

Necropolis 321

Chapter 321: The Gorb Demon

The South Sea Gourmet!

Even Xue Daozi couldn't help the shudder that ran down his spine. He'd heard of the name before as well, but just never had the chance to meet the personage in the flesh.

Of course, if he had, he'd most likely be resting in the Gourmet's stomach by now.

However, he quickly recalled his new identity, and the terror on his face vanished without a trace.

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"Hehehe, I didn't expect to see so much delicious foodstuffs gathered here." All smiles, the South Sea Gourmet sized up the crowd on the Divine Glory's deck. "A divine octopus with an ancient bloodline, a silverbrow whale, and a pure-blooded xiangliu. There's even a skydragon, a demon dragon.... Tsk tsk tsk, there's even a kunpeng! And what's that? An unknown dragon breed...."

The meatball's eyes narrowed into slits, sparing no one on the ship his scrutiny. "Fox meat doesn't taste good, so forget that. I should dice all this delicious meat together and make a stew out of them...." His drool was about to hit the ground.

Supposedly fearing nothing beneath the heavens or atop the earth, the troublemakers on the ship were shaking and ashen, the dread in their eyes plain for all to see.

No one had ever escaped from the South Sea Gourmet's clutches once he'd set his sights on them. Rumor had it that he'd even once chopped up a monster spirit prince from the Truewater clan in one of the ten lands and made a stew from the meat.

"Little fellows, don't you worry 'bout a thing. This connoisseur respects the elderly and cherishes the young. I won't cook you for the time being!" he beamed when he noticed the fear in the four youngsters' eyes. "You're not immortals yet. Too tender, too tender! Not chewy enough... I'll wait for you to become immortals before cooking you!"

He swallowed loudly again and wiped off the saliva bubbling from his lips with a hand.

The four youngsters turned even more pale upon hearing the words that boomed like a death sentence sealing their fates. They were dead without a doubt after ascending to immortality!

The Gourmet's eyes then landed on Xue Daozi.

"This silverbrow whale, now, he's already reached the aether dao immortal realm and his flesh has been nourished by nine aether dao fruits. The texture is just right, not too tough and not too tender... paired with the octopus, it'll make for a delicious meal!" He slid out the cleaver by his hip as he spoke.

"Bastard! Who dares kill a king of my West Sea!" An angry shout ripped through the sky, quickly followed by a man in purple descending from the sky amidst rumbling thunder. When he saw the Octopus King's corpse floating on the water, his purple eyes almost belched fire.

In response, thunder and lightning raged even more intensely amongst the clouds. The aura emanating from the newcomer wasn't any weaker than Xue Daozi's in the slightest. He was, without a doubt, another peak aether dao immortal powerhouse.

"Goodness—" the South Sea Gourmet suddenly shrieked. "A thunder eel! A dao realm thunder eel! With flesh cleansed by celestial lightning, not to mention his dao fruits.... This is a supreme delicacy! Hahahaha. I really haven't made the trip in vain!

"So... now you can die!" The cleaver in the Gourmet's hand flared with a dark blade-light that slashed across the sky, making straight for the purple-clad man hovering amidst the lightning.

"What?!" The man jumped in fright. His real form was indeed a thunder eel, but after reaching the dao immortal realm and concealing his nature, even an arcane dao immortal would've had trouble discerning the truth.

However, the meatball in front of him had seen through his concealment with a single glance and sent out a terrifying blade light that almost split the sky in two!

As a peak aether dao immortal, he was only one step away from plucking an arcane dao fruit. He only needed to comprehend some of the arcane truths of the universe and harmonize with the world. But he found himself powerless when faced with this blade light, feeling a bizarre sense of only being able to stick out his neck for the butcher's block.

"You're the South Sea Gorb Demon!" he suddenly screamed in terror.

Gourmet was merely the moniker the man had given himself. Gorb Demon was his true identifier.

Boom!

Lightning zigzagged across the sky right at that instant, highlighting the backdrop behind a tremendous eel that extended five kilometers above.

Four slim dragon claws extended from the bottom of the creature, and two immature dragon horns sprouted from the top of its head. Obviously possessing a dragon bloodline, the giant eel had opted to discard the form of a fish and go for a dragon.

Strangely enough, the Gorb Demon's attack hadn't inflicted material injuries, but had instead forced him to reveal his true form.

"Die!" The meatball roared as his cleaver glowed once again. Blade light several hundred meters long landed mercilessly on the eel's neck, separating head from body and splashing purple blood tinged with lightning all over the sea.

A peak aether dao immortal eel, hacked to death in two simple attacks!

"Hahaha—this trip just keeps on giving!" The Gorb Demon brayed with laughter before looking back at Xue Daozi, baring his white teeth in a wide grin. "Your turn now. ...hmm? What's that?"

He stiffened as vast, white brilliance coalescing at lightning speed hinted in the corner of his eye. Subconsciously twisting his head backward, he saw a magnificent, awe-inspiring ship posturing threateningly.

Boom!

A white pillar of light spewed from the ship's bow and ruthlessly blasted into him.

"You fucker!! An immortal weapon of war!!" he shrieked as the white column swallowed his figure. "Ahhhhhhh—" came mournful wails from inside the column of light.

Throughout the duration of the attack, the giant thunder eel and dead octopus had somehow vanished without a trace.

"Hehehe—you four little fellows, and you, kumpeng, and also you, unknown dragon. Oh, and let's not forget you either, silverbrow whale. I'll remember you all!! Wash yourself nice and clean and wait for this connoisseur to come feast on you!" The Gorb Demon's voice came from far away.

Plop!

The Deaf Prince flopped bonelessly on the deck, gasping for dear life. "Good grief, to think I'd meet the rumored Gorb Demon in person and even manage to survive the encounter...." His forehead was drenched in cold sweat.

"He said he'd come to eat us after we've ascended to immortality," Jing Dichen transmitted to the Deaf Prince, her small face deathly pale.

"What?!" The prince jumped out of his skin. "In that case, I'll never become an immortal!"

"Relax." Lu Yun arrived beside them. With a gentle pat of his hand, the Deaf Prince's flesh and bones began changing, transforming him into someone else with another aura entirely.

"Eh? What's going on?" The change struck the group speechless. If not for the transformation taking place right beneath their noses, they never would've believed it to be the same person.

The Deaf Prince himself froze with shock.

Merging death arts with his expertise in talismans, Lu Yun had infused the art of Shapeshifting with the dao of talisman. Therefore, sticking this particular talisman on someone was equivalent to using Shapeshifting on them.

Shapeshifting was a death art that could genuinely transform someone's flesh and bones, an ability that approached the power of creation itself. But he didn't mention anything and offered a type of transformation talisman as the only explanation.

"Since this Gorb Demon's come to the North Sea, I'll find a way to have him killed." The meatball gave Lu Yun a very familiar feeling, but he couldn't put his finger on the exact reason why at the moment.

Divine Glory's main cannon wasn't a true immortal siege weapon, but it'd been enough to harm the demon. This was proof that, though formidable, the Gourmet's strength had its limits.

Chapter 322: Kill As Many Who Come

After driving off the Gorb Demon, Lu Yun changed the appearance of everyone on the ship with shapeshifting talismans. Even the extravagant Divine Glory was transformed into a sinister-looking black fortress ship flying a black sail.

Lu Yun had originally planned to enter the North Sea court by way of assuming Xue Daozi's identity. However, the Gorb Demon had seen through all of their disguises, and likely already passed on the information.

Thus, another change in identity was now necessary.

The degenerate alliance had previously concealed their true forms with powerful treasures from their factions. Even the nine celestial emperors might not have been able to see through the disguises. However, the Gorb Demon had identified who they were with a quick scan, even seeing Beigong Yu and Aoxue as what they were. The man really did possess a remarkable skill.

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Everyone on the ship went through a complete makeover, both inside and out. The talismans had transformed them entirely, and it was even odds if the Gorb Demon could possibly recognize them on the second go-round. The possibility that he would still be able to pick them out had to be taken into consideration, since none of them knew how the mysterious man had identified them in the first place.

The large black ship openly sailed through the ocean, Xue Daozi at the bow. His appearance and bearing was now that of an aloof, middle-aged man, and his presence as a peak aether dao immortal was completely unleashed.

Someone as powerful as he absolutely had the right to lay claim to some of the spoils from the skydragon tomb. Therefore, the monster spirits standing guard at the entrance to the imperial seas permitted entry when they saw him.

"How is the situation in the North Sea, Canghai Chengkong?" Lu Yun contacted the sword immortal through the Tome of Life and Death.

His Infernum couldn't stray too far away from him, for it was the book that sustained their lives. Leaving the area of effect of the Tome of Life and Death would scatter their souls and have them truly depart the world. If they wished for further range of movement, they would need to be led by Lu Yun, or one of his envoys.

Canghai Chengkong, on the other hand, had his name written in the Tome of Life and Death, which made him something between an Envoy of Samsara and Infernum. Lu Yun had ordered him to return to the Dark North Sword Sect and keep an eye on the North Sea.

The sword immortal had been in charge of overseeing Levitating Island, but now that it'd been destroyed, he had nothing to supervise.

Fortunately, the senior council of the sect was too preoccupied with the chaos they were facing and didn't have the attention to spare to hold him accountable. Besides, he was a pure sword immortal, which made him a rare asset even in the Dark North Sword Sect.

After returning to his sect, he made his way to the imperial seas to look for the skydragon tomb.

The shockwaves emanating from the emerging tomb were growing increasingly powerful, to the point where almost everyone could feel them: a behemoth was rising from the ocean.

“In response to master, the North Sea political situation is splintered, and there are too many players involved!” Canghai Chengkong sounded exhausted, clearly having waded into many battles over the past few days. If his name hadn’t been written in the Tome of Life and Death, he would’ve died early on.

“However, the dragons of the Untroubled Sea have found the entrance into the tomb!”

The news raised Lu Yun’s eyebrows. So someone had found the entrance to the tomb!

“The dragons of the Untroubled Sea!” Aoxue’s expression darkened ominously. Back in the day, it’d been an uprising in the Untroubled Sea that’d compromised the North Sea Dragon Palace and resulted in the destruction of the North Sea dragons.

All the clues had later pointed to the Untroubled Sea dragons having caused the destruction on purpose. They were after the skydragon tomb.

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The alliance of degenerates on the fortress ship hadn’t come to explore the skydragon tomb. They were only cultivators, which made the tomb beyond their capabilities, despite the treasures on them. Their goals were to make Beigong Chonglou pay, and stir up troubles for the North Sea court.

Upon their arrival in the imperial sea, Lu Yun didn’t leap into brash action. Instead, he made a multitude of preparations on a deserted island, refining talismans and pills, etching formation disks, and baking black donkey’s hooves.

Memories of the two-headed zombie from the North Sea dragon tomb were still fresh in his mind. There would certainly be no shortage of such zombies in the skydragon tomb. As a spirit realm cultivator, he wasn’t the most reassured that he could deal with a tomb that buried an existence beyond the dao immortal realm.

Therefore, he had to wait. Once the tomb was forced open and the local immortals swept away some of the obstacles within, that’d be his cue to enter.

Another seven days passed and Canghai Chengkong sent another message: the formation outside the skydragon tomb had been broken!

However, the different clans interested in the tomb paid a heavy price for this accomplishment. Three dao immortals, more than ten peak peerless immortals, and many more lesser immortals had died.

The casualties weighed heavily on everyone. They’d lost three dao immortals before even entering the tomb! This mission was proving to be far more dangerous than they’d expected.

However, there was no backing down now that the tomb entrance was open.

The princes made their move as well. Their target: the North Sea court!

According to the informants they’d planted beforehand, Beigong Chonglou, first prince of the North Sea, was nursing severe injuries. He was staying behind to direct operations instead of entering the tomb himself.

Only three dao immortals remained to hold down the fort; all the others had entered the tomb with the monster spirit emperor. In an extremely short time frame, elites scattered all across the North Sea were recalled and vanished into the tomb.

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The North Sea court was located right at the heart of the imperial sea, above an underwater mountain range. The collection of extravagant palaces spanned two hundred and fifty kilometers.

This was where the palace of the North Sea dragons had been. After the blackwater snakes destroyed the clan, they'd taken it over and turned it into a palace for the monster spirit court. The formations within remained unchanged, however. Just as the architecture was a legacy of the ancient dragons, so were the formations, and both held certain weaknesses. The juba clan had sold that information to the blackwater snakes, which led to the ancient dragons' downfall.

The openings had been something neither the ancient dragons nor the present monster spirits could fix.

Within the grand collection of palaces, the enormous formation that'd lain dormant for years was circulating slowly, forming a golden light barrier that protected the premises. This was when the court was at its most vulnerable, and when its defenses were at their highest.

Lu Yun and the others made their way to the outskirts of the palace.

"What should we do?" The princes stared darkly at the formation operating at full power, and involuntarily shifted their gazes to Lu Yun. After all, he was a formation master who could set up formations without foundations.

"Let's not worry about whether we can break through the formation or not. Just attack it first!" A grin split Lu Yun's face. "The palaces span only two hundred and fifty kilometers, but there are many more subspaces in the area. We may not be able to find Beigong Chonglou even if we break the formation, so let's just launch a frontal attack and lure him out!"

Such was his plan. It would be easy enough to destroy the formation, but not nearly as easy to locate Beigong Chonglou. The weaknesses of the formation would be revealed under the light of the Formation Orb, but there were too many subspaces within. Once the formation broke, Beigong Chonglou could easily make his getaway.

"Attack, Hongxiu!" exclaimed the transformed Deaf Prince when he heard Lu Yun's plan.

In her altered appearance, the servant manifested a snow-white sword and brought it down on the formation. The peerless immortals serving the other five princes joined in, as did Beigong Yu.

Bam!

The concerted attack of seven peerless immortals crashed into the defensive formation, but the defense set up by the ancient dragons didn't waver at all.

"Who dares attack the North Sea Palace?!" A voice hectorated from the palace before a human face manifested on the light barrier of the formation. It was Beigong Chonglou, staying behind to command the court; the attack on the formation had alerted him immediately.

Since it'd been an attack from mere peerless immortals, however, he was furious, but not worried.

Bam!

A beam of sword energy slammed into his face as soon as it emerged, causing a slight ripple.

"That bastard has such thick skin that I can't break it!" Lin Yan cursed as green sword energy flashed from his hand.

"Bastards! How dare mere human cultivators stir up trouble in the North Sea Palace?!" Beigong Chonglou raged when he got a good look at the intruders.

"Hehehe, we wasted quite a bit of resources on Levitating Island. Although it's been destroyed, you disgusting worms are the real culprits here. We aren't going to miss the chance to get back at you, are we now?" Bai Qi cackled and conjured up waste matter to smear all over the light barrier. They were underwater and surrounded by water, but he somehow managed to make the feces and urine from unknown creatures stick to the formation.

"You court death!!" Beigong Chonglou snarled in response. "Guards, take down these human clowns!"

Bam!

The formation opened up to permit a group of monster spirits in black armor to march out.

"You call that an army? You shouldn't have left the safety of your turtle shell." A cold glint flashed through Hongxiu's face. Her sword morphed into eighteen strands of kaleidoscopic energy and arced at the army of a thousand august immortals.

Their blood turned the seawater red, the soldiers dead before they could even get into formation.

"North Sea bottom feeders, you'd better stay put, if you know what's good for you." Lu Yun leered viciously, his tone dripping with malice. "Once we have our fun, we'll leave. If you dare send any more people out, though, we'll kill as many who come."

Chapter 323: Worms

Lu Yun was obviously provoking them on purpose, but the first prince of the North Sea court, heir to the North Sea emperor, was no fool. Cheap taunts weren't going to get him to fling open the gates and rush out.

Therefore, the degenerate alliance were left to vandalize the front entrance of the palace while muttering curses under their breath.

The light barrier was now covered in all sorts of bodily waste and painted with derogatory language, completely defacing the grand structure's entrance. Lu Yun had even fetched a plaque from somewhere, roughly fifty meters long, that said 'North Sea, Home of Worms' in squiggly characters.

Amidst a din of raucous cheers from the princes, the plaque was firmly nailed to the barrier of light at the front entrance, covering the sign that read 'North Sea Palace'.

The commotion had drawn quite a crowd. Some onlookers were monster spirits who'd just transformed into human form, while others hadn't yet reached the cultivation heights that would enable them to transform.

There were many creatures in the ocean. On land, ordinary cultivators weren't allowed to approach the palaces of the heavenly courts, but within the ocean, such prohibitions didn't exist. Therefore, news of this public display spread quickly, reaching almost everyone in the imperial seas in no time at all. The North Sea court swiftly became the butt of every joke in its territory.

Those under the court's rule weren't the only ones in the imperial seas at the moment. There were even more cultivators from other regions in the world who'd come to partake in the happenings, since they weren't powerful enough to enter the skydragon tomb.

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"Ughhhh, enough!" Beigong Chonglou stomped his feet angrily, shaking with anger and glaring so hard at the princes outside that his eyeballs threatened to pop out of his skull.

"Bunch of little bastards," he screamed, apoplectic. "I'm going to tear them all into pieces!!"

"You mustn't take the bait, Your Royal Highness," hurried out an elder with a turtle shell on his back. "They're clearly up to something. If we open up the formation, high-level immortals in hiding will surely strike!"

"Does our court not care about its reputation then?!" Beigong Chonglou huffed into calm fury. "If we do nothing when someone humiliates us on our doorstep, how are we to maintain our dominance in the world of immortals? How are we to rule over the vast North Sea? How are we to govern all of the immortal seas in the future?"

"I would suffer it if it were just me, but they're challenging the authority of the North Sea court itself! If we offer no response, our court will lose the respect of the monster spirits, even if royal father acquires great treasures from the tomb."

With a wave of his hand, Beigong Chonglou displayed the situation in the vicinity to everyone.

North Sea monster spirits and foreign cultivators alike were watching the farce play out with obvious delight. Clearly, they were here to see the ruling body humiliated.

Many still recalled the dragons from ten thousand years ago, and knew the current court for its illegitimacy. The old turtle broke out in a cold sweat, thinking this is a deviously vicious plan! The North Sea court would suffer a serious blow no matter what their response was.

Lu Yun and his cohort had humiliated the ruling clan much worse than when Aoxue had humiliated the Qing Clan by blockading their home's entrance.

It'd be one thing if the antagonists were dao immortals—acting like this would actually only make a fool out of themselves and discard their dignity. Beigong Chonglou could just ignore them, if that were the case.

However, these were juniors that hadn't even ascended to immortality and were guarded by just a few peerless immortals. If the North Sea court didn't mount an appropriate response, they'd become the court jester for the rest of the entire world.

"Use the clan treasure!" Beigong Chonglou ordered with a clenched jaw. "We can't allow these squealing brats to keep this up, and we mustn't give those experts in hiding any chance at an opening.

"Kill them all with our supreme treasure before anyone can react! Please, seniors!" Beigong Chonglou took a deep breath and bowed at the air.

"Do not worry, Your Royal Highness," boomed a bright voice. "None can survive the ultimate treasure of the blackwater snake clan."

Beigong Chonglou inclined his head and got to his feet. "Prepare the army, Admiral Turtle. Let us meet these irreverent youths and see just who they are!"

His handsome face still bore hints of being sickly pale, as he hadn't yet fully recovered from having been possessed by an immortal ghost, but he had to put in an appearance now.

It was no surprise that the palace would be challenged after the skydragon tomb emerged, but he didn't expect the intruders to be so shameless. It seemed as if they would stop at nothing to undermine the court!

He would leave the palace as a means to test them.

Rumble!

The barrier outside the palace trembled, and the waste matter and offensive words slowly disappeared. However, the plaque Lu Yun had attached to the barrier remained.

North Sea, Home of Worms.

"Bastard!" Beigong Chonglou's lungs hurt from the sheer force of his fury. The pejorative would stick to the North Sea court for a very long time. "Activate the formation!!"

"Uh-oh, the little worms are angry." Lu Yun's expression darkened when he saw Beigong Chonglou setting foot outside the palace. He stepped forward and stopped the six princes from launching any reckless actions.

They couldn't control their emotions when faced with the first prince. Once they started speaking, they'd alert the crown prince as to the true state of things, rendering their plans useless.

With a casual gesture, Lu Yun calmed the six of them down with tranquility talismans.

"Time to go!" he snickered. "The first prince of the worms has shown his face. Those little reptiles must really be angry. Let's go, let's go!"

He manifested a large, black fortress ship with a wave of his hand; it took the group in and cut through the water, quickly vanishing beyond the horizon.

The three dao immortals hiding behind the formation had planned to kill all of them the moment the formation opened. Thus, they'd circulated their inner energy to the limit, ready to unleash it on a

moment's notice. Abruptly having no targets to spring at had made them almost choke on sea water, and their frustration nearly spontaneously ignited.

"Bastards, bastards!!" Beigong Chonglou's face flushed beet red.

The formation had cracked open, yet the large plaque remained stubbornly nailed to it, and in fact, was slowly becoming a part of the light barrier

That little band of human cultivators had disappeared without a trace, further convincing Beigong Chonglou that they only had peerless immortals by their sides. There were no further powerful experts around; they'd simply come to make a nuisance of themselves!

Heat burst from his chest as the prince threw up a mouthful of blood. He hadn't yet made a full recovery from his previous injuries, and now his swell of fury almost caused a cultivation deviation, to boot!

"Guards, pass down my order and scour the North Sea! Even if we have to turn the imperial seas upside down, we must catch those worms!" he growled as he coughed out blood. Then he realized what he'd just said. Worms...

He threw up another mouthful of blood.

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"Hahaha! Damn, that felt good!" Feng Ruyu, third prince of the Unmeant Sea, burst into hearty laughter, but his eyes were mirthless and filled with terrifying killing intent. He was a dragon, of a mutated breed called demon dragons.

In the ancient times, demon dragons were the most powerful warriors among the dragon race. Unrivaled in brutality and destruction, they became demon skydragons upon breaking through the dao immortal realm, one of the mightiest fighters among their kind.

"What do we do next? Go back now and kill them all?" He could barely keep his murderous intent in check, his struggle made evident by the veins popping out on his forehead.

Lu Yun slapped another tranquility talisman on him.

"There's no rush." The human shook his head. "Beigong Chonglou is a cautious person. He must've made some preparations before he dared leave the palace. Let's hang him out to dry for a few days. Once things settle down, we'll go back and kick things around again."

The others nodded.

The palace was the heart of the North Sea court, after all. Although the elites of the North Sea had all departed the area, the alliance of troublemakers still wasn't powerful enough to destroy the palace.

"Senior brother Lu is right. Three aether dao immortals were hiding behind the formation just now, preparing to activate their clan treasure." Li Yan's eyes glowed with a green sheen. He was a pureblooded human, but his eyes set him apart from the rest of his kind. He could see things as what they were. The others hadn't been able to see the three dao immortals, but he had.

Of course, he had to ascend to immortality before he could tap into the full power of his eyes.

His statement sent a shudder down everyone's spine. If the three dao immortals had attacked them with the North Sea clan treasure, they would've been easily decimated. Even Xue Daozi would be a pile of ashes by now.

"Our withdrawal will relax Beigong Chonglou's guard," Lu Yun reminded them. "The next time the formation opens, we'll rush in immediately. I've locked onto his aura, so he won't be able to get away from us."

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The North Sea searched every nook and cranny for the troublemakers, all of the imperial sea on the move. Countless soldiers and marine creatures wandered around, looking for Lu Yun and his companions; the North Sea court had issued a bounty for their heads.

The youths, however, were journeying across the ocean and its islands and having the time of their lives, free of any concerns. Lu Yun had made another batch of shapeshifting talismans to transform everyone. Even if a search party found them, no one wouldn't recognize them.

Meanwhile, the youth kept tabs on the skydragon tomb through regular reports from Canghai Chengkong.

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Three days passed, and the monster spirits searching for Lu Yun and the others grew complacent. That was when the delinquent youths made their return.

"Yoo-hoo, worms of the Home of Worms, we've come to visit again!" It was Qing Han who threw down the gauntlet this time.

Chapter 324: A Great Uproar in the North Sea Palace

Given the choice, Qing Han wasn't the sort to attract attention to himself. When Lu Yun and the rest had been stirring up a storm, he was calmly observing from the sidelines without joining in.

But this time, Lu Yun was determined to make his friend put himself out there.

Ever since Qing Han learned the truth about the poison plaguing him, dark emotions had been accumulating in his heart. Without a way to vent this negative mix, he would probably die from the poison before Lu Yun could fix the antidote.

Qing Han might look resolute on the surface, but he was in fact very fragile deep down. He also knew Lu Yun was doing this for his own good, so he took a position at the forefront and imitated Lu Yun's tone, jeering at the palace.

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"What? How dare they have the nerve to come back?!" In the midst of tending to his wounds, Beigong Chonglou shook when he heard Qing Han's voice.

Over the past three days, the monster court had mobilized all available manpower in the North Sea. Monster soldiers, ordinary monster spirits, and spirits who'd yet to transform into human form... even the most mundane wandering creatures had become the court's eyes and ears.

They'd turned the entire seabed around the capital upside down, but still couldn't find the beginning of a clue about the group's whereabouts. Subsequently, they'd enlarged the scope of their search to outside the imperial seas, but still to no avail.

Beigong Chonglou had been almost entirely certain those weak cultivators had realized they were in over their heads and left the North Sea.

...but then they'd come back!

What gives them the courage to do so?!

"Admiral Turtle, deactivate the formation and slaughter them all!" Without any hesitation whatsoever, he promptly decided on committing to a sortie this time and ordered the peerless immortal admiral to charge out with his men.

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"Here they come, get ready!" The instant before the formation was disarmed, Lu Yun stuck several talismans on those around him.

Hum...

As soon as the formation opened, the illusory image of an enormous sea beast appeared in the sky, baring its fangs as it threw itself in their direction. This was a battle formation assembled by the monster spirit soldiers.

Last time, Hongxiu had destroyed a similar battle formation before it'd even taken shape, cutting right through it like a hot knife through butter. So this time around, the thousand soldiers had waited for it to be completed before sallying forth.

"Eh? Where are they?" Standing on the head of the incorporeal sea beast, Admiral Turtle's green bean-sized eyes blinked in astonishment.

The human cultivators had been swaggering about right over there just a second ago, but now they were nowhere in sight. They'd all vanished into thin air from right beneath his nose, just like that!

"Did they run off again? How do they do that?" Admiral Turtle rubbed his eyes fiercely, then scanned the sea region with his formidable consciousness. He couldn't find their trail at all, as if they'd never existed in the first place.

"Loathsome punks, how dare you show such irreverence to this admiral! Men, keep searching, you will locate these human cultivators no matter what!" he raged, kicking up a fuss.

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Meanwhile, Lu Yun and his companions had shrunk to the size of dust motes, quickly making their way past the formation's barrier of light and infiltrating the monster palace.

Death art: Size Manipulation!

Thanks to Xuanxi's assistance, Lu Yun could now imbue his death arts into talismans. That would've been impossible with her former talisman proficiency, but after becoming Lu Yun's envoy, her talent had been strengthened day after day by the Tome of Life and Death.

She'd been a talisman grandmaster in the first place, one who could conjure talismans out of nothing. And prior her death, she'd been fully invested in researching how to integrate combat arts with talismans.

Now, by borrowing power from the Tome of Life and Death, she'd finally achieved this magnificent feat. Both the previous shapeshifting talisman and the present size-altering talismans were her masterpieces.

Naturally, Xuanxi grasping this ability also meant that Lu Yun acquired this power. On top of shapeshifting and size-altering, the governor had also infused his other death arts into talismans, but those arts were too heaven-defying to so easily expose.

"We're in, we're really in!" All the dust-mote troublemakers were visibly excited.

"Keep it down!" Lu Yun jumped in fright when he heard their voices and hastily transmitted, "My talismans can hide us from ordinary immortals, but not from a dao immortal's consciousness!"

Ordinary immortals couldn't perceive the specks of dust floating in the water, but such a feat would be effortless for a dao immortal's tremendous consciousness. Of course, those immortals weren't so idle that they'd scan the water with their consciousness all day long; that is, as long as this bunch of fools made sure not to attract their attention.

Hearing his warning, the youngsters immediately shut their mouths.

Convinced that Lu Yun and the rest had run away, the monsters were conducting another fruitless search in the imperial sea. Not for a second could they imagine that the group had already slipped inside the palace.

If he'd tried the same size-altering strategy the first time around, without establishing a pattern of behavior, the palace probably would've been on high alert and already spotted them.

"What do we do now? Kill Beigong Chonglou?" The usually loud Deaf Prince asked carefully via voice transmission.

"Kill Beigong Chonglou? No, his death would raise the alarm. They'll activate all the restrictions and boundaries here, and it'd be very hard for us to do anything." A smile floated onto Lu Yun's lips. "We're going to the Dragon Palace's treasury!"

Aware of his plans, Aoxue immediately pivoted in the proper direction. Though it was now the North Sea Monster Palace, for Aoxue, it remained the Dragon Palace she'd grown up in.

The blackwater snakes had remodeled the place since then, but most of the buildings and formations had remained roughly the same. These were the legacies left behind by the ancient dragons. To alter them was beyond the current blackwater snake emperor's ability; he also didn't want to alter them in the first place.

“The treasury!” The profligates all lit up at Aoxue’s words. Although each of them was wealthy and possessed a great mountain refined from immortal crystals, one could never have too many riches.

More importantly, the treasury contained not only items from the blackwater snakes and the monster court, but also a sea of artifacts left behind ten thousand years ago by the dragons.

“But raiding the place won’t be that easy.” Thanks to Aoxue’s memories, Lu Yun was aware of the many formations protecting the treasury. Even if he could break them, the moment they failed, the palace’s powerhouses would instantly be alerted.

They were inside the heart of the enemy’s lair. It wasn’t realistic to expect he could swagger in and out unopposed and kill whoever he liked with just the few people by his side.

The blackwater snakes had dethroned the dragons, which was proof they weren’t to be taken lightly. Not to mention, what they faced wasn’t just one blackwater snake or two. The palace was well-protected by the entire North Sea’s monster tribe.

Without delay, Lu Yun furtively released the Scaled-Dragon King. Along with Beigong Yu, the two of them disappeared without a sound. “Xiaoxiao, go support Beigong Yu and the Scaled-Dragon King. Use poison if they start losing ground!”

“Understood!” Su Xiaoxiao slowly drifted apart from the main group and disappeared together with Beigong Yu and the Scaled-Dragon King.

“Hehe, there’s a legend on Earth about the Monkey King wreaking havoc in the celestial palace.... Let me have a go at turning the monster palace upside down!” A wide grin spread across Lu Yun’s face.

The palace treasury lay right in front of him. surrounded by innumerable formations of every kind. Killing formations, traps, ambushes, illusions... he counted one hundred and eight formations making up a single whole.

The hundred and eight interlinked formations all complemented each other, whether attacking or defending, and setting off one of them would cause a widespread domino effect. Furthermore, even more formations waited behind them, sealing off the entire space around the treasury.

Just like the treasures inside, the ensemble composed by the hundred and eight formations was also a legacy from the ancient dragons.

Patrols traveled the paths around the treasury, each soldier a golden immortal at a minimum. There were even arcane immortals thrown into the mix. Using golden immortals as mere soldiers to protect the place clearly demonstrated this location’s importance to the monster court.

“Get ready. Once we break through the formations, I need you six peerless immortals to start killing!” Lu Yun transmitted his voice to Hongxiu and the others after taking a deep breath.

The six profligates inclined their heads. They had some misgivings, but they didn’t object. Meanwhile, their eyes burned brightly with excitement as they stared at the treasury.

Boom!

Boom!!

BOOM!!

Three massive detonations rang throughout the entire palace as three halls exploded toward the sky.

“Enemy attack! We’re under enemy attack!”

“Deploy full emergency measures!” The peaceful palace boiled over into action like a beast startled awake from its slumber.

One after another, formations and prohibitions began glowing. A forbidding aura soon permeated the enormous palace hall, and blood-curling war cries bounced off the walls.

However, the intruders seemed very familiar with the place. Before the monster immortals could even sniff out a trail, more palace halls detonated with a vengeance.

Following that, an army poured down from the heavens like a flood and immediately assembled into a fearsome battle formation. A battle image coalescing in the sky, Gonggong’s giant avatar started rampaging through the monster palace, engulfing it in utter chaos.

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“Attack!” Lu Yun quietly commanded.

Aoxue made several consecutive hand seals, shaking the formations in front of the treasury before they dramatically broke apart. Meanwhile, the treasury’s heavy gates slowly creaked open.

“What’s going on?” The palace’s defenders blanched. Why had the formations disappeared at this crucial moment?!

Before they could react, six beams of sword light shot out of the void and erupted in a series of mighty combat arts that butchered them all. The combined ambush from the six profligates’ peerless immortal bodyguards had left those golden immortals no opportunity to strike back.

“Charge into the treasury! We’re short on time, so take whatever you see!” Lu Yun took the lead and dragged the still dumbfounded Qing Han along as he charged inside.

Whooping with excitement, the six profligates followed closely behind.

“Wait, someone’s raiding the treasury!” some monster immortals cried out in alarm when they realized what was going on. Flinging caution to the winds, they rushed at the vault in an attempt to close the gates.

Hum...

The fabric of space twitched; endless mountains of corpses and a boundless sea of blood slowly came into view. Diexi had gone into action. Although she’d become a true, living creature, she still retained the talents of a zombie king. Any place her gaze rested on could morph into a scene of carnage.

Caught in this world of blood and corpses, the monster immortals racing in their direction... started massacring each other.

Chapter 325: Replica of the Monster Spirit Emperor

Embroiled in a hell of endless corpses and blood, monster immortals whose cultivation was lower than Dixi's, or who lacked unique protection methods or treasures, quickly lost themselves.

Meanwhile, Lu Yun and the rest rushed into the treasury.

The treasury of the Dragon Palace was a sizable minor world, not unlike the paradises and blessed lands in Xiankan. A great variety of exotic treasures, crystals, and ores littered the ground, surrounded by layers of defensive formations.

Nevertheless, most of the defensive mechanisms had been left by the ancient dragons. The formations and restrictions might as well not exist before Aoxue and Lu Yun.

Hands moving swiftly from seal to seal, Aoxue swiftly broke apart the draconic formations and restrictions, while Lu Yun tore down the formations set up by the monster spirit formation masters with the light of the Formation Orb.

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"Take everything, take all of it. Leave nothing behind!" The Deaf Prince removed the size manipulation talisman stuck to him and took out his World Chest. Great power surged from the treasure, sucking in everything around him with tremendous suction force.

The other troublemakers took out their World Chests as well and devoured the wealth around them, taking everything in sight. They didn't even have time to check what they'd taken.

Lu Yun, Qing Han, and Aoxue didn't linger in the outer vault.

There were a great number of treasures there, but the crystals, minerals, herbs, and spirit roots were nothing to write home about. A figure could still be put upon their value; it was just that there were so many of them that losing them all in one fell swoop would greatly hurt.

What Lu Yun wanted were the real, irreplaceable treasures deep within the vault.

The six troublemakers could guess at his plan, so they didn't follow him into the inner vault. The treasures outside were nothing special, but they were a great fortune in the outside world. That was enough for them.

A gleaming bronze door stood between them and the inner vault, covered in reliefs of dragon patterns and radiating an ancient, desolate energy.

"Dammit, those blackwater worms have opened this vault already!" Aoxue's expression darkened when she saw the door's condition.

"Even better," murmured Lu Yun. "The treasures inside might not be of any use to them, but they'll certainly have added their own valuables—treasures accumulated by the North Sea monster spirits over tens of thousands of years!"

This inner vault was the safest of all places in the North Sea. If the monster spirits possessed any particularly valuable treasures, they'd surely be stored here. If it weren't for Aoxue, the former princess of the North Sea dragons, being with the group, no one else would've been able to open the vault.

“Open!” Her hands quickly fluttered through eighteen hundred hand seals, commanding an answering rumble from the door.

“Wait, the restriction on the door has been changed!” Her face paled and a rivulet of blood streamed down the corner of her mouth. The door was guarded by a restriction, rather than a formation, and the North Sea Court had adjusted it, hurting Aoxue with the backlash.

“Die, remnants of the previous dynasty!” exclaimed a furious voice as a giant palm struck at Aoxue from overhead, bearing down with the power of an arcane dao immortal.

“The North Sea Emperor!” Lu Yun tensed at the sight.

Hum.

Next to him, Qing Han released a bolt of sparkling, cosmic light that brimmed with vitality to scatter the dao immortal’s aura.

Dong!

The sonorous tolling of a bell shattered the large hand. External appearance transformed, Xue Daozi walked out from thin air with the Arcane Golden Bell.

“It’s his replica!” He stared fixedly at a point in the air, pushing the bell in his hands to its limit.

Qing Han’s face was slightly pale and he grimaced in pain. Lu Yun reached out and stuck about five hundred healing talismans on him.

“How dare you betray Us, Xue Daozi?! You are an inconceivable disappointment!” The man had been transformed by Lu Yun’s shapeshifting talisman, but the North Sea emperor knew him too well. He’d personally guided Xue Daozi and set him on the path of dao immortality, making him the elite of the North Sea that he was.

Merely changing appearances wouldn’t fool the arcane dao immortal emperor.

Arcane Golden Bell in hand, Xue Daozi sneered derisively. “Betray you? If you hadn’t taken my opportunity from me in the first place, Beigong Xuan, I would’ve become an arcane dao immortal long ago, and I wouldn’t be your subject!”

Once he became Lu Yun’s infernum, all of his loyalty to the North Sea Court vanished. The fantastic opportunity he’d served to the emperor on a silver platter was the one thing he regretted the most in his life.

“Cut the crap,” Lu Yun transmitted. “Destroy that replica!”

“Kill!”

Dong!

Xue Daozi wasn’t in the mood for more chit-chat anyway. The bell in his hand rang again, summoning a golden whale that rushed at the North Sea Emperor’s image.

“The Arcane Golden Bell! You’re under the banner of the Qing Clan of Nephrite Major!” The emperor's face clouded over at the sight.

The bell was a dao immortal treasure that the Qing ancestor had refined himself. Xue Daozi couldn't have tapped into its full power without the clan's permission.

Meanwhile, the bell falling into Lu Yun's hand was so humiliating that the Qing Clan hadn't mentioned the happening to outsiders. Besides, who would believe that someone else could refine the bloodline power the Qing ancestor had left in the treasure?

The North Sea emperor roared angrily as he manifested a gargantuan snake that coiled around itself in the air.

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“Beigong Yu and the Scaled-Dragon King! How dare you two bastards betray the North Sea?! I'll exterminate your clans!!” Beigong Chonglou was fighting the two monster kings with his army.

The hundred thousand soldiers under the scaled-dragon's command had formed the Gonggong formation and were wreaking havoc in the palace, while Beigong Yu assisted them with five thousand soldiers he'd handpicked from the Infernum in hell.

Neither of them had bothered disguising themselves, and Beigong Chonglou was so furious that he didn't stop and think why the supposedly dead kumpeng and scaled-dragon would show up to sow this chaos.

This must be a coup!

“Did they fake their deaths and use Lu Yun to break away from the North Sea, clearing their way to strike now?” one of the remaining dao immortals in the palace said, facing off against the Gonggong manifestation.

The formation itself was unrivalled in power; it'd built its reputation in the North Sea thousands of years ago, and it could stand toe-to-toe with an aether dao immortal.

“Dammit, the treasury!” Two other dao immortals had been hiding in thin air, biding their time to strike, but they suddenly received a message from their emperor.

“Ignore these traitors and go to the treasury with the clan treasure!” snarled one of the immortals.

“You're not going anywhere,” a lilting voice sounded in the dao immortal's ear. “You've been using the Poison Wheel and Poison Fiend all wrong, little poison crocodile. Watch and learn.”

Screech!

A piercing scream of anguish rang in the air as a dark green Poison Fiend lunged at the dao immortal.

Chapter 326: Divine Seaward Iron

“A Poison Fiend! And why's it such a powerful one?!” the dao immortal screamed in abject terror as the fiend's potent poison assaulted his body, his end looming as dark green blood oozed out of all of his orifices. Even the surrounding waters became a pond of poison.

Nine dark gold dao fruits bust out of his body in flashes of aureate light, making a desperate escape.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Three of them exploded, due to the poison's corruption, while the remaining six simply faded away after a violent tremor.

A dao immortal's nascent spirit was entrusted to the confines of their dao fruit. As long as their dao fruit remained, the immortal's spirit would as well. Even if their body died, they could just manifest a new one.

With three of the dao fruit destroyed, though, the peak aether dao immortal's cultivation had instantly dropped several minor realms. It wouldn't be difficult to continue cultivating, but it would be next to impossible for him to pick another dao fruit.

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"Pity. He fled faster than a rabbit." Su Xiaoxiao emerged and cast a regretful look at the monster spirit.

The aether dao immortal had been far more cautious than Xue Daozi. Even though the escaped quarry was a renowned elite in the North Sea, one who'd enjoyed his reputation for a long time, he'd abandoned his body and made a speedy escape as soon as he felt the situation take a turn for the worse.

Still, Su Xiaoxiao had only been a golden immortal in the ancient times, and was only a peerless immortal now. It was a great enough feat for her to successfully ambush a dao immortal.

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"A Poison Fiend!" Seeing a Poison Fiend by Su Xiaoxiao's side alarmed the two remaining dao immortals and the peerless immortals.

"Are you from the Five Poisons Sect of Mist Land?" Sweat broke out on their brows and became part of the sea water.

The Five Poisons Sect of Mist Land was the greatest poison sect in the world of immortals. Lu Yun's Infernum, Lü Guhong, was a disciple of the sect.

"The Five Poisons Sect? I suppose. Stay here and don't go anywhere, or I'll have the Poison Fiend detonate itself and destroy this palace," Su Xiaoxiao giggled. "As you can see, my Poison Fiend can destroy even aether dao fruits. You two may be able to escape, but all your lesser soldiers will be killed."

The two dao immortals exchanged a look and shook their heads in unison. Great power gathered in them as they enveloped their bodies with inner energy, isolating themselves from the poison outside.

They kept fixed stares on Su Xiaoxiao. As soon as she showed even the barest hint of an opening, they would launch a powerful, lightning-fast blow and strike down the charming, but unnaturally terrifying girl.

Su Xiaoxiao wasn't as relaxed as she pretended to be, either. She was a capable fighter, but she was far from the two peak aether dao immortals' level. Her real expertise lay in poison, rather than head-on fights. Crippling a dao immortal in a sneak attack was the most she could do.

They were locked in a stalemate, and neither party dared make a reckless move.

"Now, where did I put my Far-Reaching Captivating Fragrance?" Su Xiaoxiao diverted some attention to rummaging around in her seed storage. She might seem conscientious and meticulous, but her seed storage was a mess of ingredients, poisons, and medicines, all mixed up together. Even she didn't remember where she'd stored the poison she wanted.

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Outside the inner vault of the palace treasury.

Xue Daozi was losing ground against the replica of the North Sea emperor, despite the Qing clan treasure he wielded.

"You've hidden your true power deep, Beigong Xuan!" Xue Daozi yelled disbelievingly when the emperor shattered the soundwaves of the golden bell with a palm strike and flung him backward. "You're an arcane dao immortal who's plucked nine dao fruit!"

The world believed that the North Sea emperor was an arcane dao immortal who'd only plucked eight dao fruit, putting him a touch below the greatest elites of the peak clans. Only now did Xue Daozi realize, to his chagrin, that the emperor also possessed nine dao fruit and was second only to the nine celestial emperors!

The emperor had refined one of his dao fruit into a replica so that he could maintain the appearance of an eight-fruit arcane dao immortal, concealing his true level of power.

The replica, being the manifestation of a dao fruit, was an arcane dao immortal. Although Xue Daozi was only a step away from ascending to the arcane dao realm, the difference between the two realms were night and day.

The replica was in an entirely different league. If Xue Daozi hadn't been wielding the Arcane Golden Bell, or wasn't able to tap into its full power, the replica would've killed him with a simple slap upon their initial engagement.

"We have you to thank for the Scarlet Arcane Fruit three thousand years ago. That helped Us with Our final step." The North Sea emperor smiled faintly.

A Scarlet Arcane Fruit could not only help peak aether dao immortals break through, but it could also deepen an arcane dao immortal's understanding and increase their chances of successfully obtaining dao fruits. It was incredibly valuable and had been priceless even in the ancient times.

Three thousand years ago, Xue Daozi had discovered a Scarlet Arcane Fruit in a secret realm in the North Sea. Once the news got out, the emperor asked for it to be presented to him.

As a subject of his emperor's will, Xue Daozi had naturally offered the fruit to his liege. Keeping further developments to himself, the emperor then plucked his ninth arcane dao fruit and refined it into a replica to defend the inner vault.

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“We trusted you so much, Xue Daozi. You are such an incredible disappointment!” the emperor’s tone gained an edge as he noted Xue Daozi’s expression. He’d been reluctant to reveal the replica, but all three of the dao immortals stationed in the palace were trapped. He had no choice but to tap into the replica’s full power to defend his position.

With a hand seal from both hands, he gathered dark energy in his hands.

“Dammit, he’s summoning the clan treasure of the blackwater snakes!” Xue Daozi panicked.

Roar!

A tremendous dragon howl rang throughout the palace. A claw sparkling faint silver starlight slashed at the replica.

“Blasted remnant of the North Sea dragons!” snarled the emperor. He manifested a black iron staff and viciously struck at the glowing dragon claw.

“The Divine Seaward Iron!!” Empress Myrtlestar shouted with a start within the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.

Chapter 327.1: Not Even A Hair Left

The Divine Seaward Iron!

Ancient immortal emperors had once used this peerless treasure to pacify the four seas and subdue the dragon clans. Never in her wildest dreams had Empress Myrtlestar imagined it would be in the hands of the North Sea emperor!

Awooo!

A dragon roar of anguish traveled forth. Hidden in the void, a black dragon carpeted in silver cosmic radiance suddenly fell out of the air and was sent flying. One of its foreclaws and a smaller half of his body were ground into meat paste by the black iron rod.

It was the black dragonguard from the abyss beneath Myriad Formation Summit!

He’d been a peak peerless immortal to begin with, and after being strengthened by one of Qing Han’s starstones, he was as strong as an aether dao immortal. But when facing the monster spirit emperor and the Divine Seaward Iron, even an aether dao immortal had collapsed from a single blow.

However, a sphere of blue light erupted violently from the emperor after this attack, and his figure turned somewhat transparent.

“This replica of his is still flawed. It’s not perfect, so it can’t fight for long. Let’s beat the shit out of him!” Qing Han realized the truth of their opponent when he took stock of the situation.

Hum...

In the next moment, dazzling silver starlight burst around him and his black topknot scattered into a mess of long hair across his shoulders, slowly turning silver.

Two silver stars appeared at his side.

Roar!

Silver starlight once again ensconced the black dragonguard, restoring its broken body and claws at a speed visible to the naked eye. Soon thereafter, its giant frame pounced fearlessly at the monster emperor.

Coming to his senses, Xue Daozi brandished the Arcane Golden Bell, threw all reservations to the wind, and deployed the dao-grade weapon in a ferocious strike at the emperor's replica.

Caught between the forces, the entire treasury began to shake.

The entire North Sea Palace was now lit up by the activation of countless formations and prohibitions, and various halls had been sealed off. Innumerable soldiers had gathered outside the treasury's doors, preparing to mount a frenzied charge at the outer vault.

Su Xiaoxiao had crippled one of the great dao immortals and held up the other two, preventing the palace's greatest firepower from rushing to the treasury.

However, the palace was the heart of the monster court. Its many concealed spaces held close to ten million soldiers, as well as quite a few peerless immortal monster kings who hadn't left for the skydragon tomb.

Upon receiving their emperor's commands, the monster kings exited their hidden locales, leading their men in a frantic rush to the treasury to tear apart the presumptuous intruders.

But there was a scourge standing in their way at the entrance: Zombie King Diexi!

She'd shed the body of a zombie king, but had become even more terrifying in the process. A single glance of hers could summon endless mountains of corpses and oceans of blood to trap the monster spirit troops and compel them to kill each other.

Although the illusion didn't affect the peerless immortal monster kings, they couldn't simply force their way inside, either.

Celestial Mistfield Banners!

The eighteen zombified banners had been conquered by Diexi and were now deployed into a defensive formation, sealing off the area with a scarlet mist. There were eighteen monster kings present at the scene, but even they couldn't dent the banners' defenses.

Hong Xiu and the other five peerless immortals had also arrived near the treasury's gates and reinforced the banners with their strength so that Diexi could operate the scarlet formation at full strength.

Lu Yun hadn't deployed the Great Formation of Heavenly Fiends, or called upon the Formation Orb. Since he was here in disguise, he couldn't let anyone discover that the ruler of Dusk Province was at the heart of all this turmoil.

The current Dusk Province was far too weak to bear the North Sea Monsters' crazed reprisals after the dust settled on their actions here.

As the soldiers outside attempted to batter their way in, the monster emperor's replica grew increasingly frantic outside the inner vault. Indeed, his replica wasn't flawless; because of certain defects, he couldn't battle for long.

As time went on, his aura waned, in stark contrast to the increasingly formidable power radiating from the Divine Seaward Iron. By now, his figure had become half transparent, so much so that Lu Yun's current visual sensitivity could discern a bluish-black arcane dao fruit inside the emperor's figure.

"Out of the way!!" the youth suddenly shouted.

Xue Daozi shuddered and vanished immediately, returning inside the Gates of the Abyss, while the black dragoon turned into a streak starlight and shot inside the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.

Boom!

A white pillar of light exploded in front of Lu Yun and shot straight at the emperor's replica.

"An immortal weapon of war!! How is this possible!!" Gaping in shock, the emperor shrieked painfully.

An immortal weapon of war!

Other than the nine celestial emperors, or enormous treasures like the skeletal ship, even the ancestors of the greatest noble houses and peak arcane dao immortal powerhouses would suffer heavy damage from the blast.

Feinie and Huang Qing had jointly created Divine Glory's main cannon by combining their expertise with weapons and formations to emulate the immortal weapons of old. Normally, such weapons were merged with the local earth veins and drew upon the power of the land to attack. However, Divine Glory's main cannon burned immortal crystals instead.

The more crystals the cannon consumed, the greater its might. The previous shot had combusted a full billion premium crystals that Lu Yun had borrowed from the six troublemakers.

The resulting might could only be described as world-destroying. In fact, it was almost beyond the limit of what the cannon could support and the mouth of the weapon was already showing faint signs of melting.

So much energy had simply vaporized the monster emperor's figure. Even the restriction on the bronze gates behind the emperor had been destroyed in that one, powerful blast. The monster spirits had done away with the original restriction controlling the inner value's gates and installed a new one, but its power was a far cry from the one left by the ancient dragons.

When the air cleared, they could see that the explosion had even cracked the gates themselves.

"H-how powerful..." The six profligates paused in the middle of plundering the outer vault and stared in the direction of the inner vault, overwhelmed with shock.

"It's stronger than our crystal mountains.... Mine, at least, certainly can't crush an arcane dao immortal!" Beicang Qing murmured, his eyes wide as he watched the vanishing pillar of light.

“Stop daydreaming.” Jing Dichen’s foot landed on his butt. “Hurry up and empty this place out. Don’t leave a single hair behind!”

“Right, not even a single hair!”

Since the group had changed their appearances early on, there was no need to worry about possible reprisal from their enemies. Without delay, the power of the World Chests in their hands erupted in full force and swept across the treasury.

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A bluish-black arcane dao fruit floated in the air above Lu Yun, shimmering with a misty light. It was the ninth arcane dao fruit of Beigong Xuan, Emperor of the North Sea! His mouth turned dry. Compared to the other baubles, this dao fruit was a real treasure, one that could produce an arcane dao immortal!

Hum...

The Divine Seaward Iron that’d fallen to the ground turned into a streak of black radiance that gathered the dao fruit and tried to shoot out of the treasury.

“Where do you think you’re going!?” an angry challenge reverberated in the air as an azure dragon claw suddenly stretched out from the void. It grabbed the Divine Seaward Iron, along with the arcane dao fruit, then slowly disappeared back to where it’d come from.

The Azure Dragon King had finally acted at this crucial juncture.

.....

Pfft!

In the middle of unraveling an ancient prohibition inside the dim skydragon tomb, the North Sea emperor suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood.

“Bastard!!” he roared in indignation. “Bing Xuan,” he spat out a name, “hurry back to the palace at once and kill those devious rats!”

“Your will be done.” With a jerk, a single-horned man standing at the emperor’s side slowly vanished from view.

The North Sea emperor could sense the events inside the palace through his replica, but everyone else was still in the dark. At the same time, he was reluctant to leave the skydragon tomb in person at this juncture.

Chapter 327.2: Not Even A Hair Left

“Now that his replica’s dead, he’s definitely going to send his experts back here. We have to hurry!” Lu Yun dragged Qing Han with him and slipped into the inner vault through the crack in its gates.

What the... who would’ve thought the principles of the ancient immortal dao would still be complete inside the inner vault!

Though he'd already known what to expect, thanks to Aoxue's memories, he was still flabbergasted by the presence emanating from this ancient site.

Exotic herbs of all kinds, plants, immortal roots, and fruits that existed only in the ancient immortal world... the treasures were simply too many to count. He even saw some spirit roots that Su Xiaoxiao recalled as already having gone extinct in the ancient immortal world.

As for other treasures, there were even more of them: various ancient immortal weapons that couldn't even be assigned a value, exotic treasures, rare ores, and mystical metals.

"Found it!" His gaze landed squarely on the center of the chamber where an osmanthus tree stood, basking in moonlight as white as snow.

The Moon Osmanthus!

Ranked sixth among the ten great connate spirit roots, the Moon Osmanthus was his true goal in visiting the treasury!

Ever since learning the truth behind the vicious poison plaguing Qing Han, he'd been thinking of the Moon Osmanthus. Perhaps he couldn't collect all ten great connate spirit roots, but he knew that the more of them were inside Qing Han, the more his friend's poison would be suppressed.

Qing Han had used the power of his starstone just a moment ago and consumed quite a bit of his vitality in the process, thereby deepening the poison's hold on him. But with the Moon Osmanthus, they could beat it back once again.

"I did not think this tree would be here!" Inside the Scroll of Shepherding Immortal, Empress Myrtlestar was also stunned, then casually erased the nascent spirit mark on the Divine Seaward Iron and re-refined the arcane dao fruit.

"This dao fruit will be barely enough for me to fashion a replica. I'll soon be able to have a look outside. Too bad the lower half of my body's become dead matter inside the Blood Sea," grumbled the Azure Dragon King. He'd restored some of his vitality, thanks to the scroll's power, and could now fight for Qing Han at crucial moments, but he still couldn't break away from the scroll.

"The Blood Sea is clearly someone's plot. The dead creatures inside... they were all born of powerhouses from the ancient era, or even the primordial era," Empress Violet remarked seriously. "It would be wise of you to stop fantasizing about taking back your lower half."

The dragon nodded with resignation.

The primordial era.

According to the timeline of the world, it was the era before the ancient times. Its existence could be vaguely surmised from records unearthed from ancient tombs, but few exact accounts about it could be found.

Even so, as a pinnacle figure of the ancient times, Empress Myrtlestar was no stranger to it. There was no clear-cut divide between the primordial and ancient times, as there was from a hundred thousand years ago when the path of cultivation was severed.

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“Qing Han!” Lu Yun suddenly looked at his friend. “Ask Senior Myrtlestar to activate the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals and gather this ancient site inside!”

“Ah?” Qing Han blinked. “Take the inner vault away with us?”

“Right! We’re already irreconcilable enemies with the North Sea monster spirits anyway, so why should we leave anything behind?” The governor decisively made up his mind. “Senior Myrtlestar should be able to exert some of her powers after obtaining the arcane dao fruit, so it shouldn’t be an issue for her to make off this ancient site!”

He’d first thought of plopping the entire premises inside hell, but the netherworld was a broken world with incomplete laws; the ancient plants would be ruined if they were stored there.

“Very well, you and Qing Han leave this place first.” The empress’s gentle voice reached their ears.

Lu Yun hastily dragged Qing Han along through the half-open door.

Swish—

The next moment, the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals floated out from Qing Han’s figure and transformed into a misty ball of white that encompassed the entire inner vault.

Hum...

Like a painting scroll slowly rolling up, the inner vault quickly shrank, melding with the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.

“This ancient site contains the laws of the ancient immortal dao. It can establish a genuine minor world inside the scroll that will be greatly beneficial for us to recover and cultivate in.” Empress Myrtlestar’s shadow flashed over the scroll.

The Tiger Prince, the Dragon Prince, and the black dragonguard cheered with one voice and slipped inside the small world. As for the Azure Dragon King, he stared mournfully at Empress Myrtlestar, full of resentment. His injuries were too severe for him to even enter that minor world.

When it came to his injuries, there were the ones he’d already collected before meeting Lu Yun, and there were the more recent ones that he’d received during his great battle with the empress.

Boom!

The moment the ancient site left the inner vault, the building that’d been present since the ancient times exploded and collapsed into shattered ruins. Inside the treasury, a white dragon image flashed into existence and howled, its resounding croon spreading through the entire palace, as well as all of the imperial seas.

“No, someone’s laid hands on the dragon vein!” Inside the skydragon tomb, Bing Xuan blanched, suddenly understanding the source of his emperor’s wrath. He’d made his way back to the outskirts of the tomb, but was trapped in a formation. Throwing caution to the wind, he turned into a giant, single-horned rimesnake and barrelled outside without regard for anything.

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Inside the monster palace, the two dao immortals facing Su Xiaoxiao, as well as Beigong Chonglou, immediately went berserk.

“How dare you touch our court’s dragon vein?! Die!” The two dao immortals flew into a rage and recklessly threw themselves at Su Xiaoxiao.

“Aha, there it is! That’s where the Far-Reaching Captivating Fragrance got to! This fragrance can disregard immortal energy, defensive treasures, and protective formations alike!” Su Xiaoxiao beamed so merrily that her eyes bent into two crescent moons. With a gentle wave of her hand, an intoxicating smell spread throughout this section of the palace.

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“This... this is the ancient Dragon Palace’s dragon vein!” Aoxue shrieked. “Sir, take the dragon vein with you, take it with you! You can’t leave it for that blackwater snake filth!”

“Alright!” Without waiting for Lu Yun, a dragon roar suddenly came from the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.

The Azure Dragon King once again extended his claw and grabbed the vein that’d nearly formed itself into a dragon, dragging it inside the scroll.

“I can’t believe we obtained the dragon vein. That’s a massive blow to the very foundations of the North Sea court!” The six profligates’ eyes lit up with excitement. “Loot it, loot it all! Don’t leave even a single strand of hair behind!”

Six World Chests immediately floated aloft and swept away countless treasures like six bottomless tornadoes. However, the treasury was really too vast... Even all six of them together could barely gather one third of it.

“Come out and help me loot!” With a wave of his hand, Lu Yun opened the Gates of the Abyss. Thousands of Infernum and ghostly servants piled out of the netherworld to join the plundering.

All of these immortals, cultivators, and other entities had personally died at Lu Yun’s hands. Sadly, the two dao-grade formations that he’d detonated with the stored lightning from two pill tribulations had only counted him as the indirect cause of those fatalities, so those victims hadn’t been collected as Infernum.

However, his massacre at Cloudwater Township, and those he’d killed in Xiankan’s outer city with the Great Formation of Heavenly Fiends had all resulted in new recruits for his army.

Like a migrating cloud of locusts, his ghostly subordinates made off with everything their eyes landed on. The outer vault was initially protected by prohibitions and formations, but those were connected to the great formation and were easily disabled by Aoxue.

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“N-North Sea, Home of Worms? What in the dark depths is going on here?” Bing Xuan was a renowned powerhouse in the North Sea, with three arcane dao fruits to his name. But even so, dizziness struck him when he returned to the monster palace.

The great defensive formation outside the palace stood as strong as before, but the palace’s interior had become a right mess. Countless buildings had been wrecked, and quite a few areas were completely razed to the ground.

“Open the formation!” he bellowed, livid with rage.

“Lord Bing Xuan is back, hurry and let him in!” Hiding outside the palace gates and avoiding everything going on, Admiral Turtle’s eyes shone at the sight of his savior and he quickly gave the order to open up.

Bing Xuan’s figure blurred, then appeared inside the palace and saw almost ten million soldiers and officers collapsed on the ground, piled up in a small mountain as they snored in deep sleep.

None of the two aether dao immortals, first prince Beigong Chonglou, or the eighteen monster kings were in sight, but Bing Xuan paid scant attention to their absence. Instead, he made a beeline for the treasury.

...and found it completely empty. There wasn’t a scrap of spirit herb, piece of gold coin, or lone jewel rolling across the floor. In the depths of the treasury, the inner vault was now scattered fragments on the ground. The ancient site was a gaping, dark crater!

Pfft—

Bing Xuan wavered and threw up blood. There was truly... not even a strand of hair left.

Chapter 328.1: Divvying Up the Spoils

Tongues wagged all over the North Sea, as certain things couldn’t be kept secret. Countless plankton, regular marine life, and monster spirits that hadn’t yet achieved human form filled the sea waters. Therefore, what happened in the monster spirit palace naturally spread throughout the entirety of the North Sea in only a few days.

The treasury has been raided and the dragon vein seized, and on top of that, Prince Beigong Chonglou had been kidnapped! Not only that, two of the three aether dao immortals defending the palace had been taken as well! The last of the three had lost three aether dao fruit, which plummeted his cultivation to new lows.

It didn’t take much for people to connect the happenings to the trouble that the human cultivators had started trouble at the palace entrance. The famous plaque that read ‘North Sea, Home of Worms’, had been the talk of town for a while.

Arcane dao immortal Bing Xuan communicated with the entire plankton population in the North Sea and attempted to locate the perpetrators with their network, but came up empty handed.

It was as if the interlopers had vanished into thin air! There were absolutely no tracks or traces of any presence or energy left of them in the North Sea.

“Who are they, just who are they?!” Furious growls rang throughout the imperial sea.

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Within a patch of completely isolated space, a door seemed to creak open and a few figures snuck in from the outside.

Thump!

A solidly trussed-up man fell to the ground.

“Who is it?!” Sprawled out on the ground and enjoying doing nothing at all, the little fox jumped up and warily considered the strangers that had barged in.

Whoosh!

Flickers of light flashed across the figures as their shapeshifting talismans deactivated, revealing their true appearances.

The little fox sighed in relief. She hadn’t entered the palace with Lu Yun and the others, but had stayed behind in a special pocket of space that Lu Yun had created with the Formation Orb. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to go, but that his shapeshifting talisman wouldn’t work on her.

Her illusions were unrivalled, but some unique powerhouses could still see through them and she was a marquis who’d been personally appointed by the North Sea emperor, after all. The gig would’ve been up the moment she set foot into the palace.

“Beigong Chonglou? So you guys did it!” The little fox jumped into Qing Han’s arms and fiercely nuzzled the human’s chest.

Qing Han smiled wryly. Though the monster spirit ancestor still called the disguised girl ‘Ugly Thing’, she’d grown increasingly attached to him, much to Lu Yun’s deep-seated irritation.

Knocked unconscious by Su Xiaoxiao’s powerful Far-Reaching Captivating Fragrance, Beichong Chonglou, the two peak aether dao immortals, and eighteen monster kings had been easy pickings.

Barring the prince, Lu Yun had killed them all to convert them into his Infernum. Being the enemy of the six troublemakers, Beigong Chonglou had no right to join the ranks of his ghostly army.

The group had made a close escape moments ago, taking advantage of Bing Xuan being overcome by fury to slip out of the palace with shapeshifting talismans.

“Mmfff hmm hmmp!”

Lu Yun had secured Beigong Chonglou with the Skydragon Tendon, and the Silence Talisman on his mouth prevented him from making any sounds beyond muffled grunts.

The prince’s eyes went wide with fear when he saw his kidnapers for who they really were. Jing Dichen bent down and peeled off the Silence Talisman.

“What do you think you’re doing?!” Beigong Chonglou screamed. “I’m the first prince of the North Sea. If you lay a finger on me, my royal father will hunt you to the ends of the sea!”

“You ate my little sister, Beigong Chonglou.” Jing Dichen’s deep blue eyes hardened. “Therefore, I’m going to eat you.”

“No, no, don’t eat me... I, I...”

The little princess had become an ever-present nightmare in Beigong Chonglou’s mind. He’d been terrified of the retaliation from the Unsullied Sea, but hadn’t expected that their reckoning would come so soon.

“Don’t eat him,” Lu Yun interjected.

“That’s right. That’s so right!” Beigong Chonglou agreed vehemently. “Don’t eat me. I’m the first prince of the North Sea and its future emperor. I can give you all the crystals and treasures in the seas if you just let me go!”

“Crystals? Treasures?” Jing Dichen scoffed. “We’ve emptied your vault. Not even a hair is left in the North Sea treasury.”

Beigong Chonglou’s eyes went round as he cast a pleading look at Lu Yun. Jing Dichen and the other five turned to Lu Yun as well. They knew there was just as much bad blood between him and the North Sea court.

“It would be too merciful to just eat him.” Lu Yun grinned savagely. “I’m going to refine various items soon, and need to offer up souls and flesh in exchange for power. Beigong Chonglou is a peerless immortal. If I sacrifice him....”

“Soul sacrifice!” The six troublemakers shuddered at the mention of this great taboo. Whoever dared attempt that cruel ritual would become an enemy of the entire world of immortals!

A soul sacrifice offered up the flesh and soul of a living being as tribute to a mysterious entity in exchange for power. The victim would undergo endless pain and torment until their soul scattered, forever deprived of the chance to reincarnate.

Back in Yuying’s tomb outside of Dusk City, Lu Yun had almost been sacrificed by the Exalted Immortal Sect. In the end, one of its members had sacrificed the rest of his senior brothers to escape from Yuying.

Lu Yun wanted to refine the Divine Seaward Iron into various treasures and equipment, but neither hellfire nor the three immortal fires could melt the material. Thus, he’d turned to soul sacrifice in a moment of inspiration.

He would use Beigong Chonglou to enhance the power of his fire, melting the Divine Seaward Iron!

“Alright!” the Deaf Prince shouted when he heard Lu Yun’s transmission. “Let’s sacrifice the little bastard!”

The others agreed as well. It would be far too merciful to just eat the prince; sacrificing his soul was the right and proper punishment!

Color drained from Beigong Chonglou’s face, leaving his gaze empty. At this moment, he wouldn’t hesitate for a split second to commit suicide or self-detonate. However, he was bound by the Dragon

Restraints, an ancient treasure that Huangqing had refined from the Skydragon Tendon. It not only restrained his body, but also his consciousness and inner energy.

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Revenge had been well served. Meanwhile, a message came from Dusk Province saying that Pill Fairy Yuying had begun refining a Soul Restoring Pill. A great burden was finally lifted from the hearts of the profligate alliance.

As a result, Beicang Qiong even made the final push and ascended to the perceived void realm, observing the void with his nascent spirit and creating an original void method.

“Time to divvy up the spoils!”

Everyone perked up at those words.

They’d raided the vault of the North Sea court, which housed valuables from the last ten thousand years of monster court rule and seventy thousand years of draconic rule, even going back as far as when the ancient divines were in power!

Their riches now rivaled those of any top faction in the world. Even the nine heavenly courts might pale in comparison.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Lu Yun laid down supreme-grade treasures, assorted valuables, pills, talismans, and completed formation disks.

“Senior brother Lu, you...” The six troublemakers gaped. They hadn’t done anything of substance during this escapade, and thus hadn’t expected Lu Yun to be the first to offer up his gains.

Chapter 328.2: Divvying Up the Spoils

“We’re all brothers here, so let’s skip the formalities.” Lu Yun waved a hand. “I want crystals and materials for pills, treasures, talismans, and formations! I have no use for anything else.”

If the six princes hadn’t previously loaned him billions of crystals, he wouldn’t have been able to so easily deal with the emperor’s replica. At the same time, the replica would’ve kept them all there until Bing Xuan returned, then none of them would’ve escaped.

“Senior brother Lu is right! We’re brothers, so what’s mine is yours!” Hearty laughter broke out.

Their transgression this time was on par with punching a hole in the sky—utterly ludicrous and overboard! The North Sea court would be their enemy until the end of time as a result. If their true identities were ever found out, retribution would descend upon Dusk Province and the six troublemakers’ factions.

The monster spirit court wouldn’t be their only problem; Ingress Island and the Dark North Sword Sect would retaliate as well! They were comrades in arms, their fates closely intertwined.

Setting concerns aside, they moved the premium materials and various crystals from their World Chests to storage treasures and handed them to Lu Yun.

He took their gifts without hesitation and swapped them the other treasures, finished pills, talismans, and formation disks.

“A connate-grade treasure!” Jing Dichen’s expression shifted when she picked up a mirror-like treasure.

There had been no connate-grade treasures in the outer vault; they’d all been stashed in the inner vault.

“Connate-grade treasures are too valuable, senior brother Lu. You....” Flustered, she refused the item, but Lu Yun insisted on giving the six troublemakers seven of the connate-grade treasures.

“I know you all have a World Chest each. With its power, you’ll be able to activate these connate-grade treasures.” He shook his head sternly. “Chaotic times are descending upon the world. All six of you possess special bloodlines, which paints a target on your backs. You’ll need these to defend yourselves!”

“But there’s seven of them....”

“Your little sister is coming back to life soon. Consider this a homecoming gift.” He flashed an easy grin.

Despite that, the profligates still wanted to turn him down, but they couldn’t find a good reason to.

Meanwhile, Beigong Chonglou was on the verge of heartbroken tears. There had been nine connate-grade treasures in the inner vault, which had served as Beigong Xuan’s trump cards. They were meant to form the bulk of the firepower needed to reinforce the court’s dominance when the North Sea conquered all bodies of water in the world.

Who would’ve thought that Lu Yun would rob them clean like this?

“Besides, I still have two more.” Lu Yun displayed a black silk dress with a flourish, as well as a dusky, grey orb. “The dress is for Qing Yu,” he chuckled. “The orb is yours, Qing Han. It’s a treasure for both offense and defense. Use it to protect yourself!”

“Tsk, I thought you’ve forgotten about my sister.” Qing Han happily accepted the treasures and tucked them away.

“Strange,” Lu Yun said hesitantly, cocking his head. “Why do I feel like Qing Yu is always with me?”

Qing Han wisely shut his mouth and avoided further ribbing.

“Wait... a second... the North Sea Court really has been hiding its true capabilities!” Lin Yan exclaimed suddenly. “When it comes to premium immortal crystals, there are more than a trillion of them alone!”

One. trillion. immortal. crystals!

That was a staggering sum of wealth!

Even factions that were known for their wealth, such as the East Sea court or the dragon palaces of the four seas, couldn’t bring out so many crystals all at once.

“Moreover, the treasures and materials we found are far more valuable than the crystals,” Jing Dichen said in a trembling voice. “Dao immortal treasures that can be considered ultimate clan treasures alone amount to more than a hundred....”

Once the thrill of raiding the treasury and exacting revenge had receded, their heads cleared and an overwhelmed buzz set in, instead.

This was too incredible a fortune—one so large that it intimidated them.

Frowning, Lu Yun smacked Tranquility Talismans onto the six troublemakers and their peerless immortal bodyguards, calming them down.

“I have another trillion here. The North Sea court is much more than it seems!” Lu Yun took the storage treasure filled with immortal crystals from Lin Yan, his tone grave. “The North Sea emperor also possessed Divine Seaward Iron. It seems obvious that he would one day send his troops against all four cardinal seas and even move upon the four immortal seas! He is much more ambitious than we reckoned.”

The others nodded and took inventory of what they’d gained, freely handing over what they didn’t want or what their friends needed.

There were many treasures in the North Sea treasury, and the emperor’s replica had personally defended it with Divine Seaward Iron. The place should’ve been impenetrable, even if an immortal emperor were to come in the flesh.

However, court elites had left the palace for the opening of the skydragon tomb—the event was imperative for their future rise to power. Then there was Aoxue, princess of the previous dynasty, and the replica weapon of war in Lu Yun’s possession. Those factors combined had made the raid possible.

“So what’s a little wealth? Why do you look like you’ve brought about the end of the world?” Su Xiaoxiao tittered merrily when she saw the troublemakers’ expressions. “The connate-grade treasures in your hands are priceless items, the value of which can’t be quantified in immortal crystals.”

“Um....” They stared dumbly at her.

“Oh? What’s this?” Eyebrow arched, she picked up a green seed from the pile of treasures on the floor. “It’s the seed of a Violet Orchid Fruit!” She exclaimed and hastily tucked it away.

“Violet Orchid Fruit? The fruit that can be used to brew Violet Orchid Wine?” Lu Yun’s eyes lit up.

This supreme immortal fruit hailed from the ancient times. The liquor of the immortal court at the time had been diluted Violet Orchid Wine. To the envoy’s knowledge, one such fruit could yield six thousand kilograms of Violet Orchid Wine, and a drop of the wine could be diluted to yield six thousand kilograms of imperial liquor!

This immortal wine could reinforce one’s cultivation foundation and strengthen their inner energy. It’d been the most supreme alcoholic libation of the ancient immortal world.

“Can you bring it back to life?” Lu Yun asked hurriedly.

“I can!” A confident smile tugged at her lips. “I’ll have these flowers blooming all over Dusk Province!”

Chapter 329: First Clan of Nephrite Major

Empress Myrtlestar shifted the treasures from the ancient site of the inner vault into a storage treasure and tossed it to Lu Yun, along with the Divine Seaward Iron.

As for the Moon Osmanthus, Qing Han refined it with Empress Myrtlestar's help.

After a brief moment of solemnity, the six troublemakers began dividing their spoils with renewed glee and chatter. Thanks to the doting care of their factions, they were almost lackadaisical in nature, despite their precious bloodlines.

The six of them and their peerless immortal followers had truly made out like, well, bandits this time.

Even the little fox, who'd abstained from the raid and thus hadn't done much, was given many valuable items. That prompted an immediate shift in loyalty and drove her to seek the comfort of Jing Dichen's arms.

Fortunately, the space Lu Yun had created was large enough, or it wouldn't have been able to accommodate all of the valuables.

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Hell.

Beigong Chonglou had been duly sacrificed in exchange for the power to temper the Divine Seaward Iron. The material was so sturdy that even the three immortal fires combined couldn't melt it.

Hellfire could be used to refine treasures as well, but it was a cold fire, and its properties overlapped with those of the iron. After heating the iron with hellfire for some time, Lu Yun realized with resignation that the iron had hardened even further.

This was a weapon that'd been used by the ancient immortal emperor, and even rulers of the primordial era, to keep the four seas under control. It was named 'divine' iron, but it contained the essence of the four seas and could thus tap into their power.

Nevertheless, sacrificing Beigong Chonglou's soul had bequeathed unto Lu Yun a mysterious power that boosted the might of the three immortal fires to an incredible height, completely disintegrating the iron until it returned to its original form: a pool of molten iron. He would use that to refine a weapon of war!

"Oh?" Lu Yun's expression shifted.

During the soul sacrifice, a slight, inexplicable tremor had passed through the Enneaworm Coffinbearers and the Nine-Phoenix Casket. Regardless, he only paid the two unpredictable heavyweights some minor attention. Refining the weapon of war was much more important.

He'd also obtained two trillion premium immortal crystals from the North Sea vault, and wouldn't have to worry about money ever again! However, he still wasn't strong enough, so he needed items to assist him in dealing with his enemies.

The replicated weapon of war Feinie and Huangqing had developed was the perfect choice.

The counterfeit had a fatal flaw, though. It could only bear, at most, the power of a billion premium crystals, or the weapon would explode from overcharging, which fell short of the authentic weapon's capabilities. The strength it could bring to bear was also a far cry from what the real item could do.

If the replica of the monster spirit emperor hadn't been flawed itself, the blast wouldn't have killed him.

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A hundred years passed in hell.

Lu Yun worked with Feinie and Yuying in order to complete the weapon of war, the new main weapon of the Divine Glory. It could bring forth much more power than the previous main cannon, and when powered by sufficient crystals, it could theoretically even surpass contemporary models.

Lu Yun might lack for anything, but he would never lack for money! To be exact, his fortune now totaled two trillion and three hundred billion crystals. It would be no exaggeration at all to call him the richest man in all the world.

"This cannon has been made with Divine Seaward Iron and was completed in the North Sea." Lu Yun returned to the real world at the exact moment he'd left it. "This will be the new main cannon of Divine Glory, named Black Emperor! Under its divine power, all immortals and gods will fall!"

He summoned the fortress ship and mounted the cannon in the position of main artillery. The old one that'd begun melting was relegated to the ship's broadside.

I wonder how powerful Black Emperor is... Making it with Divine Seaward Iron must make it special, somehow. After some deliberation, Lu Yun decided not to test it. He was rich now, but he wasn't about to become the true seventh profligate and splash crystals around for no good reason, not just yet.

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News that Lu Yun had arrived in the imperial sea spread throughout the North Sea. Many were doubtful, at first, but jaws dropped at the sight of Lu Yun's signature vessel, the ridiculously extravagant fortress ship from the Ling Clan, the foremost clan of Nephrite Major.

The North Sea was at its most chaotic at present. Eighty percent of its elites had entered the skydragon tomb, but many opportunists still remained on the sidelines, ready to reap the benefits as various factions clashed.

Even the North Sea Palace had been raided not long ago. What could Lu Yun possibly want when arriving at this time, other than to stir up more trouble? Everyone knew about his troubled relationship with the marine court.

Visiting the North Sea so openly would surely prompt Bing Xuan, arcane dao immortal of the ruling clan, to kill the boy, Guardian of the Dao Flower or top youth sovereign be damned.

No one even suspected him of being responsible for the raid of the dragon palace. Lu Yun was a mere cultivator; no matter how talented he was, he was nothing in the face of the North Sea court.

However, his next move shocked everyone. Lu Yun, refiner of items, was now open for business!

As long as one supplied the relevant materials, he would refine treasures according to their needs! Only after the shocking development percolated did many recall that Lu Yun was a master refiner as well.

Back in Xiankan, he'd earned Master Zhurong Cangshan's respect with the forge of earth and sky, the peak equipment dao technique. And now, he'd set up his forge in the North Sea.

The skydragon tomb was open, and many powerful immortals had rushed in in a bid to be the first to explore it. Even so, there were still many who were hesitant to enter the tomb without high quality treasures as protection.

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Immortal Sky Island.

This island was a large marketplace where the Panorama Pavilion's North Sea branch was located, a marketplace whose scale rivaled the former Myriad Returns Market on the now-ruined Levitating Island.

Upon Lu Yun's arrival, the executives of the local branch personally welcomed him with great veneration and led him to the back hall, where the pavilion lord was waiting. Said lord had almost sunk the entire island in a fit of excitement when he received the Tribulation Surrogate Pill.

"Please note that you must notify this junior before you consume the pill and attempt to pluck the dao fruit," Lu Yun issued a serious reminder when he handed over the pill.

The pavilion lord tensed. "Do you mean...."

"Things... aren't as simple as they seem here." That was just the young governor's hunch, and he didn't know exactly what drove it.

"I will," the pavilion lord promised, then smiled faintly. "I can keep my power in check for another hundred years. I'll pluck the dao fruit once I'm fully prepared. Whatever you're planning to do in the North Sea, you may do so without worry, my young friend."

Lu Yun shrugged. If the pavilion lord found out exactly what he'd done, he'd excuse himself and flee back to the Panorama Pavilion with any flimsy excuse he could grasp at. Even peak arcane dao immortals couldn't bear the ire of the entire North Sea court.

The pavilion lord wasn't interested in the skydragon tomb. After acquiring the Tribulation Surrogate Pill and dao weapon, he had no reason to head in for an expedition.

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Within the courtyard before the branch of the Panorama Pavilion, Lu Yun hovered imposingly in the air, looking down at the unprecedented crowds of immortals that'd been drawn to the island. Even some who'd already entered the tomb had made their exit and found their way to the Immortal Sky Island instead.

More than ten thousand immortals had come, and more still were to come.

"Master Lu," said a bearded peerless immortal, raising a cupped fist salute at Lu Yun, "will you only be refining weapons?"

Although Lu Yun was a mere spirit realm cultivator, many immortals considered it unwise to offend him.

“As long as you can supply the materials, I will refine formations, talismans, treasures, and pills for you!” His answer rang through the courtyard.

Beardy perked up, his breath quickening. No one doubted Lu Yun’s words, as he’d more than proven himself in Xiankan.

“What’s the price for your service, then?” asked someone else.

Lu Yun smiled faintly. “I need no payment for benefiting the world of immortals.”

Deafening silence fell over the scene as many looked at Lu Yun in sheer disbelief.

“Surely you jest, Master Lu. All of the great masters in the world charge an eye popping price for their services. Pill Master Gu Zun, for example, requires five full sets of ingredients or five million premium immortal crystals as payment for a ninth-rank pill...”

“Gu Zun? He’s nothing but a clown.” Lu Yun shook his head. “I was appointed the foremost youth sovereign by the nine celestial emperors themselves, and will be the lord of the future Dusk Sacred Land. I charged nothing for entering the inheritance tower or the Sword Lake, the two holy lands of cultivation in Dusk Province. Anyone can freely come and go, so why would I charge you just for refining a few items?”

The crowd’s breath collectively hitched. Free refinement?

It would be too good to be true, coming from anyone else, but this was Lu Yun making the offer. Anyone else would’ve kept the inheritance tower and the Sword Lake for their own use, or profited off of them.

In fact, the Feng Clan had set up checkpoints and demanded large sums of crystals when they’d taken control of the inheritance tower.

When Lu Yun had reclaimed Dusk Province, he immediately abolished the rules the Feng Clan set up. So when he said he wouldn’t charge people anything, he really did mean it.

Great waves of goodwill converged and streamed into Lu Yun’s body, condensing into a new fruit hanging low on the boughs of the Sal Tree of Life and Death.

“How impressively generous you are, senior brother Lu from Dusk Province,” sounded a mocking voice. “Then I ask you to return what belongs to the Ling Clan.”

A young man in a moon-white robe descended upon Lu Yun with a few followers, gracefully treading the clouds. He looked at Lu Yun with a supercilious smile, his features handsome and his eyes bright as stars.

“Senior brother Lu has taken our fortress ship and used it in untold slaughter. That bad karma will fall on our clan. If you’re truly so generous, I ask you to return what is rightfully ours.”

The bystanders froze upon hearing the declaration. The Ling Clan, foremost clan of Nephrite major! The young man before them was a cultivator, but he’d reached the void realm!

After Mo Yi had blazed the way, void realm cultivators had sprouted all over the world of immortals.

“Ling Ruyu of the Ling Clan greets senior brother Lu.”

Chapter 330: Senior Brother Lu Beat It Into Me

“The Ling Clan? Ling Ruyu?” Lu Yun nodded. “I know you. You were one of the geniuses at the Dusk Tournament.”

During the tournament two years ago, the newcomer had proven himself to be a genius second only to the five youth sovereigns.

“The Dusk Tournament?” Derision passed through Ling Ruyu’s face. “Do you still fancy yourself the top youth sovereign and the greatest cultivator beneath the heavens?”

“You, Lu Yun, have been eliminated by the times.” He flung open his arms in a grandiose manner as he spoke, unleashing a tremendous swell of power that seemed to contain the presence of the heavens and imbued him with the power of the land.

Shock and dismay crossed the faces of the immortals around him. This wasn’t a true show of power, but a mere display of his cultivation realm—the true realm of heaven and earth.

He could perceive the void with one’s nascent spirit!

With Mo Yi’s void realm method as a guide, numerous geniuses of the immortal world and many other worlds over had pioneered their own methods and broken through to the perceived void realm.

Wu Tulong, Zi Chen, and Mo Qitian had created their own methods and made their breakthroughs long ago, followed by Ling Ruyu and his peers.

Given that the Dao Flower yet remained, cultivators who ascended to the void realm could now not only create their own methods, but also gain the flower’s blessing, enabling them to understand the world a little bit better.

The later one ascended, the fewer benefits they’d gain from the flower.

Although Lu Yun had made several breakthroughs in a row and reached peak transformed spirit realm, Ling Ruyu felt that anyone who hadn’t ascended to the perceived void realm were obsolete relics, discarded by the times.

The previous foremost youth sovereign was now floundering in a vat of mediocrity, and those who hadn’t ascended to the void realm would never understand how great it was. The crowd of immortals around him were nothing but fake immortals, false bearers of the title.

“Two years ago, you made a striking debut in the Dusk Tournament and defeated all the young geniuses in the world of immortals, earning yourself the title of top cultivator.

“Half a year ago, you stunned the world by slaying unknown creatures to defend the Dao Flower... and now, you’re just an average nobody.” Pride tinged Lin Ruyu’s expression, colored by a hint of derision. “Refining items in the North Sea? Have you already noticed that you’ve fallen behind in cultivation, so you chose to focus on a supplemental path instead?”

“You should surrender our ship if you know what’s good for you, Lu Yun!” exclaimed a golden immortal from behind Ling Ruyu. “Then Master Ling may be in a good enough mood to teach you a thing or two and help you ascend to the void realm!”

Thud!

Frowning, Lu Yun turned back and glanced at the Panorama Pavilion branch. With a wave of his hand, he manifested an extravagant fortress ship that was hundreds of meters long.

This wasn’t the ship he’d taken; that one had been shattered during his battle with Jiangchen Wushang and had later been renovated into the Divine Glory by Huangqing and Feinie. This was another fortress ship the two envoys had later refined.

“Oh? Isn’t Lu Yun the domineering sort, quick to fight back and even kill? He’s deciding to return the ship just like that?” It surprised many to see him return a high-class fortress ship to the Ling Clan.

Was Lu Yun... scared?

Back in Xiankan, Lu Yun had set up a Great Formation of Heavenly Fiends and slaughtered close to ten thousand immortals. But now that Ling Ruyu had shredded Lu Yun’s dignity and demanded him to return clan property, he was doing so without complaint?

“Not this ship! I want ours!” Ling Ruyu pointed at the even larger and far more opulent fortress ship at the harbor of Immortal Sky Island.

Lu Yun had docked it there instead of stowing it away. It’d become a representative signature of his. As soon as he dropped anchor, everyone knew that he was in residence on the island.

“Hahahaha!” a peal of hearty laughter sounded. A burly man with shoulders that spanned double the average width and arms as thick as the thighs of others emerged from the building. “What a fucking shameless idiot you are, Ling Ruyu!”

“Beicang Qiong!” Ling Ruyu’s expression darkened when he saw the young man, his eyes widening with disbelief.

The void realm!

The prince known for his troublemaking ways, who did nothing with his days other than start mess after mess and attract untold troubles to the Beicang Clan, had ascended to the void realm!

It was widely believed that the young man would’ve long been killed, if it weren’t for his influential father, grandfather, and friends from a similar background as him. Who would’ve thought that this absolutely good-for-nothing would make the leap forward as well?

It was a heavy blow to Ling Ruyu’s lofty ego.

“The Ling Clan doesn’t deserve the greatest battleship in the world of immortals,” snorted Beicang Qiong. “Senior brother Lu only gave you a ship for the Panorama Pavilion’s sake. He doesn’t want to start a fight and break their rules.”

Immortal Sky Island was the pavilion's territory, and was a place for business. All fights were strictly prohibited here. Even immortals from the three most powerful factions here—the North Sea court, the Dark North Sword Sect, and Ingress Island—had to follow the rules.

It was then that realization dawned on the crowd of immortals. Lu Yun hadn't clashed with Ling Ruyu out of consideration for the Panorama Pavilion. Everyone knew the young man had close ties with the merchant guild.

He'd refined a Heaven Descent Pill for them, and the guild had supported and protected Dusk Province and the Lu Clan during the fifteen months that Lu Yun had gone missing. He naturally wouldn't break their rules here.

"What did a piece of trash like you eat for breakfast to ascend to the void realm, Beicang Qiong?!" Ling Ruyu snapped out with his eyes fixed on Beicang Qiong, paying no attention to the other's words.

He was immensely proud to be among the first batch of cultivators to ascend to the void realm after Mo Yi, and couldn't accept the fact that Beicang Qiong had achieved the same feat. His first reaction was thinking that the young man must've made the leap with outside help; a push from some precious natural ingredient, surely.

"I'll tell you." Beicang Qiong threw his head back proudly. "Senior brother Lu beat it into me!"

"What?!" Ling Ruyu paused in befuddlement.

"I said," Beicang Qiong smiled with honest sincerity, "I ascended to the void realm after getting beat up by senior brother Lu."