

## Necropolis 281

### Chapter 281: Revenge of the Corpse Refiners

The Scaled-Dragon King and his hundred thousand soldiers had disappeared right in front of everyone's eyes, while the Monster God's Palace remained completely unscratched. The eerie development imparted a mysterious air to the unassuming palace. Its open front gate now seemed like a demon's maw, ready to devour all living souls at any time.

Hell.

The scaled-dragon stared at the sinister world around him, dumbfounded. Finally, he realized who the young man he'd so recklessly attacked was.

"At last, I have a complete battalion under my command." Lu Yun entered hell and considered the Scaled Dragon Army and its leader with a smile.

"This servant greets the master!" The scaled-dragon got to his knees and kowtowed to Lu Yun.

"Greetings to the master!" The hundred-thousand-strong army knelt down at the same time and shouted loudly, their voices echoing through the emptiness of hell.

"At ease," Lu Yun said calmly to the monster king. "Remain here and train the army well. I need you and your men to defend Dusk Province in the future."

"Understood!" Responding with gusto, the scaled-dragon picked himself up. The second most powerful monster king of the North Sea was now Lu Yun's Infernum, wholly devoted and utterly loyal. Although he was killed by a feng shui layout, it'd been set up by Lu Yun, which made the scaled-dragon king his kill.

"What a shame that the four long-haired monsters haven't become my Infernum. Either their kind is powerful enough to defy the rules of the Tome of Life and Death, or they're manifestations of a stronger monster rather than real deal themselves." Lu Yun thought back to his battle with the long-haired monsters. There hadn't been anything left of them after their deaths, marking the failure of his aim to make them part of his ghostly army.

The scaled-dragon and his hundred thousand soldiers settled down in hell, injecting more life into the domain. Expansion of the previously existing town had enlarged it into a city housing more than a hundred thousand residents.

"This city needs a name." Lu Yun cocked his head and looked at the Infernum busying themselves with construction. "It's a city in hell. How about I name it... City of the Dead?"

"...no, that's so tacky. There used to be a City of the Dead here too, but someone dusted it. Since that's already been done, how about City of Life? A city for all living beings in hell! I have to pick someone smart to be the city lord and to manage the Infernum in the future." With that, Lu Yun returned to the real world, whereupon a sudden epiphany came to him.

Although the residents of hell were dead and had been Lu Yun's enemies in life, they were still independent, living beings under the laws of the Tome of Life and Death, with their own thoughts and

emotions. As such, they deserved respect and it didn't feel right to treat them as cannon fodder, or casually trade their lives for any purpose.

"It's a kind of shared destiny that I was the one to kill them and bring them to hell. I should stop treating them like expendable trash." Lu Yun sat cross-legged next to Qing Han, quietly guarding his friend.

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The disappearance of the second most powerful monster king in the seas and his army of a hundred thousand strong caused an immediate uproar. Levitating Island took the news hard, and the North Sea at large reeled with shock. That was three monster kings they'd lost to Lu Yun now!

Their foremost monster king, Beigong Yu, had been slain in broad daylight and reduced to ashes for all to see, while the King of Southern Subjugation and the Scaled-Dragon King had gone missing.

Despite his rage, the North Sea emperor couldn't do anything. Even the dao immortals of the court couldn't leave the capital seas, lest others seize the opportunity and locate the skydragon tomb. It was the key to the North Sea Court's rise to power, and as such, no outside interference would be tolerated.

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Seven days passed before Qing Han finally succeeded in incorporating the Embittered Bamboo into his body, imbuing him with a unique, aloof grace.

"Maybe... we shouldn't look for the skydragon tomb," Qing Han said worriedly. He couldn't help but be concerned after learning that Lu Yun had killed the Scaled-Dragon King. This was no regular peerless immortal, but the second most powerful immortal in the North Sea, and he'd stood a good chance of becoming a dao immortal! If Lu Yun dared enter the capital and reveal himself to the elites of the North Sea, he'd immediately be torn to pieces.

"I've already refined the Embittered Bamboo. With its vitality suppressing the poison, I should be fine...."

"No!" Lu Yun objected gravely. "The bamboo can temporarily suppress the poison, but it won't remove it. We need the Skydragon Pearl, its power is the only thing that can cleanse the poison!"

As the power of skydragons exceeded the dao immortal realm, there was no alternative. Qing Han looked at Lu Yun, determination flashing through his eyes as he made up his mind about something. But just at this moment, he was cut off by the return of their foxy friend.

"The old man you kicked out last time is back." Miao barged in as the Monster God. "He wants to talk to Lu Yun!"

"The dao immortal from House Donglin? What's he here for?" Qing Han shuddered, his determination to tell the truth receding.

Miao pouted. "For your little lover, I guess."

"What?" Qing Han said dumbly. "My little lover? What do you mean?"

Lu Yun was also speechless. "Qing Han has a lover?"

“I mean the girl with the cosmic constitution.” The little fox blinked. “Didn’t the ugly thing refuse to hand her over to House Donglin because he wanted her?”

Qing Han rubbed his forehead and stopped talking. Nothing came to mind for a clear, concise explanation.

“I’m not going to meet him. Tell him to piss off.” Lu Yun heaved a sigh of relief and shook his head.

There was no love lost between him and House Donglin; the feud between them would never be resolved. He certainly wasn’t going to hand Xing Mou over and allow his enemies to benefit for free. So if negotiations were out of the question, Lu Yun was more worried that the dao immortal would take advantage of the opportunity to kidnap him.

“Shame, I thought I would be able to take down Lu Yun this time, but he won’t even see me!” Donglin Bo, the dao immortal from House Donglin, dejectedly left the Monster God’s palace. The negotiation proposal was merely a front, and capturing Lu Yun was the true item on the menu. However, the young man had refused to meet him, which rendered all of his plans useless.

“Who goes there?!” With a tremble, Donglin Bo came to a halt and looked around warily.

“Jin Heyi of Corpse Refiners, at your service.”

Hum.

A gray haze wafted into the air as giant chains shot out and wrapped around Donglin Bo. Jin Heyi slowly emerged from the void, an enormous formation set up behind him by thousands of zombies.

“Back in the battle of Spirit Panorama Mountain, House Donglin broke the rules and sent dao immortals to ambush our peerless immortals. Today, the Corpse Refiners pay back the favor by refining your dao immortal into a zombie with a Formation of Corpse Refinement!”

“Corpse Refiners!!” Donglin Bo blanched in abject terror. In a panic, he channeled his aether dao fruit to shatter the great formation, but to no avail.

The Corpse Refiners had been preparing for this moment for a very long time. This was no regular formation as it could trap even dao immortals. Donglin Bo would never break free, no matter how hard he struggled. The sect had spared no effort to enact their revenge against House Donglin!

### **Chapter 282.1: Dragon Crown Prince of the East Sea**

Within the Great Formation of Corpse Refinement, Donglin Bo howled and struggled with every bone in his body, but to no avail. Nothing he tried or threw at the formation rattled his cage or granted him any freedom.

A corrupting will oscillated through the formation, slowly but surely extinguishing the gleam of life from his eyes. In no time at all, Donglin Bo became rather wooden and his body exuded a rotten stench, a sign that his spirit had begun to rot away.

Seven days and nights later saw the completion of the Donglin dao immortal’s zombie transformation. He stood loyally at Jin Heyi’s side with a stilted expression.

“The North Sea dragon tomb will open very soon. This dao immortal zombie gives me the right to venture in and try my luck there, too.” Jin Heyi and the formation around him began to shimmer into the void, leaving only a few words hanging in the air. “I await your ascension to immortality, Lu Yun.”

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A ship of white bone cut through the North Sea’s surf at an incredible speed, sailing toward Levitating Island. Jiangchen Wushang stood at the ship’s bow, squinting into the distance. A dao zombie of his own stood nearby, the first Donglin dao immortal his sect had refined.

“Jin Heyi took Donglin Bo as his battle zombie?” Jiangchen Wushang screeched with sudden rage and gnashed his teeth together in frustration. “That bastard! I’d only just convinced Donglin Shaohui to ally with me against Lu Yun... why’d he have to go refine one of their dao immortals now!”

His dao zombie was a Donglin immortal too, but didn’t have much of a relationship with Donglin Shaohui. The zombie had been an elder that didn’t even bear the clan surname. Donglin Bo, on the other hand, was a core member of the clan, a member of the main branch with Donglin blood flowing through his veins. He was far more important than some outsider.

The loss of a guest elder wasn’t much worse than a servant, which made smoothing things over much easier. Zombifying a pureblooded Donglin clansman however, required a blood feud in response.

Now that Lu Yun was out of Dusk Province, a golden opportunity to kill him lay before them. Originally, multiple clans and the Exalted Immortal Sect had sent dao immortals out to deal with him as well. Thwarting their goals, however, was the reappearance of the Lu ancestor several days ago.

After a long absence, Lu Daoling returned to announce that he would adopt a very shameless style indeed: any dao immortal who dared attack Lu Yun would find their own juniors slaughtered in turn. More specifically, if a dao immortal from any clan dared stick their nose in Lu Yun’s business, Lu Daoling would devote himself to killing off every single descendent of that clan until their line completely died out.

His words astounded the entire world, making all of the dao immortals on their way to Levitating Island immediately turn tail. When unfettered by a gentleman’s agreement, a peak arcane dao immortal like Lu Daoling was practically unstoppable.

The Lu clan was done for. Not only had it lost Mauve Peace Paradise, most of its clansmen were imprisoned in the Nephrite dungeons. A small portion had escaped to Dusk Province, but the once-great clan that sat at the top of the world was largely no more. As such, Lu Daoling had nothing to hold him back.

It was a most vicious threat indeed. The fact essentially no one knew where he was only added to the intimidation. It was impossible for the other clans to arrange an ambush to take out the danger waiting in the wings.

Out of necessity, the task of killing Lu Yun fell to the clans’ younger members. His Great Formation of Heavenly Fiends could kill peerless immortals, but the great clans all had similar treasures to offer their scions. Jin Heyi’s Great Formation of Corpse Refinement was proof of exactly that, as it was able to transmute a dao immortal into a zombie.

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Jiangchen Wushang hated Lu Yun with a burning passion. The latter had taken away his Cauldron of Invincible Constitution and grievously damaged his bone fortress ship. Without the Bag of Corpse Refinement as his last line of defense, he probably would've died in Dusk Province.

More importantly, the Corpse Refiners had become the world's public enemy. That time, the zombies inside the bag had been freshly refined. They hadn't been given enough time to reach the peak of their strength, which was why they'd been cut down so easily.

At the same time, he was currently at less than twenty percent of his former power. Would he be able to defeat Lu Yun one on one, even with his dao immortal zombie taken into account?

To that end, he'd contacted Donglin Shaohui, who was currently burning with rage that Lu Yun had taken his Embittered Bamboo replica. Jiangchen Wushang found him at the height of his anger, and the two became allies overnight.

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Boom!

The sea around him unexpectedly exploded as geysers of brine gathered into an enormous humanoid in midair. It was Donglin Shaohui!

"Jiangchen Wushang!" The watery giant roared. "My clan uncle was refined into a zombie by someone from your sect!"

Jin Heyi had made no effort to hide the fact that Donglin Bo was now his battle zombie. In fact, he openly strutted around with it in North Sea imperial waters and picked all sorts of fights with it.

It was an act of vengeance against the Donglin clan in the first place, and additionally served as a warning to the great factions. In a way, it was the same kind of inexorable threat as the Lu ancestor's.

"I'll give you a satisfactory answer for that later." Jiangchen Wushang's expression darkened ominously. "Our number one objective is killing Lu Yun! We only have one chance to kill him. If he escapes into the infinite expanse of the North Sea, we'll never be able to find him again.

"I know you lost a powerful replica to him. If you delay too long, he'll probably refine it and completely steal it from you."

Jiangchen Wushang was only a peak spirit realm cultivator. He could've become an immortal at any time, but the void realm had put a stop to that. Perceiving the void was... too difficult. However, he nevertheless stood confidently with both hands behind his back.

The aura he projected was more than a match for the peerless immortal's image. There was no question about his talent; he easily rivaled Wu Tulong and the others. The Corpse Refiners' policy of secrecy and isolation was the main reason for his lack of reputation.

Donglin Shaohui's seawater double blinked uncertainly, but recalled that Lu Yun still had custody of his embittered bamboo replica. It'd be far harder to deal with the youth if he managed to make it his own.

“Fine! I’ll leave the matter for now. Killing Lu Yun comes first!”

Splash!

His seawater double dispersed back into the sea.

“Lu Yun has already headed toward the heart of Levitating Island. He’s trying to enter the North Sea imperial waters through the transportation formation there,” Donglin Shaohui’s voice echoed from the distance.

“That damned Jin Heyi nearly ruined my business!” Jiangchen Wushang’s face was blacker than a moonless night. “Jin Heyi refined Donglin Shaohui’s uncle into a zombie, but Donglin Shaohui still chose to remain allies with me. Either he plans to stab me in the back at some crucial moment, or... the replica he lost to Lu Yun is too important!”

His own Cauldron of Invincible Constitution was with Lu Yun, too. The cauldron was no mere treasure; it contained a powerful heritage!

## **.2: Dragon Crown Prince of the East Sea**

“No wonder this place is called Levitating Island!” Deep inside the island, Lu Yun looked up at the colossal landmass hovering in the sky with unmasked awe. Levitating Island’s heart was, well, a huge levitating island about five thousand kilometers across. True to its name, it floated at least fifty thousand meters above sea level.

Below the island was an endless inner sea, wrapped in a barrier. Despite its bounded nature, Lu Yun was nevertheless unable to see where it ended. The floating island’s inner sea was just as mysterious as the North Sea, filled with danger and opportunity alike.

“Hmm?” He paled suddenly. He soared a few thousand meters into the air, scanning the waters below.

“What have you discovered?” Close behind him, Qing Han asked curiously. The little fox hung wide-eyed on his shoulder, clearly wondering the same thing.

“This Levitating Island follows a natural ‘pearl-in-jade’ layout in the terrain!” Lu Yun gasped in surprise. “If there’s a great tomb here, the one buried inside is either an irredeemable devil or a veritable saint...”

The pearl-in-jade layouts he’d seen back on Earth had only involved small marshes. A dozen kilometers of land, at most. Levitating Island, on the other hand, was a perfect pearl-in-jade that spanned several thousand times as much space.

“Did you just say there’s a tomb here?” The little fox’s eyes lit up. Mo Yi had told her that Levitating Island held the secret to the ancient monster spirit ancestor’s tomb. If she could find it, she would be able to find herself and regain her strength.

“Not necessarily. The terrain layout is suitable for a tomb to be built here, that’s all. I’m not saying there’ll actually be one.” Lu Yun shook his head. The sea’s feng shui was completely obscure to him, and a casual glance had failed to yield any useful information at all.

He landed, and found a secluded place to wait. Moments later, Aoxue and Beigong Yu arrived with Xing Mou. The little girl’s astral constitution meant that her talent was exceptional. Given time to develop,

she would be able to reach dao immortal realm without much difficulty, so he naturally wouldn't leave her on Levitating Island for the Donglin Clan.

He hadn't hidden the truth from her, after which she'd chosen... ah, chosen to follow Qing Han. As such, Aoxue no longer felt any hostility toward her. What surprised Lu Yun and the others the most, though, was that Qing Han had taken her on as a disciple! Xing Mou was none too pleased about it, but she did accept the arrangement.

Qing Han was the future Dao Sovereign of the world, the first and foremost. As his first student, Xing Mou would become especially prominent in turn. Neither of them realized that at this moment, of course.

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"A dragon sleeps in mountains coiled,

"Those deathly cliffs with mysteries roiled.

"Danger shies if mountains hide,

"In stars bright and waters wide!"

Lu Yun took out his feng shui compass, chanting a phrase of the Dragonsearch Invocation.

Hum.

Silvery starlight burst from the luopan, transforming the endless sea before him into something drastically different—at least visually. Star after star appeared over the cerulean blue, blending the dazzling celestial radiance with the boundless sea waters. Before long, the sea looked like an indistinguishable field of stars.

Beneath the starry waves was a foggy barrier, hiding a certain place within the deep blue. This was a kind of layout based on the constellations, and his cosmic feng shui method would be able to do the same, if he reached a high enough level with it.

There is indeed a tomb here! As Lu Yun took a deep breath, his eyes became a glistening silver.

"Five stars orbit in the skies, five dragon veins course the ground.

"Five stars and veins are as one, to which the latter follows the former.

"From them emerge five archetypes, to be divided, analyzed, and understood!"

The Dragonsearch Incantation invoked the corresponding cosmic feng shui method. Five shimmering stars appeared on his compass, spinning ever faster in a variety of changing shapes.

"Five stars and veins gather as one, five veins create a guiding star.

"A star that guides true and sound, must by river and field be bound.

"Its remnant airs are fortune's ties, an influence at the waterside."

A hum filled the air, accompanied by an endless flood of starlight that gradually shaped itself into a copy of Levitating Island, projecting its every detail on the feng shui compass.

“Right here!” Lu Yun pointed at a place in the Levitating Island’s inner sea. A long strip of land cut into the inner sea in the shape of a very large peninsula. The place he was pointing at was upon the peninsula’s shore.

“That’s where my Kunpeng Palace is!” Beigong Yu immediately identified. He’d had his own territory upon the Levitating Island. Evidently, his palace was on a peninsula beneath rather than the central island proper. And unfortunately, it seemed that unwanted guests had set up there in his absence.

“Lu Yun!” The little fox looked at the human youth with pitifully adorable eyes. “You have to help me!”

“The North Sea dragon tomb will need some time to open, and the Embittered Bamboo has brought my poison under control. Why don’t we help the little fox find the ancestral monster spirit tomb first?” Qing Han piped up as well.

“This tomb must be the one you’re talking about.” Lu Yun furrowed his brow and asked haltingly, “Was the ancestor of monster spirits a huge menace of some kind? Someone incorrigibly evil?”

“No!” The fox jumped up and down in front of him in an energetic attempt to correct the misunderstanding. “The ancestor of monster spirits was very, very good! This tomb makes perfect sense!”

“Well, alright then. Let’s take a look.” Lu Yun felt a bit of an itch himself. He remembered when he’d excavated a large tomb within a ‘pearl-in-jade’ influence back on Earth. An ancient bandit lord had been buried alongside his countless treasures there, enriching Lu Yun overnight.

The skydragon tomb wasn’t open yet, so he wasn’t in any particular hurry. If he could find a powerful envoy or treasure in this tomb, he would have a much better shot at obtaining the Skydragon Pearl.

Having made up his mind, Lu Yun set off immediately, crossing the inner sea to the Kunpeng Palace. According to the information from the Scaled King, Beigong Yu’s Kunpeng Palace was currently under the occupation of the dragon crown prince of the East Sea monster spirits.

The East Sea monster spirits had a much lengthier, and more illustrious, history than their North Sea brethren. In fact, the court there could nearly rival a heavenly court of the twenty-four facets. Lu Yun didn’t want to clash with them if at all possible; he had more than enough enemies already.

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Levitating Island’s inner sea was very large, at more than fifty thousand kilometers in breadth. In his original form, however, the kunpeng carried them nine-tenths of that distance with a single wingbeat. They crossed the inner sea and arrived before the Kunpeng Palace in the blink of an eye.

“The East Sea’s... Dragon Crown Prince?” Lu Yun mulled over the name with some hesitation. “Could the East Sea’s monster spirits actually be ruled by dragons?”

“Halt, interlopers! This is the crown prince’s residential palace!” Two enormous water spirits rose into the air, interrupting both the kunpeng’s passage and his train of thought.



“Good generals, please tell your master this: Lu Yun of Dusk Province requests an audience,” the young man said, openly proclaiming his identity.

### **Chapter 283: Draggin’ Crown Prince, Not Dragon Crown Prince**

“Lu Yun of Dusk Province!” The two East Sea monster spirits started when they heard the name and hastily bowed.

“So Sir Lu has come. Please wait just a moment, we will announce your arrival to His Highness the Crown Prince at once!” The two monster immortals withdrew as they spoke.

“Strange, East Sea’s monster spirits have always prided themselves about the legitimacy of their reign over the other facets. They’re usually a pretty arrogant bunch. I’m surprised those two are being so respectful toward you.” Qing Han found the treatment of his friend rather curious.

Lu Yun blinked twice in rapid succession. While he had no quarrel with the monster spirits of the East Sea, neither did he have a deep friendship with them. In light of that, these two guards’ overly cordial response seemed out of place.

“That’s my palace!” The now-humanoid Beigong Yu nattered in complaint, forlornly looking down at the grandiose complex beneath him. The palace stretched across the entire peninsula!

Hum.

The luxurious palace below suddenly trembled, extending a path of rainbow light all the way beneath their feet. Illusory flowers and delicate music filled the air, turning the premises into a small slice of paradise.

“That’s the guard of honor I used to greet special guests!” Beigong Yu was becoming increasingly upset. All of this used to be his, and seeing it so brazenly used by others gave him a stomachache.

“Hahahaha! We are truly honored to receive you, Sovereign of Dusk Province. Delighted, flattered, honored!” A regal youth dressed in robes of brightest gold came striding down the path, accompanied by ringing laughter. The handsome young man gazed at Lu Yun with positively worshipful eyes.

“Lu Yun of Dusk Province greets the Crown Prince of the East Sea.” Lu Yun fidgeted uncomfortably before bowing in salutation.

“Hahaha... it really is Dusk Province’s sovereign! Honored, what a great honor!” The dragon crown prince’s voice was oddly loud. He extended a hand in friendly support, then boomed with laughter once more. His guests glanced askance at each other with some confusion.

“Honored! Truly a great honor!” continued the dragon prince.

“...Your Highness?” Lu Yun blinked once more, this time in caution.

“Come, come, come. Let us chat inside the palace. The honor is all mine, and what a great honor it is!”

The prince didn’t appear to react to anything Lu Yun said and invited his visitors with a strange, hospitable air, still muttering vague exclamations of how flattered he was to receive his visitors.

Well, at least there was no doubt the prince was honored to have them!

“This East Sea monster prince is a xiangliu, a nine-headed snake divine beast. Why does he call himself a ‘dragon prince’?” Aoxue frowned slightly.

The dragons of the North Sea had ruled their domain since the divines’ downfall. As a member of royalty, she knew the background of the East Sea monster spirits quite well. This monster spirit prince was a full-blooded xiangliu, one of the greatest divine beast species among his race. Long ago, his brethren were often named gods of water. It confused her that the prince would bother to call himself a ‘dragon’ at all.

Lu Yun felt rather the same way. He’d thought the ‘dragon prince’ to be a mix of xiangliu and dragon bloodline alike, hence the name. After meeting face to face, it was obvious that the prince was a pureblooded member of the former.

Xing Mou bit back a giggle as she bounced along, trailing a little behind the others. As a peak transformed spirit cultivator, the dragon prince made no effort to hide his admiration and passion for his idol.

Lu Yun’s month of fierce battles were still fresh on many minds. His incredible record and the ease with which he’d dispatched peerless immortals had earned him the title of First Youth Sovereign in the world. Because of that, he’d become an idol for the young practically overnight.

Lu Yun’s fame had been earned entirely by his sweat and blood, and his two forays in and out of Xiankan had quite literally shaken the world. So in front of him, the prince behaved just like an ordinary fan. Indeed, the only thing he could find fault with was the prince’s extraordinary volume—it hadn’t reduced a whit, despite the fact that they were now indoors.

“I am Xiangliu Hongzhen and so very honored to meet you, Sovereign of Dusk Province!”

“Please, don’t call me ‘Sovereign’. Just Lu Yun is fine, Your Highness!” Lu Yun replied hurriedly.

“Hahahaha... come in, honored sovereign, please come on in! I’ve wanted to meet you for a long time now, ever since I heard you were around these parts, but I’ve been occupied by all sorts of unimportant business. Imagine my joy and surprise when I found you on my doorstep! Honored, truly honored!” The dragon prince projected every word from his dantian with thunderous force.

Lu Yun’s eardrums quavered at the stress. He exchanged a look with Qing Han; neither of them knew what to say. The prince was flattering him a great deal, but sounded almost like he was talking to himself.

Although the palace’s exterior was little different from when Beigong Yu had owned it, its interior had been lavishly renovated and refurnished. Pearls and gemstones glittered as far as the eye could see, decorating nearly every visible surface with brilliance. The palace formations, too, had received a fresh helping of maintenance and improvement.

As a dedicated cultivator and killing machine, Beigong Yu had hardly cared about how his palace looked. This particular one was only a temporary, seasonal residence, not his actual home. That didn’t make him any happier, though.

The other monster kings of the North Sea had hereditary titles and honors that passed on to their heirs and disciples. For example, the King of Southern Subjugation’s eldest son was now the new king.

After Beigong Yu's death, however, his faction had immediately crumbled and his disciples had either betrayed him, or died in battle. Even his old nest had fallen! It was at this moment that he finally understood how awful his behavior had been in the past.

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Inside the palace's main hall, a feast of unending delicacies had already been prepared, and beautiful immortals danced on the sides to liven the mood.

"Your Royal Highness!" Lu Yun tried to get the prince's attention once more mid-banquet, but he was ignored with the same characteristic sonority.

"Sovereign, what do you think of my palace? Let me tell you, this place used to belong to North Sea's number one king, the Kunpeng King! After Your Eminence killed him, I bought the palace from the North Sea court for a hundred million premium immortal crystals! I've given it a new name: the Xiangliu Palace. It's a very nice place to live, eh?"

Beigong Yu's face darkened ominously at the words. He'd thought the prince had forcibly taken over his Kunpeng Palace, not that it'd been sold off!

"I've got nothing but money, money, money!" The prince roared with laughter. "The East Sea would want for anything else before we wanted for that! Why, we have all the money in the world to spare. Sovereign, I hear you snatched a war treasure from the Nephrite court—that's a money-burner, alright. Come, five billion premium crystals for my good friend! A token of our amity!"

A monster immortal nearby bowed, then retreated to fulfill his master's request.

"Your Highness!" Lu Yun shouted again.

"Why haven't you said anything, Your Eminence? Do you think five billion too little? Come, another five billion more!" The crown prince tilted his head with a mixture of excitement and concern.

The only response Lu Yun could muster to that was slack-jawed shock.

"Senior martial uncle, he's not actually a 'dragon' prince. People call him a 'draggin' prince' because he's well, a drag to talk to." Xing Mou finally chimed in. "He's deaf, see? He can't hear anything. You have to talk to him via transmission."

"Huh? Why didn't you mention it to me earlier?!"

A deaf prince, eh? No wonder he hadn't responded to a single word.

"I thought you knew already," Xing Mou muttered under her breath.

"You're not doing a very good job as a guide, Xing Mou. Watch out, your martial uncle might dock your pay." Qing Han couldn't resist a tease.

Xing Mou drooped in dejection. A palm-sized piece of scallop cheered her right back up, though. After sneaking it into her mouth, she grinned from ear to ear at its savory sweetness.

### **Chapter 284.1: State Your Name**

So it was the Draggin' Prince, not the Dragon Prince. Xiangliu Hongzhen, third prince of the East Sea monster spirits, was deaf. He'd only recently emerged in the world and hadn't yet earned a reputation. Even the Scaled-Dragon King and the little fox had only heard of his nickname, but hadn't seen him in person. That was why they thought he was actually a dragon.

Moreover, the East Sea was more powerful than the North Sea. Those who knew the truth of the Deaf Prince wouldn't talk. Rumors begat more rumors, and he became known as the Dragon Prince.

To low-level cultivators on Levitating Island, however, the Deaf Prince was well-known. Although he was the third prince of the East Sea monster spirits, he was partial to showing off his wealth.

When he'd first arrived at Levitating Island and had disguised himself as a commoner to tour its biggest cities, he'd bought a heap of trash with millions of immortal crystals. After his true identity was revealed, he proudly introduced himself to the public and splashed money freely around his vicinity.

The low-level cultivators then discovered his deafness, and news about the Deaf Prince began circulating in their social circles. To them, the Deaf Prince was the biggest and easiest mark on the island, the perfect cash cow for all their exploitation prayers.

The Deaf Prince admired and idolized Lu Yun. Like a fan on Earth seeing their idol for the first time, butterflies had exploded in his stomach the moment he met Lu Yun. His magnanimous front was just that—a front. In truth, he was too nervous to even directly look at Lu Yun. Thus, he hadn't noticed that Lu Yun had been talking this entire time.

Resigned, Lu Yun transmitted his polite refusal to the Deaf Prince. If it'd been a few thousand, or even millions, he wouldn't say no to the gift. Billions of crystals were another story. If he accepted them, he'd be tied to the East Sea monster spirits.

"Ah, so the Dusk Sovereign doesn't think it's too little, but too much!" The Deaf Prince scratched the back of his head awkwardly. He truly was being too generous for anyone to accept his offer.

"Just call me Lu Yun or senior brother, Your Royal Highness," Lu Yun transmitted with a serious expression. "Please don't call me Sovereign."

The Deaf Prince was a powerful peak transformed spirit realm cultivator, but he wasn't Lu Yun's match, thus, his suggestion was a reasonable one.

"Senior brother Lu!" the Deaf Prince exclaimed in great joy, his voice so loud it could be heard several kilometers away.

"By the way, what's wrong with your ears, Your Highness?" Lu Yun transmitted after some consideration. "I know a thing or two about pill dao. Perhaps I can restore your hearing."

"Ears? Hearing?" The Deaf Prince looked confused. "What are you talking about?"

Was he born deaf and never realized that he's different from other people? The revelation caught Lu Yun by surprise. Ah, he's always communicated through transmission, and must think that's what everyone else does as well.

People had no choice but to communicate with him through transmission. He couldn't hear it even if someone discussed his deafness, and no one in the East Sea court dared tell him the truth.

Lu Yun rubbed his forehead and dropped the subject. He didn't want to accidentally put his foot in his mouth.

"Oh!" The Deaf Prince changed the subject before Lu Yun could respond. "Tomorrow is the opening day of Myriad Returns Market. There will be many immortals returning from the North Sea to gather in Myriad Returns City. Why don't senior brother visit it with me, since we have time?"

Myriad Returns City was the largest city on Levitating Island, and its market was the greatest event around. It was jointly organized by the top merchant guilds in the world of immortals and held every ten years. The sea market always saw countless immortals trading their treasures for crystals or other treasures.

As the kind of person who itched with great discomfort if he went an entire day without spending money, the Deaf Prince had come to Levitating Island and bought the kunpeng palace for the market.

"The North Sea is poorer than my East Sea, but some strange treasures always appear at the market. Three thousand years ago, there was even a connate-grade treasure!" the Deaf Prince spoke with increasing excitement.

Immortals dancing attendance on him sighed inwardly at his expression. The Deaf Prince was widely known as the cream of the crop for chumps on Levitating Island. In the East Sea court, he had an even more 'prestigious' nickname—the textbook prodigal.

Nevertheless, he was a rare pureblood of the xiangliu clan. Once he ascended to immortality, he would gain the abilities of the ancient water god, which made him a treasured member of the East Sea monster spirits.

Xianglius were ancient divine beasts with the divine decree of a water god, having once served under the foremost water god, Gonggong, as his officials. In the ancient war, the clan had suffered a tremendous blow. Not only had they lost their divinity, but they'd almost had their bloodline wiped out.

The current imperial xiangliu clan consisted mostly of mixed-blood xianglius. There were only a couple purebloods, and every one of them had later become peak arcane dao immortals, pillars of the clan.

Xiangliu Hongzhen was bound to become such a figure, and would reinforce the authority of his clan. Of course, his true identity was the biggest secret of the East Sea monster spirits and there were only a handful who knew the truth.

The Xiangliu Emperor quite favored the Deaf Prince. Even if someone did hold grievances against him, they wouldn't voice their thoughts.

"The Myriad Returns Market!" Lu Yun nodded. He'd come to the floating island at the center of Levitating Island for exactly that. "I have a favor to ask, Your Royal Highness." He decided to open up after some deliberation. "There's an ancient tomb under Xiangliu Palace."

"What?!" The Deaf Prince jumped up with a yelp. Eagerness overtook his expression at the mention of an ancient tomb. "There's an ancient tomb here? Dig it up! Dig through Xiangliu—Kunpeng Palace!"

Draped over Qing Han's shoulders, the little fox scowled warily and transmitted breathily, "The tomb belonged to my monster spirit clan!"

“Hmm, you’re the Monster God, aren’t you? Tsk, who would’ve thought the sissy Monster God is actually a little fox, and female at that?”

The Deaf Prince immediately noticed the palm-sized fox and smiled. “The East Sea monster spirits used to be the legitimate clan of the ancient monster spirits! It’s said that Levitating Island has something to do with the sacred land of our ancestors. We naturally mustn’t stay on the sidelines.

“Your palace is gone,” the prince continued proudly. “It doesn’t matter anymore if you’re the Monster God.”

The little fox leveled what she thought was a fierce glare at Lu Yun. “It’s all your fault!”

If it weren’t for Lu Yun, her palace wouldn’t have become a target, and she wouldn’t have been forced to give up on her growing forces.

Although she’d been dropped off here by Mo Yi, she had her own ambitions. She wanted to establish a real sacred land of monster spirits in the world of immortals. Now that her palace had been destroyed, there was no reason for her to waste her energy disguising herself as the Monster God.

#### **284.2: State Your Name**

Lu Yun felt not one iota of remorse. Miao’s faction had been young and weak, consisting of a couple monster spirits in her palace and a group of toll-levying bandits. If it weren’t for her powerful illusions keeping other immortals at bay, her palace would’ve been overrun long ago.

“Enough about your palace.” He cast her an unimpressed look. “Who do you think I’m raiding this tomb for? I have better things to do.”

The little fox embarrassedly lowered her head and didn’t respond.

“Since the Draggin’ Prince has granted us permission, we’ll first check out the market, then enter the tomb.” Lu Yun quickly made the decision.

The prince couldn’t hear him, but he kept talking about joining Lu Yun in raiding their ancestor’s tomb. Lu Yun couldn’t find an excuse to turn him down; after all, this was the Deaf Prince’s territory.

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The rest of the night passed quietly.

The next day, Lu Yun and the others made their way to Myriad Returns City. Levitating Island’s biggest city was located at the heart of the floating island and was jointly governed by the three leading factions of the North Sea—the North Sea monster court, Dark North Sword Sect, and Ingress Island.

Among them, the North Sea court was the foremost faction and had established a sprawling dynasty over the North Sea, while the Dark North Sword Sect and Ingress Island remained independent and outside the court’s jurisdiction. Those two were extremely powerful and influential as well.

Myriad Returns City was co-ruled by the three factions, making it the political center of Levitating Island. Although the island wasn’t particularly wealthy, it still had something to do with the fabled sacred land,

and tomb, of the monster spirit ancestor. Moreover, the island was a gateway into the North Sea and was located at a strategically significant maritime choke point.

Unusually luxurious, the Deaf Prince's carriage was as large as a small city and extravagantly adorned with gold and shining immortal treasures. It was more lavish than even Lu Yun's fortress ship. Pulling the carriage were nine dragon-horses, which were all golden immortals!

Golden immortals were considered the royalty of the world of immortals, to be treated with respect no matter where they went, and they might make their way to becoming a local overlord. However, the Deaf Prince had nine of them pulling his carriage! What utter extravagance!

According to him, these dragon-horses were rides the East Sea court raised for this one purpose. Lu Yun clucked his tongue in astonishment and hurriedly declined when the prince offered to gift him a couple such dragon-horses. Although they were speedy, they didn't know how to suppress their cultivation. Once they entered Dusk Province, they'd only be slaughtered by the restriction.

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Rumble.

Dark clouds gathered in the sky, isolating the area. An enormous skeletal fortress ship broke through the air, heralded by thunderous rumbles. Standing at the bow was Jiangchen Wushang, clothes fluttering in the wind with dramatic flair and a dao immortal zombie by his side.

"I didn't expect you to latch on to the East Sea monster spirits' thigh, Lu Yun!" Jiangchen Wushang called out in a cold voice. The Deaf Prince had only just entered the world, so most didn't know much about him, other than that he was the third prince of the East Sea Court.

Still, Jiangchen Wushang recognized the insignia of the East Sea monster spirits on the carriage. Well, this wasn't so powerful a faction that the Corpse Refiners couldn't afford to offend them.

"What kind of lowly scum dares obstruct this prince's way?!" The Deaf Prince strode out of his carriage with a flourish. His purple-gold long robe accentuated his tall and wide frame, imbuing him with an imposing presence. His piercing eyes settled on the skeletal fortress ship.

"It's the Corpse Refiners, Your Highness," the peerless immortal accompanying the prince transmitted with a wary look.

"Corpse Refiners? Never heard of them." There was no insult in the Deaf Prince's customary sonorous voice, he'd just really never heard of the Corpse Refiners before. Not to mention, well, he couldn't actually hear.

Scowling, Jiangchen Wushang announced, "The Corpse Refiners have no intention of making enemies out of the East Sea monster spirits. You simply need to trade Lu Yun for your freedom. If you don't... you'll all die in the Great Formation of Corpse Refinement!"

Jiangchen Wushang's formation was no match for Jin Heyi's, but the extravagant carriage in front of him was manned by only a few maids and a peerless immortal. The skeletal ship could easily crush them and refine them all into zombies.

“What kind of faction is the Corpse Refiners?” the Deaf Prince muttered to himself, not hearing a word from Jiangchen Wushang. “I’ve never even heard of the name before!”

“Surrender Lu Yun!” Jiangchen Wushang boomed again, reluctant to make the East Sea monster spirits his enemies.

“State your name, disciple of Corpse Refiners,” announced the Deaf Prince. “This prince doesn’t kill nameless men!”

“The prince?” Jiangchen Wushang’s face tightened. East Sea royalty was another matter entirely—the Corpse Refiners may not fear them, but the Jiangchen Clan did.

So Lu Yun’s gotten involved with a prince of the East Sea monster spirits, but that’s fine. Donglin Shaohui carries the Qing treasure called Spirit Light. We’ll just shift the blame to the Qing Clan!

“This seat is proud of who I am and never hides behind a pseudonym,” said Jiangchen Wushang. “I am Qing Yunhe of the Qing Clan in Nephrite Major, now a disciple of the Corpse Refiners!”

“Pfft!” Qing Han spat his tea all over Lu Yun’s face. “Qing... Qing Yunhe?” His face twisted in befuddlement.

Qing Yunhe was his second brother and a man of few desires. He never involved himself in any conflict, and instead, conducted himself more like a mortal scholar who perused a wealth of books.

Lu Yun wiped his face clean with a wry smile. “The East Sea spirit monsters rarely enter the continent, so they can’t differentiate between the Jiangchen Clan and the Qing Clan.”

“Introduce yourself, fiend!” shouted the Deaf Prince.

“I am Qing Yunhe of the Qing Clan!” repeated Jiangchen Wushang.

“Do you think too little of this prince?! Why don’t you introduce yourself?”

“Qing Yunhe of the Qing Clan!” Veins popped out on Jiangchen Wushang’s forehead.

“This prince never attacks nameless vermin!” The prince’s voice grew even louder.

“I’m... Qing Yunhe!” Jiangchen Wushang’s confidence crumbled. Had the prince seen through him?

“State your name, vermin!” The Deaf Prince’s rage was building. It was his first time ever facing an enemy, and it was quite an exhilarating experience. He, too, wanted to defeat famous geniuses to prove himself, like his idol, Lu Yun. However, the man kept moving his mouth without saying anything.

“I am Jiangchen Wushang of the Corpse Refiners!” Jiangchen Wushang snapped out.

“Since you refuse to introduce yourself, vermin,” snarled the Deaf Prince, “I’ll beat you up until you do!”

Jiangchen Wushang felt an urge to cry. The prince must be doing this on purpose!

### **Chapter 285: Smashing Him to Death With Immortal Crystals**

Those in the carriage were almost crying with laughter. What kind of expression would Jiangchen Wushang wear if he knew the truth?



"I actually feel kinda bad for the prince." Qing Han's mood took a sudden downturn. He sighed at the Deaf Prince's tall and well-built frame. "He has the right to know the truth. Even if it's hard to accept, he deserves to know that he's different."

"Since when did you become so sentimental?" Lu Yun asked in surprise.

Qing Han shrugged and didn't respond.

"We'll wait until we meet Senior Wayfarer." Lu Yun shook his head. "It'll only trouble him if we tell him now."

Qing Han paused. "Senior Wayfarer?"

"He survived beneath the abyss despite lacking hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. Senior Wayfarer's consciousness is powerful enough to sense his surroundings in place of his five senses, which he likely developed from practicing a powerful method of the mind. We'll have the Deaf Prince cultivate under Senior Wayfarer's guidance," Lu Yun spoke with assurance.

Qing Han nodded. The Deaf Prince wasn't a bad person. Although he was a member of the imperial family, he didn't lord over others with the airs of a royal prince. Even after being scammed out of millions of crystals back on Levitating Island, he simply took it in stride and didn't take any revenge.

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"Screw this shit, go to hell!" Jiangchen Wushang raged at the Deaf Prince's hectoring and snarled, "Do it!!"

Hum.

A faint beam of light pierced through the heavy clouds, sealing off the vicinity and restraining the power of the land.

"That's the Qing Clan's supreme-grade treasure, Spirit Light," said the peerless immortal standing beside the Deaf Prince. "Does he really have something to do with the Nephrite Major's Qing Clan?"

Jiangchen Wushang's skeletal fortress ship opened its mouth and slammed into the Deaf Prince's carriage.

"Hongxiu!" called out the Deaf Prince, furious that Jiangchen Wushang would attack him without forewarning. "Fetch me my crystal! I'll smash him to bits!" This would be his first battle to death!

"Understood!" With a shudder, the peerless immortal took out a box from her storage treasure and carefully handed it to the Deaf Prince.

"Know your place, you lily-livered, crusty, corpulent cretin. Suffer death via immortal crystals!" The box was heavy, made clear by the way the Deaf Prince almost toppled to the ground when he took it. He then threw the box at the Jiangchen scion with all of the strength in his body.

"East Sea monster spirits really are insufferably arrogant!" Jiangchen Wushang couldn't be more furious when he heard the prince's declaration. Who did he think he was?! Smashing him to death with immortal crystals? What does he take me for, a penniless bastard?

However, his expression soon crumbled.

When the box opened in mid-trajectory, a great wave of immortal energy rushed out into the air, overwhelming the Great Formation of Corpse Refinement and the treasure Donglin Shaohui had unleashed. Then... an enormous mountain descended from heaven.

Thirty thousand meters tall and tens of thousands of meters in radius, it looked like an artfully sculpted crystal with wisps of white mist floating around it. Such dense immortal energy! The entire mountain was sculpted from a titanic piece of immortal crystal!

Immortal crystals were immortal qi that'd been crystalized by nature, and were heavier than normal mountainous rock. An average immortal crystal was a hexagonal crystal measuring four inches long and one inch wide, weighing roughly sixty kilograms.

Sixty kilograms wasn't much for a cultivator or an immortal, but a mountain sculpted from a crystal of such ridiculous size weighed too much for even dao immortals to endure. More importantly, the crystal mountain contained not only immortal qi, but also endless power of the land, which enabled it to resonate with this local patch of heaven and earth!

Am I... going to be the first person in this world to literally die from wealth? Despair overtook Jiangchen Wushang's face. As the crystal mountain bore down on him, the skeletal ship beneath his feet whined weakly and struggled. However, the crystal mountain fell with such a great momentum that it scattered the ship's aura and locked it helplessly in place.

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Immortals in the nearby vicinity stared at the descending crystal mountain in shock. Immortal crystals were the common currency of the world of immortals, and a necessity for cultivation. However, they felt absolutely no desire to claim the crystal for themselves. It was too large!

Even dao immortals would have trouble hauling around the crystal mountain, and whoever threw the mountain as a weapon would be someone they couldn't afford to offend. After being refined into a treasure, the crystal mountain had been made invincible. It was near impossible to shatter it!

"Heavens... who was it? Who threw that mountain?"

"I wonder who the unlucky victim is."

"The skeletal ship seems to belong to a member of the Corpse Refiners!"

Donglin Shaohui blanched as well. The supreme-grade treasure, Spirit Light, which he'd borrowed from the Qing Clan, had cracked and shattered the moment the crystal mountain appeared.

Color drained out of his face as all of his bones and meridians broke. White blood trickled out of his orifices as, once again, this wasn't his true body, but another replica.

Due to the special method he cultivated, Donglin Shaohui had a good number of replicas lying around. He always sent his replicas on missions, while he himself hid somewhere safe. Besides, his replicas were even more powerful than he was. However, the crystal mountain almost shattered his replica in one blow.

“Who’s the man in the carriage? Who did that bastard Jiangchen Wushang provoke now?!” Donglin Shaohui’s heart pounded.

Bam!

His replica exploded into ashes.

Crack!

The rib cage of the fortress ship broke, and the fifty-kilometer-long, city-sized ship fell apart. The ship growled and keened in distress, but couldn’t do anything facing the tremendous mountain.

“Graw!!” The dao immortal zombie next to Jiangchen Wushang let loose with a heaven-shaking howl. Black light exploded out of the zombie’s body as it soared into the sky and dove down at the crystal mountain.

“You’ve bitten off more than you can chew!” Despite the carriage being in the shadow of the crystal mountain, the Deaf Prince stood on top of the carriage and took out another box. It radiated a faint light that shielded the entire carriage from outside forces.

“A dao immortal zombie, no wonder his sect is called the Corpse Refiners.” The Deaf Prince was surprised when he saw the opponent charging his crystal mountain. However, the mountain was much too heavy and was protected by natural forces. The zombie was crushed by the mountain’s tremendous aura before it could lay a finger on it, pulping even its soul.

“Free at last....” A strand of consciousness faded out of existence.

“He refined a living person into a zombie!” The Deaf Prince breathed in deeply, a trace of killing intent flashing through his happy-go-lucky gaze. He reacted the same way Lu Yun had upon first seeing Jin Heyi of the Corpse Refiners.

Splash!

The powerful skeletal ship in pieces, debris and fragments rained to the ground. Countless zombies on the fortress ship scattered as ashes, leaving only Jiangchen Wushang alive. His yellowish-gray Bag of Corpse Refinement hovered over his head in protection, but it too began shuddering as the crystal mountain continued to descend. It was a supremely powerful treasure that should’ve been invincible, but Jiangchen Wushang was just a cultivator who couldn’t take the pressure.

Rumble!

Suddenly, the void trembled and a plume of thick, black smoke billowed into the air, shifting the heavenly energy in the area. A giant formation spontaneously took shape.

“Open!!” an earthshaking growl penetrated the smoke.

Bam!

An enormous skeletal fist shot out and rammed into the crystal mountain, breaking its descent for a fraction of a second. It wasn’t much, but it was enough for the man who’d intervened.

A figure radiating faint golden light flashed to Jiangchen Wushang's side and kicked him and his bag away, sending the injured man flying out of the crystal mountain's range like a shooting star. Jiangchen Wushang bellyflopped into the inner sea of Levitating Island at the end of his trajectory, then vanished shortly thereafter.

The formation that'd emerged suddenly released a thick layer of smoke, which stopped the crystal mountain like an enormous ball of cotton. Although the formation was breaking at the same time, it was still enough to offset the destructive power of the crystal.

"I await your ascension to immortality, Lu Yun, Qing Han, and the Dragon Prince of the East Sea." Golden light flickered at the center of the formation as it quickly shrank and vanished into thin air.

"Since you're here, senior brother Jin Heyi, why don't you show yourself so we can have a chat?" Lu Yun called out in a clear voice from the carriage. The Sugato Sword manifested in its true form—an enormous sword shadow running three thousand meters long—and pierced through the sky, slashing at the Jin scion hiding deep within the black smoke.

"You're not yet my match. Like I said, I will wait until you become an immortal."

A humming vibrated from within the black smoke as the skeletal arm that'd halted the crystal mountain emerged again and squeezed Lu Yun's sword energy into nothingness. Then the black smoke shrank, disappearing everything in the smoke.

Bam!

The crystal mountain crashed into the ground, shaking all of Levitating Island. The impact undermined foundations of many smaller cities and almost destroyed them.

"Shame that he got away," muttered the Deaf Prince.

"That formation is very powerful," Lu Yun said in apprehension. "More so than the Great Formation of Heavenly Fiends!"

"He'll wait until we've ascended to immortality... Is he planning to refine us into zombies then?"

Qing Han's expression darkened.

Atop the carriage, the Deaf Prince waved the open box at the crystal mountain, which returned to the box in a flash of light. After a slight stumble, the prince hurriedly handed the box to Hongxiu, and the servant quickly put it away.

"This prince is Xiangliu Hongzhen, the third prince of the East Sea Court!" declared the Deaf Prince. "I will smash to death whoever dares provoke me! Anyone else wish to try their luck?!"

### **Chapter 286: Return to Origins**

The Deaf Prince didn't know he'd been dragged down by Lu Yun, he thought Jiangchen Wushang was after him. If he'd known the Jiangchen scion was after Lu Yun, however, he probably would've been even more eager, and killed the man before Jin Heyi could come to the rescue.

Onlookers broke into a cold sweat at his declaration; only the freaking insane would want a taste of his crystal mountain!

"I didn't expect the cash cow of Levitating Island to be so vicious. I once heard him say he was going to bury someone with immortal crystals, and thought it was a joke. But no, crystals can actually be lethal!"

Although it'd been a zombie the crystal mountain had crushed, it was still a dao immortal zombie. Those who'd scammed the prince before suddenly felt their ill-gotten gains sitting heavily in their hands. An abrupt desire to pay the violent prince back flared up.

"The third prince is righteous and good!" announced a monster spirit immortal dressed in North Sea official attire. "The Corpse Refiners are a plague upon the world who refine living immortals into zombies. Their sins cannot be forgiven! Today, the third prince drove away their disciple and undid their conspiracy, saving countless immortals on Levitating Island. What great fortune for us to be graced by your presence!!

"On behalf of the countless cultivators of the island, this marquis thanks Your Highness for your great kindness and deeds!" The marquis bowed down to the East Sea Third Prince.

However, the prince considered the immortals around him like he hadn't noticed the marquis at all. "Who else would like to try my crystal? I may not possess great strength, but I have immortal crystals aplenty!"

The marquis stilled, his back still bent and his expression dark. As an official representing the North Sea Court, the tiger shark considered it highly disrespectful for the prince to ignore his expression of gratitude.

An empyrean immortal burst into laughter. "Stop trying to curry favor, Marquis Tiger Shark. The Draggin' Prince is also the Deaf Prince. He can't hear you!"

However, the other immortals around him didn't laugh, but instead moved away from the man in unison. Peerless immortal power locked on to him in the next second, cutting the empyrean immortal off in mid-laugh and draining the color from his face.

"Say that again?" Hongxiu's voice cut through the crowd as a sharp and chilling sword, almost penetrating the man's purple manor.

"N-no... never again..." Almost pissing himself with fright, the empyrean immortal kowtowed frantically in apology.

"It is fine for anyone to say anything they like when His Royal Highness wanders around the city as a commoner. However, he is now here in his capacity as the third prince of the East Sea court. He represents the authority and dignity of the royal clan. If I don't kill you, that would make the East Sea monster spirits seem weak in comparison."

The empyrean immortal wilted with despair as two beams of sword light shot out from Hongxiu's eyes, severing his neck.

Thud!

His nascent spirit had been minced as well.

“Stand down, Marquis Tiger Shark,” Hongxiu said in a steely voice. “His Royal Highness was attacked by Corpse Refiners out of the blue and forced to fight back. This has nothing to do with the cultivators and immortals on this island.”

“Un-understood...” The tiger shark wiped the sweat off his forehead and fell silent.

“Hm? Why did you kill the empyrean immortal?” the Deaf Prince asked in surprise.

“Because he deserved it,” Hongxiu transmitted with a smile.

“Ah.” The Deaf Prince didn’t keep asking. If Hongxiu said he deserved to die, then so he did.

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Jiangchen Wushang sprawled bonelessly like a puddle of mud on an uninhabited island in the inner sea. His meridians, flesh, and blood were paste, and his bones stuck out of his skin.

“Why save me?” he asked with an impassive expression, staring at the Jin scion near him.

“You’ve already lost the Cauldron of Invincible Constitution, and I didn’t want you to lose the Bag of Corpse Refinement as well.” Jin Heyi shoved a grey pill that reeked of decaying corpses into his mouth.

“You almost disrupted my plans when you refined Donglin Buo! Don’t you know I’d just formed an alliance with Donglin Shaohui?” Hatred flashed through Jiangchen Wushan’s face—plainly, he was forgetting that it’d been Jin Heyi who’d saved him.

“Donglin Shaohui? He’s just spineless junk.” Jin Heyi shook his head. “You’ll become trash by association if you work with him.”

Jiangchen Wushang didn’t respond, his chest heaving.

“Lu Yun is mine.” A particularly devilish look overtook Jin Heyi’s expression as his eyes turned the ghastly pale of a zombie’s. They settled unblinkingly on Jiangchen Wushang. “If you make another move against them, I’ll suck your blood and spirit dry.”

“The Zombifying Method!” Jiangchen Wushang shrieked with terror when he noticed Jin Heyi’s eyes.

“You’ve practiced a zombie method with your own body! Are you out of your mind?!”

“Who said we can’t practice the method on ourselves?” Jin Heyi schooled his expression and his eyes turned back to normal. An orb shimmering with crimson light appeared in his hand—Diexi’s origin sphere. “It’s a shame that the zombie king escaped.... But no worries, I’ll find it sooner or later with the sphere. Then I’ll perfect the method and reach immortality with the dao of zombies.”

.....

It was the opening day of the Myriad Returns Market.

From within the city shot a beam of white formation light that criss-crossed over and over again to form a giant formation in the air, enveloping all the floating inner island. Tall buildings formed within the light and gradually turned physical, forming an enormous city. That was the real Myriad Returns City, all of the floating island itself!

The market was held every ten years because that was when the formation light activated, turning the island into a grand city.

“That’s the Great Formation of Myriad Returns... Return to Origins!” Shock flashed through Lu Yun’s face from his position in the Deaf Prince’s carriage, and he looked up at the hazy white island. “Return to Origins is the greatest perfection of formation dao! It’s a realm that we hear of only in stories!”

The ultimate peak of comprehension for formation masters was to set up formations without foundation, but the great perfection of formation dao was to Return to Origins.

Formations drew their power from heaven and earth. The perfect state of formation dao returned formations to their origins, becoming one with heaven and earth, which then corresponded to the heavenly influence of feng shui layouts.

Moreover, those who mastered the technique could distill ten thousand formations into one, and vice versa. It allowed the formation master to truly manipulate formations at will. If Feinie could fully refine the Formation Orb and master all of the formations within, she’d be able reach those heights. Right now, however, she could tap into only a thousandth of the formations in the orb. There was still a very long way to go.

Lu Yun had thought it was merely something that existed in theory. No human had ever attained those levels of accomplishment. Now however, he was faced with the proof of its existence—the Great Formation of Myriad Returns. The city before him was a standalone world created by the formation.

“Not just that.” The little fox stared at the island and shrieked, “It’s also the peak of illusions—Simulated Reality! All these used to just be illusions, but now they’ve been refined into reality and come into existence!”

### **Chapter 287: Borrowing a Treasure**

When formation dao and illusions combined, they came together as illusory formations. The enormous Myriad Returns City was created by one such formation. Everything about and within the city was fake, but when the formation attained the heights of refining illusion into reality, the city became tangibly substantial and formed a city of five thousand kilometers in radius.

Such were the heights that the little fox dreamed of reaching.

Now real, crowds thronged the streets, carriages fought for space, and all sorts of vehicles filed into the city. Shops lining the avenues hawked a great variety of ingredients and treasures, too many for the eye to catalogue.

Another great commotion rose when the Deaf Prince’s carriage entered the market. After all, the prince had just smashed a dao immortal zombie of the Corpse Refiners into meat paste. More importantly, he was rich enough to use immortal crystals as weapons! Though he was known as the fattest cash cow on Levitating Island, no one dared approach him now.

Heavenly melodies reverberated in the air as a golden path extended from Myriad Returns City to the Deaf Prince’s carriage. A group of high-level immortals rushed along the path, led by an aloof-looking, golden immortal girl.

“Qing Xun of the Panorama Pavilion greets His Royal Highness the Third Prince, Sir Lu, and Sir Qing Han,” she transmitted as she approached the carriage.

“Fairy Qing Xun of the Panorama Pavilion!” The Deaf Prince perked up.

Myriad Returns Market had been held on Levitating Island for thousands of years, and was first organized by the Panorama Pavilion and a few other major merchant guilds. Therefore, the pavilion naturally wouldn’t miss the event when it kicked off.

As the largest trading company in the world of immortals, the Panorama Pavilion did business all over the world, as well as the East Sea. Thus, it was no surprise that the Deaf Prince would know Qing Xun.

“I didn’t expect Fairy Qing Xun to welcome us in person. What an honor, truly an honor!” The Deaf Prince laughed heartily to see the girl.

Qing Xun was the pavilion head’s personal disciple and arcane dao immortal Qing Ruyan’s younger sister. That bequeathed her great status in the guild; she’d been the facilitator of the auction in Xiankan.

“He says that a lot,” muttered the little fox.

Smiling, Qing Xun continued her transmissions with the Deaf Prince and turned to Lu Yun at the same time. She wasn’t here for the Deaf Prince, but for Lu Yun and Qing Han.

Lu Yun had refined a Heaven Descent Pill for her elder sister, which had effectively gifted the faction a future celestial emperor. Meanwhile, Qing Han had restored the Dao Flower and gained its favor. He would one day become the rightful Dao Sovereign of the world. In fact, he was already known as the Youth Dao Sovereign.

But of course, Qing Xun wasn’t going to point that out. She wasn’t going to embarrass the Deaf Prince, who was partial to grandiosity.

Some of the immortals in the area couldn’t help but feel disappointed when the Panorama Pavilion guided Lu Yun and his companions into the market. They were low-level immortals and cultivators who couldn’t enter the real trading hub, so had to stay on the fringes. Originally, they’d hoped to make some money from the Deaf Prince, but the Panorama Pavilion’s actions had shattered that hope.

“Hahahaha!” The Deaf Prince’s hearty laughter scattered from overhead. “I have money to spare! I have nothing but money and crystals!”

Clatter!

Translucent crystals dropped from the sky like high-velocity snowflakes. The Deaf Prince stood on top of his carriage with a giant box in hand, an immortal-crystal bearing flower boy as the carriage moved. Cheers rose in a deafening din as countless cultivators and immortals fought for the crystals, and the Deaf Prince roared with pleased laughter at the crowd’s reaction.

Within the carriage, the corners of Qing Xun’s mouth spasmed.

“The third prince is... indeed the biggest spender of the East Sea.” Qing Xun and the other Panorama immortals had been invited into the carriage. It was extremely spacious, resembling more of a living



room than the interior of a carriage. They all looked outside at the Deaf Prince with a strange expression.

Hongxiu smiled wryly when she returned and saw the look on their escort's faces.

"The biggest spender of the East Sea?" Lu Yun shook his head. "It'll be worth it, if the crystals buy him some loyalty, but you should remind the prince that this kind of generosity might come to attract resentment over time. Not everyone will be grateful to him."

He fell silent after the reminder. The Sal Tree of Life and Death in his dantian had sensed the tremendous feedback of goodwill flowing to the Deaf Prince. Many immortals and cultivators were thankful to the prince for the crystals, which manifested as goodwill.

In no time at all, the Deaf Prince would be known for his generosity and kindness, rather than being an easy mark. Of course, many still didn't feel any goodwill even after receiving his crystals; they took the prince's generosity for granted.

Hongxiu paused and sunk into deep thought. The Deaf Prince continued to shower crystals off the carriage as they moved from the outer circle of the market into its heart.

"I've finally found you, Sir Lu," Qing Xun transmitted to Lu Yun, shifting her attention away from the Deaf Prince.

"Found me?" Lu Yun paused. "What is it?"

Qing Xun and the others had welcomed them with the pomp and pageantry that one would afford the patriarch of a major clan. Lu Yun and the others weren't openly walking on the golden path only because the Deaf Prince had enthusiastically stuffed Qing Xun and her entourage into his carriage.

He wasn't too surprised by Qing Xun's words, however. Not long ago, he'd received a message from Yuying, saying that a dao immortal from the Panorama Pavilion had arrived at Dusk Province with an invitation for Lu Yun. However, he'd already left the province for the North Sea.

"We do indeed have a favor to ask." Embarrassment tinged Qing Xun's expression.

Although Lu Yun had acquired three treasures from the Panorama Pavilion, they still owed Lu Yun a great favor. Not only had they gained the knowledge of the properties and uses of a thousand and eighty dead herbs and their refining methods, they'd also gained a Heaven Descent Pill. Thus, it was more than a little embarrassing that they were here to ask another favor from Lu Yun.

"Please speak your mind, Fairy Qing Xun." Lu Yun didn't mind. He, too, wanted to understand what ancient recipe the pavilion was restoring. Therefore, he was happy to help with whatever they needed him for.

"My honored master, the head of the pavilion, is about to face a tribulation." Qing Xun turned serious.

"A tribulation?" Lu Yun said in surprise. "You aren't asking me to absorb the lightning, are you?"

"I'm not." Qing Xun smiled wryly. "My master is a peak arcane dao immortal. He's facing an origin order tribulation, rather than a lightning tribulation."

“Origin order tribulation!” Lu Yun started. “Then he’s to become a celestial emperor?”

“That’s two different things,” she corrected. “To become a celestial emperor, one has to pluck all nine dao fruit, be at the peak of origin dao realm, and summon all twenty-four heavenly mandates of the world.

“My master is simply ascending to origin dao realm from arcane dao realm. He’s an old immortal who survived the divine race’s rule and can no longer suppress his cultivation. There are nine arcane dao fruits within his body that have been communicating with the world every second of the day and he can’t stop the process any more.”

For some immortals, it was arduously difficult to pluck a dao fruit. For real geniuses, however, once their cultivation reached a certain height, a dao fruit would be drawn into their bodies even if they didn’t seek it out.

However, there was a great tribulation blocking the way between the two realms. Not a heavenly tribulation, but a human tribulation! The tribulation brought creatures like the long-haired monsters—the guardians of the origin dao fruit. Anyone who wanted to pluck a fruit would be attacked and possibly killed by them.

## **2: Borrowing a Treasure**

Other than the imperial clans of the nine majors, which had special heritages that ensured their members would safely overcome the tribulation, very few could make the ascension. That was why all the ancestors of the top clans were arcane dao immortals, rather than origin dao immortals. Almost no arcane dao immortal could emerge victorious over the guardians to pluck their dao fruit.

Other than the nine celestial emperors, anyone who’d tried had damaged their foundation during the process and become incredibly vulnerable. They then went into hiding.

The head of the Panorama Pavilion might be powerful, but he knew he was much weaker than the arcane dao immortals who’d been killed or severely injured by the monsters throughout history. If he attempted to pluck the fruit, he’d be killed even if the fruit came to him of its own volition.

That was why the pavilion had sought Lu Yun out—to borrow a treasure. They wanted to borrow the black axe Lu Yun had gleaned to deter the monsters guarding the fruit.

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Lu Yun’s lips pressed tightly together. So it would seem that similar long-haired monsters guarded the veil between the arcane and origin dao immortal realms. No wonder there were so few origin dao immortals in the world. Only the nine celestial emperors touched upon that level, while the leaders of the ten lands and four seas were all arcane dao immortals.

“Contemporary immortals haven’t experienced the void realm to understand heaven and earth. Neither have they had the chance to refine the power of the land into themselves. That’s why they face such great dangers when picking their dao fruit and can’t deal with the hairy monsters!” Lu Yun continued to mutter, “the only thing that makes the monsters special is the strange dao weapons they wield, but immortals also aren’t their match when plucking the fruit.”

Of course, that was simply Lu Yun's perspective. In the eyes of other cultivators, they still wouldn't be able to deal with the monsters even if the latter weren't armed with dao weapons.

"Alright." He nodded and transmitted, "I can lend your master the dao weapon. However, the axe is unique due to the great dao it contains. No matter what cultivation realm you are, you can only make one swing before you're drained of all inner energy!"

"I was able to make several swings back in Dusk City only because I prepared a great amount of pills beforehand," Lu Yun reminded her. "Your master must stock up on energy replenishing pills before attempting his ascension. No cost is too great when it comes to preparation!"

He then threw Qing Xun a storage ring and said out loud, "Here's the last of my wealth: five million premium immortal crystals. Please prepare fifty thousand supreme formation stones for me!"

Crush the ring when you need the weapon.

Our thanks for Sir Lu's generosity and integrity! Qing Xun carefully schooled her expression into calm. "Not to worry, Sir Lu Yun. The Panorama Pavilion will deliver fifty thousand stones."

"Five million premium crystals for fifty thousand supreme formation stones?" muttered the little fox. "Nice bargain he just got. The Panorama Pavilion is more wasteful than the Deaf Prince!"

Xing Mou bobbed her head rapidly. A supreme formation stone was worth at least ten thousand premium crystals. Exchanging five million crystals for five thousand supreme formation stones was simply highway robbery. Qing Han was sharp enough to figure out that Lu Yun was making a different deal with the pavilion, but refrained from exposing the double play.

"Also," Lu Yun transmitted again, "I'm very interested in the ancient pill recipe you're restoring. I'm not lending you the weapon for free. I'd like to take a look at the recipe."

"We couldn't hide it from you after all." Qing Xun opted to speak rather than silently transmit this time. "We might've been able to keep the truth from the other pill masters last time, but not you. Indeed, the thousand and eighty herbs, as well as a few additional herbs, can be refined into a long lost pill. We can't restore the recipe on our own, which is why we resorted to holding an auction."

"With your help, however, we're very likely to be able to restore the ancient recipe."

That caught the attention of the others in the carriage. They'd been in the dark regarding what deal Qing Xun and Lu Yun were making, but now they knew. It had something to do with the Panorama Pavilion's secrets, which explained the discretion being employed. Hongxiu had been especially curious, but now abruptly lost interest in the conversation.

The Panorama senior council around Qing Xun feigned nonchalance and remained silent as well. No wonder Qing Xun would take the deal; Lu Yun was striking while the iron was hot and making out like a bandit!

Qing Xun inwardly sighed with relief. Compared to the ancient recipe, the pavilion head's tribulation was the true matter at hand. It was better to reveal the pill recipe than to let others know that they'd borrowed a treasure from Lu Yun!

From Lu Yun's perspective, he was willing to make this deal, since, when he'd gone missing, the Panorama Pavilion had provided sanctuary for the Lu and Chen Clans, minimizing damage to the two. They'd also terminated their business deals with the Qing and Feng Clans, and the Exalted Immortal Sect, dancing dangerously close to open warfare in a bid to protect Aoxue.

Though Qing Ruyan was a large driving force behind these actions, the fact that the merchant guild hadn't kicked him when he was down made them a worthy ally. Moreover, he really was curious about the pill recipe.

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"Oh?" Lu Yun shot to his feet and looked out the window with a startled look. "Stop the carriage!" He transmitted to the Deaf Prince.

"Hm? What's wrong?" With a wave of his hand, the Deaf Prince halted the nine dragon-horses and stopped flinging around crystals.

Lu Yun jumped out of the carriage without a word and walked up to a little stand, picking up a gray, oval stone the size of a fist.

"How much for this stone?" He turned to the golden immortal manning the stand.

The seller's skin was rough and weathered, and there was a strong smell of brine about him. It was obvious that he often traversed the ocean. He perked up when he saw Lu Yun jump out of the Deaf Prince's carriage and his eyes shifted cannily. "A million premium crystals!"

"May I borrow a million crystals from you, Your Royal Highness?" Lu Yun transmitted.

"Sure!" The prince beamed from ear to ear at the prospect of spending money.

Thud!

He threw a silver box onto the stand with dramatic flair.

"A million crystals!" shouted the Deaf Prince. The golden immortal smiled obsequiously and hurriedly took the box.

"Hold!" came another voice. "I'll pay two million for the stone. It's mine now."

### **Chapter 288: Qilin Egg**

"Oh?" Lu Yun's lips tightened disagreeably at the unwanted third party. The newcomer was a handsome young man with a mild-tempered smile, dressed in fine robes. His gaze was fixed on the stall owner.

"I..." the golden immortal waffled and cast Lu Yun a conflicted look. He was here to earn money, otherwise he wouldn't have asked for a million after seeing the Deaf Prince. Now that someone was offering him two million, he immediately changed his mind. He could tell the unassuming stone must be more valuable than it seemed, and his quick wits wondered if he should increase the price even further.

Thud! Thud!

With an unwavering smile, the young man chucked two silver boxes onto the stall table, crowding the limited space.

“This gentleman is Fang Feixing from Ingress Island. The stone is mine now.”

His tone was polite, but he was already reaching out for the stone in Lu Yun’s hand. However, Lu Yun was even faster. With a twist of his wrist, he put the stone into his storage treasure.

Grasping nothing but air, Fang Feixing’s polite mask broke. “What, do you want to make an enemy out of Ingress Island?”

Ingress Island was one of the three leading factions of the North Sea, ruling over Levitating Island along with the Dark North Sword Sect and North Sea Court. Fang Feixing was one of Ingress’ core disciples, which granted him great influence and authority on the island.

“I’ve made a deal with this golden immortal to buy the stone for a million premium crystals, and we’ve already traded crystals for the ware,” Lu Yun enunciated clearly. “It’s the rule of this market that a transaction is completed once the exchange has been made, yet you want to take the stone from me. Do you think being from Ingress Island justifies your behavior?”

The golden immortal had accepted the Deaf Prince’s crystals, and Lu Yun had taken the stone. According to the rules of the market, the deal was done.

Fang Feixing looked at the golden immortal, who shuddered in response. Although he was a golden immortal and considered royalty in the world of immortals, he was nothing when facing a faction as powerful as Ingress Island.

“I’m not selling the stone!” he shouted suddenly. “Although you’ve given me the crystals, I haven’t verified the amount yet. The deal hasn’t yet been completed, so return the stone to me. I’m not selling it to you!”

A great aura roiled from the golden immortal over to Lu Yun, but an even stronger aura exploded behind Lu Yun, causing an enormous collision. Beigong Yu stepped between Lu Yun and the merchant to guard his master.

Bam!

“Peerless immortal!” The golden immortal took several steps backward, color draining from his face.

Fang Feixing smiled coolly when he saw Beigong Yu step forward. “Do you plan on forcing a sale and violating the rules of the market?”

“You said you needed to verify the amount. Isn’t that an insult to the third prince of the East Sea? Do you think he would give you the wrong amount of crystals?” Lu Yun completely ignored Fang Feixing. He already had the stone in hand, and he wasn’t surrendering it.

“I...” The golden immortal paused. That was right. This young man’s backer was the third prince of the East Sea, one who could crush people with immortal crystals. This wasn’t someone he could afford to offend, either.

“Hahaha!” Fang Feixing laughed. “Threatening North Sea denizens with an East Sea prince? Do you take us for such pushovers?”

That struck a chord in the hearts of the onlookers, and hostile glares swung at Lu Yun.

“Hah! Third prince of the East Sea? How very impressive!” Someone snapped, echoing Fang Feixing. “Throwing his weight around on our Levitating Island and crushing someone with immortal crystals. He shows our North Sea cultivators not one bit of respect!”

“Show you not one bit of respect?” Lu Yun looked at the man derisively. “I remember you. You’ve been following the prince’s carriage since outside Myriad Returns City. You’ve collected quite a lot of crystals by now, haven’t you?”

“I picked them up from the ground,” the monster spirit said self-righteously. “What does it have to do with an East Sea prince?”

Within the carriage, Hongxiu’s expression darkened. Lu Yun was right; not everyone would be grateful for the prince’s actions. The Deaf Prince looked around in confusion, as he had no idea what was happening. He was used to such situations. In fact, to him, this was just how the world operated. Everyone relied on transmission to communicate, and there was no such thing as communication through sound alone. Although he spoke as well, that was because he believed his words would transmit into listeners’ minds.

“I’ve finally experienced Myriad Returns Market for myself today. Truly, knowing something by its reputation isn’t the same as seeing it in person.” With a sigh, Lu Yun threw the stone at the stand and grabbed the silver box from the golden immortal’s hands.

“Let’s go,” he transmitted to the Deaf Prince.

“You’re not buying it anymore?” the prince asked in surprise.

“The local lords of the North Sea are influential. If we dare buy something they want, we’ll be killed before we leave the island!” Lu Yun transmitted and said out loud at the same time, “Rules of the market? Tsk, what a joke.”

The golden immortal blanched, while Fang Feixing remained impassive.

“What?!” The Deaf Prince jumped and flew into a rage. “Someone dares bully senior brother Lu? Hongxiu, give me my crystal!”

Fang Feixing’s expression finally changed.

“It’s alright, let it go. Some of the establishments here belong to Fairy Qing Xun. It’s better to avoid trouble,” Lu Yun transmitted while continuing to lament out loud, “heh, I’m but one man without a faction behind me. I happened to run into a treasure by accident, yet I’m forced to give it up.”

“I wonder how many people in the market will encounter the same fate as well,” Lu Yun sighed woefully. “If I insist on buying the stone today, I won’t be able to leave the island alive.”

That finally hit a nerve and brought the crowd back on his side. True, very true, Lu Yun was right!

Over the past thousands of years of tripartite rule from the North Sea court, Ingress Island, and Dark North Sword Sect, they'd committed no end of atrocities. The rules of the market protected only the powerful!

Low level cultivators and those without an impressive background remained vulnerable to their superiors. Although the rules would keep them alive while they were in the market, they'd be killed as soon as the market ended, or when they left the island.

Lu Yun walked off, but the cultivators in the market were still deep in thought.

"Lu Yun..." Fang Feixing sneered. "You've offended all three major factions in the North Sea with your actions. You won't be going anywhere in the North Sea."

He'd plainly recognized Lu Yun from the start and didn't care at all what the young man said. He was right, but the market had still thrived for thousands of years. It wasn't going to change on account of one word from a specific individual.

"Sir Fang..." The golden immortal handed the stone to Fang Feixing, who took it with an impassive look and retrieved the two silver boxes he'd thrown out with a wave of his hand. Then, he threw four inferior immortal crystals onto the stall.

The seller pulled a long face, but couldn't say anything. He could've earned a million premium crystals, but now only had a few inferior ones to show for his business. Many cultivators looked at him with a trace of sympathy.

"I can't stay any longer. Dusk Province of Nephrite Major isn't far from here..." murmured the golden immortal. "Perhaps the overlord of Dusk, the top youth sovereign, will be different." He disassembled his stand and left the market in a streak of sword light.

Thud!

Suddenly, an enormous flash of sword energy pierced the sky and cut the immortal down.

"Anyone who dares betray the North Sea," boomed a powerful voice, "must die!"

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"We're going to let it go just like this?!" The Deaf Prince was frustrated. Lu Yun looked thoughtfully at the crimson flower that'd newly appeared in the sky.

"Honestly, the market wasn't like this when it first started," Qing Xun sighed. "But this is the North Sea, after all. That means the North Sea Court, Ingress Island, and Dark North Sword Sect are in charge. We merchant guilds have no choice but to compromise when we enter.

"Levitating Island's location makes it unique. It not only leads to the North Sea bordering Nephrite Major, but also to the Exalted, Truespirit, and Lazuli Majors. Everyone has to pass through this island to enter the four majors.

"Cultivators who return from an expedition in the North Sea must trade on this island for a passage token, or they'll be raided by pirates upon their departure." Qing Xun also transmitted to the Deaf Prince when she spoke.

"What a bunch of scurvy curs! Bastards, the lot of them! My East Sea cultivators would never do such a thing!" raged the Deaf Prince.

"The North Sea Court, Ingress Island, and Dark North Sword Sect don't yet control the entire North Sea. There are many uncharted regions waiting to be explored, and many more treasures than there are to be found in the East Sea." Qing Xun sounded resigned. "That's why immortals keep flocking to this island, despite the shady business. While the market is open, all routes leading out of the North Sea are blocked off."

Aoxue nodded in agreement. Back when the North Sea dragons had been at their peak, they'd been able to rival even the most powerful heavenly courts of today, such as the Exalted, Aureate, and Lazuli courts.

Even then, there were many secret realms in the North Sea that the dragons had yet to explore. The same was true of all four seas. Those who ventured into the ocean for opportunities were low-level immortals and cultivators who couldn't survive in the world of immortals. Powerful immortals and factions mostly targeted the ancient tombs, where complete heritages and opportunities could be found. The Skydragon Tomb, of course, was an exception.

"The three factions of the North Sea are indeed tyrannical," Lu Yun sighed.

"Did you really just give up on the thing you wanted?" Qing Han piped up with a frown.

Lu Yun cracked a smile. "I already have it in hand."

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"I didn't expect to find an egg of the ancient divine beast, the water qilin here!" Fang Feixing toyed with the oval-shaped stone with a smile. "Top youth sovereign, my ass. So what if he's killed many dao immortals of the nine majors and ten lands? He still has to cry uncle in the North Sea!

"However, it's unwise to openly attack him, since he's gotten the support of the Deaf Prince. Whatever, Ingress Island has no feud with Lu Yun. Let the monster spirit court worry about him." He caressed the egg as he spoke.

Boom!

A tremendous pulse of vitality suddenly burst from the egg, whereupon it exploded with a bang. Caught off guard, Fang Feixing suffered severe injuries from the close range detonation.

"What just happened?!" He laid prone on the ground after being hurtled backward by the explosion, disbelief marking his face. "The... the egg! It must have been tampered with! ...Lu Yun!!"

### **Chapter 289: The Tribulation Surrogate Pill**

The egg of a water qilin!

In the ancient world of immortals, qilins were revered as the top of the four spirits and king of all beasts. Even dragons and phoenixes had to bend the knee. However, qilins had suffered a fatal blow in the ancient war, resulting in the extinction of their bloodline. There were no more pureblooded qilins in the



world of immortals anymore; there wasn't even anyone with the bloodline. How fortunate it was for Lu Yun to stumble upon a water qilin egg!

The egg was dead, but it contained great qilin energy. Anyone who refined the egg would gain the divine spirit's bloodline and talent. According to the ancient texts, water qilins had dominated the world underwater. Their mastery over water manipulation could even rival that of the Black Tortoise.

Although there were no living water qilins in the current world, there remained qilin nests with significant remnants of their energy. Therefore, members of many major factions could still recognize a qilin egg.

Since this particular egg was dead, that made it a corpse that Lu Yun could resurrect. He only needed a single particle rather than the entire egg, and thus arrived his sixth Envoy of Samsara.

Hum.

Deep blue radiance sparkled in hell as a water qilin egg appeared before Lu Yun. He'd surreptitiously cut a small piece from the egg during the confrontation, so it'd been no big deal to give the egg to Fang Feixing.

He'd even been able to save a million premium immortal crystals while he was at it!

With the egg resurrected by the Tome of Life and Death, the one in Fang Feixing's hand had naturally gone defunct in fiery fashion. Lu Yun's breathing quickened; this was the first time he'd ever tried making an egg his envoy!

According to Huangqing and Aoxue's memories, water qilins were the undisputed king of the ocean with their terrifying innate water talent, making them worthy opponents of the Black Tortoise.

Lu Yun's sword ocean aura was based on the intent of water. If he could gain the talents of a water qilin, his understanding of the element's intent would improve greatly. So far, he'd created only three sword techniques using his sword aura as a foundation—Vast Dragon Seaturner, Peng of Kun, and Starstream Sword. He'd hit a bottleneck and needed to improve his command over his sword aura if he wished to create more powerful techniques.

In fact, he had a vague premonition that once the void realm was fully mapped out and contemporary cultivators ascended to that realm, he'd lose all of the advantages he currently enjoyed. By then, even the youth sovereigns and current lists of genius cultivators would be replaced. The void realm was just too significant.

It allowed one to discern heaven and earth and incorporate themselves into nature. Once someone ascended to immortality after experiencing the void realm, not only would the old immortals be made obsolete, so too would the genius cultivators who'd earned a reputation in the Dusk Tournament.

Indeed, a good number of decisive immortals had already severed their own cultivation and started anew. If Lu Yun didn't want to be eliminated by the times, he had to keep improving.

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Scintillating blue light dyed everything in the region faintly blue. The dusky qilin egg was now baby-blue colored and releasing ripple upon ripple to transform the area into an inlet of water. A figure in faint-blue slowly walked out of the premises.

“Sixth Envoy of Samsara, Cangyin, greets the master.” A naked girl with blue hair and blue eyes swept a graceful curtsy at Lu Yun. Looking roughly eighteen, the beautiful girl had a quiet elegance to her.

“Cangyin... you...” Lu Yun’s jaw dropped. “How did you grow up so fast? Aren’t you supposed to be a pup?”

He hadn’t gleaned anything beforehand because her mind had been as blank as a sheet of paper. Therefore, he’d thought his sixth envoy would hatch as a pup, not as a charming little beauty.

“In response to the master.” Cangyin looked up, her body shifting with her motion. “This servant was reverted into egg form by a time manipulation art.”

“I... see...!” Lu Yun paused, then reacted, “Wait, there’s such things as time manipulation arts?”

“There are!” Cangyin answered with great confidence. “This servant is certain that was what killed me.”

Time manipulation!

“Who were you before, then?” Lu Yun frowned. “What level was your cultivation?”

Since she’d been hit with a retroactive time art, everything that had happened in her life had been erased from the annals of time. Even the Tome of Life and Death couldn’t read her experience from her soul. To the book, she was a newborn, and Lu Yun had only recognized the dead egg as a water qilin’s when he’d found it. He hadn’t seen any information about Cangyin.

“In response to the master, this servant was the matriarch of the water qilins, and my cultivation had reached peak principal realm.” Once resurrected, Cangyin could recall her past, and her cultivation returned to the level she’d been born with—true immortal realm.

“The matriarch of the water qilins?” Lu Yun’s eyes widened. He didn’t expect the egg he’d stumbled upon in the streets to be the leader of the water qilins!

“The principal realm? Is that the realm after dao immortal realm?” His mind seized on the new tidbit of information.

During the hundred thousand years after the great immortal war, no one had been able to break through the dao immortal realm, and all records about anything after dao immortal had been destroyed.

“The realm after origin dao immortal is named the ingress realm,” Cangyin explained. “The ingress realm is divided into nine minor levels. After the ingress realm is the primordial realm, then the principal realm.”

“Is the realm after that the nature realm?” Lu Yun asked without thinking. As someone born and raised on Earth, he was no stranger to the progression from ‘ingress’, to ‘primordial’, to ‘principal’.

“What comes after the principal realm is the emperor realm—the realm of an immortal emperor.”

“Alright then.” Lu Yun nodded. “Tell me, what happened in the ancient times? How did the great war break out? Who killed you?”

The ancient war of immortals had forever changed the course of this world, shattering it into the twenty-four facets. Everyone knew there was such a war a hundred thousand years ago, but the reasons behind why the war had broken out had always been a mystery.

“Well...” Fear flashed through Cangyin’s face. “I... I was killed by a silver-haired monster with a silver pagoda when attempting to ascend to emperor realm. The time manipulation art was released from the pagoda!”

“Silver-haired monster?!” Lu Yun tensed. “Are you sure?”

With a wave of her hand, Cangyin manifested an image with her inner energy, showing a monster covered in long, silver hair that held a delicate silver pagoda in its hands. It looked just like the black-haired monsters Lu Yun had encountered; the only difference between them was their color and the weapons they carried.

No wonder she was hit by a time manipulation art, and the Tome of Life and Death couldn’t read her memories. It’s all because of that treasure.

The black-haired monsters could make a swing of the great dao with their black axes, while the silver ones manipulated time with their silver pagodas!

“As for the ancient war of immortals...” Cangyin said with a wry smile. “If there ever was a war, it must have broken out after my death. However...” her focus shifted, “a good number of the world’s powerhouses had already died before me. The dragon, phoenix, xiangliu, and kunpeng patriarchs all encountered the silver monsters when attempting to ascend into the emperor realm.”

“I see.” Lu Yun nodded and dropped the subject. Something this high level was beyond his control at the moment.

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Soon, the Deaf Prince’s carriage reached Panorama Pavilion territory. The merchant guild was highly efficient. As soon as Qing Xun sent the dao weapon back to headquarters through a formation, a set of ingredients for the damaged pill recipe was sent back.

“There are a hundred and eight thousand in total?!” Lu Yun sucked in a breath when he took the storage ring from Qing Xun.

“That’s right. There were a hundred and eight thousand ingredients in the ancient ruin!” Qing Xun nodded and continued in a wistful tone. “It must’ve been the herb garden of an immortal emperor. The herbs planted there were the ingredients of a powerful pill. Unfortunately, the recipe etched in the ruins was damaged, leaving behind only the herbs themselves.

“The Panorama Pavilion discovered the ruins three thousand years ago. But during this time, our pill dao masters only identified five thousand herbs and their refinement methods. We have no clue as to how the recipe can be restored.”

Qing Han took the ring from Lu Yun. “These are the main ingredients for the Tribulation Surrogate Pill,” he suddenly said. “However, three hundred and eighty thousand more supplementary ingredients and three catalysts are needed to refine the pill.”

“The Tribulation Surrogate Pill?” Lu Yun and Qing Xun were stunned.

“Are you sure?!” The latter asked breathlessly.

### **Chapter 290: Skyqilin Blood**

The Tribulation Surrogate Pill was once considered the stuff of myths and only theoretically possible even back in the ancient times. However, Qing Han had just said that the herbs the Panorama Pavilion had acquired were its main ingredients!

“Is this true?” Lu Yun asked in a trembling voice, his expression colored by disbelief. The question wasn’t meant for Qing Han, but for Empress Myrtlestar in the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.

“It is,” the empress affirmed in Lu Yun’s mind. “That pill is also Qi Hai’s handiwork. The Panorama Pavilion must have found the herb garden he left behind.”

Qi Hai was the foremost pill master of the ancient world of immortals. He was the one who’d invented the Heaven Descent Pill, and the Tribulation Surrogate Pill was only even more heaven-defying. It could be used as a substitute during a tribulation, be it a life, death, heaven, earth, or human tribulation!

The head of the Panorama Pavilion was no doubt in great need of the pill. When facing unknown dangers and challenges, even the dao weapon might not get him through the upcoming tribulation alive.

“Sir Lu Yun....” Qing Xun took a deep breath and looked at Lu Yun.

“In addition to the hundred and eight thousand main ingredients, you’ll need three catalysts and three hundred and eighty thousand supplemental ingredients,” Qing Han responded in his stead. “The supplemental ingredients aren’t uncommon—you should be able to find them in the current world.”

He manifested a jade slip and handed it to Qing Xun; Empress Myrtlestar had just engraved the ingredients into the slip. Fairy Qing Xun hastily accepted it with great urgency.

“The problem lies with the three catalysts,” Qing Han said after a bemused pause.

“What are they?” As a golden immortal, Qing Xun was able to memorize all three hundred and eighty thousand ingredients with a single sweep of her consciousness. They were indeed things that existed in the current world and nothing too complex. Although she wasn’t a pill master herself, most of the wares she handled were herbs and medicines. The list wasn’t too foreign for her.

“The three catalysts required,” Qing Han said, “are skydragon blood, skyphoenix blood, and skyqilin blood!”

Qingxun paled. Skydragons, skyphoenixes, and skyqilins referred to the heavyweights of the three races, ones who’d exceeded dao immortal realm.

The first two weren't a problem. The world still had some secret realms left behind from the ancient times, and some skydragon and skyphoenix blood were preserved from those glorious heydays. Even the Panorama Pavilion had a limited stock of both.

The qilins, however, had gone extinct. There weren't even any mixed-breed qilins in the world of immortals. Although a few nests had been unearthed before, no blood had been found.

"None of the ingredients or catalysts are going to be a problem," Lu Yun said suddenly.

Oh?" Qing Xun's eyes lit up.

"And I can refine the pill for you," continued Lu Yun.

"Then... what would you like in return, Sir Lu?" Qing Xun was sharp enough to read between the lines. There wasn't such a thing as a free lunch in this world. Lu Yun had already lent them the dao weapon, and was now offering to refine a Tribulation Surrogate Pill of his own volition. There must be something he wanted.

"I do have a few things in mind," Lu Yun nodded, "but I must talk to the head of the Panorama Pavilion in person."

Qing Xun took in a deep breath. "Of course. This is too important a matter for anyone other than my master to negotiate with you, I'll arrange a meeting!"

With that, she took her leave. The pill might determine if her master could ascend to origin dao immortal realm. She didn't want to waste even a minute.

"Have you fallen for her?" Qing Han pursed his lips as he watched Qing Xun go.

"Huh?" Lu Yun turned to Qing Han in shock.

"You haven't once asked about my sister since we returned from the Blood Sea." A pang of jealousy struck Qing Han.

"Ah." Lu Yun paused. He had indeed not been worried about Qing Yu's whereabouts and if she was safe. It wasn't that he'd forgotten about her, but subconsciously, he knew that she was fine.

"What?" Qing Han stared deeply at Lu Yun's face and asked again, "Have you moved on already?"

Lu Yun fell into deep thought. Seeing that, Qing Han quietly lowered his head. To be honest, his friend had been solely focused on nothing else but finding the skydragon tomb for him in all this time. He'd even tossed his responsibilities in Dusk Province by the wayside.

Qing Han wasn't sure what he should be feeling at the moment, either.

"I feel like... she's right beside me," Lu Yun said haltingly. "I feel like... she never left my side."

Qing Han stilled, his heart pounding under Lu Yun's gaze.

"Not only now, but last time, too.... When I saw her in the Chen Clan, there was something strangely familiar about her." Lu Yun wandered through the hallways of his memory. "That seems to be the reason I've fallen for her...."

“Stop!” Qing Han blurted out. “You’re making me nauseous.”

His heart beat even faster; he knew what Lu Yun meant. It was him! Lu Yun liked Qing Yu because she was Qing Han!

Lu Yun stared at his friend and found himself seeing traces of Qing Yu again.

“My master has arrived, Sir Lu!” Qing Xun’s return interrupted Lu Yun’s ruminations and prompted a sigh of relief from Qing Han.

“Wait for me here.” Lu Yun got to his feet and followed Qing Xun.

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“Just what are you worried about?” Empress Myrtlestar’s voice suddenly echoed in Qing Han’s mind.

Qing Han didn’t respond.

“He has spared no effort to scour the North Sea for the skydragon tomb. He does it for you,” the empress said faintly. “He has even taken on the entire Qing Clan by himself....”

“I...” Qing Han answered in a dejected tone. “I worry that I’ll cause his downfall. If he’s made an enemy out of the Qing Clan for me, then one day he’ll face all of House Donglin for me. His future is limitless. It shouldn’t be destroyed because of me.”

“Even heroes are hard pressed to resist their feelings,” Empress Myrtlestar sighed. “He has a rare treasure that can sense your true form, and it has been affecting his perception every moment of the day. He cannot tap into the treasure’s full power yet, but he will fully incorporate the treasure once he ascends to immortality. Then he will see through your disguise.”

Qing Han nodded. He—she—had already noticed how Lu Yun had treated him like Qing Yu, albeit unconsciously.

“What do you plan to do then?” asked the empress. “He will find out the truth once he becomes an immortal.”

Qing Han didn’t answer.