

## Necropolis 271

### Chapter 271: The World

Immortals who'd been waiting for Jiangchen Wushang and Lu Yun to mutually destroy each other could no longer stay on the sidelines. The thousand zombies had all been geniuses that'd gone missing in Dusk Province!

They were the future pillars of numerous major sects and factions, but were now zombies refined by Jiangchen Wushang! In one fell swoop, the Corpse Refiners had effectively made enemies of half the world of immortals.

They were a mysterious bunch, and their tracks difficult to trace. No other members of the sect had shown up in Dusk Province. Thus, the Jiangchen Clan quickly became the primary target and an even more ferocious battle broke out, engulfing most of the observers present.

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The Dao Flower had completed its bloom and the path of cultivation was restored. All unusual phenomena had faded away, and the projection of Dusk Province in the other worlds dissipated as well.

Qing Han, Wu Tulong, Zi Chen, and Mo Qitian hovered in the air with their legs crossed, seemingly receiving some sort of heritage. They could only look on helplessly at the events unfolding on the ground.

The Bag of Corpse Refinement was shot down from the air, and the skeletal fortress ship haphazardly tore around the scene. Lu Yun's foot grinding him into dirt, Jiangchen Wushang roared and thrashed to no avail as Lu Yun stripped away each individual rune of the Cauldron of Invincible Constitution from his body.

Many immortals wanted to kill Jiangchen Wushang to slake their bloodlust and fury, but Lu Yun's demonic expression gave them pause.

Together, Yuying, Feinie, Xuanxi, Aoxue, and Huangqing made quick work of the zombies emerging from the sack. They were all geniuses and disciples from major clans and sects around the world, without exception.

Tears streaked down numerous faces as their seniors and masters shook to see their juniors and children executed, but it had to be done! Becoming a zombie was torture in itself. Death was the only release! With this, the hatred of the crowd for the Jiangchen Clan climbed to new heights.

Hum.

A cauldron three hundred meters tall, scintillating with golden sparkles reformed over Lu Yun's head. It was the Cauldron of Invincible Constitution's true form. Glittering golden runes circled about the cauldron, colliding, combining, and disintegrating to form a terrifying combat art.

The Invincible Constitution? What an impressive combat art. Pleased, Lu Yun took a deep breath and tucked the treasure away.

Jiangchen Wushang just about lost his mind. He had been able to defeat both Aoxue and Huangqing only because of the runes of the cauldron! Lu Yun removing the treasure would render him helpless.

Buzz!

The quieted Bag of Corpse Refinement once again burst forth with terrifying power and knocked away the Formation Orb on top of it. Two twinkles of gray light blinked by before Jiangchen Wushang and the skeletal fortress ship disappeared.

“So the ship is a zombie, too,” Lu Yun muttered at the direction the ship had disappeared into.

The zombies had all been cleared away, and the Jiangchen immortals present were slaughtered down to the last. The world fell silent. All eyes were on Lu Yun.

“What, wanna keep going?” In stark contrast to his unkempt state, Lu Yun’s expression was confident as he smiled at the immortals surrounding him.

Gaze suddenly sharpening with solemnity, his body scaled up at dramatic speed as a ball of black flames flared around him, turning him into a giant to protect Qing Han and the others. He’d noticed the malicious glances the immortals were throwing them. The four youths in the air were receiving the heritage of the Dao Flower, which was a significant development, but also made them extremely vulnerable at the moment.

The world of immortals didn’t need dao sovereigns to be worshipped by all life. If this weren’t Dusk Province, some dao immortals would’ve already moved to kill the four of them. However, the immortals present were up to no good as well.

“If you want a fight, I’m game.” Lu Yun’s voice rang throughout the sky. His five envoys took flight and circled around him. The extravagant fortress ship reemerged as well, its ninth-rank treasures emitting the piercing light of readiness. Five thousand kilometers away in Truewater City, the weapon of war radiated immense presence, ready to take another shot.

“We leave!” An immortal clenched his teeth and turned to leave. It was the dawn of a new era now that the path of cultivation was restored. And right now, their biggest enemy was the Corpse Refiners. No one would forgive them for refining all those geniuses into zombies.

In no time at all, the sect would become a public enemy of the entire world, and the Jiangchen Clan would be dragged down with them.

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Peace gradually returned to Dusk Province. Qing Han and the three youth sovereigns remained in the air, receiving the Dao Flower’s heritage. Lu Yun stayed by their side, preventing anyone from sneaking up on them.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world fell into chaos.

Since their emergence, the Corpse Refiners had been challenging geniuses around the world and raising a storm of violence and bloodshed, inciting complaints and stoking the hostility of many sects and clans. Now that it was revealed that the universally disliked sect had been refining living immortals and

cultivators into zombie slaves, the sect quickly became the common enemy of all denizens in the world of immortals.

As the other party of contention, the Jiangchen Clan attracted great backlash as well. Jiangchen Wushang had been the refiner of the zombies released in Dusk Province. Dao immortals of the affected parties joined hands to invade Jiangchen ancestral territory and force them to surrender the culprit.

Even the domineering Jiangchen Clan found themselves at their wits' end for once. They had made an enemy out of a number of top factions. No matter how powerful they were, they couldn't face all of these premier factions at the same time.

Then another piece of information spread—Jin Heyi, Jin Clan of Nephrite Major, was also a disciple of the Corpse Refiners!

Many factions reluctant to offend the Jiangchen Clan shifted their targets to Nephrite Major, as the Jin Clan was much easier prey in comparison. They'd already suffered a tremendous blow from Lu Yun's inheritance tower, then said to have attempted to destroy the Dao Flower and in turn the path of cultivation. This provided quite a number of legitimate excuses to go after them.

By this point, even the Feng Clan abandoned the Jin Clan and avoided crossing paths with them. The Jin ancestor, and many disciples along with him, fell into thorough despair. To add insult to injury, the aristocratic house that Jin Heyi hailed from announced their intention to give up on moving to Mauve Peace Paradise and their withdrawal from Xiankan. No one knew where that branch of the clan went after that.

However, the other factions didn't believe that the rest of the clan didn't know where Jin Heyi's branch had disappeared to, and kept up all sorts of pressure. It only took a short amount of time for the once solidly top-tier clan to decline and fall into obscurity. Eventually, the clan ceased to exist altogether.

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A month after the path of cultivation was restored, the Corpse Refiners raised the curtains on an even greater prelude of things to come. The celestial emperor of the Truespirit Major abdicated and passed his throne to... the sect head of the Corpse Refiners!

Meanwhile, Lu Yun and Qing Han had snuck their way to the northern part of Dusk Province, right outside the seaside stronghold.

## **Chapter 272: The North Sea**

It'd been three months since the path of cultivation had been restored. However, no cultivator in the world of immortals or any other had ascended to the void realm yet. The path had been severed prior to the ancient times, so no contemporary cultivation method existed to show the way. Cultivators would have to explore and experiment for themselves.

For the present, tensions were running high in the world of immortals. Truespirit Major was about to fall to the Corpse Refiners, which weighed heavily on everyone like the looming nightmare it was.

Over the past three months, members of the sect had popped up everywhere to taunt numerous major factions and refine their disciples into zombies. The victims organized multiple assaults on the Corpse

Refiners, but each campaign ended in abject failure and enormous casualties. House Donglin of Primus Major even lost a dao immortal, taken by a Bag of Corpse Refinement wielded by a dao immortal of the Corpse Refiners. The infamous sect peaked to new heights of notoriety with all the lives they took.

In addition, a few previously reclusive sects followed their example and emerged in the world to challenge the rule of the old guard.

Compared to other regions, Dusk Province was relatively peaceful. No one had come knocking to disturb the site of the Dao Flower's bloom. However, the two weapons of war respectively established on the border of Outré Province and at the seaside stronghold were specifically aimed at Dusk City. If anything untoward occurred, the Nephrite celestial emperor wouldn't hesitate to order the destruction of the rising sacred land.

And the Nephrite celestial emperor... was now Zhao Changkong. Somehow, this seemed to be a preordained development. No one was surprised, nor did anyone raise a note of objection; it was business as usual for the major factions in Nephrite Major. No one even wondered where Zhao Shenguang had gone off to.

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The seaside stronghold in Dusk Province had been renovated. Dark cyan squares of sculpted boulders were cast in molten bronze as the building blocks of an awe-inspiring fortress. A colossal formation circulated within, releasing a beam of prismatic colors that spanned the rainbow to encompass the stronghold.

It was a hundred times more impressive than the seaside stronghold in Lu Yun's memory. Even the heavenly soldiers stationed here were all august immortals—a far cry from the stronghold of old.

"I wonder how Diexi is doing." Concern flashed through Qing Han's eyes. "She would never betray you, but the stronghold is now in the hands of the court."

Lu Yun wore an answering expression of solemnity. He'd once sent his people to reclaim the seaside stronghold, but it'd proven too powerful for him to challenge. He would need a few dao immortals to launch an assault, but even then, the weapon of war within its walls could kill dao immortals.

"She's still alive, I think she probably fled into the North Sea." After a pensive moment, Lu Yun sighed with resignation. "I'm not yet the Nephrite Court's match."

The court had ruled over Nephrite Major for eighty thousand years, so no single faction could defeat it on their own. This time, Lu Yun and Qing Han hadn't come to take down the stronghold, but to seek out the dragon tombs of the North Sea.

Wu Tulong, Zi Chen, and Mo Qitian had already been escorted back to their clans for protection. There was no shortage of people who wanted them dead, even though the three of them and Qing Han had all earned the title of Dao Sovereign.

The Qing Clan had also sent representatives to bring Qing Han back, but Lu Yun had driven them away with brute force. He'd spared their lives only because he didn't want to give the clan and the heavenly court an excuse to wage war against him.

The two of them passed through the stronghold without difficulty, as it was meant to defend against the monster spirits of the North Sea. Humans, on the other hand, could come and go as they pleased due to a revelation mirror hanging on the stronghold gates. Any monster spirit who tried to slip by would be revealed in their full, original glory.

However, the monster spirits had long since retreated from the region and given up on Dusk Province. The weapon of war alone intimidated them. Moreover, too many factions had entered the province. If the monster spirits dared invade, they'd quickly be exterminated in the ensuing chaos.

Dusk Province was able to enjoy a short reprieve only because the Corpse Refiners occupied most of the collective attention. At the heart of things, the new stronghold hadn't been set up for the monster spirits, but for Dusk City.

Lu Yun and Qing Han entered the North Sea without trouble. The East, West, South, and North Seas weren't named in relation only to Nephrite Major, but the entire world of immortals. While the Untroubled, Unmeant, Unsullied, and Unselfish Seas each were independent territories and possessed a heavenly mandate like the nine majors, ten lands, and the mysterious central world, the East, West, South, and North Seas were merely lifeless oceans that connected the different regions of the world of immortals.

Other than zones that bordered the other twenty-four facets of the world, the four seas were devoid of any immortal or heavenly qi, and were thus unsuitable for cultivators to reside in. Even regions near inhabited territory were relatively impoverished, which was why the monster spirits were always eager to conquer the shores.

There was more than one side to everything, however. Despite being impoverished, the four seas were home to many unique treasures and even ruins leftover from the ancient world of immortals.

Their waters had always been shrouded with mystery. No one knew exactly what lurked within the four connecting seas. Since antiquity, innumerable immortals and cultivators had entered the seas to seek their fortunes.

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Lu Yun entrusted Dusk Province to Yuying. As a former governor, she was far more experienced in governing than Lu Yun. With the help of the Panorama Pavilion, some members of the Lu and Chen Clan trickled into Dusk Province. Most of them, however, remained in the Nephrite Court's prison. Lu Yun couldn't rescue them even if he wanted to.

The dragon tombs lay hidden in the furthest depths of the North Sea. Even with Aoxue's memories, Lu Yun couldn't pinpoint its location. Only those with pure draconic bloodlines could sense it.

What he was looking for was the dragon tomb of the ancient world, rather than the ones of the present dragon clan. Although Aoxue was now a blood dragon, her bloodline remained pure. 'Ao' was the imperial surname of the ancient dragon clan, and was even now an uncommon surname among the dragons residing in the four immortal seas. That surname had also partly contributed to the destruction of the ancient North Sea dragons.

Not far from the shore, Lu Yun and Qing Han crewed a small skiff and navigated the sea at a leisurely pace. A blazing sun hung high in the sky, its light reflected by the rippling sea. Wind caressed their faces with a faint salty tang.

“This is my first time ever sailing the ocean!” Qing Han stood at the bow of the boat with his arms flung open, inhaling deeply.

Lu Yun kept the craft going at a relaxed speed and silently watched Qing Han. The greater his cultivation crew, the more he noticed there was something amiss about his friend.

Bam!

A sudden explosion beneath the calm surface brought about a tall wave.

“Come home with me, Qing Han,” an aloof voice echoed over the waters. “The Qing Clan is your home.”

### **Chapter 273: Self Detonation?**

Splash—

As soon as that was said, a seawater giant at least three hundred meters tall stood up from the waves. It seemed to direct a real pair of eyes at Qing Han and was the image of a dao immortal.

“No more trouble, child. Come home with me.” Its words rumbled in the sky like thunder, causing the surrounding waters to whip up calamitous tides. Many nearby boats and monster spirits who couldn’t escape in time were torn apart by the prodigious waves.

The skiff that Lu Yun and Qing Han sat in was only about a meter and a half long, but it remained safe and stable despite the tempest. Stretching languidly at the boat’s stern, Qing Han squinted with thoughtful curiosity. “Wasn’t I branded a traitor to be killed on sight?” he asked. “Why are you now telling me to go back?” His expression was fearless, even a little derisive.

The saltwater giant raised its aqueous eyebrows at the response. After a moment, it reached out with a silent grab.

Boom.

The surrounding seawater exploded into a flurry of crests and swells, surging toward the small boat.

Splooooosh.

An even bigger wave whipped up, smashing the giant’s hand and surrounding surges into a million droplets. A silver-haired man in a cerulean robe walked out from the void.

“Qing Quan, you disgusting exhibitionist! Don’t think I don’t recognize you from behind that facade!” He cackled with insolent disdain as he threw a straight jab at the giant. The punch seemed to carry a hundred million newtons of force behind it, destroying the giant in an enormous big geyser of brine.

“Wellspring, how dare an old demon like you interfere in the Qing Clan’s affairs? Do you not fear our reprisal?” His seawater giant broken, Qing Quan showed his true form. He was the dao immortal who’d appeared in Dusk Province the last time, attacking Lu Yun and nearly causing Qing Han’s death from a mixture of new poisons.

In return, he'd become the laughingstock of the world. Apart from losing the Qing ancestral treasure, he'd gotten his clothes ripped off by a cultivator junior, forcing him to run nude through the streets. Because of this, he desperately wanted to kill Lu Yun and capture Qing Han to redeem his name.

"Hahahaha, the Qing Clan's affairs?" The silver-haired Wellspring roared with laughter. "I can afford to anger a clan of your caliber."

Hum...

A ripple flared out from Wellspring, gathering power from the seawater for leagues around. A cerulean ball of light three hundred meters across appeared in front of him. Lightning snaked across the ball's surface, thundering toward Qing Quan with lethal force.

"I've hooked him. Show yourselves!" Qing Quan suddenly roared with laughter.

Boom, boom, boom!

Three great figures stepped out from wrinkles in space, firing off terrifying attacks in unison. Wellspring's ball of light was annihilated in the blast.

"You think far too little of the Qing Clan, Wellspring! Let me see if you really can afford to offend us!" A tall, broad-shouldered dao immortal grinned angrily.

"You're from the Skandha Range too, eh, Wellspring? Tsk tsk tsk, is Lu Yun really your master's bastard son? Is that why you protect him like this?"

Although the current Skandha Range appeared rather pedestrian—presently, it was only inhabited by a group of monster spirits who'd sealed their cultivation—it had an infamous history of serving as a safe haven for all kinds of monster spirits and other villains.

When the divines ruled the world, even they dared not cross the Skandha Range. At its peak, the Range was capable of facing any of the imperial courts head on and indisputably the foremost sacred land of evil.

Despite its decline in recent years, it still commanded considerable influence. The scoundrels and devils who'd lived there in the past would gather at a single word from the desolate willow.

Those who left the Range tended to lead singular lifestyles. Some hid their identities and lived among the world with little regard for their reputation, while others ruled their own domains of evil among the greater facets.

It was quite inexplicable, really, why the Skandha Range's evildoers were coming together on Lu Yun's behalf to oppose three great clans and a sect, among other important factions in the world. He'd nearly flattened the Skandha Range, once upon a time. Shouldn't they be hostile toward him instead?

In many places, the popular rumor that Lu Yun was the illegitimate son of the Skandha Range's master had begun to circulate. It was patently absurd, but there was no shortage of believers nevertheless.

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Lu Yun had expected the Qing Clan to show up on his trip into the North Sea. Their blood flowed through Qing Han's veins, after all, and they had a thousand ways to figure out where he was. That was why Wellspring, a dao immortal demon, was here to protect them. When Qing Quan showed himself, Wellspring had followed suit.

Alas, the arrival of three more dao immortals was too much for them to handle. Lu Yun and Qing Han weren't the Qing Clan's sole objectives. They wanted to kill the Skandha Range expert who was with them!

This was both a threat and a warning to the rest of the world!

Hum.

The four dao immortals instantly sealed off their patch of sea, and even froze the sky. Wellspring wouldn't be able to fight them alone.

"Wellspring, you old monster! It's time for you to die!" one of them laughed as he attacked.

Wellspring remained undaunted by the number of enemies he faced. His average-framed figure soared into the sky on a huge waterspout in a direct attack.

Wham. Wham. Wham. Wham!

A momentous battle broke out, though it was rather one-sided. Four against one was bad enough, but the Qing Clan immortals had a supreme-grade treasure with them as well. Qing Quan was the weakest of the lot, while his three comrades individually rivaled Wellspring in strength, having plucked three aether dao fruits each.

Wellspring roared in frustration. His body broke and reformed four times in the clashes; the effort had drained the rosiness from his cheeks.

"I'm... taking... you... with me!" After his fifth reconstitution, Wellspring's face contorted with madness. He spat a blue orb from his mouth that began glowing with tremendous power.

"Careful! He's going to detonate his life sphere!" Qing Quan's hairs stood on end in horror. He shrieked with terror, abandoning his readied attack to flee as quickly as he could. The other three dao immortals silently followed suit.

Wellspring was an otherkind cultivator. His life source was a life sphere, rather than a nascent immortal soul. Monster spirits, especially ones as unique as Wellspring, could cause incredible amounts of devastation when they detonated their life spheres, and the four dao immortals would have no chance of survival. It was a double-edged sword, however; the user would be annihilated in the blast as well, leaving absolutely nothing behind.

Boom!

A storm of cerulean light appeared over the ocean, accompanied by a cacophonous clamor of explosions. Tons and tons of seawater were evaporated by the energy and the commotion was more than enough to convince the Qing immortals to abscond without hesitation.



“Let us hurry, young lords!” Suddenly, Wellspring’s body reappeared on the skiff that Lu Yun and Qing Han were riding. He summoned a jet of water that propelled them deeper into the North Sea.

#### **Chapter 274: The Abyss**

The four Qing immortals got quite a distance away before they realized something was awry.

“Hold on, stop!” Qing Quan came to a skidding halt. He turned his head, clearly irked.

“What is it?” another dao immortal stopped to ask.

“Wellspring is a dao immortal who has picked three aether dao fruits. A real detonation of his life sphere would’ve severely injured me and even the three of you! But I’m perfectly fine right now... we’ve been tricked!” Qing Quan said through gritted teeth. The other immortals looked at each other, stunned by the statement. “The power back there was fierce and destructive, but it was firmly concentrated, not at all what an otherkind’s self-destruction should be like!

“Let us return!” Qing Quan glided across the sky on a beam of sword light. His three peers shouted angrily before following suit.

Alas, the place where they’d fought previously was completely calm. It was as if nothing had happened there at all. No signs of devastation from a life sphere detonation existed, with only the traces of a battle between five dao immortals remaining.

Clearly, the scene Wellspring had made just now was merely smoke and mirrors.

“They won’t have gotten far. After them!” The four immortals split off in separate directions, taking pursuit against an imagined enemy.

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Wellspring’s vitality was burning away. He was going as fast as he could. Stream after stream of seawater gathered behind him, wrapping up the skiff in a swift current that carried it along.

Suddenly, he came to a stop. His face was deathly pale, having sustained grievous injuries in the fight against the four Qing immortals. The exhaustion that was accumulated from burning his lifeforce to flee had only worsened his condition.

“A little bit further and you’ll be out of Nephrite Major. The North Sea monster court rules the waters ahead, so this is as far as I can take you,” he said helplessly.

“Thank you for saving us, Senior Well. Please feel free to leave us here,” Lu Yun hurriedly responded. He’d expected the Qing Clan’s interference, but not their ulterior motive to kill a dao immortal from the Skandha Range.

“Young lord!” Wellspring grew deadly serious. “Though you are a Lu and have admitted to as much before the public, you must still beware of your clan!”

Lu Yun blinked.

“Do you remember those who came to Dusk Province before, wanting to turn you into a puppet? The Lu Clan is under the control of their ilk now.” Wellspring’s voice grew cold. Although he usually led a quiet

life, the otherkind was no stranger to violence. His nickname as a demon was well-deserved, as he'd slaughtered at least one clan that'd crossed him in his time.

In other words, he was not a good person.

Though he didn't pay much mind to the outside world after secluding himself, he had heard tangential rumors about Lu Yun and his clan. Moreover, the heads of the Skandha Range were a network of contacts and info all on their own. They weren't omnipotent, certainly, but they knew far more than one would expect.

"The reason Mauve Peace Paradise fell to the Jin Clan and Lu Daoling lost after being attacked by mysterious experts... was because he was sold out by those people. In fact, it's their existence that caused the Lu Clan's near destruction a hundred years ago. So as I've said, be careful."

Lu Yun sobered up, then nodded lightly. Dusk Province was still accepting those from the Lu and Chen Clans. The former was a very large clan that had maintained its numbers in spite of several calamities, its bloodline plentiful still.

"Due to personal reasons, I cannot enter the North Sea monster court's jurisdiction myself. What comes next is up to you." Wellspring took two orbs of light from himself, handing them to Lu Yun and Qing Han. "These are two uses of my aether dao immortal power. They'll be able to block an attack from a cultivator of the same level. I hope the young lords can make good use of them."

"Farewell!" Saying this, he disappeared into the waves.

The youths absorbed the light into themselves, then saluted gratefully with cupped fists in his direction of departure.

Despite Wellspring's honorific, Lu Yun didn't dare settle too comfortably into that mantle. After the Enneawym Coffinbearers entered hell, the Skandha Range's desolate willow had pledged fealty to Lu Yun.

But the Range had never placed any bonds or restrictions on the otherkind cultivators or villains who came from there. The only reason it was called a sacred land of evil was a voluntary gesture from its alumni.

A hundred thousand years ago, the ancient immortals' great war had destroyed both the world and the path of cultivation. Even the immortals who hadn't participated in it had lost their power and returned to mortality, forced to walk the path of cultivation while assailed by sickness and the looming specter of death.

Cultivation was an arduous process, filled with peril every step of the way. It took hundreds—nay, thousands of years for the path to be cleared. Only then had cultivation begun again for most.

All kinds of ferocious monsters and beasts were born in the process. Zombies and ghosts within the ancient tombs rioted from time to time, and the particularly talented divines rose to enslave the races. There was an exception to all that though: the Skandha Range.

The desolate willow there had always been a peerless immortal. After the ancient immortals' war, it was the strongest, and only, peerless immortal in the world for a time.

Despite that, the willow had never attempted any conquest or domination. Instead, it'd taken root in the deepest part of the Skandha Range, silently protecting the unknown under its guardianship.

Those who fled to the Skandha Range were taken under the old, lonely willow's boughs... and like that, its inhabitants multiplied.

Because the desolate willow was an otherkind, those attracted to it also tended to be otherkind. In those days, even the divine court dared not easily offend the Skandha Range.

Though the old desolate willow was still only a peerless immortal, it nevertheless commanded considerable respect. Many among the first to attain immortality after the great war were alive still, the willow's kindness toward them unforgotten.

If they showed themselves in the world, no one, save the nine celestial emperors, could possibly match their strength. However, the old monsters worked hard to repress their cultivation. They didn't want to risk breaking through to where the celestial emperors were, where the blood-soaked white path awaited them.

Plenty of immortals had reached the realm of the celestial emperors before, but when their cultivation peaked and reached the threshold, they always died under mysterious circumstances.

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Lu Yun didn't summon his fortress ship here as it was too telling for him to do so. The fortress ship's quality wasn't the only reason; it also belonged to the Ling Clan, foremost clan of Nephrite Major.

The group was out of Nephrite Major now and ambient qi was very sparse here, barely better than the Dusk Province of yesteryear. The skiff drifted along the waves, adding two more passengers to its number. Aoxue and Beigong Yu had come out. Aoxue was able to sense where the ancient North Sea dragon tomb was through her blood, while Beigong Yu was a local head honcho. As the only *kunpeng* in the world of immortals, he'd been born in the North Sea.

### **Chapter 275: Monster God**

The ocean was peaceful. With her eyes closed, Aoxue tapped into the power of her bloodline. After a while, she opened her eyes and pointed. "The dragon tomb is in that direction."

"There?" Beigong Yu tensed. "That's where the capital of the North Sea monster court is!"

"That's too much of a coincidence." Lu Yun turned to Aoxue with furrowed brows. "Are they in the same direction, or at the same location?"

"We're too far for me to pinpoint exactly where the tomb is." Aoxue shook her head after extending her senses again. The North Sea was vast, so much more so than any of the nine majors, ten lands, or four immortal seas. Thus, it was almost impossible for her to hone in on exactly where the tomb was.

"Then let's go to the capital first," said Lu Yun. It would be very troublesome if the tomb was located in the same spot.

Although the North Sea court couldn't rival the twenty-four facets, they were still a major player in the world of immortals. In fact, they were more powerful than some of the top factions in the world.

A death feud had formed between them and Lu Yun a long time ago. The King of Southern Subjugation had merged with the juba to become a Black Tortoise, marking him dead at Lu Yun's hands. Then, Lu Yun had cut Beigong Yu down himself. If the monster spirits knew he'd arrived at the North Sea, he would have trouble traveling anywhere.

Although he had disguised himself with a talisman refined by Xuanxi, it wouldn't fool dao immortals. Qing Quan, for instance, had spotted Lu Yun and Qing Han earlier, despite their disguises.

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The capital of the North Sea court lay at the heart of the vast ocean, spanning a distance of two Nephrite Majors between it and the coastline bordering Nephrite. The different facets of the world weren't continents, nor were they islands.

The world of immortals was a complete, standalone world. Within it, however, crisscrossed various fragmented spaces that split it into twenty-four enormous fragments of the world. Each of them was an isolated facet with its own heavenly mandate, connected by the four seas to form a single world.

Without the four seas, there wouldn't have been a world of immortals after the ancient times; as such, they were too vast for even dao immortals to traverse.

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Levitating Island.

This was the largest island located between the North Sea and Nephrite Major. Despite being called an island, it was larger than Dusk Province at more than five thousand kilometers in radius, and was a veritable cornucopia of resources. It was a rare, fertile plot of land along the North Sea coastline.

The transportation formation leading to the depths of the North Sea was located at the center of the island. Established by cultivators from around the North Sea, the island didn't fully belong to the monster spirits either.

The sea was too vast for even the past dragon clan to claim full ownership. Other than the monster spirits, there were also many more factions in the area. Together, they'd developed and ruled over Levitating Island.

Lu Yun and his companions opted for low profile outfits, so they would stand out less. Aoxue reduced her stunning temperament and transformed herself into a woman with average appearance and bearing. Beigong Yu dressed as an old servant, a talisman from Xuanxi suppressing his cultivation to peak august immortal realm. The foremost king of the North Sea Court was dead, his followers divvied up and claimed by others. Now, he was only Lu Yun's servant.

Lu Yun and Qing Han assumed the roles of two noble scions that were down on their luck, venturing into the North Sea for treasure hunting due to having trouble surviving in the human world. Such people weren't uncommon in the world of immortals.

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"Levitating Island..." Lu Yun looked over the lush island in slight surprise. "I thought it'd be hovering above the ocean, but it's just a regular island," he muttered. "Why is it called Levitating Island?"

Aoxue was curious as well. Back in her time, all of the islands in the North Sea had been ruled by the dragons, and there'd been no Levitating Island. Beigong Yu coughed and opened his mouth to introduce the lay of the land, but another voice interrupted him before he had a chance to speak.

"Y'all's first time here?" A boy with a smudged face sidled up to them and adopted a mysterious, lofty tone. "Levitating Island isn't a safe place. Without guidance, newcomers are likely to be scammed or killed!"

He looked about sixteen, similar to Lu Yun and Qing Han. His linen shirt was dirty, but his brown eyes were bright and piercing. He was only a golden core cultivator, which put him at the bottom of the pecking order on an island with no shortage of ambient qi.

"Hmm? Why do you dress yourself like this, little girl?" Qing Han asked merrily.

"What?!" The 'boy' shuddered and scanned the surroundings with big eyes, only sighing with relief when she made certain there wasn't anyone else around.

"Please don't joke around, sir. I'm a man!" She puffed up her chest, but her voice lacked the same confidence.

"It's difficult for little girls like her to survive on their own on Levitating Island. Only by disguising herself as a young man can she protect herself from unsavory sorts." Beigong Yu shook his head slightly. He was a bona fide peerless immortal. Although he'd once severed his own cultivation, the Tome of Life and Death had resurrected him to full power. Therefore, although the little girl had disguised herself with clever illusions, it couldn't fool him. As for Qing Han, he'd seen a trace of himself in the little girl.

"Gentlemen, I suddenly remember I have matters to take care of. Then I, I'll..." The girl backed away and bolted, but Lu Yun reached out and hauled her back with irresistible might.

"Don't rush off just yet," Lu Yun said with a smile. "It's our first time here and we happen to need a guide. You'll do."

The little girl was on the verge of tears.

"Please let me go, milords... I, I really wasn't going to swindle any stones from you..." With her secret revealed, she didn't dare remain with Lu Yun and his companions. Levitating Island was a land where the law of the jungle ruled supreme. Even female immortals might become a playtoy, let alone a mere golden core cultivator.

"Don't worry, this gentleman won't do anything to you," said Lu Yun. Beigong Yu had given him an overview of the island beforehand, so he knew what the girl was worried about.

"Do you see these two? They're august immortals, nobility of the world who're one step away from ascending to golden immortal realm!" Lu Yun pointed at Beigong Yu and Aoxue. "Stick with us as our guide, and you'll be rewarded with spirit stones."

He did indeed need a guide. Given Beigong Yu's previously lofty position, he'd only schmoozed with the upper echelons of Levitating Island. The island in his eyes was completely different from what the low-level cultivators experienced.

Lu Yun didn't want to raise a ruckus. He just wanted to enter the capital through the island's transportation formation without making a scene. However, the formation wasn't accessible to everyone, especially not the formation leading to the seas around the capital. One would need the permission of the north sea monster spirits to utilize it.

Of course, Beigong Yu had his ways of activating the transportation formation, but he would have to return to his manor on the island, which had long been occupied. Compared to the other islands, Levitating Island was the most accessible doorway to the capital.

The little girl trembled, resigned. August immortals were above the average level of power here, and could own their own manors in the big cities on the island. The North Sea was large, but there was a lack of natural energy around and immortal qi was especially scarce. Only the islands were suitable for immortals to settle down and rest in.

"Can, can I wait until I ascend to the life core realm to warm your bed?" the girl asked in a tiny voice, a bashful expression tinging her dirty face.

"Eh? Warm my bed?" Lu Yun blurted out in shock.

Aoxue levelled the girl with a murderous gaze. What an honor it would be to warm Lu Yun's bed! She and the four other envoys had never gotten the chance, and now the little girl had the audacity to volunteer herself?! What an infuriating and all-around uncomfortable feeling.

Aoxue's killing intent made the girl blanch and break out in a cold sweat.

Qing Han stepped between the two of them and patted the girl on the shoulder, injecting warm energy into her tiny frame to drive away the killing intent.

"Don't worry." Qing Han glared at Lu Yun. "If he tells you to warm his bed, I'll castrate him myself."

Lu Yun could only respond with awkward silence. He wouldn't have asked in the first place!

The girl nodded meekly and hid behind Qing Han. Instinctively, she felt something familiar and soothing from the gentleman. The girl's name was Xing Mou; she didn't know who she was, or who her parents were.

Her earliest memories started with serving incoming cultivators as a guide, along with her master and little band of companions, earning meager spirit stones for her cultivation. It was her master who'd taught her how to disguise herself. Although it wouldn't fool a high-level cultivator, it was enough for her to survive in the lowly parts of the island. Unfortunately, her master had died in a conflict some time ago, which resulted in the little family parting ways.

Qing Han's eyes stung as he listened to Xing Mou's story.

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The city closest to the coastline was named 'Tidesong'. It wasn't big, but still bustled with energy. Cultivators of various races gathered here to trade treasures acquired from the ocean for stones or crystals. They always found a ready buyer from the outside cultivators who visited.

“Halt!” exclaimed a voice when Lu Yun and the others approached the city. Fifteen finely-dressed immortals sauntered toward Lu Yun and blocked the way. The burly leading man shouted through his thick beard, “I am king of the hill here! I planted every tree and paved the path—”

Lu Yun almost tripped over himself when he heard the familiar sentence. This Chinese meme from Earth was used in the world of immortals as well?

“They’re envoys of the monster spirit god...” Xing Mou hastily explained.

“Tree? What trees?” After looking around in surprise, Aoxue flashed forward and punched the bearded true immortal in the eye.

Thud!

The man toppled to the ground with a yelp, smashing a human-shaped hole into the earth.

“Don’t!” Xing Mou paled when she saw Aoxue attack the thugs. “They serve His Holiness. We mustn’t get on their bad side....”

Aoxue ignored Xing Mou and punched the bearded man again and again with her fair fists.

“How, how dare you?!” the man bawled. “Don’t you know who I am?!”

After a pause, the other thugs howled and charged at their female assailant.

Bam!

Aoxue knocked all of them off their feet with a single blow. “You planted the trees? Tell me, where are these supposed trees?”

The land was barren outside Tidesong City, completely devoid of any flora.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

She’d been fuming ever since Xing Mou had mentioned warming Lu Yun’s bed, and now she had some perfect targets to vent her ill will on. They cried and begged for mercy, the nonexistent trees the last thing on their minds.

### **Chapter 276: Monster God?**

“What fools they are to beat up the god’s men just because their cultivation is superior. Do they have a death wish?” Immortals passing by hunched in on themselves when they saw Aoxue delivering a furious beating.

That gang had been demanding road tolls for about a year. Everyone visiting Levitating Island knew the rules. At first, a good number of immortals had leveraged their superior cultivation and refused to pay, but after their patron, the Monster God, had shown up and killed a number of golden immortals, no one dared resist since.

The Monster God had gained control over the seven cities on the outskirts of the island and became a local overlord. All seven of the cities had checkpoints like this one, forcing anyone who wished to pass to hand over a certain number of immortal crystals.

After a while, the thugs lay prone on the ground, their faces battered and bruised. Aoxue hadn't killed them, despite her anger. She'd merely planted them into the earth head-down, their limbs protruding like saplings.

"Who dares challenge the authority of the Monster God!" A tremendous aura descended from the sky as an august immortal emerged, walking on air. "Die!" He extended a hand and slashed at Aoxue's head.

"Oh, do you want to be planted here as well?" A dangerous curve crossed her lips.

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To no one's surprise, the august immortal also ended up buried headfirst in the ground as a human tree. Since Aoxue was disguising herself as a regular august immortal, she'd accomplished the feat with Beigong Yu's help.

Color drained from her face as Xing Mou trembled uncontrollably, too afraid to say anything. The Monster God ruled over the outskirts of Levitating Island, which made him a veritable god in the heavens in the eyes of lower level cultivators like Xing Mou. Death was the only punishment for anyone who offended the heavens.

"You should, you should leave now," Xing Mou said tearfully. "The Monster God will kill you once he comes."

"Don't be afraid." Qing Han patted her head.

"Monster God... I've never heard of such a figure on the island before." Frowning, Beigong Yu cocked his head and listened to the chatter around him. "An expert who's risen in power in the past year... he must have an impressive background."

Levitating Island was divided into different territories, and even the overlord of the outskirts must be from a powerful faction. This Monster God must be something else, if he could take over seven cities in only a year.

"What overlord? He's nothing but the leader of a bunch of thugs," Qing Han snorted, eyes gleaming with eagerness. "Why don't we establish a base here and collect treasures from the North Sea?"

The ace up his sleeves emboldened him. Besides, even Qing dao immortals would think twice before making a move on this island.

"Let's find the dragon tomb and the Skydragon Pearl first." Lu Yun smiled wryly at Qing Han. He knew Qing Han was thinking of him.

Dusk Province was only just beginning to heal. Although its ambient qi was recovering, and immortal qi had even returned to some areas, the province remained impoverished with no veins of immortal crystals or spirit stones.

It would take time for such things to form.

Therefore, Lu Yun needed money! The crystals that the Feng Clan had accumulated over the past year were depleted after the few shots Li Youcai had taken with the weapon of war.



Levitating Island lay between the North Sea and Nephrite Major, which made it a strategic chokepoint and a bustling trade hub. All kinds of ingredients and treasures were exchanged here, and the amount of crystals flowing into the island was tremendous. If Lu Yun gained ownership of a few cities, he would never have to worry about crystals again.

Still, first things first. Qing Han pursed his lips and didn't push.

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"The Monster God's army is here!" shouted a terrified immortal passing by.

Rumble.

A tremor passed through the land as a great puff of smoke rose from the horizon, heralding the arrival of a great army. Before them, Tidesong City began trembling as well. Countless immortals screamed and scattered like a stampeding herd.

"Run! The Monster God's ruthless army doesn't discriminate between friend and foe!" In an instant, the bustling area was emptied and quieted down. Xing Mou's dirty face paled until it was as white as a sheet.

"Dead, dead. We're really all dead!" Her lips trembled faintly and her brown eyes shone with fear.

"This... is a bit of overkill, isn't it?" Beigong Yu was caught off guard by the incoming army as well.

It was a group of heavy cavalry clad in black armor and riding exceptionally fierce beasts as their mounts. The dust they kicked up threatened to obscure the entire horizon as they charged at Lu Yun and the others. There were at least three hundred thousand of them!

It was ludicrous that the Monster God would send such a large army just because Aoxue had bullied a few toll-takers. Even Lu Yun was flabbergasted. What was this Monster God thinking?

Silver starlight sparkled from Qing Han as he readied for a fight.

"Surrender, blasphemers against the Monster God!" the leading black-armored rider bellowed upon halting the army three hundred meters away from them. "Surrender at once!"

"I wish to speak with the Monster God," Lu Yun said coldly and took a step forward.

"A mere cultivator," scoffed the leading rider, "and you have the audacity to demand an audience with His Holiness?"

"Oh? Do you think I'm not good enough?" Lu Yun chortled and walked toward the imposing army on his own. Wising up to the truth, Qing Han retracted his starlight aura and quietly watched Lu Yun.

"Stop!!" shouted the leading rider. "I ordered you to stop!!"

"Why should I?" Lu Yun asked with a supercilious smile.

"Stop at once, or I'll, I'll..." panic colored the rider's voice.

"Or what?" Lu Yun cracked a smile. "Or you'll bite me?" His voice focused into a straight line that zipped into the army. "Aren't you supposed to be with Mo Yi, little thing? How did you end up here?"

“It really is you, Lu Yun!” said a childlike voice. “If you don’t expose me, we can still be friends!”

“Alright, alright, I won’t,” Lu Yun transmitted to her with resignation. “Just dispel your illusions, first.”

Swoosh!

All three hundred thousand soldiers vanished in the next moment, but to others, it’d leisurely retreated after capturing Lu Yun and the others.

A pretty little girl of about nine years old appeared before Lu Yun. She was simply too exquisitely pretty and had big eyes, a small mouth, delicate nose, and fair skin. Dressed in white, one could see what a great beauty she would grow into.

It was Miao, the little fox Lu Yun had discovered in the burial mound under the Myriad Formation Summit. She’d disguised herself as a beautiful man, then, but had ended up exposed by Mo Yi. Although she lacked raw power, she was a master of illusions who could fool almost everyone. Lu Yun was an exception, since he was an expert of feng shui and knowledgeable in many other fields.

“Rumors have been flying for the past couple of days that you were coming to the island. I didn’t expect you to actually come here and undermine my authority!” Both her voice and face were childlike, but she affected a mature tone when she spoke.

“There were rumors about my arrival?” Lu Yun’s face clouded over. “Have the old men from the Qing Clan come already?”

There was no question that Lu Yun would make a stop at Levitating Island first after entering the North Sea. Thus, a few Qing dao immortals had come to the island ahead of him to announce his arrival. Lu Yun was a public enemy of the North Sea, after two monster kings had died at his hands.

Once the news reached the North Sea Court, there really would be three hundred thousand soldiers coming after him.

“What about you?” Lu Yun asked in bafflement. “How did you become this Monster God? And you’ve almost gained human form already. Didn’t you say it’s only possible after ascending to peerless immortal realm?”

He only realized now that Miao had truly transformed into a human, rather than create the form from illusions.

### **Chapter 277: A Cosmic Constitution**

The sudden turn of events almost gave Xing Mou whiplash. She’d thought she, along with the irreverent heretics who dared challenge the Monster God, would be torn apart in an agonizing death. But now, they’d been cordially invited to his palace!

Tidewatcher City sat by the ocean and was one of the biggest cities on the outskirts of Levitating Island. Spanning a hundred kilometers, it rivaled Dusk City in size. Miao’s palace happened to be located in this city.

Being a golden immortal made her a formidable player on the fringes of the island, and her mastery of illusions only amplified her authority. The other overlords in the area were reluctant to make an enemy out of someone who could ensnare their senses.

By now, Miao was back in the form of the beautiful man Lu Yun had met in the burial mound. Silver eyes were framed by silver locks, and both carried by unrivaled grace—this was the Monster God that locals were familiar with.

“Big sister Mo Yi brought me here,” Miao said with resignation. “She said the island is special, that it used to be a sacred land of the monster spirits, so it will help with my recovery.”

“Is that why you’re able to transform now?” Lu Yun and Qing Han couldn’t believe their eyes.

Aoxue, Beigong Yu, and Xing Mou had been taken somewhere else in the palace to rest, leaving only Miao with the two of them.

“It’s not that magical.” Given her current form, Miao had opted for a deeply resonant, androgynous voice. If Lu Yun and Qing Han hadn’t seen her true form before, they never would’ve believed that the beautiful man before them was actually a little girl around nine years old.

“Three months ago, big sister came and gave me her dao fruit and its cultivation. That brought my cultivation to the golden immortal realm, and that’s why I can transform into human form.”

Mo Yi had been a dao immortal before she’d severed her own cultivation and fallen back to the august immortal realm. Despite crippling her strength, she still possessed her dao fruit. With the path of cultivation restored, she’d made up her mind to retrace the journey of immortality. She thus severed her own cultivation again and gave the little fox her dao fruit and the cultivation embodied within.

Lu Yun and Qing Han were struck speechless by the recounting. Mo Yi... sure was unforgiving on herself. Thus far, she’d severed her own cultivation a couple times, and had now even given away her own dao fruit. That took courage that many other immortals didn’t possess. It was extremely perilous to destroy one’s cultivation, and Beigong Yu had almost died when he’d done so.

“Big sister Mo Yi said that there’s a great secret hidden on this island. The tomb of the ancient ancestor of the monster spirits? If I can find it, I may be able to recover my full power and be myself again!”

Miao reverted into her true form of a furry, nine-tailed fox cub, and clung to Lu Yun’s neck like a koala, nagging in a soft voice. She’d already died once, leaving her with no memory or cultivation. The tomb of the monster spirits’ ancestor might help her recover her true self.

“Help me help me help me! You have to help me! I know you’re strong. A little tomb won’t be a problem for you!”

Lu Yun scratched his nose while Qing Han turned away. The imposing and serious-looking monster spirit god from moments ago had suddenly turned into a coquettish fox and was acting cute.

“Alright, I’ll help you.” Lu Yun laughed wryly. “But I have other things to attend to first. I have to go to the capital city of the North Sea court.”

“Oh?” The fox clambered to the top of Lu Yun’s head. “That’s easy! I’m a marquis of the court. I can take you to the capital! Eh? Wait, that’s not right!” Miao leapt off his head. “What are you doing in the North

Sea? The Dao Flower's bloom attracted a great deal of attention and enhanced Dusk Province's prestige. You should've stayed there to further develop your territory...." She batted round, baby-blue eyes. "Did you come here to raid a tomb?"

"Good guess," Lu Yun admitted with some surprise.

The fox shook her furry head. "The legendary ancient skydragon tomb is about to open, which is located in the seas around the capital. You can't be going there for anything else."

"What?" Lu Yun turned to Qing Han with a grave expression. "The tomb is opening?"

"Hehehe, you've only just arrived, haven't you? The news has reached all parts of the North Sea. Immortals from all around the world have gathered here to search for the tomb. They say you're coming here in search of the tomb as well, so the North Sea monster spirits have set up many traps in preparation," she continued proudly, "You'll need me if you want to enter the capital!"

Her ears suddenly twitched. With a flash of bewitching sparkles, she morphed back into the inhumanly handsome and urbane gentleman.

"Your Holiness, Marquis Kun requests an audience!" A cultivator in black armor rushed in.

"Marquis Kun? What's he doing here?" Miao's faint silver eyebrows furrowed as she waved a dismissive hand. "I see, you may go."

"Understood!" The cultivator hurriedly took his leave.

"Marquis Kun?" Lu Yun asked. "Are there other kumpengs in the North Sea?"

Beigong Yu had been the only one in the world of immortals, and he was now Lu Yun's Infernum. It quite surprised Lu Yun to hear about a Marquis Kun.

"He's just a shark who luckily stumbled upon some kumpeng energy and absorbed it." Miao was so masterful in illusions that her expression was vividly reflected on her manifested self.

"I've got it!" The fox jumped in realization. "The shark is in cahoots with House Donglin. The little girl you brought here is a pet the house has been shepherding. That's why he's here."

"Xing Mou?" Qing Han asked in bafflement. "Shepherded by... House Donglin?"

"Her cosmic constitution is awakening!" said Miao. "It was dormant back when House Donglin found her on this island. They killed her master and set her loose so her constitution would gradually awaken.

"Their Donglin Taihuang cultivates the cosmic method. He needs to copulate with a woman that has a cosmic constitution. However, the Qing patriarch keeps failing to produce a daughter, so Xing Mou is an easy solution."

Miao had only been here for a year, but she'd collected a lot of critical information about the players on the island. It was how she was able to avoid trouble and establish herself as the Monster God with her own forces.

"No wonder...." Now Qing Han understood why she was so fond of Xing Mou. They shared the same constitution.

Although Xing Mou knew a unique disguising method, it wasn't enough to fool high-level immortals. She'd only managed to survive on this island because of House Donglin, who killed everyone that dared think about laying a finger on her. They couldn't stay put after the girl was brought to Miao's palace, and therefore sent Marquis Kun to bring her back.

The awakening of the cosmic constitution was a unique process that no one could force. The constitution must be allowed to come into fruition on its own, and employing outside force might destroy it.

House Donglin had studied the subject for thousands of years, and knew how to identify someone with the cosmic constitution and guide its awakening. They considered the process not unlike keeping an animal free range. Thus, they called it star-shepherding.

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"Monster God, this marquis has paid you a visit. I'd appreciate a meeting in person!" a brusque voice rasped through the palace and shook the architecture.

"Why don't we return Xing Mou to House Donglin?" Miao shrank inward. "Marquis Kun is more influential and powerful than I am, and I can't make an enemy out of him. Moreover, if House Donglin makes a move and discovers your identities..."

"No!" Qing Han shot her down before Lu Yun could speak. "I won't let them have Xing Mou no matter what!"

There was no one who hated House Donglin more than Qing Han; she hated them down to the very core of her being. They were why she'd never been able to be herself since birth. Even now, she didn't dare tell Lu Yun the truth. Though she knew that she'd be free once Xing Mou's cosmic constitution awakened, she still didn't want House Donglin to get what they wanted.

"Ugly thing, you're still ugly even though you've become prettier!" Miao gave him a sideways glance. "You haven't fallen in love with the little girl, have you? Listen, she's a bad omen who'll bring misfortune to everyone around her."

"Bad omen?" Qing Han's lips twitched. "What a coincidence, I'm a bad omen as well."

Miao paused and lowered her head. "Your damn accursed spirit root."

Bam!

The entire palace creaked and groaned.

"Monster God, you flamboyant sissy! Get your ass out here!" Running out of patience, Marquis Kun rained some blows down on the palace.

"Damned shark, do you think this holy one is a pushover?!" Miao was growing anxious. She'd only been here for a year, and her foundation was far inferior to that of the shark marquis. Besides, Marquis Kun was an arcane immortal. Her illusions could fool golden immortals, but not an arcane immortal.

“You dare call yourself Marquis Kun just because you’ve absorbed some kungpeng energy, you little shark?!” roared a furious voice. In the next moment, an enormous avian claw descended from the sky and closed around the shark, interrupting his taunting.

“A peerless immortal!” Despair flashed through Marquis Kun’s face as he stared at the giant claw. Peerless immortals were at the top of the pecking order here and should be found only at the heart of the island. Why would one come to Tidewatcher City? Moreover, there was a familiar power in the peerless immortal’s claw, which tore apart the strand of kungpeng energy in his body.

### **Chapter 278: Embittered Bamboo**

Beigong Yu was beside himself with rage. The kungpeng energy he sensed in Marquis Kun had come from the nest of kungpengs, where he himself had been born. There was another egg there that he’d carefully protected, anticipating the birth of another of his kind. Similarly, Spiriteater Demon Frogs had once gone extinct, but some remaining eggs had remained whole and carried on the bloodline.

The presence emanating from this shark, however, meant that the nest had been invaded, and the egg that Beigong Yu had carefully preserved might’ve fallen into someone else’s hand. It’d been only two years since his death in the Dusk Tournament!

In those two years, the forces he’d left behind had been exterminated and the kungpeng nest invaded. To be frank, he had only himself to blame. He’d been entirely too vicious and violent when alive, and had possessed a penchant for slaughter. He’d wiped out his fair share of clans, including not only humans, but also North Sea monster spirits. The mass murders he’d committed had left dense negative karma on him, which allowed Lu Yun to kill him with the Judgement of Life and Death.

After his death, his followers were immediately exterminated and his nest destroyed. The luckier monster spirits had absorbed the energy in the nest and acquired the kungpeng bloodline, making a great leap in strength. Marquis Kun was one such example. The great amount of energy he’d consumed propelled him to arcane immortal realm, whereupon the North Sea emperor had appointed him a marquis.

“I am a marquis of the North Sea Court. How dare you try to kill me?!” Ensnared by the giant talons, Marquis Kun could feel a tremendous wave of killing intent rolling off from his captor. He yelled at the top of his lungs, “This is the North Sea! His Majesty will chase you down!”

“A North Sea marquis?” Beigong Yu’s face split into a feral grin, his giant head manifesting in the air with eyes fixed in a death stare at Marquis Kun. “I’ve killed no less than eight hundred marquises in my lifetime. One more notch on my belt won’t make a difference.”

The proclamation chilled Marquis Kun to the bone. He could tell that the ruthless heavyweight before him meant business, and clearly had grudges to settle with the North Sea Court.

“Tell me, how many more little spirits have consumed kungpeng energy like you?!” Beigong Yu growled again.

“There are, are....”

Bam!

Before he could respond, a tremendous might knocked away the talons Beigong Yu had manifested with his inner energy.

"Fellow daoist, Marquis Kun is a member of the North Sea Court and a great official in charge of Levitating Island," spoke a feminine voice. A handsome man in emerald long robes quickly appeared in front of the palace to protect Marquis Kun. "Your actions are disrespectful to the court."

"Master Donglin!" Marquis Kun looked visibly relieved. The peerless immortal of House Donglin ignored him and stared gravely at Beigong Yu.

"House Donglin?" Beigong Yu showed himself. His true form was a stern-looking man in black, but he was currently disguised as a weary old man in grey, playing the part of an old servant.

"Is House Donglin of Aureate Major now going to intervene with the internal affairs of the monster spirits?" Beigong Yu smirked derisively.

The Donglin immortal tensed, then continued with some hesitation, "Who are..."

"You're in no place to ask about me. Have your superiors come!" Scoffing, Beigong Yu suddenly clawed at the shark under the peerless immortal's protection. He had to find out who'd entered the nest and where'd the egg had gone. Although he'd become Lu Yun's Infernum, it was still his duty to rebuild the kungpeng race. Only by Lu Yun's side could his kind soar to great heights. He would find the egg and offer it to Lu Yun!

"Hmph!" Face darkening, the Donglin immortal charged at Beigong Yu, his body flaring with emerald light as a green bamboo shadow flashed over his head.

Bam!

A great shock spread through the area from their collision, shaking the entire Monster God's palace and destroying many of its buildings. Even Tidewatcher City itself felt the great impact. The repercussions of a battle between peerless immortals were far too strong for a golden immortal's palace with unfinished formations.

"My palace!" Miao cried out unhappily.

"I'll stop the peerless immortal," the Donglin immortal said to Marquis Kun. "Retrieve the cosmic constitution from the palace."

"Understood!" Marquis Kun reported. His kungpeng bloodline had been crippled by Beigong Yu, but he himself still retained the cultivation of an arcane immortal.

"Don't kill him!" Beigong Yu reminded hurriedly when he saw the shark rushing into the palace.

"Think about yourself," scoffed the Donglin immortal.

Beigong Yu was a formidable fighter, due to both being born with incredible talent and kungpengs being one of the top divine beasts in the world. He hadn't become any less powerful after becoming an Infernum. And yet, the peerless immortal from House Donglin was keeping up with him, proof in itself that the immortal was a rare genius.

However, the immortal's face clouded over when he sensed a terrifying power seizing Marquis Kun.

"I'd actually love for you to take the little girl." Aoxue hauled up the shark with one hand and glanced at the slightly baffled Xing Mou. "However, Sir Qing Han seems to have taken a liking to the girl. If you take her, I won't be able to explain myself to Sir Qing Han."

In the eyes of Aoxue and the other envoys, Qing Han's importance was second only to Lu Yun. Xing Mou's eyes lit up at Aoxue's words, but then lowered her head uneasily, her face flushed.

Crimson power unleashed from Aoxue's body restrained Marquis Kun before she walked out of the palace.

"Be careful, the peerless immortal isn't here in his true form. It's a replica," Aoxue voiced after careful observation. As an august immortal, it was easy for her to capture the half-crippled Marquis Kun, but she wouldn't be a peerless immortal's match. Thus, she stayed out of the battle.

Beigong Yu's expression turned solemn at her words. Such replicas were usually refined from great connate treasures, and as a result, were extremely powerful.

"This particular replica is refined with an embittered bamboo, which ranks seventh among the ten connate spirit roots!" Aoxue yelled with sudden realization. "Capture him!!"

### **Chapter 279.1: The Second Monster Spirit King**

Embittered Bamboo!

Aoxue's identification sent a ripple of surprise through the scene. As one of the ten great connate spirit roots of the world, it was a mythical thing that existed only in legends dating from the ancient times. It'd been introduced to the world at large after records of it were unearthed from ancient tombs.

Their reputation exceeded that of many connate-grade treasures, as all connate spirit roots possessed great power. It was said that whoever could obtain all ten would set foot on an accelerated path through the immortal dao! Even Feinie's Formation Orb paled in comparison.

However, the spirit roots weren't something that could be sought out intentionally. The world of immortals at large didn't even know if the myths were true. Yet now, the seventh on the list—Embittered Bamboo—was in the public eye in the form of someone's replica!

Donglin Shaohui, peerless immortal of House Donglin, blanched. He hadn't expected his greatest secret to be seen through so easily. The woman hadn't only spotted this body as a replica, but had also ascertained what it'd been refined from.

"Run!" Donglin Shaohui disengaged from his fight with Beigong Yu and burst into emerald light. A tremendous bamboo shadow flashed through and took him out of the city, knocking away Beigong Yu at the same time.

"You're not going anywhere!" roared Beigong Yu. His body made a sudden transformation into an enormous bird with a wingspan of three thousand meters that blotted out the sun. This was one of the forms of a true kunpeng!



A kunpeng had two forms—one as a fish, and the other, a bird. As the only kunpeng in the world of immortals, Beigong Yu had only ever displayed his fish form to outsiders, saving his bird form as a secret weapon. Not even the North Sea monster king knew about it.

Now that he'd died and been resurrected as Lu Yun's Infernum, he was at liberty to reveal himself as a divine bird and unleash tremendous power. Watery ripples violently undulated from him and doused all of Tidewatcher City like a giant pond, shunting all of the local immortals away from the city.

Water Kingdom!

It was a combat art that kunpengs were born with, and it wrapped around Donglin Shaohui before he could escape the city.

"What kind of divine beast is this?!" he yelled with shock at the giant black bird. The horrifying domain of the Water Kingdom had suppressed his embittered bamboo body and was close to forcing its true form to manifest.

"Die!" growled Beigong Yu. The ripples enveloping the city converged and transformed into a giant hand, grabbing Donglin Shaohui's replica.

"Gahhhhh—break!!" Donglin Shaohui roared. An enormous bamboo shadow emerged above him, its tremendous power smashing the hand of water so he could totter out of the Water Kingdom.

"Don't let him get away!" shrieked Aoxue. Throwing caution out the window, she manifested a crimson halberd, unleashing her battle strength as a blood dragon and slashing at Donglin Shaohui.

The embittered bamboo was so great a treasure that Aoxue had to acquire it for Lu Yun, even if she exposed herself as a blood dragon in the process.

"What the hell is that?!" Donglin Shaohui barely had the time to breathe before a blinding crescent of crimson light slammed into him. Panic flooded his face when the light almost ground the nascent spirit he'd attached to the embittered bamboo to paste. Nevertheless, he was still an elite immortal of House Donglin who'd been so fortuitous as to encounter an embittered bamboo. That alone put him above average immortals.

"Break!" Donglin Shaohui decisively bit the tip of his tongue and spat out dark-green blood. A pleasant fragrance immediately filled the air as millions of shadowy bamboos manifested.

Bam!

A crimson halberd slammed into the bamboo with terrifying radiance and slowed like it'd been mired in mud, but then Beigong Yu's Water Kingdom arrived and trapped Donglin Shaohui again.

"The great peng rides the wind and soars forty-five thousand kilometers into the sky!" Beigong Yu howled. An enormous kun fish leapt from his Water Kingdom and twisted in the air, turning into a giant peng bird.

Peng of Kun!

This was Lu Yun's second personal sword technique. As the original that the technique was based on, Beigong Yu could naturally master it. In fact, the technique was even more powerful in his hands.

“That’s Lu Yun’s sword technique,” Donglin Shaohui shrieked. “You’re Lu Yun’s man!!”

As House Donglin’s enemy, they’d studied all of Lu Yun’s combat arts and techniques. Therefore, he’d recognized the technique the moment the divine bird used it.

Wham!

A massive kunpeng body slammed into him, forcing out a mouthful of blood and the almost complete expulsion of the spirit he’d attached to the bamboo.

Clang!

Aoxue shifted, sweeping her giant halberd at Donglin Shaohui and knocking him off his feet. If the embittered bamboo replica hadn’t been as sturdy as it was, the attack would’ve bisected him at the waist.

Donglin Shaohui snarled furiously, but didn’t have a chance when confronted with a concerted attack from two powerful experts. Beigong Yu and Aoxue together made a formidable team; however, the blood dragon had also caught Donglin Shaohui off guard. If he’d reacted in time and managed a counterattack, he would’ve easily killed Aoxue, whose cultivation was inferior. Even though she’d tapped into the power of a blood dragon, she was no match for Donglin Shaohui in a head-on fight.

A replica of Embittered Bamboo was too powerful!

Rawwwr!

After a failed blow, Aoxue opted to transform into a dragon, her now-scarlet body running three hundred meters long and her foreclaws clenching the same crimson halberd. She unleashed draconic combat arts and battle techniques with abandon, scattering the great combat art Donglin Shaohui was planning to use.

Aoxue was an unrivalled genius in close quarters combat. Even with an embittered bamboo replica, Donglin Shaohui still found himself struggling.

The blood dragon and kunpeng fought together with Beigong Yu taking the lead, clashing head-on with Donglin Shaohui and meeting the embittered bamboo with his enormous kunpeng body. Meanwhile, Aoxue utilized her wealth of experience and sophisticated draconic combat arts to parry Donglin Shaohui’s attacks, blocking his escape routes at the same time.

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Many immortals in Tidewatcher City kept an eye on the epic battle. However, they hesitated to approach the city since it was the territory of the tyrannical Monster God.

“Wait, it’s not the Monster God who’s fighting. The power ripples are coming from peerless immortals!”

“Some peerless immortals are making a move against the Monster God?!” Many snapped to attention.

“I heard that Marquis Kun of the North Sea court is paying the Monster God a visit... so why is there a battle between peerless immortals?”

The little fox didn't have a strong foundation on Levitating Island, but she knew well the art of intimidation. Anyone who dared challenge her quickly suffered a harsh and brutal end. Therefore, though there was a great fight raging in the city, everyone gave it a wide berth lest they attract the Monster God's ire. Even the other local overlords on the outskirts of the island kept their distance.

House Donglin territory.

"Shao... Shaohui's in trouble!" An elderly man shot to his feet with a rapidly shifting expression. "The Monster God's taken the cosmic constitution back to his palace, and now Shaohui is under attack in Tidewatcher City. Is this a plot against House Donglin?"

There was a hard glint in his gaze as he looked in the direction of the city. "A strange divine beast and a crimson dragon... and they're overpowering Shaohui?!" Sword energy built beneath him before taking him to the city.

### **Chapter 279.2: The Second Monster Spirit King**

"Someone's coming, let's finish this!" A piercing dragon howl escaped Aoxue's mouth, and the crimson light around her increased in intensity, almost turning Beigong Yu's Water Kingdom red. The struggling Donglin Shaohui was quickly restrained, and a maddened Beigong Yu stopped pulling his punches. His body split into both a giant kun and enormous peng, slamming into Donglin Shaohui in a concerted attack that doubled their power.

Synergy of kun and peng!

Donglin Shaohui paled when he felt the splintering of the spirit he'd attached to the replica.

"I'll never forgive you for this, Lu Yun!!" he shrieked. The kun and peng attack had greatly damaged his deteriorating nascent spirit.

"How dare you?!" A tremendous presence descended from the sky as an enormous blade of sword light coalesced and almost cut the city in half. The specter of death loomed over everyone.

"Dao immortal!" Color drained from Aoxue's face; Beigong Yu had lost his mobility after using that taboo technique. They could only watch helplessly as the sword came for them. The figure of an old man appeared at the same time. When he fired off the slash, he also extended a hand to grab Donglin Shaohui's prone body.

Roar!

The tolling of a bell rushed out of the city. Blaring like tiger roars, a tiger shadow formed by soundwaves burst out of the city and shattered the sword light.

"The Qing Clan's Arcane Golden Bell!" The old man tensed. "It is Lu Yun!"

Everyone knew that Lu Yun had acquired the bell and in the process, thoroughly humiliated the Qing Clan. Its sudden attacks now alarmed the Donglin dao immortal. This was a dao immortal treasure with mysterious powers that no ordinary supreme treasure could rival; even the immortal sword in his hand was starting to crack.

According to those Qing dao immortals, Lu Yun arrived in the North Sea thanks to the protection of Wellspring from the Skandha Range. Lu Yun must've given the treasure to the old monster!

But Wellspring's not a Qing, so how is he able to use the hereditary Qing treasure? Or is it that the Qing dao immortals are here, too, and this is their plot against House Donglin?

Dong!

A bell toll interrupted his train of thought, and heat burst in his chest before he threw up a mouthful of blood. The old man spared no thought for the hapless Donglin Shaohui, fleeing in helter-skelter terror when he saw a soundwave tiger lunging at him. He was just an aether dao immortal who'd plucked his first dao fruit, and couldn't possibly defy the golden bell's strength!

"Lu Yun!! The wrath of House Donglin will descend upon you!" came his fleeting voice while he made his getaway.

"It's Lu Yun! He's really come to the island!" Many immortals had taken note of the roared threat.

"He handed a great loss to the Donglin dao immortal as soon as he set foot on the island... that man really is House Donglin's bane!"

"Their previous patriarch died in Dusk Province, and Donglin Shaochen, the genius who could slay golden immortals as a cultivator, died at Lu Yun's hands back in Xiankan."

Their chatter didn't escape the Donglin dao immortal's hearing, but he regretted nothing. House Donglin had failed too many times when it came to Lu Yun. One more failure was nothing. No one cared about an extra louse when there was already a colony of them. He'd exposed Lu Yun's tracks, so now the North Sea Court would deal with the young governor.

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Back in the Monster God's palace, Qing Han's face was slightly pale. Over time, the poison in his body had grown increasingly potent. Not even the Fusang Purewood could keep it fully in check anymore.

Every time he channeled the cosmic power of his starstones to grant the strength of dao immortals to the Tiger and Dragon Prince, the poison in his body grew a little more virulent. Of course, he hadn't told anyone about this. Not even Empress Myrtlestar knew about his condition.

"We've finally obtained the Embittered Bamboo!" Qing Han broke into a joyous smile.

Aoxue and Beigong Yu returned to human form and brought Donglin Shaohui's body to Lu Yun and Qing Han.

Although Beigong Yu had shattered the Donglin scion's spirit, the latter's consciousness remained on his replica. He glared at Lu Yun venomously, wanting to imprint his enemy's visage in his mind.

"What are you looking at me like that for? If you have even one ball, you'd face me in person." Lu Yun walked up to him and crushed the strand of consciousness with a hellfire-imbued palm-strike.

Hum.

Surreal green radiance blossomed forth with great vitality as an emerald bamboo stick slowly materialized in front of them. Roughly three meters tall, it was as thick as a wrist and studded with spots of light that sparkled like the stars. Its emergence was accompanied by a marvelous spiritual energy that soothed the mind and calmed the heart.

“This is the Embittered Bamboo!” The little fox’s eyes shone avidly. Embittered Bamboo ranked seventh among the ten connate spirit roots; many coveted it, but never had the chance to lay their hands on it. And here it was, floating quietly before them.

“What a shame.” Empress Myrtlestar sighed from within the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals. “This bamboo had a chance of becoming a monster spirit and rising to great power, but someone killed its consciousness and refined it into a replica not long after its birth. What a great waste of a natural resource.”

“See if you can refine it into your own duplicate, Lu Yun!” Qing Han said eagerly.

“That won’t be necessary.” Lu Yun shook his head. “The bamboo brims with life essence that’ll greatly benefit you. Fusang Purewood ranks third among the ten connate spirit roots, so the Embittered Bamboo isn’t its match, but it’s still a powerful spirit root that can help suppress your poison.”

Qing Han started, and even the little fox was shocked. She didn’t understand how Lu Yun could give the seventh greatest spirit root away without even batting an eye.

“Is big sister Mo Yi right? That Lu Yun likes men?” she muttered. “But I’m a hundred times more beautiful as a man than that ugly Qing Han. Why has he never spared me a glance? Does he only like ugly things?”

The little fox wanted the bamboo as well, but couldn’t stake her claim. After all, it’d been Lu Yun’s two followers who’d risked their lives to fetch it.

“There’s... actually another way to cleanse your poison,” Lu Yun said suddenly.

“What is it?” Qing Han blurted out.

“We can collect all ten connate spirit roots in the world and refine them into your body,” he said seriously. “Then you’ll be immune to all poisons... and be almost immortal!”

“He’ll get struck down by lightning first!” The little fox jumped. “Every one of the ten connate spirit roots is unique, and there’s only one of each! They’re truly heavenly ingredients, treasured by heaven and earth!”

“It’s already crazily lucky for someone to gain one or two,” shrieked the little fox. “If he dares refine all ten into himself, the heavenly dao will strike him down in a fit of fury with a chaotic thunder tribulation!”

“Other people might be, but Qing Han’s different. He restored the overall framework of the void realm when repairing the path of cultivation, which makes him first of the Dao Sovereigns and grants him the protection of Dao Flower. There will be no tribulation levied against him.” Lu Yun shrugged after those confident assertions. “Of course, the ten connate spirit roots aren’t going to be easy to find. This is just a theory of mine.”

The little fox stared dumbly at Qing Han, only then did she recall the background of the ugly thing in front of her.

After restoring the void realm, Qing Han was now a Dao Sovereign recognized by the Dao Flower.

“Trouble may come knocking if we wait any longer,” said Lu Yun as he manifested the Formation Orb of Yin and Yang. “Refine the Embittered Bamboo into your body while I stand guard over you.”

With a wave of his hand, he established a hundred and eight disguising formations and three thousand defensive formations, creating a bubble of safety in the local vicinity.

“Alright!” Qing Han sat down cross-legged and communicated with the bamboo, accepting Lu Yun’s gift.

.....

Lu Yun had come to Levitating Island, sent a Donglin dao immortal fleeing with his tail between his legs, and was now residing in the Monster God’s palace! The latest news spread to all parts of the island, and soon, the North Sea Court, creating an enormous uproar.

However, the emergence of the fabled Skydragon Tomb was at hand. Countless elites had gathered in the imperial seas and the North Sea emperor had no attention to spare for what was happening on Levitating Island.

Despite that, the island itself grew turbulent as other elites gathered in Tidewatcher City. North Sea monster spirits stationed on the island surrounded the Monster God’s palace. Their hatred for Lu Yun was as deep, if not deeper than that of House Donglin and the Feng and Qing Clans.

Even then, no one dared put a reckless toe out of line as even House Donglin’s immortals had met with yet another ignoble defeat here.

Formations and barriers hummed around the palace, and an army of monster spirits took over the city. It was fortunate that the North Sea monster spirits didn’t have a weapon of war, or the palace would’ve been razed to the ground long ago.

“I spent a year building my influence, but now it’s all gone!” The little fox whined tearfully on the floor, maintaining the appearances of the Monster God, but none of its associated dignity. “You have to make it up to me!”

Lu Yun was guarding Qing Han at the moment, and Xing Mou was hidden deep within the palace. Only Aoxue and Beigong Yu were with her.

“You, especially!” The little fox pointed at Aoxue and denounced angrily, “You wanted to eat me, back in the burial mound. Now that I escaped to the ocean, you’re bringing me trouble again!”

“I am the last princess of the North Sea dragons,” Aoxue said slowly. She didn’t consider those circling the palace real threats. “I know the North Sea like the back of my hand. Once Sir Lu Yun returns to Nephrite Major, I will take you on an adventure in the North Sea and help you recover to your peak strength.”

“Promise?” The little fox jumped and returned to her true form, clinging to Aoxue’s neck. Beigong Yu watched in resigned silence.

“Monster God!” exploded a voice that demanded awe and respect. “His Majesty bestowed upon you great favor and kindly appointed you a marquis, yet you betray him and harbor an enemy of the court!

“This king will give you one chance to hand us Lu Yun, upon which you will be forgiven for your mistakes!” The very world seemed to tremble with every utterance.

“It’s the Scaled-Dragon King!” Beigong Yu’s expression tightened. When he’d been known as the foremost monster king of the North Sea, the scaled-dragon had ranked second.

The Scaled-Dragon King was a pentacolor scaled-dragon with bloodlines of both the ancient dragons and crocodiles. He could’ve become a true dragon after reaching peerless immortal realm by shedding his crocodile bloodline, but he went against tradition and cultivated both bloodlines, greatly improving his strength. Even a premier divine beast like Beigong Yu was only a hair stronger than he was.

“He’s consumed kungpeng energy as well, and he has the egg!” Beigong Yu couldn’t stay put when he sensed energy radiating from the scaled dragon.

“Calm down,” Aoxue said coolly upon seeing her colleague’s agitation. “You’re not his match anymore.”

Beigong Yu trembled with suppressed rage. Consuming the kungpeng energy had granted the scaled-dragon some of the bloodline’s power, adding to his already formidable capabilities. Beigong Yu was but an Infernum and not protected by the Tome of Life and Death. Thus, he was no longer the scaled dragon’s match.

“I only show you mercy because you’re talented, Monster God. This king will give you a hundred breaths of time to consider. Hand us Lu Yun or die for him. Your choice.”

.....

Outside the palace, a man with black hair stood calmly with his hands behind his back. He wasn’t tall, and he was actually slightly stooped over. There was nothing about his appearance that would make him stand out in a crowd. This ordinary looking person was the second most powerful monster king, whose name reverberated throughout all of the North Sea. He’d risen to the top after Beigong Yu’s death!

“He refused to discard his crocodile bloodline and insisted on concentrating on both. What an ambitious monster spirit!” The Donglin dao immortal had stayed hidden in the dark, muttering his appreciation. “When the kungpeng nest was invaded a year ago, the scaled-dragon must’ve swallowed some of the energy and gained that bloodline as well, which has only further improved his strength. Given enough time, only Taihuang will be his match.”

The dao immortal stayed hidden, waiting for the monster spirits to break into the palace so that he could spirit away the cosmic constitution in the resulting chaos. There would be no more shepherding of stars or free-range nurturing. He would simply force cosmic power into the girl and awaken her constitution. Becoming one with Donglin Taihuang would drain and kill her anyway, and there wasn’t much difference between a perfect cosmic constitution and a damaged one.

.....

“It’s been a hundred breaths of time. It seems you’ve decided to betray His Majesty, Monster God... Activate the formation and prepare the assault!”

Bam!

As soon as the scaled-dragon gave the order, the army of monster spirits behind him assembled into formation and formed the image of a water god in the air. It possessed a human face, snake’s body, and red hair.

It was the legendary Gonggong, first of the ancient water gods!

### **Chapter 280: Feng Shui Killing Layout**

“That moldy scaled-dragon is as sanctimonious as ever!” Beigong Yu ground his teeth at the giant image of Gonggong.

The palace was encircled by three thousand layers of defensive formations, but the Monster God was a mere golden immortal who’d been on Levitating Island for only a year. With the limited foundations she’d laid down, she couldn’t have set up three thousand immortal-grade formations. They were enough to withstand a shot from a weapon of war!

The scaled-dragon was simply looking for an excuse to attack the palace, as the Monster God was a marquis appointed by the North Sea emperor himself.

.....

The enormous Gonggong image sprang to action and whipped ahead of the army. Imbued with endless water energy, it slammed ruthlessly into the defensive formations.

Bam!

Water and light exploded, and the fabric of the air trembled. A dozen formations that Lu Yun had set up with the Formation Orb instantly evaporated. Meanwhile, the great formations the monster spirits had laid down outside the palace activated, shaking its architecture.

“Dammit!” The little fox jumped up, her face twisted with dismay. “Lu Yun’s formations are anchored to the air. Someone set up a Great Formation of Isolation to seal off the palace from the outside world. Without anchors, the three thousand formations will quickly shatter!”

“If only I can improve my illusions to the point of becoming reality. Then I’d be able to kill people with them....”

“Don’t worry.” Aoxue remained unfazed. “The moment all the formations break is the moment they die.”

Beigong Yu nodded as well. “The scaled-dragon is doomed this time.”

The little fox looked at them dumbly, wondering where their confidence came from. She cast a glance back at the depths of the palace. There, Lu Yun sat cross-legged, protecting the hundred and eight concealing formations, which not only concealed the energy of Qing Han and the Embittered Bamboo, but also guarded them from outside turbulence.



He wouldn't allow himself to repeat the mistakes of yesteryear and let the battle outside affect Qing Han.

The Scaled-Dragon King struck a pose on top of the manifested Gonggong with his hands behind his back. The Great Formation of Isolation had cut off the palace from the outside world, creating a domino effect of three thousand formations popping like multi-colored bubbles.

"Formations without foundation..." murmured the scaled-dragon. "Although it's the peak technique of formation dao, there's a fatal flaw to formations set up with such technique. Once the space around them is isolated, they become as fragile as eggshells."

Formations needed the support of heavenly energy to function, and ones etched in the air would weaken and break, once cut off from the outside world.

Formations set up with formation stones were different, as every stone was birthed by nature and contained tremendous heavenly energy. Being cut off from the world wouldn't affect those formations at all, since premier anchoring stones could actively draw on the power of heaven and earth.

Therefore, strongholds and fortresses always opted for formations set up in the traditional method. To many, it was suicide for a fortress to be guarded by formations without foundations.

"Is Lu Yun really that gullible? Or is he just faking it?" Confusion flicked through the scaled-dragon's face. "Strange, it's said that he's one of the greatest formation masters in the world. He shouldn't have made such an amateur mistake..." Realization suddenly dawned on him.

"Wait, stop! Stop at once!!" he roared in panic, but it was too late.

Bam!

The destruction of the last formation suddenly triggered a tremendous explosion, shifting the environment around them. The palace was gone, replaced by an enormous, dark green swamp with rising mist and dark green arms shooting out to grab the soldiers.

With strangled cries that quickly cut off, they were hauled into the swamp and drowned without leaving even a finger behind. In no time at all, half of the soldiers forming the Gonggong battle formation had been claimed by the unearthly swamp.

"These... are all Poison Fiends!!" Horrified, the scaled-dragon soared into the air and screeched, "You despicable bastard, Lu Yun!! How dare you use poison?!"

Arm after arm shot out of the swamp and bore down on him. With a backhanded blow, the scaled-dragon shattered the arms. He held his breath and closed off all of his pores before searching for a way out.

.....

"Aren't the formations broken? Where are the Scaled-Dragon King and his soldiers?" The immortals watching from a distance gaped at the empty clearing; it didn't make any sense. "The last of the three thousand formations is broken... did he charge into the palace already?"

"But nothing's happened to it. According to his style, he would've destroyed the palace already."

Likewise, the Donglin dao immortal goggled at the palace. He'd witnessed the disappearance of the monster king and the monster spirits himself, or he would've rushed into the palace for the cosmic constitution. As it was, he quietly retreated with a heavy heart, alerting no one to his presence.

.....

"Aren't those... corpsefish hair?" The little fox widened her round, baby-blue eyes at the swamp, mouth agape in disbelief. Those outside couldn't see what was really going on, but she could clearly see the poison swamp from within the palace and easily identified the arms reaching out of it.

"Formations without foundation?" Lu Yun opened his eyes and sighed faintly. "I'm skilled in formations, true, but my real expertise lies in tomb raiding, and feng shui is my most fatal weapon.

"The three thousand formations were set up to be broken. Otherwise, how else was I going to create the Ghost Yanking Feet layout? How was I supposed to lure all of you in?"

The formations were merely a front. His real killing ace was the feng shui layout he'd set up with the Poison Fiend!

Every time a formation was broken, its shards melded with the void and changed the environment, until finally, the Ghost Yanking Feet layout could be established. And throughout this process, the monster spirits would be further lured inside.

Once all of the formations were broken and the layout was formed, the scaled-dragon and his monster spirits would've also reached the heart of the killing layout.

Originally, Ghost Yanking Feet was only a layout meant to restraint and trap, but after incorporating Lü Guhong's Poison Fiend and turning it into a terrifying killing layout, Lu Yun had made it even more deadly with the addition of the ten thousand poisons it'd consumed from Qing Han's body!

Hum.

Countless dark green tentacles merged into a giant arm, shooting through the air and seizing the Scaled-Dragon King by the ankle. With an awful screech, his inner energy was restrained before he could use any combat arts. Dragged into the swamp, he died just like that, without even bone shards to mark his passing!