for a response.

“Have there been others like me that you told to search through the Three Thousand Soul Daos instead of giving them the legacy?”

The spirit nodded subconsciously. “But that person went on to accomplish striking achievements and founded a sect called the Snowsword Sect. He is renowned and venerated throughout the Boundless Planes.

“I haven’t seen him in the last couple of hundred years though. He must have set foot into sequence.”

Those who entered sequence could no longer train in Soul Dominion.

“The Snowsword Sect?” Lu Yun gaped. “Xing Chen from my sect razed it to the ground by herself. Its founder hadn’t set foot into sequence—Xing Chen scattered his soul into the void and he will never be reborn.”

“W-what?? His potential is far greater than Xing Chen’s, how could she possibly kill him?!” Of course the spirit knew who they spoke of, but in his eyes, Xing Chen was far from being a match for that genius—despite both of them being Nihil World Sovereigns and supplemental grandmasters.

“Because she possesses the complete heritage of Serene Annex and views the world from the shoulders of a giant, while the one who founded the Snowsword Sect was still crawling on the ground trying to understand how he should walk, heh!”

Pff!

The spirit exploded upon hearing these words.

“Err, that old guy hasn’t gone into a cultivation deviation, has he? Can spirit manifested from rules even do that?” Lu Yun blinked.

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Lu Yun completely trolled the guy into self detonating.

Chapter 1602: Innovation and Creation

A spirit manifested from rules was vastly different from a living being. They were essentially a simple program after creation, operating in accordance with predefined directives. It wasn’t until they came in

contact with more living beings and absorbed emotions that they slowly developed their own thoughts and logic, thereby forming a sense of self.

After they defined their own being, they could determine good from evil, right and wrong, perspectives, and craft their own thoughts and plans. They could even possess the ability to learn and gradually evolve toward a true life form.

But they still wouldn't be truly alive—they continued to behave according to established rules. The Argent Snow spirit's speech when trying to convince Lu Yun, for example, was likely the influence of a certain being that had become a deeply rooted belief in the spirit's own mind.

However, Lu Yun's refute had been so revolutionary that when the spirit's consciousness couldn't accept it, his replica exploded like a computer overloaded from input impossible to process.

He returned after a short while.

"Someone misled me and said that peerless geniuses can make their own way without needing to imitate others." He shook his head, confusion still noticeable in his eyes. "But why? Shouldn't the best geniuses discard unoriginal thoughts and proceed according to only their own?"

"Why was Xing Chen, someone who only followed in another's footsteps, able to kill Sword Snow when he forged his own path?"

Sword Snow was the founding ancestor of the Snowsword Sect.

"Civilization flourishes and dao prospers... today will always triumph over yesterday." Lu Yun suddenly felt that he needed to educate the deeply conflicted spirit of the rules. "This is because civilization of modern times stands on the shoulders of bygone cultures and treads the road that was laid by the ancients.

"The most initial dao was very simple. It followed a primitive trajectory, the changing of the seasons, the form of flora and fauna. It then gradually metamorphosed from those and began to perfect itself, reaching new heights.

"Those who came after pioneered dao methods, consulting not the evolution of dao, but what it was in its final form of that time. They also improved upon their creations, raising everything another level higher. Would you tell someone who's never practiced a combat art to invent one? As prodigious as their powers of comprehension may be, what they come up with will never measure up to someone who actually knows combat arts.

"This is not the ancient times, we stand at a very high starting point. Even the greatest of potential cannot start from zero," Lu Yun sighed. "I don't know who invented the Three Thousand Soul Daos, but I do know it is the building block of all soul force methods.

"Though many sects in the fourth realm use it as part of their foundation, everyone chooses other stronger methods to increase their strength after they attain a rudimentary level of soul force. Only with sufficient strength and cultivation level does one have the right to comprehend more from the Three Thousand Soul Daos!

“The Snow Sword you speak of probably spent his life studying the method, trying to find his own way and grasp a method of Argent Snow that belonged to him alone. What a pity that he lived in an era of the eight great legacies...”

Lu Yun shook his head and thought of the high speed rails on Earth—fast, safe, and reliable. They were the transportation method of choice, exceeding even planes in their popularity.

Their prototype was the humble steam engine, but Earthlings hadn’t invented the high speed rail by studying steam engines. They’d upgraded existing trains and rails until the leap in technology was feasible; the steam engine had long fallen by the wayside.

While the Three Thousand Soul Daos was still highly relevant, Lu Yun believed that it wouldn’t be long before a new and improved version came along.

Such was the general trend of events with the advancement of society.

Although the original Hongmeng had kept order under control during its era and cultivation methods had seemed to be the most prosperous, no one was able to string the worlds of the Boundless Planes together. Ribbons of light containing numerous worlds were an unthinkable achievement.

Some of the modern combat arts and secret methods exceeded those of the last epoch. Lu Yun studied the legacies of the original Hongmeng because he wished to use them as a foundation for which to upgrade and improve.

“What we need to do now is innovate, not recreate the wheel from scratch.” Lu Yun stroked his chin thoughtfully. “Only when reaching a certain height does one have the right to create.”

When he and Qing Yu created formula dao, they’d been aided by treasures such as the Tome of Life and Death, despite not standing at the peak of the world of immortals themselves. Lu Yun had feared almost no one then—he and Qing Yu had been at that certain height.

“The first combat arts and cultivation methods to come into existence must have been riddled with holes. They needed to be continuously honed and perfected. There is still a very long ways to go.”

“You... are correct...” the spirit responded dumbly after listening to Lu Yun’s lecture. “Here is the legacy of the Domain of First Snowfall as according to our agreement.”

He waved a beam of silver light into Lu Yun’s forehead. The spirit was thoroughly convinced and discarded the theory that he’d once cherished from the bottom of his heart.

“I have impeded three since the dawn of the new epoch. You are the fourth, and thankfully you are not as pedantic as them,” the spirit smiled.

“You existed during the time of the original Hongmeng?” Lu Yun snapped out of digesting the legacy when he heard these remarks, instantly grasping the spirit’s main point.

“Yes,” the other nodded. “There were once only seven great soul weapons in the trials of Soul Dominion. One more appeared during the time of the original Hongmeng. It is because of that additional spirit of the rules that the rest of us gained our own thoughts.”

“The Profound Pagoda?” Lu Yun asked subconsciously. God was its creator and he was someone from the original Hongmeng. Additionally, the other seven appeared in stick form whereas the pagoda was as it looked.

“Correct, and the Profound Pagoda is also stronger than us. Our inheritors will be no match for those of the pagoda if they are of the same level,” the spirit answered truthfully.

“That’s why... you thought that way before?” Lu Yun was beginning to understand the reason for the spirit’s actions.

“I did not know how to think when the Profound Pagoda appeared. I just thought that since it was stronger than all of us the second it appeared, it was more important to walk your own path. It now looks like its creator started from the end of our path to create the Profound Pagoda.”

The spirit chuckled. “Alright, I will gift you the legacies of the Domains of Glorious Snowdrift and Eventide Snow, and even higher domains, when you finish the twenty-seventh floor.”

He waved a hand and sent Lu Yun out of the realm.

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“Eh? You’re finally out, little brother!” Sword Thirteen’s eyes lit up when Lu Yun suddenly materialized.

“You’re the weird kid that Sword Thirteen talked about?” Sword Feather approached them as well.

“Sword Thirteen?” Lu Yun paused with shock when he heard the name, not even taking a clear look at the other two first. “You’re Sword Thirteen?” He snuck a look at the Argent Snow Hero Ranking over his head.

Sword Thirteen of the Sword Clan was ranked number one hundred on the ranking.

There were a total of twenty-four thousand names on the eight Hero Rankings. Anyone listed on them was an absolute genius and powerhouse in the Boundless Realms.

While there were more than just supplemental cultivators in the fourth realms, to the people, these twenty-four thousand were undeniable elites. Their strength and potential were acknowledged by all.

Being ranked as number one hundred on the ranking, Sword Thirteen had practiced his Argent Snow to an ultimate realm. He could absolutely kill others above his level—if he were a Void World King, he would be able to kill ordinary Nihil World Sovereigns.

Normally speaking, the gap between the two was too big. When Nihil World Sovereigns revealed their true forms, they were so vast that Void World Kings were unable to see them. But someone listed as number one hundred on the Hero Rankings could kill such a person if there was nothing uncommon about their target.

He was the greatest genius of the younger generation in the Sword Clan. Sword Thirteen was indeed a Void World King.

“Feng Feifan of the Star Sect.” Lu Yun raised a cupped fist salute to Sword Thirteen.

“Feng Feifan?” Sword Thirteen and Sword Feather looked at each other, unfamiliar with the name.

That was to be expected, since Lu Yun wasn't famous within the sect. He was more known for being part of the love triangle between Xing Lan and Xing Lingkong. Such gossip abounded in the Star Sect and other factions couldn't be bothered to collect this kind of intelligence.

"Just a nameless person in the Star Sect," Lu Yun chuckled. "I'm going to go back and cultivate now, so I take my leave."

He raised another cupped fist salute and hugged his seat cushion, returning to the Hall of Soul Dominion and leaving the testing grounds.

"I need to go back and investigate this Feng Feifan. He's no ordinary person," Sword Thirteen murmured to himself when he saw the young man leave. Stunning geniuses as him always trusted their intuition.

Chapter 1603: The Equation of Formula Dao

Lu Yun had no intention of engaging Sword Thirteen in further conversation. His mind was filled with the Domain of First Snowfall legacy that the spirit of Argent Snow had given him.

To Lu Yun, that was enough.

His body slowly coalesced in the Hall of Soul Dominion, but he sensed an incredible killing intent drape over him as soon as he opened his eyes.

Lu Yun jumped with shock and hastily leapt aside. When he looked back to where he'd been standing, he saw a brooding Xing Lingkong where he'd just been.

"Xing Lingkong?" Lu Yun started, not knowing how he'd offended the man so badly that he'd be waiting for Lu Yun to exit his trials.

"Aren't you something, junior brother Feng Feifan," Xing Lingkong sneered at Lu Yun. "You failed the first level of the first domain two hundred and thirty-four times. I wouldn't fault you for that if you hadn't received my reflections, but if this is all you amount to after ten years of closed door cultivation, I have to beat a lesson into you!"

"You'll swing from the hall doors today so I can slap some sense into you!" Xing Lingkong charged forward and reached for Lu Yun's collar.

With his ten years of cultivation and insights derived from the snowflakes' ripples, Lu Yun's mastery of Argent Snow had long outstripped Xing Lingkong's. The other had completed the eighty-first level of the third domain. If Lu Yun fully exerted himself, he'd be able to pass the same level as well.

Most importantly, he was a Nihil World Sovereign and Xing Lingkong a Void World King.

Lu Yun calmly assessed Xing Lingkong's attack and firmly kept his cultivation in check. He shook Argent Snow and deployed the Domain of First Snowfall with a flurry of one hundred and eight snowflakes.

Unable to halt in time, Xing Lingkong slowed down as soon as he drew near his junior brother, like he'd sunk into a bog.

"How dare you flaunt Argent Snow in front of me!" he scoffed, fanning out an arc of silver light through the air. His Argent Snow appeared amid a dance of dense snowflakes.

The two domains crashed together and Xing Lingkong shouted with agony when Lu Yun's stick hit him on the head. He only had time for one pained gasp before he fainted dead away.

"Good thing I pulled back in time or I would've killed him," Lu Yun breathed out with relief. He'd gotten used to smacking the spirit of Argent Snow on the head, so when he deployed the Domain of First Snowfall, his method of attack was the stick instead of the snowflakes.

If he hadn't abruptly come to his senses and dismissed most of his strength, he would've smashed the Void World King's head like a watermelon. Even still, Xing Lingkong was out cold on the ground.

The disturbance drew the crowd's attention, but Lu Yun ignored their reactions. It wouldn't be long now before a new round of rumors appeared in the sect, such as Xing Lingkong and Feng Feifan being at odds with each other over a beauty. Perhaps the newest addition to the stories would be that they'd fought each other for three hundred rounds in the Hall of Soul Dominion before Xing Lingkong tragically lost.

Things developed as he thought, but the gossip was even worse than he'd imagined.

Xing Lingkong had fallen in love with both Feng Feifan and Xing Lan at the same time. In order to bring happiness to his beloveds, he'd voluntarily withdrawn, purposefully losing to Feng Feifan so the other two could move on without guilt.

That explained why the former head disciple would lose to a mere inner disciple.

This version of events swept through the entire sect within a few short days, becoming the hottest topic on everyone's lips. Xing Lan almost vomited blood from anger when she heard the gossip, but didn't clarify anything. Some things became even worse if they were explained.

Still, she sought out Xing Lingkong and beat him black and blue.

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Back in his residence, Lu Yun didn't immediately delve into the legacy that the spirit had given him. He was mulling over formula dao.

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Whether it was regular or supplemental cultivation in the fourth realm, all of his progress was the result of derivation from formula dao. He'd decided to have it take root and flower in the fourth realm so that it could herald the immortal dao from the Hongmeng.

"Why do I feel like formula dao is a bit familiar?" Lu Yun rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "Formula dao can be the building blocks of anything, be it supplemental dao, immortal dao, or the cultivation daos of the third and fourth realms. It can derive them all.

"Formula... form... hang on a freaking second. Aren't we talking about math on Earth here?" Lu Yun's jaw dropped.

Mathematics was the foundation of science on Earth, whether it was physics, chemistry, astronomy, construction, computers... Everything required the calculations of math. This was very similar to formula dao. While it didn't tangibly manifest in the various great daos, many theories and assessments stemmed from a beginning in formula dao.

Lu Yun and Qing Yu had extracted formula dao from the combat arts of immortal dao, then perfected it with the Tome of Life and Death for it to become a true great dao.

“The current iteration of formula dao is not fully complete. If it really is the math of cultivation, then there must be some actual, well, formulas within it that can derive everything!”

When Lu Yun and Qing Yu first used formula dao, they’d used it to dissect, theorize, reassemble, and perfect combat arts and cultivation methods. There was a definable pattern to any combat art or cultivation method, and theoretically speaking, a formula should be able to capture that pattern.

If they could systemize combat arts, then the intangible formula dao would become something tangible and thus be disseminated throughout the fourth realm.

It was mainstream knowledge in the world of immortals and had become the basics of cultivating immortal dao. Thus, development of this iteration of immortal dao had exceeded any other era it’d existed in.

Denizens of the world of immortals could swiftly grasp formula dao because it came from immortal dao, so learning was easier for them. It wasn’t as straightforward for those of the chaos, Hongmeng, and fourth realm.

But now, inspiration struck Lu Yun. If he could define this intangible formula dao as a system, then even those who didn’t understand or practice it could use formula dao.

“That’s right, that’s right, this is the right path! This isn’t my stroke of brilliance, but the heights that formula dao has reached in the world of immortals. Someone’s already started doing this, and since Little Yu and I are the inventors of formula dao, this is feedback from developmental trends on the world of immortals.

“Damn I’m dumb, why didn’t I think of this earlier? I’m an embarrassment to all Earthlings!” Lu Yun grinned.

When he and Qing Yu utilized formula dao, they simulated the cycle of great dao in their minds. But if formula dao was defined as a system, then manual calculations were possible. The notion of “system” was just Lu Yun’s framework. More accurately speaking, it was the simulation of pattern.

“Just me alone isn’t enough to make formula dao tangible and shape it as a physical great dao. Little Yu, the little fox, and I aren’t enough either. We need more collective wisdom.”

The joint wisdom of the world of immortals had induced the first metamorphosis in formula dao. The second step was up to the fourth realm.

“The Alchemist, Formation, Treasure, and Talisman Sovereigns... These people are wise sages in the Star Sect.” A smile floated onto Lu Yun’s face when he thought of the Alchemist Sovereign that he’d met.

Supplemental cultivators were viewed as the symbols of wisdom. The sovereigns had reached peak level in their fields. If they were introduced to formula dao, that would certainly deepen their understanding.

“I might be able to grasp that trace of the pattern if I use formula dao to analyze the Domain of First Snowfall, then calculate the other two domains. I might even be able to theorize the domains that are to come.” Lu Yun headed out of his abode when his thoughts traveled here and headed for Mount Buzhou.

“Where are you going, junior brother Feifan?” A threatening voice sounded in Lu Yun’s ears as he flew to Mount Buzhou.

He’d been considering formula dao as he traveled, so his speed wasn’t very fast. Lu Yun shuddered when he heard the voice and quickly stopped.

“Senior sister Xing Lan, you can’t do anything to me now or the gossip tomorrow will say that you’re madly in love with Xing Lingkong. They’ll interpret this as you beating me up in revenge for senior brother Lingkong and that you love him more!”

Lu Yun had wrapped his mind around the Star Sect gossip style. Rumors faded away after a few days if nothing else happened, but they grew even worse if anything further developed.

Xing Lan glared viciously at Lu Yun and reluctantly put her hand down.

Chapter 1604: Teaching Dao

Lu Yun also breathed out in relief. After a trip to Soul Dominion, he really didn’t want to fight Xing Lan. She trained with the Serene Annex, just like her master Xing Chen. As the foremost senior sister of the younger generation, she was number nine hundred and ninety-eight on the Hero Ranking.

It was a very high placement considering she was just a Void World King. If she could ascend to Nihil World Sovereign, she would certainly be one of the titans of the fourth realm. Therefore, she rarely left the sect as there were plenty of old farts in the Boundless Planes who loved prematurely killing geniuses.

“I followed you from your residence,” Xing Lan put away her soul weapon with a frosty look. “The honorable Alchemist Sovereign wants you.”

“The Alchemist Sovereign wants me?” Lu Yun brightened. “Probably because of the pill recipe. Perfect, I was just about to go find him.”

“Pill recipe?” Xing Lan’s expression shifted. As Xing Chen’s disciple, she naturally knew that the Alchemist Sovereign had obtained a precious pill recipe ten years ago, one that could refine the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus.

Did it have something to do with Feng Feifan?

“Come with me.” Instead of satisfying her curiosity, Xing Lan turned around and headed in another direction. The Alchemist Sovereign wasn’t at Mount Buzhou.

This time, however, she traveled more carefully. She concealed her presence and form as they flew, not wanting to provide more fodder for gossip if anyone saw her with Lu Yun.

There were many notable mountains and rivers in the World Star. The Alchemist Sovereign lived on the Divine Alchemist Mountain, one that nurtured a vast herb garden. It differed from the world of spirit herbs on the eighth floor of Mount Buzhou as only plants without spirituality grew here.

The Alchemist Sovereign was eagerly waiting for Lu Yun’s arrival.

“You’re finally here, fellow daoist Feifan!” He rushed up in greeting when he saw Lu Yun and Xing Lan arrive. “Heh heh heh, if it wasn’t for another batch of Principal Seventh Rank Pills simmering in my pill cauldron, I would’ve gone to you myself!”

“Fellow, fellow daoist?” Xing Lan gaped as she looked dumbly at Lu Yun.

Anyone with the Alchemist Sovereign’s standing in the Star Sect was an extraordinary personage. He was second to only the Star Sovereign King, and even Xing Chen had to respectfully hail him “senior” when the two met. But this prodigious heavyweight called Feng Feifan his fellow daoist?

Fellow daoist?

Fellow daoist??

That honorific couldn’t be easily bestowed upon someone. Not only was it a title used between peers, but it also had a deeper meaning that the two walked the same path.

Xing Lan’s thoughts were thrown into disarray.

“Senior, is something the matter?” Lu Yun asked curiously when he saw the other’s expression. “Has something gone wrong with the pill recipe?”

“Ahem!” the Alchemist Sovereign responded awkwardly. “It’s absolutely fine, I’ve been able to synthesize the properties of the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus from it and refined Principal Seventh Rank Pills with it. The latest batch is coming together in my pill cauldron.”

He’d indulged himself with his new toy after Lu Yun gave him the recipe. Over the past ten years, the sovereign had refined several tens of thousands of cauldrons of pills. Though none of them contained spirituality and couldn’t help the recipient’s mentality advance to grandmaster, they could do so when it came to soul force. Thus, their medicinal effects weren’t too far removed from the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus.

That made these pills the equivalent of a connate spirit root. They would fetch a princely sum in the outside world if none of the Star Sect disciples needed one. After all, there were plenty in the fourth realm who’d been like Lu Yun—a grandmaster’s mentality but ninth level soul force.

“Actually, I wanted to ask you... where did you get this recipe?” The sovereign turned solemn. “If you really did derive it yourself, I must report to the Star Sovereign King so you are protected as well.”

He looked at Xing Lan as he talked, an obvious sign that she was also under the sovereign king’s protection. As a genius on the Hero Ranking, she would be targeted every time she set foot outside sect grounds.

It was enough for the Star Sect to have a Xing Chen, they would not be permitted to also have a Xing Lan.

“So the pill recipe does indeed have something to do with him...” Xing Lan’s expression flickered rapidly, finally understanding why the sovereign had called the young man his fellow daoist.

“Has the word gotten out?” Lu Yun smiled as he looked at the sovereign.

The elder shifted awkwardly. “I er, showed off to an old friend a few days ago and accidentally let it slip.”

“That’s alright,” Lu Yun smiled.

“You didn’t derive the pill recipe?” blinked the sovereign.

“No, I did.” Lu Yun waved the rest of the elder’s words off. “You didn’t need to come to me, I would’ve come to the senior—not for the recipe, but for how I came about it. Would you invite the other seniors in the sect here?”

After some thought, Lu Yun decided not to include Ah Zhi. Sleep was probably more important in her eyes.

“Very well,” nodded the elder; he smiled ruefully at Xing Lan. “Lass, I’m afraid I’ll have to trouble you again. I’ve also practiced the Star Sovereign King’s Dream Sutra and can’t be bothered to go myself.”

“This junior will be on her way.” Xing Lan smiled with resignation, took another look at Lu Yun, then bounded off into the distance.

“How did you derive the pill recipe? New recipes are usually riddled with flaws and erroneous logic, the pills they produce are never perfect and in fact, come with a certain degree of poison.

“But I see no such holes in your recipe.” The Alchemist Sovereign glanced at the seven snoring pill dolls in his abode.

“Formula dao,” Lu Yun responded candidly. “This junior and my dao partner created a great dao in our world called formula dao. It can analyze all things and derive even concepts for the Boundless Realm.”

The senior’s eyes widened and continued to grow bigger as Lu Yun described his thoughts and the wonders of formula dao. In the end, the Alchemist Sovereign breathed rapidly for air.

“Do you, do you mean that? Can such a formula dao really exist?” he asked dumbly.

“Yes and yes.” Lu Yun nodded. “I intend to systemize the patterns of formula dao and share it with the realm.”

“Do you know the significance of this dao?! Once it spreads, the entire fourth realm will be up in arms about it. Everything will change!” The elder frowned. “And you might not benefit from the changes either.”

“Only when people walk a path is it dao. If it is clutched in the hands of the few, that makes it a secret art,” Lu Yun responded with an open mind. “But, we can limit it to the Star Sect at first and then slowly teach it to everyone else.”

“It seems like you want to upend the sect and turn the Star Sovereign King into a figurehead,” the elder looked strangely at Lu Yun.

“He doesn’t need to go to that effort if he wants the Star Sect,” Ah Zhi’s languid, slightly sleepy voice sounded in the air. “I wanted to give the sect to him when he first arrived ten years ago. Not only did the kid not want it, but he used a taboo to scare me off the notion.”

Her willowy form gradually materialized in the air, a purple silk dress molded to her body and fully illustrating her perfect curves.

“Yawn!” She yawned hugely and huffed, “But you lied to me, kid! You’ve already cleansed the resentment on that thing!”

“I didn’t know myself until not too long ago,” Lu Yun explained apologetically. “That’s why I’ve decided to make the Star Sect the foundations of formula dao and teach it here first.”

The Alchemist Sovereign was so stunned he didn’t know what to say. All Ah Zhi cared about was yawning; she didn’t bother with any explanations and allowed the elder to wildly hazard guesses as he would.

This was a perfect illustration of why so many rumors flew about in the sect.

“Greetings to the Star Sovereign King!” Xing Lan returned with the Treasure, Talisman, and Formation Sovereigns. When they saw that Ah Zhi was present, they quickly inclined their bodies in a bow.

Though their status was beyond compare in the sect, they still had to show due respect to a sequence expert. As proud as they were of their ability, arrogance had no place in front of their sovereign king.

Chapter 1605: A Myriad of Supplemental Dao All Returns to Formula Dao

“Order is required to maintain the heritage of formula dao and the establishment of its foundations. I will hold down the fort for you. Lu Yun, teach them formula dao. They’re the wisest four of the Star Sect.” Ah Zhi knew what the young man wanted to do and called him by his real name, not Feng Feifan.

“Teach Xing Lan as well, her capacity for understanding is uncommonly high. Let her listen off to the side.” Her usual sleepiness had dispersed, replaced by an incomparable solemnity.

Xing Lan’s mind was blank; she had no idea what this incredible assembly sought to achieve. The Star Sovereign King and four great sovereigns were all in attendance—this was the strongest compilation of force in the Star Sect.

“Should we invite Sovereign Chen as well? She’s the first Nihil World Sovereign of the sect, after all,” Lu Yun asked.

“No need.” Ah Zhi shook her head. “Xing Chen’s brains are filled with muscle. It’d be one thing if she’s to research how to beat people, but comprehend formula dao? She won’t be as useful as Xing Lan.”

Xing Lan grinned ruefully. She hadn’t thought that her master would be nothing more than a simpleminded henchman in the Star Sovereign King’s eyes.

“Oh, alright then.” Lu Yun nodded and released his formula dao, projecting it into the air.

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The Star Sect was a lazy sect—a habit that started with their founder, the Star Sovereign King. Its disciples didn’t fight or steal from each other, and there were no counterproductive rankings within the faction. Disciples spent their idle time sharing gossip and starting rumors. If it wasn’t for the senior

brothers and sisters being indirectly forced to beat up their juniors, the sect would be a massive retirement home.

Even the elders rarely ventured outside to recruit disciples. New recruits were brought back by the senior disciples from their travels. Anyone who had the ability to pass through the ribbons of worlds and enter the World Star proved themselves worthy of joining the Star Sect.

This faction's members even rarely put in the effort to fight over zones of danger, secret areas, and treasures out in the realm. When the Tomb of the Hallowed Emperor manifested, only Xing Wuliang had gone to represent the Star Sect—and he'd been forced to go.

There was only one rule in the sect—death to traitors.

That aside, their treatment of disciples ranked among the best in the realm. Treasuries and libraries abounded on the World Star and one could freely take from them, as long as one had the relevant authorization to. Said authorization was a function of the disciple's powers of comprehension and strength.

This was almost impossible in other sects and clans.

In Lu Yun's eyes, the Star Sect was as if the universities of Earth. It supplied abundant resources and foundations for its disciples, the masters passed on knowledge, and the rest was up to the disciples themselves.

While disciples walked their master's path, they did so in their own way.

Of course, there were those who possessed incredibly high potential but were lazy beyond belief. For those, the senior disciples provided all the motivation they needed.

At the same time, Star Sect disciples understood the depths of their good fortune and demonstrated their gratitude when they perfected their craft. They journeyed to the outside world and seized treasure to deliver to the sect's vaults.

As opposed to lazy, perhaps it would be more accurate to describe the Star Sect as lacking in desire. They wanted for nothing and lacked for nothing. Going with the flow and acceding to nature was the general state of things.

While the sect council would not take revenge or shelter their disciples if the latter made enemies or died in the outside world, that wasn't a description that could be taken to the extreme.

Who didn't have a few friends that one could entrust their back with?

Take the Snowsword Sect, for example—it'd once killed a few young Star Sect disciples. Those had been Xing Chen's senior brothers. When she filled out her wings, she came knocking on Snowsword doors and killed them all.

Though it was true that the sect had been a nest of demons, she wouldn't have cared if it housed demons or ghosts if they hadn't killed those Star Sect disciples.

There was no hierarchy in the Star Sect—whoever reached a new level of accomplishment first was the senior. Those who were stronger were senior and those who were weaker, even if they had a longer

tenure, were junior. If one became a Nihil World Sovereign, they were an elder even if it'd been less than a hundred years since they joined the sect.

At first, Lu Yun only wanted to borrow the sect as a place to cultivate. He would leave as soon as he was finished and refrain from forming karmic relationships. Thus, he presented himself as a regular disciple and didn't deploy the strength of a Nihil World Sovereign.

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But now, the Tome of Life and Death had resolved the crisis of the withered wood; there was no need to conceal anything about himself. He planned to completely unleash his full cultivation and project formula dao with the strength of a Nihil World Sovereign.

Xing Lan was completely numb. She'd never dreamed that the bizarre young man who'd somehow joined them was a powerful Nihil World Sovereign. While he wasn't the strongest of world sovereigns, he wasn't new to the level either.

"Focus on observing formula dao and clear your mind of random thoughts." Xing Chen suddenly appeared behind Xing Lan and smacked the back of her head.

"Yes, master!" Xing Lan quickly composed herself and studied Lu Yun's projections.

While Ah Zhi had said that they didn't need to invite Xing Chen, how would the latter not be present to reaffirm the supplemental dao foundations of the fourth realm, given her status as the first Nihil World Sovereign of the sect?

Just as Lu Yun had said, if he was the only one to understand formula dao in the Boundless Planes, that would only make it a secret art. It wasn't until multiple people tread the path did it become dao.

Given how marvelous it was, whoever grasped it first would soar ahead of everyone else and see an explosive increase in strength. Lu Yun well knew the saying of keeping the richest water for one's own fields.

Therefore, the first to practice formula dao would be Ah Zhi's Star Sect.

He spent three years projecting formula dao, completely entrancing those present and initiating them into this new path. Ah Zhi had sealed off Divine Alchemist Mountain, so the new dao that'd yet to take root in the fourth realm didn't travel elsewhere.

Three years later, Lu Yun slowly withdrew the manifestations of formula dao around him.

"This formula dao... cannot be appraised." The Formation Sovereign awoke, now a new initiate in formula dao.

Lu Yun looked at his eyes—they were the ones who appeared in Xing Wuliang's eyes. Though Xing Wuliang hailed Xing Shenzuo as his master, he practiced the Formation Sovereign's methods.

"Before I came here, I thought that formula dao would become the ninth major supplemental dao, on par with the others. But it seems that I was gravely mistaken," the sovereign mused.

“Hmm?” Lu Yun blinked. In the world of immortals, that was indeed formula dao’s place, but it was viewed as the foremost of supplemental dao.

“Supplemental dao is just an overall category name, not the name of a tangible dao. It’s a reference to the countless daos that complement cultivation,” the Formation Sovereign murmured.

The Alchemist, Treasure, Formation Sovereigns, and Xing Lan woke as well. Ah Zhi yawned lazily, looking at the Formation Sovereign with interest. Of the four sovereigns, he was by far the strongest in strength and cultivation level.

“With the appearance of formula dao, I see a possibility... a possibility of formula dao.”

“A possibility of formula dao?” Xing Lan blinked, not understanding.

“There is a myriad of supplemental dao out there, of which all returns to formula dao. Do you mean that the great dao that can truly convey supplemental dao is formula dao?” asked the other three sovereigns.

The Formation Sovereign slowly inclined his head.

“Since the time of the original Hongmeng and even earlier, innumerable forebears have exhausted an uncountable number of years to search for a great dao that could bear the weight of supplemental dao. They were yet to succeed even when the original Hongmeng shattered, but to think... that the great dao would appear today.” The Formation Sovereign sighed. “I’d thought that if the Three Thousand Soul Daos could evolve into a great dao, it could possibly become that medium. But it is a cultivation method in the end, not a dao.”

Lu Yun listened quietly to the four sovereigns converse while Xing Chen and Xing Lan both looked at him. The handsome young man was suddenly shrouded in mists of mystery to them.

“I would like to take this moment to remind everyone that this conversation should remain behind closed doors. If formula dao is to take root in the Boundless Planes and grow into a great dao, it must do so with the help of all beings.

“If we are to popularize it, we do indeed need to systemize it,” the Alchemist Sovereign agreed.

“Any formula needs a most basic notation. What is the symbol of formula dao?” Lu Yun finally broke his silence.

The basic notation of math was numbers. Numbers were used to develop a variety of formulas and programs to calculate data, thereby leading science to higher levels. If formula dao was to do the same, it needed a basic symbol with which to undergo calculations and simulations.

Chapter 1606.1: Basic Formulas

“The most basic symbol of the Boundless Planes is the primitive trajectory.” Silent this entire time, Xing Chen suddenly spoke up. “Whether it be various combat arts, dao methods, or cultivation methods, all follow the primitive trajectory. Pill refinement, glyph etching, formation setup, and equipment refinement are all a result of primitive trajectories.

“Anyone of the Boundless Planes can see and use them when they reach Void World King, thereby coalescing combat arts.”

“Aren’t you supposed to have a brain full of muscles?” Lu Yun mumbled after hearing the astute analysis.

Xing Chen flicked a sideways glare at him, but otherwise ignored the impertinent young man.

“There’s also no need to be a Void World King sometimes. If one sets foot onto the path of soul force cultivation and their soul force reaches first level, they’re also able to see the primitive trajectories and refine pills and equipment.” Xing Lan quickly added her opinion when she saw her master speak up.

Supplemental dao in the fourth realm centered around soul force as its foundation. The most fundamental method that was the Three Thousand Soul Daos was meant to be a medium for supplemental dao. It’d been formed with the intent of combining all supplemental daos as one.

In spite of it all, however, it remained a method instead of a dao itself.

“In that case, we must not lack methods when we cultivate formula dao. As the Three Thousand Soul Daos is the basic method with which to cultivate soul force, it can be the same for formula dao. That detail does not need to change.” The others nodded in agreement.

That first level soul force could see and utilize primitive trajectories was an immensely important characteristic. At the same time, the term “primitive trajectories” was a catch-all referring to a variety of trajectories. They could be further subdivided into more categories; anything was a possibility.

“In that case, I will have to trouble the seniors to use formula dao and derive the existence of the primitive trajectories, incorporating them into formula dao,” Lu Yun requested. He wasn’t familiar with the method or primitive trajectories. His understanding was less than even Xing Lan’s.

“Please continue operating formula dao, fellow daoist,” the Formation Sovereign answered. Just as Lu Yun’s comprehension of primitive trajectories was insufficient, so were the others far behind him when it came to formula dao. They needed to complement each other.

Lu Yun nodded and projected formula dao once more. The formula dao that he, Qing Yu, and those of the world of immortals had derived together was just a beginning, a new concept.

It was the equivalent of a dragonling with the utmost potential to bear all supplemental dao on its back. But for now, it bore many flaws and insufficiencies.

The four sovereigns, Xing Chen, and Ah Zhi started supplementing formula dao with their own great dao, further perfecting what seemed to be a flawless great dao in Lu Yun’s eyes.

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One hundred years quietly drifted by, as seamless as the snap of a finger. More people gathered on Divine Alchemist Mountain during this time. Apart from those present at the very beginning, Qing Yu was here as well.

As opposed to Lu Yun, Qing Yu was the one who'd truly invented formula dao and shaped it into a great dao. What Lu Yun pioneered in the beginning was simply a way to derive combat arts. Her presence smoothed the process of operating formula dao, and Yun Zhongzi came as well.

He was a bonafide supplemental grandmaster whose accomplishments and cultivation level exceed the Formation Sovereign's. His addition to the group enabled them to discover faults that'd thus far remained undetected.

Various Nihil World Sovereigns of the Star Sect were also in attendance—Wu Mochou of Mochou Mountain, Xing Shenzuo of Shenzuo Mountain, Xing Feicui of Feicui Mountain, and others joined the derivation of formula dao.

Some of the genius disciples in the sect had also been summoned—Xing Lingkong, Xing Wuliang, Su He, and others. Just like Xing Lan, they became guinea pigs as soon as they set foot onto the mountain.

They were tested with each rendition of formula dao and taught this new great dao as well. The main purpose of manifesting formula dao now wasn't to cultivate it, but to propagate it.

Once formula dao was perfected in the fourth realm, it would change in the world of immortals as well. Formula dao cultivators were affected by it at every second; the various supplemental daos of the world of immortals were already showing signs of melding with formula dao.

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"This is as far as our abilities go," the Formation Sovereign and Yun Zhongzi declared in unison, then smiled at each other

"That is enough. We are very few, after all, and a great dao needs to be tread by innumerable beings before it can be perfected with the collective strength of all," Yun Zhongzi tutted with amazement; formula dao had formed a perfect circulation in his body. He would be able to analyze anything in front of him with the slightest exertion, and his strength was at least thirty times greater than before.

For powerhouses at his level, every hint of improvement was hard fought and the effort of hundreds of millions of years. A thirty percent increase in one hundred years was unheard of!

"Formula dao has already incorporated the Three Thousand Soul Daos. The latter was originally just a method to cultivate soul force, but we can now use it to commence some simple deductions since it's become part of formula dao," Yun Zhongzi suddenly mentioned. His cultivation was the highest level among all those present; he outstripped even Ah Zhi.

As a character from the original Hongmeng, he'd long set foot into sequence. He'd severed his cultivation to cultivate order anew with the dawn of the new epoch and hadn't activated sequence yet, but his cultivation level remained what it was before.

When he derived formula dao, he'd also focused on combining it with the Three Thousand Soul Daos so that the latter could transform into another method. It would become the fundamental method of formula dao.

“I’ve named it the ‘Totality Method,’” Yun Zhongzi hummed with thought. “Fellow daoists, though Totality is a basic method, it is capable of shifting into many forms and the possibilities are endless. As such, it’s more meaningful than the Three Thousand Soul Daos.”

Since he was a premier supplemental grandmaster, he’d participated in the formation of the Three Thousand Soul Daos during the original Hongmeng era. The goal back then was already to propagate it as a great dao so it could support supplemental dao.

They’d failed.

He’d inherited the fruits of that labor and seamlessly connected it to formula dao, transforming it into the Totality Method of formula dao.

Credit didn’t go to him alone; this was the summation of conclusions from the previous epoch, ones that incorporated results from even earlier.

With the appearance of the Totality Method, all of the Nihil World Sovereigns smiled at each other. The new method contained their efforts as well. It was one that surpassed the Three Thousand Soul Daos—not as an advanced version, but a completely new version.

“The seventy-two basic formulas of pill methods are complete,” the Alchemist Sovereign announced with a smile. “Their interaction and reinforcement with each other makes it possible to derive all thirty-eight million pill recipes and sixty-one million refinement methods in the known and unknown expanses.”

When he utilized the seventy-two basic formulas, the sovereign discovered with great surprise that Lu Yun had easily derived the recipe for the Principal Seventh Rank Pill. Since this was just the result of using the basic formulas, more awaited discovery with more advanced formulas. Just as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division were the basic operations of mathematics, so were there more advanced operations that existed.

One hundred years wasn’t enough for the Alchemist Sovereign to determine more advanced formulas, but everything was possible given enough time.

“The one hundred and eight basic formulas of formation dao can derive eighty-some million variations of formations and feng shui.”

“The thirty-six basic formulas of talisman dao can derive thirty-six million glyphs and forty-some million talismans.”

“The seventy-two basic formulas of treasure dao can derive sixty-three million kinds of treasures.”

With help from the assembled Nihil World Sovereigns, the four great sovereigns were able to determine all of the basic formulas of their dao and furthermore ascertain the refinement methods of all sorts of formations, pills, treasures, and talismans.

These results were also a function of the four sovereigns being absolute powerhouses in the fourth realm. They’d only needed some basic formulas to delve into their craft.

Chapter 1606.2: Basic Formulas

“These basic formulas haven’t been explored to their fullest either, there’s plenty left for us to discover. We need time to excavate more and perfect them,” remarked the Formation Sovereign. “I employed formula dao just now and determined that the formulas of formation dao should resonate with the major cycle. There should be three hundred and sixty-five of them, but I’ve sadly only found one hundred and eight.”

Every basic formula discovered beyond the one hundred and eight would be a qualitative improvement for formation dao. The basic formulas were the foundation of everything; the more there were, the more advanced formulas they could coalesce and thus the more formations that could be derived.

Every formula represented a certain pattern. Patterns were the underlying rules of everything; they were the product of law and order. The existence of pattern meant trending toward a great dao.

The Talisman, Treasure, and Alchemist Sovereigns nodded in agreement. There should also be three hundred and sixty-five basic formulas for their daos as well, but their level of enlightenment wasn’t high enough to discover them all.

“And that’s not it, all of the other supplemental daos should possess basic formulas too. Even combat arts and cultivation methods are the same way,” Yun Zhongzi elaborated.

Ever since Lu Yun had raised the theory of a system of formulas, those gathered on the mountain felt the notion to be very accurate in describing the pattern of formula dao. Thus, they’d readily embraced the concept and used the word “formulas”.

Lu Yun and Qing Yu hadn’t been able to get a word in edgewise; they sat off to the side and listened to everyone chatter excitedly. The sect geniuses looked blankly at legendary characters they would ordinarily never have a chance of seeing. What a sight it was to see these titans gesticulate and debate wildly!

There were times when they agreed with each other, and times when they didn’t. When the Alchemist Sovereign disagreed with another Star Sect pill grandmaster on the notion of formula theory, they almost broke out in a fight.

“As important as the various formulas are, we should not forget that the basis of supplemental dao cultivation is soul force. Thus, the basics of formula dao should be soul force.

“Senior Yun Zhongzi’s Totality Method provides us with the basic framework of cultivating soul force in the context of formula dao. However, the current delineation of soul force in the fourth realm is a bit crude at best.” the Alchemist Sovereign suddenly raised. He sent the pill grandmaster flying with a kick—the man was still running his mouth at him! The sovereign continued smoothly, “I feel that there should be a unit of measure for soul force—not for purposes of battle, but to facilitate calculations, derivations, and refinement.

“Let us use pill refinement as an example. We can use formula dao to determine the amount of ingredients each pill recipe needs, but we overlook a crucial problem—the amount of soul force each recipe requires!

“At our cultivation levels, adding the proper amount of soul force is an instinctive action. But for those whose levels are not high enough, it remains a murky notion. Each step of cleansing, distilling, and

refining requires a different amount of optimal soul force at different timings. How much soul force should be imbued in a cauldron of Purification Pills is a lesson in theory and calculation.”

“Very true, it’s definitely a problem!” the Treasure Sovereign hastily concurred. “Some of the disciples I’ve taught are enormously talented in refinement, but it’s always a problem of soul force when they fail. If we can calculate the precise amount of soul force needed for every step, our failure rate will greatly decrease. We might be able to eliminate it altogether!”

Deploying soul force was one thing, controlling the amount used was another. How much soul force necessary in refining treasures, pills, talismans, and formations would affect the quality of the final product and success rate.

These old farts were highly practiced and employed their craft as an extension of themselves, subconsciously understanding how much soul force to instill. But sometimes, even they miscalculated. Many treasures were one of a kind in the fourth realm; the slightest error resulted in total waste.

Thus, soul force was enormously important when it came to refinement.

“There ought to be a formula that calculates the amount of soul force needed in each recipe and method.”

“But... the cultivation of soul force differs from person to person, and the characteristics of each person’s soul force is different as well...”

“Those differences aren’t big enough to cause trouble, they all follow the same pattern. If we find these patterns and arrange them into formulas, that will take care of all of our troubles.”

“A unit of measurement should be easy to determine though.”

“There are ten levels of soul force, from level one to grandmaster. Each level is determined by strength of soul force. As long as we locate their commonalities and standardize measurement, we’ll find other similarities as well,” the Formation Sovereign expounded with gusto.

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Qing Yu leaned against Lu Yun’s shoulder and stared off into space at existences she was overawed at. She pulled a long face, “I don’t even understand what they’re talking about anymore. Do I have to learn all this?”

Lu Yun dropped a gentle kiss onto her cheek and caressed her hair. “Nope, don’t worry about it. We don’t need to learn any of this and you don’t even need to cultivate soul force. You’ll be the direct beneficiary as soon as they perfect formula dao. Everything will be accessible to you with a thought.

“Formula dao is an independent great dao in the fourth realm, but soul dao falls under the immortal dao in the world of immortals. Immortals have immortal force as their base and possess innate soul force.

“Most importantly is that what they’re describing will be illustrated in the Dao Flower. It will be a theorem that appears in the immortal dao. We don’t need to spend effort to learn it, but it would be better for the other immortals to bend their minds to the task,” Lu Yun gently whispered into her ear, prompting a sigh of relief.

“Let’s go, they’re immersed in dao and no longer need us. Let me go raise your cultivation level.” He wrapped his arm around Qing Yu’s waist and prepared to leave Divine Alchemist Mountain.

She was now a true king, a powerhouse in the Hongmeng, but not one of the greatest. The third realm grew more disorderly by the day as all sorts of unsavory characters had emerged after Lu Yun’s departure.

The various plans that the Curse King and other fourth realm factions had made in the Central Hongmeng revealed themselves, igniting flames of war across the realm.

Fortunately, Qing Yu could easily deal with them thanks to the sword “Quiet” that Lu Yun had left for her. If she could ascend to potentate level, however, it would lessen the danger around her.

Most importantly was that the last key to the Hongmeng Tower had appeared in the past one hundred years, but contrary to their expectations, the little fox hadn’t obtained the Hongmeng Tower.

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“Wait, don’t go yet!” Yun Zhongzi called out to Lu Yun and transmitted the rest, “Quiet is in that lass’ hand, correct? The two of you should visit the Sword Clan when you have a moment.”

Lu Yun started.

“The Quiet Sovereign King’s passing will be public knowledge soon. I employed formula dao a moment ago and realized that the clan faces the risk of extermination. Since you two wield Quiet, you should visit the clan and help them resolve their danger,” Yun Zhongzi’s tone turned gravely solemn.

After the demise of the Hallowed Emperor, the Di Clan had moved to the Central Hongmeng. It was no coincidence that they’d obtained the divine sword that the Quiet Sovereign King had turned into upon his death.

However, too many things had changed in the tomb, so there’d been many secrets that Yun Zhongzi couldn’t tell Lu Yun. Too many pairs of eyes in the fourth realm kept constant watch over the tomb. He only dared slightly mention Quiet when they were on the Divine Alchemist Mountain on the World Star.

Lu Yun nodded slightly.

“The full heritage of Argent Snow is with the Sword Clan as well. That is one of the reasons why they face annihilation.”

The legacies of the eight soul weapons were a major mystery that the assembly sought to solve with formula dao. However, this was possibly one of the most complicated topics in the fourth realm. Lu Yun had died two hundred and thirty-four times despite detailed tutelage from the spirit of Argent Snow, and he’d only grasped a tiny bit of understanding to manifest the ripples on the snowflakes.

He’d gifted that knowledge to the Star Sect.

As it stood now, formula dao, the theories and formulas it’d given rise to were insufficient to determine the full legacies. Lu Yun had also come up empty-handed after a hundred years, which was why he’d shifted to studying formula dao and establishing it in the fourth realm.

Chapter 1607.1: The Luminaries Arrive

The Sword Clan cultivated both supplemental dao and combat arts. If the assembly could invite experts from the clan to join the process of deriving formula dao, it would surely help formula dao take another giant leap forward.

Plainly, Yun Zhongzi had paid them a visit after leaving the tomb and understood their current situation. The impending danger of the clan's demise wasn't something that could be resolved by one or two Nihil World Sovereigns. Not even sequence experts could avert the disaster. The only thing that would make a difference was Quiet.

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"What about Ingress Sword Island?" A sudden thought struck Lu Yun; the sage hadn't mentioned the island at all. "Should I pay them a visit as well?"

"Ingress Sword Island?" Yun Zhongzi shook his head. "Jian Juexian's been confined and his sword, Immortal's End, stripped from him. Ingress Sword Island is now a Luminary faction. You will not return if you go and will most likely lose your life. The Luminaries are also present in the Central Hongmeng."

It was Lu Yun's second time hearing the name, the first time had been from Xing Chen. Xing Mochou's head disciple, Xing Heng, had been part of this faction.

Their ambitions were exceedingly great as they wanted to conquer the known expanses and become an existence like the original Hongmeng. Not only had the original Hongmeng been the core of the fourth realm, it'd ruled the Boundless Planes and maintained the realm's orders.

The Luminaries plainly didn't have that level of strength.

"Don't rush off to save Jian Juexian either. He'll be just fine if you don't go, but he'll die by your side if you do." Yun Zhongzi waved a hand and returned to conversing with the Nihil World Sovereigns.

"They seem to be... a little too obsessed." Qing Yu frowned slightly at the group. She'd heard what Yun Zhongzi had said to her beloved, but she trusted that he would make the right decision.

"They... are indeed losing sight of the big picture just a bit." Lu Yun shook his head slightly. "Honorable seniors."

The couple returned to the scene and interrupted all of the conversations taking place.

"What is it?" The Formation Sovereign looked at Lu Yun with puzzlement.

"There is a tiny world of mortals in the Boundless Planes that lacks combat methods, cultivation methods, and supplemental dao. However, there's something very interesting there called mathematics. Its formulas calculate the illogical, producing chemistry, astronomy, architecture, and smelting.

"These formulas are used in practical manners to create miracle upon miracle." Lu Yun waved his hand and illustrated the development of science in an enormous scroll, unfurling it in front of the Nihil World Sovereigns.

“We see... we were a little too focused on a tangent and almost proceeded down the wrong path.” Yun Zhongzi immediately grasped Lu Yun’s meaning when he saw the scroll. They were moving away from the proper perspective with their discussion of basic formulas, deriving advanced formulas, soul force, cultivation, and combat arts.

Dao was not the final destination, its purpose was to be used.

Dao was pattern, rule, and order. Living beings walked the path of dao to borrow it for their own use. Using it was the final destination.

Earth’s science wasn’t very complicated to existences on a Nihil World Sovereign level. They could quickly discern the truths within via a simple glance.

Lu Yun hadn’t shown them scientific knowledge, but rather research processes and how humans used science. They bore stunning similarities to formula dao. The system of formula dao that he’d proposed was based on mathematical theorem.

“In addition, theory is just theory at the end of the day. It must be practiced before it can be verified and further developed. Perhaps the formulas that evade the seniors’ diligent efforts will come to be after a bit of experimentation.

“Then, this junior takes his leave.” Holding Qing Yu’s hand, Lu Yun left Divine Alchemist Mountain.

“Sovereign Yun, what is his background?” the Formation Sovereign asked curiously after Lu Yun left.

“The world he showed us does not seem to be an imaginary one. It has developed toward another extreme in the absence of combat arts and cultivation methods.”

“You’ll have to ask your Star Sovereign King for that,” chuckled Yun Zhongzi as he glanced at Ah Zhi.

He’d recognized the sleepy leader of the Star Sect; he just hadn’t known that Ah Zhi of Mount Buzhou was the Star Sovereign King. With that, his last bit of distaste toward the sect vanished.

Fuxi and the others had succeeded in some ways and failed in others. Hongjun, the Grand Pure One, and Ingress had likewise succeeded and failed. Now that Lu Yun had shown them formula dao, it would compensate for all previous failures. It was only a matter of time before they found a way to bring order under control and maintain it.

“That kid?” Ah Zhi wasn’t participating in the discussions. She looked to be asleep, but had been holding open the door to sequence. It wouldn’t be that easy for the Nihil World Sovereigns and supplemental grandmasters to derive formula dao otherwise. “He’s the future leader of the Star Sect, that’s all you need to know.”

“...understood,” the assembly smiled wryly; they didn’t dare press further for answers. ...perhaps he was the sovereign king’s secret son?

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Although the sect’s heavyweights and various geniuses were gathered on Divine Alchemist Mountain, life continued normally on the World Star. The heavyweights and geniuses were mysterious characters in ordinary times, so their absence wasn’t important for the time being.

All the same, the Star Sect did not grow idle. Or rather, if they dared laze around, beatings would be in order once the head disciples returned.

When Xing Wuliang visited Divine Alchemist Mountain, he'd accomplished passing the first twenty-seven levels of the first domain in Lunar Pivot. He'd rescued his senior brother from Xing Lingkong's cultivation realm, and Xing Lingkong had fulfilled their agreement to apologize to Xing Shenzuo. Only then did they all continue to the mountain.

Numerous powerhouses derived formula dao on Divine Alchemist Mountain and they passed on their findings to the head disciples and geniuses, so that the latter could further disseminate it within the sect.

Many disciples within the Star Sect cultivated formula dao these days, using Yun Zhongzi's Totality Method as the entry point and subsequently utilizing formula dao to analyze other supplemental daos.

Though formula dao would eventually encompass all of supplemental dao according to the Formation Sovereign's words, it couldn't do so yet in its current iteration. The myriad of supplemental daos out there remained separate from formula dao.

When Lu Yun and Qing Yu returned to his nameless residence, he set up a hundred thousand restrictions after setting foot through the door and wrapped Qing Yu in a tight embrace. After slaking their yearning for each other through a night of passion, Lu Yun refocused on raising his beloved's strength.

Out of the thirty-six million ways he'd derived to help Qing Yu over the past hundred years, three of them were the safest and wouldn't give rise to unwanted side effects.

Chapter 1607.2: The Luminaries Arrive

"Do I really not need to practice soul force?" Qing Yu looked blearily at Lu Yun after she put her clothes back on. Her dao partner's accomplishments in soul force were so great that she couldn't fully see them.

"My current level of strength isn't a result of immortal dao. If my true cultivation is raised to the same level, then my soul force and six hellfires will immediately retreat, becoming pure immortal force." Lu Yun chuckled, "What do we need to practice soul force for?"

Pure immortal force filled Qing Yu's body; she was the Dao Sovereign and cultivated the immortal dao. Whether it was soul force or the "nothing" of the fourth realm, all became immortal force once they entered her body.

Though the immortal dao was yet to traverse the Hongmeng, the third realm possessed its shape thanks to Qing Yu. Hence, Lu Yun used the methods he'd derived to forcefully raise Qing Yu's cultivation level and strength.

There was no qi in the fourth realm or on the World Star. All beings cultivated "nothing". However, Lu Yun forcefully distilled qi out of the void through his formations and directed it into his dao partner's body.

This was qi of the fourth realm.

Qing Yu reached peak potentate level after three days with no negative consequences from this method of advancement. It wasn't too hard for Lu Yun to manage a feat like this since he was a Nihil World Sovereign.

"Do we go to the Sword Clan now?" Qing Yu breathed out more easily when she saw that her beloved was still present after she broke through. She'd been deeply concerned that Lu Yun would leave her behind and make the trip himself.

"No, I'm going to Ingress Sword Island," Lu Yun shook his head. "Jian Juexian has been locked up because of me, I can't hang him out to dry."

"Then I'll wait here for you." Qing Yu didn't bother advising Lu Yun against his course of action; there was no way she'd change his mind.

In the same vein, she wouldn't make the trip with him because that'd only burden him. He'd just end up putting her into his inner world. It would be better to wait for his return and then go to the Sword Clan together.

Boom—

An enormous explosion sounded outside the World Star before he had a chance to respond.

"The Great Brahma of the Luminaries has come. The Star Sect will swiftly open its doors in welcome!" echoed a dignified voice.

The entire World Plane began to shake and the multicolored ribbons outside the World Star undulated and tangled with each other as a disorderly ball, creating disaster upon disaster.

Worlds clashed together, consigning many beings to grisly deaths.

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"The Luminaries are here?" A bored Ah Zhi maintaining her door of order jerked her head up with a sharp look. "Is this a test?" She cocked her head and murmured to herself, "They know that my primary body isn't here and that I've left only a replica to oversee the rules of the World Plane, so this so-called Great Brahma..."

"No, this isn't a test. They know you're not here and so have come to kill Xing Chen." Yun Zhongzi raised his head to Ah Zhi standing at the peak of the mountain. Only he among the crowd knew that it wasn't her primary body present.

With the open door of sequence, the massive disruptions outside didn't affect anything on Divine Alchemist Mountain. Though it was just a replica, it was a replica that'd set foot into sequence nonetheless.

"How dare a mere Great Brahma try to kill Xing Chen?!" A stretch of stars reflected in Ah Zhi's eyes—the Great Brahma stood among them.

A trace of vicious cruelty appeared in her lazy expression. All of the World Plane was under her protection; this interloper had killed an untold number of denizens with a single move. This wasn't a probing gesture, it was outright provocation!

“The Great Brahma is the foremost head disciple beneath the Sun Sovereign King of the Luminaries. He does indeed possess the strength to kill Xing Chen,” she said with resignation after a momentary pause.

The Luminaries were the strongest faction in the known expanses of the fourth realm because they possessed three sequence experts—the Sky Sovereign King, the Moon Sovereign King, and the Sun Sovereign King.

They’d once sought out the Ah Zhi and invited her to join them, thereby completing the sun, moon, and star trio. She’d sent them away with a simple response of “I’m too lazy”.

The Star Sect was one of the few sects in the known expanses with a sequence expert holding down the fort. They held themselves removed from everything and rarely interfered in Luminaries business.

But this time, the faction came kicking down their door.

The Great Brahma was still showcasing his might outside the World Star, twisting the multicolored ribbons into knotted skeins and annihilating countless living beings. All of the World Star’s Nihil World Sovereigns were gathered on Divine Alchemist Mountain. Due to the protection of sequence, they didn’t know what was taking place outside and remained enthusiastically conversing about the derivation of formula dao.

“I’ll go,” Yun Zhongzi sighed. “Though the body I’m possessing isn’t a premier Nihil World Sovereign, I am confident that I’ll be able to send that Great Brahma away.”

He and the Hallowed Emperor had received invitations from the Luminaries as well, prior to the construction of the Tomb of the Hallowed Emperor. They’d also refused and subsequently been hunted down and harassed for it.

Yun Zhongzi didn’t understand why the Luminaries were suddenly attacking—were they not afraid of Ah Zhi’s wrath after she returned? According to his calculations, they should be attacking the Sword Clan first.

Regardless, this salvo indicated that the Luminaries were about to engage in a series of high profile maneuvers. The Nihil World Sovereign that’d emerged from the Central Hongmeng was likely the spark that’d lit the match.

In all of the Star Sect, Yun Zhongzi was the only one who could defy the Great Brahma.

But before he could take the field, an enormous ray of sword light erupted from one of the World Star residences and slashed at their attacker.

“What??” The Great Brahma watched the sword light descend upon him and could do nothing but let it crash into him, almost splitting his body into two. “Sword dao from the Hongmeng? Or sword dao from the Sword Clan?”

He was one of the strongest Nihil World Sovereigns in the fourth realm and one of the most elite powerhouses in the Luminaries.

“Neither of the above,” rang out a cold voice. Grasping Quiet tightly in his hand, Lu Yun stepped forward with sword light circulating around him and his face and presence completely concealed. “Since the Luminaries have offered their head on a platter, this sovereign will not stand on ceremony.”

Boom!

He operated the method of nothing and summoned the world of order, imbuing himself with the order of time and slashing forward at the Great Brahma. This stroke crossed endless empty space and was more terrifying than the one before.

“There’s actually people who use cheap tricks to access sequence and wear it on themselves? What a joke!” the Great Brahma laughed heartily, the trace of alarm in his heart instantly dissolving into contempt. Accessing sequence through a shortcut? That made this upstart the same as the sealed overlord of Ice—utter jokes, both of them!

He reached out a hand to grasp the cutting sword light.

Swish!

Radiant sword light flashed by and sliced off half of his hand.

“...the Quiet Sovereign King! So you are indeed dead! Hahahaha!!” gasped the Great Brahma as shock quickly turned into delight.

He’d recognized the sword—the Quiet Sovereign King, first connate divine sword to form in the fourth realm and for the purpose of eliminating the Luminaries. The faction had refused to believe that he’d truly died, but since his sword form was grasped in a Nihil World Sovereign’s hand, that was proof that he was well and truly dead!

The Luminaries’ plan to root out the Sword Clan could finally begin.

Chapter 1608: Capturing Alive

“What, what’s he doing out there with Quiet?!” Yun Zhongzi paled with dismay to see Lu Yun charge the enemy with the sword.

According to his plans, Lu Yun and Qing Yu would travel to the Sword Clan to create the misconception that the Quiet Sovereign King was still alive. That would induce wariness in the Luminaries and persuade them to leave the clan alone. At the same time, it would also delay the organization’s other plans.

But Lu Yun charging out with the sword knocked all of Yun Zhongzi’s plans awry. When the Luminaries confirmed that the sovereign king had died and his true form was controlled by another, they would hasten their speed and march on the Sword Clan.

“He’s not a fool, he must have his reasons for doing this.” Ah Zhi yawned and relaxed, lazily perusing Lu Yun’s battle with the Great Brahma. “Don’t you do anything either.” She waved off Yun Zhongzi when she saw his hands move.

“The Great Brahma is on our doorstep—he’s obviously here to attack us. No matter what the result is, their final goal is to destroy the Star Sect. It makes perfect sense for Lu Yun to respond,” she murmured as she looked at Lu Yun. “The only thing that surprises me is that he’s grown to such heights over a hundred years, to the point where he can match the Great Brahma!”

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Lu Yun didn't really have the strength to take the Great Brahma in a head-on fight. The latter was one of the strongest Nihil World Sovereigns in the fourth realm; he was stronger than Xing Chen.

That Lu Yun could briefly stand toe-to-toe with his opponent was due to the sword in his hand and the method of nothing that the overlord of Ice had taught him. When the two were deployed in conjunction, they blossomed with incredible strength. It flooded his body and temporarily granted him enough strength to fight the Great Brahma.

At the same time, a hundred years of teaching dao and simulating formula dao had enhanced Lu Yun's true cultivation once more. He'd reached peak nihil realm and was a half step away from World Manifest.

Hellfire formed from the amalgamation of the six hellfires circulated within his body, buttressing his strength. One stroke cut off one of the Great Brahma's arms, another slash cut off the other.

Despite the inconsequential injury, the Great Brahma's expression froze. Shockingly, he wasn't able to simply regenerate his arms! It was as if he'd never possessed two arms!

Thus was the result of severing rules and crushing order. He would never again possess those arms unless Lu Yun agreed to it.

"Since the Luminaries have imprisoned Jian Juexian on Ingress Sword Island, I'll capture you and see if the Luminaries will trade him for you!" shouted Lu Yun.

He dashed forward once more—Dragonrise!

A piercing dragon croon shook the world. Still reeling from the loss of his arms, the Great Brahma didn't have time to react before a silver dragon devoured him.

"Break!!" he roared furiously, shattering the dragon from inside out.

"So it is you, you little mongrel! Just as we thought, you're at the Star Sect!" screamed the Great Brahma. There was only one reason why the Luminaries had the sect in their sights—Lu Yun.

Lu Yun also knew that they were looking for him and targeting those around him to root him out. It was why Jian Juexian was suffering and why the Star Sect was being attacked. Since that was the case, it was better to meet them face-to-face!

He wasn't afraid of trouble, especially when others would be dragged in if he kept hiding. Though the Tome of Life and Death had erased the curse on the withered wood, a trace of it still remained in Lu Yun's body.

It'd affected both Jian Juexian and the Star Sect.

If it wasn't for the Tome of Life and Death, then the one attacking now would be a Luminaries sequence expert, not the Great Brahma. That would spell the doom of the sect since Lu Yun could also tell that it was only Ah Zhi's replica present in the faction.

Plainly, the Great Brahma knew that as well, which was why he was here alone. Merely he alone was sufficient to raze the sect, just as Xing Chen had once destroyed the Snowsword Sect.

If Lu Yun wanted to resolve the crises facing the Star Sect, Jian Juexian, and the Sword Clan, he needed to step forward and shoulder his burden. The karmic relationship between him and the Sword Clan was naturally Quiet.

After the Great Brahma shattered the sword dragon, he came at Lu Yun with a mighty kick. It was wreathed by blazing flames as if the eternal sun in the heavens, emanating terrifying heat and light.

Lu Yun felt like he would burn up before his opponent even touched him.

“Is this the power of an elite Nihil World Sovereign in the fourth realm?” Lu Yun took a deep breath and summoned rays of sword light from Quiet, bringing it down on the Great Brahma.

This time, his enemy was prepared. His foot kicked the sword light apart and thudded into Lu Yun’s chest.

Lu Yun spat out a mouthful of blood.

“DIE!” the Great Brahma snarled and ignited the flames around his leg, shoving them into Lu Yun’s body.

Lu Yun now resembled a giant furnace—he was red all over and cracks fissured through his body.

“Still alive? One more time!” The Great Brahma laughed heartily and kicked again, stomping on the same place on Lu Yun’s chest.

He wanted to kill Lu Yun, not capture him. No Nihil World Sovereigns were allowed to appear in the Central Hongmeng. Not even supplemental cultivators who knew soul force were permitted. Any budding hints of one would be instantly suppressed!

That was why sequence experts from the Luminaries had sealed away the overlord of Ice. He’d tried to share the method of soul force cultivation with the Eastern Planes.

Snowflakes suddenly drifted through the sky. One hundred and eight in total, each of them oscillated with ripples.

Argent Snow.

The soul weapon immediately forced the Great Brahma back.

“The Argent Snow soul weapon... The Star Sect deserves death for giving a soul weapon to sinful blood!” A crimson flame rose from the Great Brahma’s body. Though he lacked arms, that didn’t affect his terrifying aura in the slightest.

Boom—

His strength fluctuated as he punched through the Domain of First Snowfall. He dashed forward and connected with Lu Yun’s chest once more.

Puff!

Lu Yun exploded into a pile of dust.

“What is this?!” The Great Brahma remained on his guard after killing Lu Yun. There was something strange about the Nihil World Sovereign in front of him.

Hummm.

A note resonated in the void as the hovering Quiet exploded with pure sword radiance, crashing into the Great Brahma.

He screamed with anguish as he was sliced into two.

A second Lu Yun, a third, a fourth, a fifth... thirty-six Lu Yuns walked out of the void and formed a marvelous formation, trapping the split Great Brahma between them.

“I will be capturing you today instead of killing you. You’ll be traded for Jian Juexian.” Holding a handful of soybeans, a thirty-seventh Lu Yun walked out from another direction.

Chapter 1609: Leave Your Life Behind

Death art—bean soldiers!

Lu Yun’s primary body had remained in the shadows throughout this time; he’d used the death art to summon golden warriors, then disguised them as him with Shapeshifting Talismans. The golden warriors possessed his strength and he could even teach them his combat arts if he so desired.

Thus, from a certain perspective, these golden warriors were his replicas.

Though the Great Brahma had destroyed one of them, he quickly resummoned it back to the field. Thirty-six golden warriors assembled in a Formation of Heavenly Spirits, trapping the Great Brahma within.

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“So you were using puppets... The Star Sect is evil beyond redemption to teach you such a sophisticated supplemental dao. I was right to come!”

The two halves of the Great Brahma struggled to come back together, but Quiet’s terrifying killing intent had severed control over the lower half of his body. However, he didn’t panic. He would instantly recover as soon as he activated the power that a sequence expert had given him to destroy Quiet.

“A little thing like you wants to capture me?” he barked with laughter and dissolved into a blaze of fire.

Bam!

The diffused flames recoiled, like they’d hit a wall, and reformed into the Great Brahma’s partial upper body.

“W-what? What??” He couldn’t understand it.

“There’s no leaving after you’ve fallen into one of my formations,” sneered all thirty-six Lu Yuns at the same time. The formation erupted with celestial radiance and flooded the area with light.

Such was the result of his one hundred years of simulating formula dao. He’d calculated a formation for his thirty-six golden warriors—the Formation of Heavenly Spirits and Celestial Gods.

Once someone was trapped within, it was almost impossible for them to escape if they hadn't set foot into sequence. Not to mention, the Great Brahma was heavily injured after Lu Yun's ambush. Having lost both arms and his lower body, there was almost no hope for him to escape.

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"Is this the fruit of his labors?" Yun Zhongzi tutted with astonishment as he observed the Formation of Heavenly Spirits and Celestial Gods from outside the World Star. This was a demonstration of pure formula dao. Lu Yun had calculated his battle with the Great Brahma down to every step in the process.

He would first use his replica as bait and severely injure his opponent in an ambush. When the latter's heart quailed, Lu Yun would lure him into a formation and suppress him inside.

Once confined, the Great Brahma lost all ability to resist.

Lu Yun's Formation of Heavenly Spirits and Celestial Gods was the first formation to come into existence under the formula dao. He'd derived it completely from the formulas they'd discovered; it was much stronger than a formation under formation dao.

Of course, the combined strength of thirty-six Lu Yun was also enough to halt the Great Brahma in his tracks.

After Lu Yun threw the Great Brahma into his internal world, he raised a cupped fist salute toward the World Star and vanished in a streak of light.

He was on his way to save Jian Juexian.

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He'd originally planned on charging in alone, but now he had a hostage and could negotiate a swap with Ingress Sword Island—or rather, the Luminaries. Everyone knew who he was now, no thanks to the Curse King.

Since the Luminaries wouldn't allow him to move freely through the fourth realm, he might as well step into the open before the faction raised all manner of war trying to locate him. Constantly being on the run wasn't something he enjoyed.

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"Do we let him go just like this?" Yun Zhongzi asked urgently. Ingress Sword Island was now a den of tigers—even sequence experts might not make it out alive. The Quiet Sovereign King had been one of the few sequence experts born in the new epoch; he'd been killed by the three sovereign kings of the Luminaries nonetheless.

"What else can we do? Will he not go just because you say no?" Ah Zhi yawned. "Sleep, I'm just going to sleep. You guys will have reached a decent level in formula dao when Lu Yun returns.

"The Formation of Heavenly Spirits and Celestial Gods was the result of his one hundred years of research. If you old fellows can't match him, then you'll be such an embarrassment to yourselves. Since formula dao of the Boundless Planes stems from the Star Sect, we should be the most prosperous in it. You old farts are the first to be graced with the new dao, so don't you dare fall behind.

“Lu Yun’s right, you’re not practicing formula dao so you can engage in endless flights of theory. You’re supposed to use it to create corresponding treasures.

“Formula dao... formula application... hehehe,” Ah Zhi’s voice trailed off until it ended in a soft snore.

It felt like lightning had struck Yun Zhongzi.

“Formula dao... formula application... I see... I see! Hahaha!!” Deeply worried just a second ago, Yun Zhongzi laughed gaily when he heard these two phrases. He promptly put Lu Yun out of his mind and rejoined the conversations deriving formula dao.

Deriving formula dao was the process of learning its formulas, discovering new formulas, and using the formulas to search for answers. Formula application was the usage of formula dao’s conclusions and practical application in refinement.

Only when both existed in conjunction was formula dao complete.

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Ingress Sword Island was an enormous Hongmeng world that’d developed to the level of the fourth realm.

When the original Hongmeng shattered, its multitude of fragments had taken root in the fourth realm and formed multiple tiny Hongmeng worlds. The island was one of the bigger fragments; Daoist Ingress had established his dao on the fragment and created Ingress Sword Island.

By now, he’d gone missing for many eons and still sent no word. The faction was now under the Luminaries banner.

Since Jian Juexian had invited Lu Yun to the island several times, he’d naturally told the young man where to find it. With Lu Yun’s current level of strength, the trip was easy enough.

Xing Chen had wanted him to visit for Argent Snow’s heritage, but she hadn’t known that the island had sworn fealty to another, and neither did she know Lu Yun’s true identity.

“As befitting a world that’s developed to the fourth realm, this Hongmeng is much bigger than the Central Hongmeng. Its rules and orders seamlessly connect with the fourth realm’s,” Lu Yun murmured to himself as he stood next to the island.

“Lu Yun of the Central Hongmeng is here at senior brother Jian Juexian’s invitation. I have come to return a treasure,” he sent his voice forward.

It’d yet to finish echoing before an enormous sword formation blossomed from the island and came down around him.

“Since you have come, fellow daoist, you can leave your life behind,” rang out a clear voice.

The formation whirred to life and four enormous swords appeared, cutting down on Lu Yun with tremendous killing intent.

Chapter 1610: Figurehead

The four swords churned through the air and disintegrated Lu Yun.

“Just like that?” The young man who’d walked out of Ingress Sword Island started. He hadn’t thought that he’d take care of the problem so easily.

“Lu Yun of the Central Hongmeng is here at senior brother Jian Juexian’s invitation. I have come to return a treasure.” Another Lu Yun walked out of the void and raised cupped fists to the young man.

The latter’s pupils constricted violently.

“Hah, smoke and mirrors. Die!” The yet-to-dissipate sword formation snapped back into place and churned this new Lu Yun to death as well.

A third one walked out of the void, then a fourth, a fifth... An endless stream of Lu Yuns walked out and repeated the same greeting. The young man overseeing the sword formation killed an endless number of him, but never reached an end to their visitor.

Slowly, he began to panic.

“Since you’re here to return a treasure, come on in.” He finally waved a hand and retracted the sword formation, extending a welcoming gesture to Lu Yun.

The young man had given up his plan to kill Lu Yun outside Ingress Sword Island. He could tell that the Lu Yuns that’d appeared weren’t replicas, but an uncommonly sophisticated puppetry art that could pass off falsehood for reality.

Unless one severed the connection with one’s replica, flaws and mistakes would abound in a replica. It was impossible to hoodwink someone with a higher cultivation. Only puppetry at an incredibly high level could turn falsehood into an independent entity.

Extremely skilled puppet masters could replace themselves with their puppets, using puppets like they would a replica. Could it be that this Lu Yun was a supplemental grandmaster adept in puppetry?

Hair rose on the back of the young man’s neck.

“Many thanks to this senior brother.” Lu Yun raised cupped fists like nothing had happened and entered the island with a leap.

Ingress Sword Island was an enormous Hongmeng world, but it differed from the Central Hongmeng. The latter’s rules and orders diverged from the fourth realm as it’d inherited them from the original Hongmeng.

Ingress Sword Island, however, had been assimilated by the Boundless Planes. Though it was called a Hongmeng world, it was, in truth, a world of the fourth realm. Its strength, rules, and order were no different from the Boundless Planes, which was why it was labeled as having developed to the point of the fourth realm.

The true form of the Hadal Hell was nine Hongmeng worlds that’d reached the fourth realm. They’d likely been just as mighty as Ingress Sword Island, and the real identity of the previous prisoners was highly likely to be Nihil World Sovereigns. Their power had been completely eroded by their prison and their connections to the past utterly severed.

Upon entering Ingress Sword Island, Lu Yun felt powerful rays of sword intent ensconce the void. Four enormous swords rose from the cardinal directions, like four pillars holding up the firmament.

Immortal's Condemnation, Immortal's Entrapment, Immortal's Slaughter, and Immortal's End.

Rather than physical swords, they were sword shaped mountains with boundless sword intent radiating at all times, becoming the great dao of this Hongmeng world.

Sword dao!

Everything on the island cultivated sword dao.

His arrival didn't raise any attention. Apart from the young man who'd attacked him, no one cared about him.

"Fellow daoist Lu Yun, isn't it a bit lacking in sincerity to not come in person, since you're here to return a treasure?" The young man appeared behind his visitor with a cold sneer.

Lu Yun finally had a chance to see his attacker clearly. Approximately twenty-seven, he had long and thin eyes. He wore long pale green robes and bore a green sword on his back. Derision danced in his eyes.

"Are you a fucking idiot?" Lu Yun couldn't help but ask.

"What did you say??" The young man paused, not expecting this response. It hardly seemed worthy of Lu Yun's status.

"Have Jian Zhuxian speak to me, you don't have the right to talk to me," Lu Yun responded impatiently.

There were four great sword daos on Ingress Sword Island—the paths of paths of immortal condemnation, immortal entrapment, immortal slaughter, and immortal end. The strongest of their beholders was Jian Zhuxian. Lu Yun had seen him ranked number one on the Argent Snow Hero Ranking! He was likely the current leader of the faction.

"How dare you be so brazen in Ingress Sword Island! Our methods can easily kill your primary body through your puppets—" The young man had just started talking tough when silver light flashed before him. He knew nothing after that.

Lu Yun had knocked him out with a blow from Argent Snow.

"Other than deploying soul force attacks, Argent Snow seems quite useful as a stick," Lu Yun muttered to himself as he toyed with his soul weapon.

Though the Ingress Sword Island disciple was also a strong Nihil World Sovereign, his true strength was less than Lu Yun's. He was strong only because of the Formation of Immortal Condemnation.

"Do not waste your time with minor characters, fellow daoist. This way, please," came a gentle voice. The sword intent over the island shook and formed a sword-shaped bridge that extended to Lu Yun's feet.

He nodded, then glanced at the unconscious young man on the ground. He hadn't had a chance to ask for the other's name. He took a step forward onto the bridge.

The bridge led to a green sword-shaped mountain to the east—the mountain that Immortal's Condemnation had formed. A young man in green robes sat at its peak.

He was clean cut and lacked all hints of violence or sword intent. A short silver stick hovered next to him—Argent Snow. He was the greatest of Ingress Sword Island, Jian Zhuxian.

In contrast to Jian Juexian, he cultivated supplemental dao in addition to sword dao. His mastery of Argent Snow was unparalleled in the fourth realm.

Lu Yun carefully sized him up, raised a cupped fist salute, and plopped down in front of the faction's leader. This was the peak of Mount Immortal Condemnation; all cultivators training in the path of immortal condemnation would be gathered here. But since they were at the peak, there was no one else present apart from the beholder of the path.

"The old master is still alive, isn't he?" Jian Zhuxian asked merrily.

"Yep," Lu Yun nodded. "You imprisoned Jian Juexian when he came back with Immortal's End?"

Jian Zhuxian shook his head. "Can you not tell what my circumstances are? I am the beholder of immortal condemnation and once ruled the island. But I am now a figurehead. My words bear no authority on Ingress Sword Island."