

Necropolis 331

Chapter 331: Stomping to Death

Beicang Qiong's answer brought a befuddled still to the clamorous crowd. He'd ascended to the void realm after getting beat up by senior brother Lu?

Senior brother Lu Yun?

Many turned to Lu Yun in surprise, and Ling Ruyu's disbelief was writ clear on his face.

"Hahaha!" The Ling scion threw his head back and brayed with laughter. "I didn't expect the Beicang Clan to put Lu Yun on a fake pedestal just for the sake of two cultivation holy lands. Ludicrous, what a joke!"

Beicang Qiong shrugged and didn't say anything further.

The crowd didn't join in Ling Ruyu's ridicule, and the Ling scion noticed the awkward atmosphere after a while. He shut his mouth with an embarrassed expression.

Someone suddenly floated to the forefront of his mind.

Qing Han.

There was no way Lu Yun was capable of helping Beicang Qiong ascend to the void realm, but Qing Han was a definite possibility. The dao sovereign certainly had the ability to do so. He'd restored the entirety of the void realm. The only thing holding him back from ascending was his cultivation, which hadn't yet reached peak transformed spirit realm.

After running through the idea, Ling Ruyu quickly calmed down. He hadn't forgotten what he was here for—the fortress ship!

There were many means of transportation in the world of immortals, but fortress ships remained the premier option.

The art of creating fortress ships had been excavated from an ancient tomb by the Ling Clan. It could be said that the best fortress ships in the world came from their clan, and even the master refiner clan, the Zhurongs, fell short in this area.

Now, however, Ling Ruyu saw a fortress ship that was several times more powerful than the Ling Clan's work. He couldn't not do anything about that. As the clan's most talented genius, he could naturally recognize the ship—its foundations were Ling handiwork, after all—but it'd become much more powerful after significant remodeling.

That, the clan wouldn't tolerate or accept.

The Ling Clan enjoyed a special status in Nephrite Major and considered themselves to be above mundane matters. When Dusk Province showed the potential to become a cultivation sacred land, almost all of Nephrite Major and half of the immortals in the world wanted to kill Lu Yun and replace him, but the Ling Clan had avoided involvement in the matter from beginning to end.

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“Please return my clan’s ship, senior brother Lu.” Ling Ruyu’s expression hardened.

“Hahaha! Do you have no shame at all, Ling Ruyu?!” Beicang Qiong was unusually loud, his tones covering half of the island.

Among the six degenerates, with the exception of the petite beauty, Jing Dichen, everyone had been influenced by the Deaf Prince after long-term exposure and were used to shouting everything.

Beicang Qiong approached Ling Ruyu and crooked a finger at him. “Come, come, let me smack you across the face and check how thick your skin is.”

Livid, Ling Ruyu met Lu Yun’s gaze with a scoffed, “Are you returning the ship or not, Lu Yun?!”

“The ship is right there,” Lu Yun finally spoke up. “Take it yourself if you want it so much.”

“Little bastard!” huffed a peerless immortal behind Ling Ruyu. “How is the young master supposed to claim the ship if you don’t deactivate the formation on it?”

“Isn’t that supposed to be your clan’s ship?” With a casual wave of his hand, Lu Yun stowed away the fortress ship he’d offered the Ling Clan. “If that’s the case, there must be one of your restrictions at the heart of the vessel. As a core Ling genius, you should know how to control it. Activate the restriction. You’ll be able immediately to destroy the formation then.”

Lu Yun’s tone was calm, but the implications of his words hit everyone hard.

Ling-crafted fortress ships could be found all over the world of immortals. In addition to the Nephrite court, they also supplied ships to all of the major factions in the world. In fact, half of the thousands of ships moored at the Immortal Sky harbor were manufactured by the Ling Clan. But Lu Yun had said there was a restriction on every ship!

“Utter nonsense!” Ling Ruyu hurriedly denied, his expression tense. “Why would there be restrictions in our ships?!”

“If there isn’t, what proof do you have that the ship is yours?” Lu Yun’s face darkened. “I had a ship that once belonged to you. Senior brother Chen Xiao took it from an elite of the Ling Clan. So let me ask you this, why didn’t you ask for the ship back when senior brother Chen Xiao first took it from you?”

“You demand its return only when I’m refining treasures on Immortal Sky Island?” He stalked toward Ling Ruyu, his presence growing increasingly powerful and weighing heavily on Ling Ruyu’s heart like a mountain.

Ling Ruyu panicked, backing away as Lu Yun advanced. To his horror, the void realm cultivation he was so proud of was as flimsy as a piece of paper when facing the mountainous presence radiating from the guardian of the Dao Flower.

Even the power of the land coursing through him that he was so proud of was crushed by this presence. Not scattered or stripped, but crushed!

Lu Yun could crush the power of the land!

It was only at that moment that Ling Ruyu finally understood the true depths of Lu Yun’s strength.

“Die!” shouted a peerless immortal behind the Ling scion when he saw his master being suppressed by Lu Yun. Sword energy shot out of his mouth and pierced straight at Lu Yun.

Violence may be prohibited on Sky Immortal Island, but the Ling Clan was influential and they owned a merchant guild that could rival the Panorama Pavilion. Naturally, they didn’t think much about the pavilion’s rules.

“It’s you who should die.” a chilling voice enunciated from behind the peerless immortal. An enormous hand wrapped around the immortal’s neck and crushed it to pieces.

“What?!” Shock and horror gripped Ling Ruyu. How dare someone kill a peerless immortal of his clan in broad daylight!

Before he could react, a giant foot descended from the sky and stepped on him, grinding him into meat paste before he could even scream. His spirit and soul were completely pulverized; he was deader than dead.

Everyone looked on with sheer disbelief.

Ling Ruyu, top genius of the Ling Clan, one who’d ascended to the void realm and pioneered his own void realm methods, had died from a single stomp!

And despite all that, no one could even determine who the foot belonged to.

“It’s a dao immortal! The person who killed Ling Ruyu and the Ling peerless immortal is a dao immortal!” a shrill shriek broke the silence, waking the Ling immortals from their shock-induced stupor.

“Young lord!!” They lunged at Lu Yun with reckless abandon, but—

Bam!

Another foot dropped from the sky and crushed them all.

Chapter 332: It’s Not the Future Yet

Dead.

Ling Ruyu and his entourage of peerless and lesser immortals had been crushed to death by a giant foot—one from a peak aether dao immortal!

No one had expected there to be a dao immortal among Lu Yun’s followers, and the Dusk governor must’ve given the order just now to kill the Ling genius!

“Do you all think it’s impressive enough just to ascend to the void realm and create void realm methods?” Lu Yun sighed and continued meaningfully, “The future is yours, but it’s not the future yet. The world of immortals belongs to the immortals still. They haven’t been wholly eliminated in full yet!

“Think about it. If someday in the future, there’s only one, or a handful void realm methods in the world of immortals and worlds beyond, and those methods are owned by a privileged few, what do you think happens then?”

A demonic smile tugged at his lips as he slowly described, "Without void realm methods, the immortals of today won't be left behind.... So heed my words well, kids who have just ascended to the void realm. Lay low or latch onto a powerful thigh, or a foot may drop from the sky and crush you at any time."

He threw Beicang Qiong a look, who blanched with a shudder. The crowd's breaths hitched as well. Lu Yun's warning hit them like a poisonous sting, seeping into all of their hearts.

That was... right. The path of cultivation had been restored, but without cultivation methods, the current immortals still wouldn't be eliminated. They would remain the protagonists of the world!

All they had to do was to destroy those new methods to remove one very unpleasant future that was currently staring them in the face. Considerations of other possibilities could be put aside for now.

However, those from the major factions interpreted his words differently. If most methods were destroyed, leaving only a handful concentrated in the hands of a select few....

A collective shudder ran down their spines.

"Of course, none of you have anything to worry about if you're as talented as Fairy Mo Yi." Lu Yun smiled faintly. "Alright, enough of that nonsense. The annoying bug has been crushed, so I'm going back to refining."

His smile dropped, seriousness blossoming in its wake. "As long as you provide the materials, I can refine even supreme-grade treasures!"

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What is the kid trying to do? Does he think the world of immortals isn't chaotic enough? Seated by a window in the branch headquarters, the pavilion lord looked at Lu Yun in the courtyard with a bit of surprise.

Ah, yes, that's right. The world has to be chaotic. The more chaotic it is, the better it is for him. The crux of the matter struck the lord.

The world was already in disarray anyway, after the nine celestial emperors had simultaneously entered seclusion. The Corpse Refiners were merely the first to emerge and sow discord and chaos. This was to be a tumultuous era, so it might as well become more of a mess. Then, those coveting Dusk Province wouldn't have the time and effort to spare for it.

That kid's determined to use me! The pavilion lord smiled. Well, I am in his debt, and I have to repay him. A single Lu Daoling in the shadows isn't enough to intimidate all the old freaks in the world....

At that thought, he stroked his storage ring, within which lay a Tribulation Surrogate Pill and a dao weapon.

He'd never even considered burning the bridge after benefiting from Lu Yun. Without a set of principles to guide his actions, he wouldn't have been able to establish the Panorama Pavilion by himself, let alone expand its business to the entire world. Thus, the idea of discarding the young man after receiving his help had never occurred to the lord.

Besides, Lu Yun had already given him a Tribulation Surrogate Pill at his current heights of achievement, which meant he'd have even more valuable things to offer in the future.

Dusk Province spanned only forty thousand kilometers. Some arcane dao immortals could destroy a land ten thousand kilometers across in a single attack, so Dusk Province would be nothing to them if they were to really bend their minds to the task.

Although the province was protected by the restriction against golden immortals, arcane dao immortals could raze the province to the ground without even entering it.

Of course, no one wanted to destroy the future sacred land unless it was absolutely necessary.

To that end, Lu Yun had decided to refine items in the North Sea to garner support and momentum for Dusk Province. He wanted to show the world that the inheritance tower and Sword Lake weren't the only things that made Dusk Province a promising investment. There was also Lu Yun, a tremendous pill, treasure, talisman, and formation grandmaster.

Of course, he needed good platforms to demonstrate his values, and the Panorama Pavilion was one such outlet.

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Currently, Lu Yun was smiling an awkward smile full of wryness.

The first person to make a request was a charming girl who'd reached the golden immortal realm, despite looking roughly sixteen years old. The materials she'd laid out were for a fortress ship.

Refining a fortress ship took a great deal of work. Even the Ling Clan would require hundreds of treasure refiners and formation masters working in tandem for several months to manufacture one.

Realizing that she might have asked too much of Lu Yun, she blushed and mumbled, "If senior brother Lu thinks it's too much, I can offer payment...."

"No need." Lu Yun spluttered when he heard her call him senior brother. "You can have this if you give me those materials for the fortress ship."

He brought out the ship he'd offered to the Ling Clan and shrunk it to a little more than a finger-width, handing it to the golden immortal who looked about sixteen, but might be much older.

"What?" The immortal widened her eyes, her mouth agape. "But I...."

The materials she'd offered were only enough for a medium-sized fortress ship, yet Lu Yun was giving her the most premium ship in the world.

However, he wouldn't take no for an answer, and handed the ship to the female immortal.

"Alright, that's the first and the last time!" he announced with resignation. "It isn't that difficult to manufacture a fortress ship, but it takes too much time. I'm only going to be here for ten days. If you want fortress ships, you may bring the relevant materials to Dusk Province. There are treasure and formation grandmasters on my level there. They can craft the ships for you."

“Then... Zhu Yan thanks senior brother Lu,” the golden immortal stammered and carefully put the fortress ship away.

Lu Yun paused. “Zhu Yan? Of Xiankan’s Twin Stars?”

Yue Longsha and Zhu Yan were nicknamed the twin stars of Xiankan. Being natural-born immortals, the pair were tremendously talented and considered the hope of the world’s renaissance.

Lu Yun had met Yue Longsha before; she was a proud girl with a touch of self-conceit. It was a surprise to run into her counterpart in the North Sea.

“That’s, that’s me.” Zhu Yan blushed, dipping her head so low that her chin almost touched her chest.

Many immortals perked up when they heard her name, casting impassioned looks her way. This was a natural-born immortal!

There were speculations that natural-born immortals were likely to give birth to immortals as well. If they could get together with her and have a couple children....

“Hmph!” A snort sounded in the air, sending a chill down everyone’s spine like a bucket of icy water. She was protected by an arcane dao immortal!

Zhu Yan gave Lu Yun a curtsy and left like she was running away from something.

“Alright.” Lu Yun shook his head and said softly, “Next.”

“Grandmaster Lu!”

“Senior brother Lu!”

“I want to refine....” People flocked to him and eagerly handed him their materials, shouting their requests like fishwives at a seaside market.

Chapter 333: Seeking Death

A timeline of ten days.

Lu Yun refined items for ten days on Immortal Sky Island before taking his leave and disappearing from the North Sea.

What he’d achieved in those ten days astounded the entire world—he refined thirteen thousand eight hundred and seventy-six treasures of all levels, with many onlookers standing witness!

They could scarcely believe it, even though they’d seen it with their own eyes. Not even dao immortal grandmasters could replicate his tremendous feat.

Every single one of the items Lu Yun handled was a masterfully crafted ‘supreme treasure’. That didn’t refer to the rank, but the quality. More importantly, he hadn’t charged a single crystal for his work, doing it all for free.

His highest record was refining five hundred treasures at the same time, including a supreme-rank immortal sword, and completing them within an hour.

That was, of course, what the others saw. In truth, Lu Yun had spent a month in hell to refine those items.

The past ten days had immensely improved his mastery over treasure, talismans, formations, and pills, as well as earned him a tremendous amount of goodwill. There were now six fruits on the Sal Tree of Life and Death.

In order to ascend to the void realm, he needed seven. Otherwise, it'd take another three years for him to make the breakthrough, based on his current cultivation speed.

Three years weren't that long a period of time in the general span of things, but the Dao Flower would've faded into the void by then and Lu Yun wouldn't gain its blessing upon ascending to the void realm at that point.

He didn't need to pioneer a void realm method. The Method of Life and Death was the foremost connate method in the world of immortals, and it was specifically tailored for his constitution. Naturally, it included a method for the void realm.

In other words, even if Lu Yun hadn't followed Lu Shenhou's lingering obsession to the ancient tomb, he would've forced a way into the void realm once he'd reached peak spirit realm.

Now, though, the Dao Flower had bloomed.

It was the most wondrous and magical thing in the world, and its powers conferred great benefits. Even the overlord of life and death coveted it greatly, as sadly, it wasn't yet under his jurisdiction.

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"Is... is this really a good idea, senior brother Lu?" Beicang Qiong, his appearance changed once more, cast a pitiful look at Lu Yun.

"It's a great idea! Senior brother Lu's hatched a perfect plan!" Lin Yan slapped Beicang Qiong on the shoulder before Lu Yun could answer. "Hehe, blame yourself for being the first to ascend to the void realm among us. Who else is gonna be the bait but you?"

Beicang Qiong once again looked pleadingly at Lu Yun, who ignored him and animatedly discussed something with Qing Han.

"Younger sister Chen, your Tribulation Surrogate Pill..."

"Umph, senior brother Beicang, senior brother Lu is helping you! You've just ascended to the void realm and need a few life and death battles to temper yourself. Don't worry, he won't let anything really happen to you!" Jing Dichen smiled sheepishly; it was obvious she had absolutely no intentions of giving him the pill.

"You must be careful this time, Beicang!" Lu Yun warned seriously. "Take all the life-saving treasures you can with you. I can just manage to stop aether dao immortals, but I'll have difficulty dealing with arcane dao immortals. Of course, all of them will value their lives greatly and probably won't risk openly offending the Beicang Clan.

“And um, don’t think about using the Tribulation Surrogate Pill. It’s used to protect one against all kinds of tribulations, yes, but it won’t work when you’re seeking death yourself.” Lu Yun smacked his lips and finally admitted the reckless nature of his plan.

Color drained from Beicang Qiong’s face, leaving him as white as a sheet.

“Don’t worry, Beicang, you still have us.” Bai Qi smiled merrily, patting his shoulder. “We’re much wealthier than we were before.”

“Do you bunch dare show yourselves if the South Sea Gourmet comes as well?” Beicang Qiong responded broodingly.

Bai Qi shut his mouth and fell silent; not even Lu Yun was sure how to deal with the South Sea Gourmet. The demon was too unpredictable, and Lu Yun wasn’t sure if the shapeshifting talismans could fool him.

“Fine, fine,” Beicang Qiong said, sounding like he was marching to his death with his mind finally made up. “I believe senior brother Lu won’t send me to my death. But, well, I get the biggest portion of our spoils this time!”

“Don’t worry,” Jing Dichen piped up. “Everything we get this time is yours. We won’t take anything from you!”

“Alright!” Beicang Qiong inhaled deeply. “Senior brother Lu has helped us greatly. Even if I break every bone in my body, I’ll help him catch that big snake!”

“Heh, that’s what I call brotherhood!” Lu Yun smiled slightly. “If we can catch the arcane dao immortal rimesnake, I’m confident I’ll be able to nurture two more arcane dao immortals! Then it’ll be easier for us to explore the skydragon tomb, and I can ambush the North Sea emperor again!”

Beicang Qiong and his friends nodded, excitement clear on their faces.

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The North Sea was currently the epitome of utter disarray.

The palace had been looted clean, then Lu Yun had set up shop on Immortal Sky Island. And now, another piece of astounding news reverberated throughout the waters.

Void realm cultivator, Beicang Qiong, was setting up an arena on Sunset Island and accepting challenges from the young geniuses of the North Sea!

The news quickly reached all parts of the imperial sea.

Sunset Island was an important island under the North Sea court’s rule, and was located four hundred kilometers away from the palace. There was not only an abundance of resources there, but also a large immortal crystal vein. However, the six troublemakers and Lu Yun had taken over the island and punted all of the monster spirits that were there into the ocean.

“That’s too much! That’s simply too much!” Bing Xuan raged when he heard the news. “Void realm? Void realm?! There’s no void realm cultivator or void realm method in our imperial court yet!”

An ugly smile split his face the next second. “The Beicang Clan of Lazuli Major? Well, we can afford to make an enemy out of them....”

“Sir, the ninety-third prince has arrived at Sunset Island to challenge Beicang Qiong!” Admiral Turtle rushed in with a panicked exclamation.

“What?!” Bing Xuan’s smile fell. “That prince is the genius who’s closest to the void realm. We mustn’t allow anything to happen to him! We go!”

He quickly vanished.

Chapter 334: A Tongue

North Sea monster spirits were mostly aquatic, so their rule was concentrated on the world under the sea.

However, there was an abundance of resources on the islands of the North Sea as well. Although they weren’t as fertile as the nine majors, ten lands, and four immortal seas of the world, these spots of land were quite precious to the North Sea court.

Sunset Island was only four hundred kilometers away from the North Sea Palace. It was a mere hundred kilometers wide, but the amount of resources to be found on the island ranked top ten in the North Sea.

And it was now occupied by the group of degenerates.

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Bing Xuan almost fell headfirst into the ocean when he arrived at Sunset Island.

A blackwater snake running three hundred meters long lay on the beach in its original form. Its head had been crushed by something, and its body skinned and cleaned. It was now roasting on a spit over a blazing fire.

The delicacy on the menu was the ninety-third prince of the North Sea, the best of the North Sea cultivators!

Hearing the news, cultivators rushed in to see for themselves and gazed upon the roasted snake with equal parts shock and schadenfreude.

Beigong Chonglou, first prince of the North Sea, had once killed and eaten the young princess of the Unsullied Sea, and now the ninety-third prince of the North Sea was being roasted as a meal.

Despite the occasion, the degenerates occupying the island were currently paralyzed and in a permanent state of high alert.

Gorb Demon.

The South Sea Gourmet, who looked like a ball of meat, had shown up again. As soon as he did, he’d crushed the head of the cocky ninety-third prince of the North Sea, then skinned and readied him for roasting.

Lu Yun hadn't expected the South Sea Gourmet to come again so soon and disrupt his plans. Fortunately, the arcane dao immortal rimesnake, his final target, had arrived as well.

"South Sea Gourmet!!" an angry howl escaped Bing Xuan's mouth when he got a clear look at the prince, and the shadow of an enormous snake manifested behind him.

"An arcane dao immortal rimesnake?" The South Sea Gourmet whirled around and looked in surprise at Bing Xuan. "Rimesnakes are a type of blackwater snake, but they possess venom that blackwater snakes don't have.

"Hehehe, today must be my lucky day! I just wanted to nab the four pureblood divine cubs and keep them on a farm so they could grow up safely. I didn't expect to run into two rimesnakes as well! The pairing of a blackwater snake and a rimesnake will make a great meal!"

Boom!

The Gorb Demon unleashed a terrifying aura, his body bouncing up and ramming into Bing Xuan like a cannonball.

"Die!!" Bing Xuan snarled and threw both fists at the Gorb Demon, meeting his attack head-on.

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"Dammit, let's go!" Spectating immortals scattered when they saw the two arcane dao immortals wade into a brawl. However, the resulting shockwaves still managed to rip apart many low-level immortals and cultivators before they could escape.

Sunset Island began trembling as cracks spread throughout the terrain in all directions. The island couldn't withstand a battle between arcane dao immortals, and half of it sank underwater in the blink of an eye.

Beicang Qiong and the others watched the fierce battle play out with unusual calm.

"What a shame!" Beicang Qiong mourned. "I should've been the spotlight. I should've risen to stardom today, and all parts of the world of immortals would hear my name!"

"You're just sorry for the treasures you couldn't nab." Jing Dichen saw through Beicang Qiong with a single glance.

"Hmph." Beicang Qiong fell silent after a few snorts.

"Hehehe, those small fish are nothing compared to these two arcane dao immortals." Lin Yan smirked when he saw Beicang Qiong's expression. "Much greater treasures can be found on the two of them!"

He was practically drooling over himself.

"Do you really need money that badly?" Jing Dichen directed exasperation at Beicang Qiong and Lin Yan. Their group had just raided the North Sea vault. Although the immortal crystals had all been given to Lu Yun, the treasures they'd gained were much more valuable.

"One can never have too many treasures," Beicang Qiong snickered with satisfaction at the two battling arcane dao immortals once realization set in.

“Senior brother Lu promised to give me everything but the immortal crystals from this undertaking!” Beicang Qiong looked warily at everyone else.

They didn’t deem that an answer. Everything would be his? It would be everyone for themselves when the spoils actually came out.

“Senior brother Lu seems to need a lot of crystals.” Jing Dichen stroked her tapered chin. “Why don’t we go back there again and find senior brother Lu a crystal mountain?”

“Again?” Lin Yan shuddered, his expression fearful.

“Yeah, let’s! Why not!” Beicang Qiong tightened his jaw. “I’m not going to the skydragon tomb after this. I’m gonna find senior brother Lu a World Chest and a crystal mountain!”

“Me too,” Lin Yan said weakly, his shoulders hunched over.

“Then we’ll all go together,” Jing Dichen said, looking around at the others. “The more of us go, the better the chances that we can acquire a crystal mountain.”

Bai Qi, Feng Ruyun, and the Deaf Prince voiced their agreement as well.

“We have connate-grade treasures to protect ourselves with this time.” Feng Ruyun smiled broadly. “It should be a piece of cake to get another crystal mountain.”

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“What South Sea Gourmet and so-called Gorb Demon. He’s nothing but a fool.” Su Xiaoxiao excitedly skipped over to the half-roasted blackwater snake and inhaled. Disapproval wrinkled her face. “Snakes and the like are best served as stew. What a waste for him to roast a blackwater snake!”

The degenerates shuddered when they heard Su Xiaoxiao. So she... was a gourmet herself.

Lu Yun stood on the fringe of the island, releasing invisible rays of formation light from his hands to protect his companions and himself from the terrible shockwaves.

“What is this South Sea Gorb Demon?” Both of Lu Yun’s eyes turned pitch black. The goodwill of the Sal Tree of Life and Death burned fiercely and flowed into his eyes to strengthen his Spectral Eye.

After reaching peak spirit realm and acquiring nine death arts, he’d realized that the power of his arts could be amplified by goodwill. In his eyes, what was fighting Bing Xuan wasn’t the meatball-like man, but a... giant tongue. The revelation sent an eerie chill down his spine.

“You may begin.” Lu Yun stared at the tongue fixedly; it reminded him of someone.

“Alright.” Qing Han nodded slightly. His hair instantly turned a shining silver, with dots of starlight bathing his body as well.

Su Xiaoxiao rushed to him and poured all kinds of medicinal potions and gases at Qing Han, keeping his body condition at its peak. The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals unfolded, and a powerful dragon howl rang throughout heaven and earth.

All of creation fell silent.

Chapter 335: Too Small

Utterly terrifying might weighed down on Bing Xuan and the Gorb Demon like an iron anvil. Both of them screeched to an involuntary halt and stared at the slowly descending giant dragon claw with shock.

“Dragons!” Bing Xuan growled. “You should be good wyrms and remain holed up in your four immortal seas. How dare you set foot in the North Sea? Are you courting genocide?!”

“It’s not the dragons... not the dragons...” Petrified, the Gorb Demon looked at the claw in disbelief, his folds of lard jiggling with fear.

“Azure Dragon Divine King!!” he exclaimed when a recollection struck him. “Weren’t you sealed in the Skandha Extinction Tomb to curse the divines? Why are you here? Has the tomb broken?”

Bam!

The void shattered into pieces, torn apart by the dragon king’s suddenly rampaging power as the Gorb Demon’s words triggered his fury.

“Now’s my chance!” Noting the change in the newcomer’s emotions, the Gorb Demon’s eyes hardened with determination. His colossal body suddenly exploded, expelling countless souls in all directions.

They were the souls of everyone who’d ever been eaten by him.

Hum.

A mysterious power ignited and sacrificed them before the souls could escape. Consumption of these souls manifested a crimson force that strengthened the Gorb Demon. His power instantly reached an unfathomable height, allowing him to break open space and vanish.

Soul sacrifice!

He sacrificed all the souls he’d collected for a speedy escape. Such was his last resort and the final ace up his sleeve.

“Hahaha! I’ll remember you, Azure Dragon King. You better wash up well and wait for the day when I come eat you!”

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The sudden turn of events left Bing Xuan dumbfounded and grappling to come to terms with the situation. He remained where he was with a blank expression.

Bam!

The Azure Dragon King’s claw knocked him into the ocean for good measure before slowly retreating back into the void.

After consuming the North Sea dragon vein, the dragon king’s injuries had recovered somewhat, and he was now able to momentarily tap into the power of an origin dao immortal. Nevertheless, he still couldn’t leave the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals, nor could he enter the minor world within the scroll.

Qing Han had had to pay a heavy price to channel the dragon king's power. If Su Xiaoxiao hadn't been with them, Lu Yun wouldn't have let his friend do this.

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"Did you recognize him?" Empress Myrtlestar approached the dragon.

"It looks to be an old acquaintance." The Azure Dragon King laid on the ground with an impassive look on his face. "There's something very familiar about him, but I couldn't see through him."

Empress Myrtlestar nodded and fell into deep thought. The Gorb Demon had just said the Skandha Extinction Tomb wasn't merely a curse on the four cardinal divine tribes, but the entire divine race!

"So it wasn't just a curse on the four tribes?" the Azure Dragon King muttered. "Can more than the fathers of us four be buried in the central tomb...?"

"Celestial Emperor of Exalted Major," murmured Empress Myrtlestar.

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"The Skandha Extinction Tomb is still there, so how did the Azure Dragon King escape?" The Gorb Demon reemerged at the edge of the North Sea near Nephrite Major, looking toward the human territory with surprised incomprehension. His meatball-like body had deflated, turning from a round ball into a flattened patty.

A shudder abruptly ran down his spine, and he whirled around to meet a pair of crimson eyes that had appeared in the air behind him and was staring at him calmly.

"Weren't, weren't you sealed away? How... how are you..." The Gorb Demon stumbled back from the scarlet sight, his face white as a sheet.

"Zhao Changkong said you were in the South Sea, which was inconvenient for me. There's an old enemy of mine there, so I wouldn't have been able to deal with you," sounded a voice dripping with malice.

"But then you came to the North Sea."

The crimson eyes contracted violently and shrank into human form. It was the other Wayfarer.

"What?? How did you get out?!" murmured the Gorb Demon, face ashen with despair. "Weren't you sealed on the Water Altar a thousand years ago? How did you escape as well?!"

Wayfarer smiled, his gaze unusually heated. It was the way the Gorb Demon had looked at the Deaf Prince and his companions.

"Too weak. You're still too weak." Wayfarer looked the Gorb Demon over rather than answer the question. "I can't eat you until you pluck an origin dao fruit. Who would've thought the manifestation of the old man's sense of taste would do nothing but eat?"

The Gorb Demon stumbled a few steps back again.

"Hehehe, I'll give you a hundred years. If you can reach origin dao immortal in a hundred years, I'll consider keeping a strand of your soul. If you fail, though, I'll devour you whole and destroy every last vestige of you!" Crimson flooded his eyes again.

Trembling, the Gorb Demon realized, to his horror, that the man had left something in his own eyes!

“Run along now.” Wayfarer waved and popped the demon out of sight.

“The North Sea skydragon tomb.... Is it the same skydragon tomb left behind after the dragon king’s death?” Wayfarer frowned at the North Sea. “So I’ve found the old man’s sense of taste and smell. I wonder where his sense of touch and hearing are...”

He lowered his head and flashed a strange smile. “Wayfarer.... Ha, it was the very heavens and earth that wanted the divines to go extinct, but you went against the will of the heavenly dao. You painted the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals, leaving them a sliver of hope.

“And what good will that do, hmm? The divine race should never have appeared in this world.”

.....

It was a pity to Lu Yun that the Gorb Demon had escaped, but at least he’d captured his true target—Bing Xuan—alive. He finally had an arcane dao immortal under his command, which strengthened his confidence somewhat.

The rimesnake king that he’d converted to an Infernum back in the Skandha Extinction Tomb had, with the help of the Tome of Life and Death, consumed Bing Xuan’s immortal energy and three arcane dao fruits. That allowed the snake to transform into another form and ascend to arcane dao immortal realm!

Beigong Yu was living proof that Infernum would recover to their peak cultivation once reborn, even if they’d severed their cultivation like he had. This precedent was why Lu Yun had the rimesnake king suck Bing Xuan dry and teetering on the brink of death before the young man took the monster spirit’s life.

It still took the rimesnake king a hundred years to digest Bing Xuan’s cultivation and dao fruit, even with the assistance of the Tome of Life and Death. The king was the sovereign of its kind, while Bing Xuan’s true form was only a normal rimesnake. Their innate hierarchy was why the snake king could consume everything that had been Bing Xuan’s.

Chapter 336: Another Part of the Soul Lost

“Wait. Did they leave, just like that?” Lu Yun looked at the six profligates’ departing figures and gently rubbed his nose.

“If they didn’t, I bet you’d end up scamming the pants off them.” Qing Han couldn’t help but chuckle.

Although Lu Yun had achieved his primary goal, he hadn’t had time to implement many of his side plans because of the Gorb Demon’s appearance, so he’d been of a mind to try it one more time and have Beicang Qiong act as bait again.

The result? The six youngsters had made a break for it the moment they’d heard his proposal.

“Why don’t I break through to the void realm right now and be your bait instead?” Qing Han offered after thinking it over.

“Out of the question!” his friend vetoed right away. “That’s way too dangerous.”

“Beicang Qiong would be hurt if he could hear you.” There was a slight rosiness to Qing Han’s cheeks.

“Ahem!” Lu Yun also found the atmosphere a little strange and hastily changed the topic. “Anyways, since they’re gone, we’ll head for the skydragon tomb!”

Before Qing Han could reply, the governor slipped his hands into the disguised girl’s arms and dragged out a soundly sleeping little fox.

“Whaaat?” The fox pried open eyes still heavy with sleep, somewhat irritated. “Just now, I was dreaming that I’d turned back into the monster ancestor and was going on a rampage....”

“We’re going to the skydragon tomb, are you coming?” Lu Yun ignored the fox’s protests and cut straight to the point.

“Not going!” The fox’s tone was very firm. “Not that this ancestor is a coward, but, but... hmmm....” Even after thinking for a long while, she failed to come up with a plausible excuse.

“You stay here, then.” Lu Yun plonked the fox inside the formation space he’d previously created.

“You two come back as soon as possible...” the furball whispered with a supremely sorrowful look at Lu Yun and Qing Han.

“Even with part of your soul gone, you’re still a lofty golden immortal, the monster god of the North Sea, an almighty figure even on Levitating Island. Why did you turn such a chicken after coming here?” Lu Yun looked at the fox, a little puzzled.

“I-I...” the little fox felt like crying, “I lost another soul fragment. I only have two hun and five po left out of the three and seven I should have....”

Lu Yun and Qing Han glanced at each other, speechless.

“I think we should take her back to the great burial mound.” Qing Han furrowed his brows. “Or perhaps Levitating Island.”

Although Lu Yun had the Tome of Life and Death, he didn’t know the first thing about souls.

The fox had been fine back when she’d been with Mo Yi. Nothing out of place had happened after Mo Yi had brought her to Levitating Island, either. But in the short time since she’d left Levitating Island, she’d lost yet another soul fragment....

It seemed the so-called monster ancestor tomb wasn’t the whole reason Mo Yi had brought her to Levitating Island. It’d simply been because the monster ancestor had left arrangements on the island to protect the fox and safeguard her soul.

“There’s no time for that.” Lu Yun lightly shook his head.

Boom!

The surrounding space vibrated as an enormous floating peak appeared at the center of the formation: the resurrection layout.

What had shielded the fox wasn’t the great burial mound itself, but the resurrection layout within, so Lu Yun immediately called upon the realms of yin and yang to release the peak where the layout was laid.

As soon as the peak emerged, the formation space instantly showed signs of collapse.

“Feinie!” With a soft order from the governor, Feinie, clad in a black silk dress, walked out of the Gates of the Abyss.

When she came into view, an orb streaked with black and white slowly floated into the air and shrouded the formation in a dream-like radiance.

A whisker away from collapsing, the formation started to steady itself.

“Stay here with her,” Lu Yun told Feinie. His envoy’s nod was the only cue the little creature needed to dart into her arms.

Lu Yun rubbed his nose and subconsciously glanced at Qing Han, who pretended not to have seen anything.

.....

The North Sea Capital was restless once again.

The ninety-third monster prince, number one genius of the North Sea, a cultivator soon to break into the void realm and develop his own methods, had been roasted by the South Sea Gourmet. In fact, his half-cooked corpse was still strewn over the soon-to-sink Sunset Island.

Afterward, arcane dao immortal Bing Xuan, one of the pinnacle powerhouses of the North Sea, fought a great battle against the Gorb Demon to avenge the ninety-third prince, but both had ultimately disappeared. Their current whereabouts remained unknown.

One might say that the current monster spirit dynasty had suffered disastrous losses because of the skydragon tomb’s emergence.

Myriad Returns Market laid in shambles—or, more accurately speaking, was no more. The Scaled-Dragon King had revolted, and first prince Beigong Chonglou, eighteen monster kings, and two aether dao immortal powerhouses had gone missing. And now, the ninety third prince was dead, and even Bing Xuan was unaccounted for.

If the monster court couldn’t reap enough treasures from the skydragon tomb this time, it would, in all likelihood, be thoroughly ruined and supplanted by Ingress Island and the Dark North Sword Sect in due time.

Beleaguered on all sides, the monster court had long since sunk into panic mode and was jumping at every shadow. They were so on edge that the strongest formation inside the North Sea Palace, the one the dragons had once relied on to resist the blackwater snakes, was now operating at full strength.

.....

Lu Yun looked in the palace’s direction, a sharp glint in his eyes.

“Don’t tell me, you.... Do you really want to annihilate the North Sea monster spirits?” Looking at the governor’s expression, Qing Han couldn’t help but shiver.

“We’ll have to fight them face-to-face sooner or later.” Lu Yun looked down as he contemplated the issue. “Even if I don’t do anything now, Beigong Xuan will surely attack Dusk Province one day.”

The immortal weapon of war in the seaside stronghold of northern Dusk wasn’t meant to stop the monster spirits. It was an anti-Lu Yun measure.

The Feng Clan had been convinced it could defend itself back when it’d occupied Dusk Province, but many in the Nephrite court weren’t so confident. Therefore, the court had ultimately decided to garrison a weapon of war at the stronghold.

Currently, this weapon was pointed at Dusk City at all hours, ready to level the city if something were ever to happen.

In case of a monster spirit invasion, the Nephrite emperor would likely be more than glad to lend them a hand, as long as Nephrite Major could ultimately regain the province.

“Let’s do it then!” Excitement flashed on Qing Han’s face, his hair imperceptibly turning a faint, silvery sheen.

“I have a bit of Far-Reaching Captivating Fragrance left... It’ll be enough for everyone in the palace,” Su Xiaoxiao interjected eagerly. “The North Sea Palace used to be the North Sea Dragon Palace, and the Dragon Palace definitely had more than one treasury! In fact, even the past dragons and the current monster spirits are probably unaware of some of the hidden treasures.”

“Alright then!” Setting his jaw, the governor took out a few shapeshifting talismans and altered the group’s forms.

Not a single powerhouse was left behind to protect the palace. The strongest of the remaining lot was a mere peerless immortal level turtle, whereas Lu Yun had now three peak aether dao immortals and two arcane dao immortals at his command. Given the palace’s current condition, he could ransack it even without Qing Han’s help.

Chapter 337: Formation of Talismans

Su Xiaoxiao’s words swayed Lu Yun; he’d originally planned to lay claim to just the millions of monster spirit troops in the palace.

Being the elites of the army tasked with defending the imperial sea, their conversion into Infernum would not only weaken the North Sea monster spirits, but also empower Lu Yun.

During the previous raid, Bing Xuan had returned too soon in his haste to capture Lu Yun and the others. That meant Su Xiaoxiao had only managed to reel in a few of the big fish and had to leave behind the small fry.

There were an endless number of water spirits in the North Sea, and hundreds of millions of monster spirit soldiers in its waters. To Lu Yun, just taking all of the soldiers wouldn’t be enough to destroy the North Sea monster spirits.

Now however, he changed his mind.

The North Sea Palace had once been the home of the ancient dragons, and the North Sea monster spirits—be they from ancient times or present—had never gained full control over it.

In fact, the North Sea Emperor, Beigong Xuan, had poured all of his efforts into exploring the skydragon tomb, mainly to find the key to the dragon palace.

Once unlocked, the North Sea monster spirits would be able to truly dominate the North Sea. They could then crush Ingress Island and the Dark North Sword Sect, becoming the real master of the deep blue.

“If we’re gonna do it, we’ll do it right,” Lu Yun declared. “Let’s take the entire palace!”

The entire palace!

“What? How?” Qing Han goggled at Lu Yun, dumbfounded. Even the Azure Dragon King and Empress Myrtlestar were flabbergasted.

The palace appeared to span only two hundred and fifty kilometers, but there were many pockets of other dimensions within. Completely unfolded and integrated with the same space, the palace would span over five thousand kilometers.

“Feinie once set up a formation to move a city spanning five thousand kilometers, along with the earth vein underneath. I can certainly do whatever she can do!” Lu Yun grinned savagely, showing his teeth.

“But she was using the Formation Orb...” whispered Qing Han.

“And I can do it without the Formation Orb!” He inhaled deeply. “I’m going to set up a layout!”

Feinie had set up a formation, while he planned to set up a feng shui layout.

Although he had the same level of mastery over formations as Feinie, his true expertise lay in feng shui. In fact, he’d long incorporated his knowledge of feng shui layouts with formation dao. He could now easily switch between the two and identify the relationship between either one.

He also possessed numerous premium formation stones from the palace vault. They ranked even higher than the ones he’d received from Qing Xun back on Levitating Island.

“I... I don’t think that’s necessary.” Qing Han cocked his head thoughtfully as he watched Lu Yun busy himself with formation stones. “Why don’t you try creating an even larger Size Manipulation Talisman, one that’s powerful enough to shrink the palace?”

Lu Yun paused, his expression as still as his halted movements.

“When you used the talisman on me, I sensed that it would be voided if I resisted it. However, the palace itself isn’t capable of fighting back. I believe the talisman will work on it.

“Well, that is, if Su Xiaoxiao can knock out all of the living beings in the palace and stop them from resisting.”

“That I can do!” Su Xiaoxiao piped up. “I still have 150 grams of Far-Reaching Captivating Fragrance, which is enough to knock out all living beings within five thousand kilometers!”

“Five thousand!” Qing Han jumped. “That’s what you used to knock out the entire palace, isn’t it?”

“Mmhhh.” Su Xiaoxiao nodded, then remarked with some disappointment, “It’s a shame that the ingredients of the fragrance no longer exist in the current world of immortals, or I would be able to refine more.

“What I have now is enough, though.” She beamed with satisfaction. “There’s a lot of ingredients now that we didn’t have back then, either. Perhaps I’ll be able to come up with an even more powerful fragrance.”

Meanwhile, Lu Yun mused on how he could improve or strengthen the Size Manipulation Talisman, which was based on his corresponding death art. Unlike other, similar methods in the world of immortals, Size Manipulation could not only change something’s volume, but also the magnitude of its strength.

Lu Yun could increase or decrease his own power by ten times with his death art, and so could his talisman.

“Let me try something....” He manifested a small talisman with a single thought and attached it to a boulder next to him.

“Shrink!”

Whoosh!

With a slight tremor, the rock instantly shrank down and became a fist-sized stone.

“It works!” Eyes bright, Qing Han bent down to pick the stone up, which put a frown on his face. “The weight remains the same despite its smaller size, though.”

“Shrink!” commanded Lu Yun once again.

“It’s lighter now,” Qing Han quickly said, “by about ten times!”

“Let me try something else. The palace’s structure is much more complicated than a simple rock...” he murmured, entering the Gates of the Abyss.

Within hell, the City of Life had reached an impressive scale. Many Infernum went about their daily business within the city and had all settled down, making lives for themselves.

“Shrink!” Lu Yun stuck a talisman to the city.

Rumble!

The city trembled, then slowly decreased in size until it was only about as big as Lu Yun’s palm. The Infernum had shrunk along with it, since they couldn’t defy Lu Yun.

The city spans roughly five hundred kilometers. If all of the spatial formations within it were unfolded, it’d cover about four thousand kilometers. Meanwhile, I’ve amplified the strength of the Size Manipulation Talisman three thousand times over with the power of hell.

If I want to miniaturize the North Sea palace, I need it to be at least five thousand times stronger! Lu Yun frowned slightly. How am I going to increase a talisman’s power by that much....

Formation dao and equipment dao can be combined to create fortress ships and weapons of war, and Mo Yi managed to meld her combat arts into formations.... Why don't I combine talismans and formations to create a Size Manipulation Talisman Formation?

Lu Yun's eyes lit up. If formation stones can be used to set up formations, then talismans should be able to replace the stones and set up talisman formations! They can even be used to set up talisman layouts!

Chapter 338: The Fire That Destroyed Hell

Death arts, formations, talismans, and feng shui layouts.

Lu Yun wanted to combine all four of them into a brand new supplemental path, an achievement on par with the invention of the weapons of war. Its creator had been a heavyweight of immeasurable power, though, and Lu Yun was far from their level.

"Talismans and formations are intricately linked with each other. The patterns of talismans and etchings of formations capture the principles of heaven and earth, hinting at the grand order of creation...."

Lu Yun took out a formation stone and started etching lines into it, like he would with talismans. In the next instant, the power of hell converged on the stone and carved lines of purple-black talisman runes.

Crackle!

However, the premium formation stone, used in creating immortal-grade formation disks, shattered into fine pieces with a loud crack.

"Oh? That didn't work?" Lu Yun paused. "No, that's not it. This is hell, a fragmented world. The principles of heaven, earth, and creation are broken as well. If I etched that into a formation disk...."

Comprehension suddenly struck him. He stared dumbly at the shattered formation disk, his expression alternating between befuddlement and realization.

"The formation stone shattered, not because the rules are incomplete here, but because a power descended that can shatter it!" Lu Yun's eyes gleamed.

When he'd previously drawn talismans out of thin air in hell, those hadn't broken down. But when he etched the same lines into formation stones, he'd somehow summoned or attracted an unknown power.

"Broken down? Destroyed? No, that's not it...." He fell into deep thought again, meditating cross-legged on the ground. Time flowed differently in hell, so he wasn't worried about wasting it.

"Talismans and formations both delineate the rhythm of heaven and earth, but if the two are combined...."

Incomprehension once again flashed through his eyes as he gazed at the dark, lifeless sky of hell. The Tome of Life and Death manifested from his body and radiated black light to protect him. His brain was running on overdrive, and if this continued, his head might explode.

"It seems that if something is drawn that approaches the essence of heaven and earth... no matter what kind of a talisman or formation is created, it attracts the core energy of the world...!"

He shot to his feet.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

Enormous formation stones dropped around him and he began etching talisman runes into the boulders. However, he didn't draw complete runes into one single stone, but instead split each pattern across ten stones.

Ten stones formed a complete talisman unit, and a hundred and eight sets of them would create a complete talisman formation.

Bam!

As soon as the thousand and eighty formation stones were assembled to form a complete talisman formation, a loud rumble exploded in the air. The unexpected might slammed Lu Yun into the nearby Enneaworm Coffinbearers.

Whoosh!

Purple flames burst out from the stones and blazed fiercely, almost igniting the ground beneath them.

"What the hell?!" Lu Yun gaped at the intense fire with shock. He sensed an instinctual fear from the Tome of Life and Death upon facing the flame's existence. This purple flame... had once destroyed hell! And after hell's destruction, it'd integrated with the netherworld and become part of its essence.

Bam!

The Nine-Phoenix Casket shook and suddenly opened. An enormous, skeletal leg stepped out of the casket and stomped on the fire, putting it out. The leg then slowly retracted, and the casket lid grated back into place.

Lu Yun paused, shellshocked. There was a disoriented something, a chaotic thought from the void mumbling at him. He knew in his heart that it was the existences within the two coffins warning him against making similar attempts.

"It's not just due to the combination of formations and talismans, but because this is hell, and I am its master. The talisman formation just now was amplified to its maximum, thanks to the power of hell, which is why it summoned the fire that destroyed this netherworld."

He turned to the pitch-black pit of nothingness in hell.

There'd always been strange creatures lurking there, struggling to escape, but now they'd all scattered back to the depths and vanished. It would seem the purple fire scared them as well.

"Are they not on the same side?" Lu Yun was feeling out of his depth. "Perhaps I'll only figure out the truth of hell after I'm powerful enough."

He sighed and left with a turn.

No sooner had he departed than a tremor passed through the void in the deep depths of hell. A giant eye slowly opened, its intense gaze fixed in the direction where Lu Yun had departed.

“Get going,” a frosty command abruptly issued from the Enneaworm Coffinbearers, and a tongue of dark-crimson fire burst forth from the Nine-Phoenix Casket.

Derision flashed through the eye before it slowly melted back into the depths of hell. It seemed as if the darkness were its eyelids.

Neither the Infernum, Lu Yun’s envoys, or Yueshen, Ruyi, or the others noticed the exchange.

.....

“Finally!” Lu Yun wiped sweat off his forehead and cracked a smile. “That ought to do it.”

He’d settled down on an island in the imperial sea for further experimentation. After a few days, he finally hit upon the right method.

Drawing the runes of combat art talismans onto formation stones wasn’t the way to go. The correct way was to set up the formation with talismans. He’d drawn thirty-six hundred and fifty Size Manipulation Talismans and used them as the eye of a formation, arranging them according to how the death art functioned.

“Let’s give it a try!” Excitement surfaced Qing Han and Su Xiaoxiao’s transformed faces.

“Shrink!” With a wave of his hand, Lu Yun activated the talisman formation.

In the blink of an eye, the island shrank from fifty kilometers wide to roughly eighty meters.

“You did it!” Qing Han’s eyes shone brightly.

“It’ll hold for about ten breaths of time!” Lu Yun stared fixedly at the talisman formation. It shattered after ten breaths, and the island returned to its original size.

Size Manipulation could be used on inanimate items, but the death art had to be sustained by energy. After ten breaths, the power within the talisman formation would be exhausted and the death art would dissipate. When attached to a cultivator or an immortal, the talisman could be sustained by the individual’s inner energy, but that wasn’t the case for objects.

“Come on, let’s go to the palace!” With a wave of his hand, Lu Yun shrunk the three of them into dust particles and vanished.

Within hell, Xuanxi had drawn thirty-six thousand and five hundred Size Manipulation Talismans for Lu Yun.

“Strange, where did those three go?” A dumbfounded fish monster spirit surfaced from the water and looked around in confusion. “Did the island get smaller just now? It’s big again.... What’s going on?”

.....

The North Sea Palace was on high alert.

The great formation defending the palace was operating at full capacity, and layers of detection formations covered twenty-five hundred kilometers around the palace. Even the smallest plankton had been driven away.

Admiral Turtle, a peerless immortal, was the only expert left holding down the fort. It could be said that the North Sea Palace had never been so vulnerable.

Although there were millions of soldiers and officers milling around, the peerless immortals leading them were nowhere to be found. Thus, they could no longer assemble into battle formations.

Without those battle tactics, the soldiers were as weak as a swarm of flies. A swat would be more than enough to crush them all. And unfortunately for them, the layers of defensive formations didn't work at all on Lu Yun.

They were as small as particles of dust and managed to slip through the cracks of the formations and reach the palace's front door.

North Sea, Home of Worms!

The giant plaque remained nailed to the light barrier, right over the front gates.

"Open!" Lu Yun commanded before an almost unnoticeable crack on the barrier.

Rumble.

The formation circling the palace began trembling.

"What's going on?!" Fretfully hiding in the palace, Admiral Turtle jumped into the air with fright.

"Dammit, they're back!"

He swiftly activated another formation as soon as the outside barrier shook and disappeared from the palace.

Back when Lu Yun had come with the troublemakers to seek revenge against Beigong Chonglou, he'd chosen not to break the barrier because he didn't want Beigong Chonglou to escape.

Crack.

An ugly scar manifested on the barrier. This had been the demise of two generations of dragons. Enemies of the ancient dragon palace had once torn the formation open, leaving the giant crack, and the blackwater snakes had invaded the palace through this same crack.

"Emergency, Admiral, emergency! The formation defending the palace has been broken!"

"Admiral? Where's the admiral?"

Chaos and panic engulfed the palace, then a familiar fragrance wove through the air and wafted into their nostrils. Unconsciousness rippled through the crowd, resulting in everyone collapsing to the floor.

Thirty-six thousand and five hundred talismans circled the palace.

"Shrink!" Lu Yun exclaimed.

Hum.

The two hundred-fifty-kilometer-wide palace disappeared, leaving only a defensive formation guarding an empty hole.

“It’ll only hold for three breaths...” Scowling, Lu Yun walked up to the palm-sized palace and grabbed it, but it wouldn’t budge.

Chapter 339: Dragon Nest

It was impossible to budge!

Even shrunken down to the size of a human palm, the dragon palace didn’t shift a single inch, no matter how firmly Lu Yun yanked.

His Size Manipulation Formation was operating at full strength. It not only decreased the palace’s size, but also reduced the weight and energy within a hundredfold. After all, the formation was made from thirty-six thousand and five hundred Size Manipulation Talismans.

True to its reputation, this palace was indeed far from ordinary.

“Retrieve!”

The realms of yin and yang rumbled into action at Lu Yun’s roar. Power from the netherworld encased the miniature dragon palace and dragged it inexorably forward, but still stopped short of its goal.

“Still not enough eh? Combust!”

Not even the twin realms of yin and yang could force it inside the Gates of the Abyss!

Without wasting a second, Lu Yun ignited a goodwill fruit and unleashed the full might of the realms of yin and yang. They engulfed the palace in a terrifying suction force and dragged it into the netherworld.

Rumble...

The palace recovered its normal size the moment it entered the Gates of the Abyss, and the energy of death immediately infiltrated its halls and killed every single living being inside. Those who passed away in hell turned into Infernum all on their own; Lu Yun didn’t need to lift a finger.

“We’re leaving, right now!” Without wasting time to inspect the treasures stashed inside the palace, the governor took Qing Han and Su Xiaoxiao by the hands and left at once.

An empty defensive formation was the only thing left of the monumental palace. In front of it, there was even a plaque that read ‘North Sea, Home of Worms’ nailed to it. Henceforth, the North Sea’s ruling dynasty would be synonymous with fools and buffoons in the world of immortals.

.....

“We did it, we actually did it!” Flushed with the heat of excitement, Qing Han’s eyes gleamed vividly. “To think we’d really... hehehe!”

Of course, he didn’t spell it out loud. They were still in the North Sea, and plenty of fish and plankton roamed the waters. Every one of them could turn into a spy at a moment’s notice.

“Yeah, we did it! And now we head to the skydragon tomb.” His expression as serene as still water, Lu Yun didn’t express too much excitement.

For him, taking the palace away was merely a means to strike a blow at the monster spirit court and distract them so much that they wouldn't have the energy to deal with him. He would also never release the palace out of the netherworld ever again.

Beigong Xuan had certainly left backup measures inside the palace. If it were ever to exit the netherworld, the monster emperor would undoubtedly swoop down in the next second—an ability the North Sea dragon kings of the past had also possessed. The current Lu Yun didn't know how to disable those measures just yet.

In any case, the Skydragon Pearl inside the skydragon tomb was his original goal for this journey!

.....

It'd been more than a month since the emergence of the skydragon tomb. Too many had died or been injured inside, and even three dao immortals had fallen.

On the other hand, there truly was a boundless supply of treasures inside the tomb. All kinds of items long lost to the world had surfaced one after another, to say nothing of fragments of ancient sites. The heightened fervor incited countless immortals to join the treasure hunt, and within a short month, more than ten thousand people had charged into the tomb.

In this current age, immortals were very used to these tombs.

Every single one of them was equivalent to tremendous opportunity and fortune. In fact, the species and clans reigning at the top of the world of immortals, the dynasties ruling the nine majors, and the masters of the ten lands had all come to power thanks to these ancient tombs.

As for death?

Many immortals saw death inside an ancient tomb as their final destination. In the last eighty millennia, more than half of them had fallen during the course of tomb explorations. So, while this dragon tomb wasn't as safe as it was first rumored to be, that still didn't stop immortals from pouring inside.

.....

"What am I seeing? Did two spirit realm cultivators really just head inside?" On watch outside, a golden immortal human couldn't help but gawk after seeing Qing Han and Lu Yun enter the tomb.

"That's a skydragon tomb that exceeds dao-grade, for crying out loud. It might be safer than most, but it's still not a place cultivators should get involved in..."

"You... didn't recognize them?" Another golden immortal looked at him in astonishment.

"Those two may be cultivators, but one is Lu Yun and the other is Qing Han!" solemnly explained a third. "Both of them are protected by dao immortal powerhouses. On Immortal Sky Island, one of Lu Yun's dao immortals stepped on the number one Ling genius, Ling Ruyi, and smashed him flat!"

"You're right, it really is the two of them!" The golden immortal's eyes lit up. "The Ling Clan almost turned the North Sea upside down in their search for Lu Yun, yet here they are!"

"Don't tell me, are you thinking of..." The other immortal blinked.

“Lu Yun refined treasures for ten days straight on Immortal Sky Island and earned the gratitude of many people. But I, Qiu Jiuling, didn’t gain anything from him, so no one can fault me for providing the Ling Clan with his whereabouts.” Desire flashed through Qiu Jiuling’s face. “I’m only half a step away from the arcane immortal realm, and the reward the Ling Clan is offering is a dao-grade item!”

Lu Yun and Qing Han strutting into the Skydragon Tomb in broad daylight had naturally attracted the attention of many.

Back on Immortal Sky Island, Xue Daozi had almost uprooted the Ling Clan’s foundations by crushing Ling Ruyun underfoot. In return, the clan had mobilized en masse to scour the North Sea and capture the young man.

However, Lu Yun had altered his looks beyond recognition. The Lings wouldn’t have recognized him even if he were standing right in front of them.

Hence, for lack of better options, the clan could only offer a bounty for information on Lu Yun’s movements. Their fleet of fortress ships was already stationed at the border of Dusk Province, ready to attack the province the moment Lu Yun was taken.

Now that many had seen Lu Yun enter the tomb, more than one person thought of informing the Ling Clan. After all, not everyone had benefited from him on Immortal Sky Island.

In next to no time, the Ling powerhouses abandoned their search in the North Sea and rushed toward the tomb.

However, another piece of information then struck the cultivators in the North Sea speechless: the monster palace had disappeared. This was so monumental that they simply felt a complete absence of emotion.

However, the formation guarding the palace was still there. Clearly, someone had moved the dragon palace that’d been in place in the North Sea since time immemorial. It was the most brutal blow that could be delivered to the North Sea’s rulers.

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“This... is unexpected. The tomb’s actually a dragon nest.” Inside the tomb, Lu Yun looked incredulously at its layout.

A dragon nest!

There was a feng shui layout on the level of a grand influence called the Homecoming of the Dragon Horde. However, in Lu Yun’s eyes, the dragon nest in front of him wasn’t a feng shui layout, but the blueprint in which those layouts were based on—a genuine dragon nest!

It was similar to how the Enneawym Coffinbearers inside hell served as the basis of every Enneawym Coffinbearer layout throughout the worlds.

A lair of dragons, where the dragon race had been born.

“This place isn’t a dragon tomb, but a dragon nest! However, the energy of death is really thick here. Someone must have reshaped it into a tomb... they wanted to sever the fortunes of all dragons!” Lu Yun

murmured as he took everything in. "It's not fully at the level of a Skandha Extinction Tomb, but the difference is negligible. Unless I'm mistaken, the ancestor of dragons should be buried here."

Chapter 340: A Sleeve Dripping Wet

"A dragon nest?" Qing Han looked around incredulously.

A dragon nest was an ancestral land for dragons. Both ancestral lands and ancestral tombs imparted blessings to their descendents, but the former embodied life while the latter embodied death. If the two were combined, unshakable bad fortune would plague the entire clan, and its destruction wouldn't be too far off.

Lu Yun could tell there was a curse on the dragon nest, similar to the one on the Skandha Extinction Tomb.

Aoxue had been able to sense the skydragon tomb because it was a dragon nest as well. In fact, all dragons would be able to sense it upon entering the North Sea.

"It seems that the destruction of the North Sea dragons ten thousand years ago didn't come wholly out of the blue."

Ten thousand years ago, the Aos had ruled the North Sea. The Ao surname belonged to the draconic imperial clan, signifying their legitimacy. Apart from Aoxue, there were very likely no more Ao-named dragons in the world of immortals. The surviving dragons were the F?ng Clan of the Unmeant Sea, Jing Clan of the Unsullied Sea, and Qi Clan of the Untroubled Sea.

The Unselfish Sea was ruled by dragons as well, but not pureblooded descendents of the old dragons. Their rulers were immortal beasts, or monster spirits of draconic bloodlines, who'd then transformed into dragons after discarding their original bloodline.

The Scaled-Dragon King was from the Unselfish Sea himself, but he'd left home because he refused to give up his crocodile bloodline.

The ancient dragons had once possessed a sprawling network of descendants across the entire world, but now, they weren't even in control of the four seas of the world. And this was all a result of the skydragon tomb in the North Sea.

"Come on, let's see for ourselves what's so different about this dragon nest. We survived the Skandha Extinction Tomb, this will be easy." Excitement thickened on Qing Han's face.

Lu Yun held his forehead. His friend had developed a blind trust in his abilities, believing him to be invincible in ancient tombs.

Well, his enemies truly would be doing nothing but courting death if they made a move against him in a tomb. Here, he could kill dao immortals in ten thousand different ways. He hadn't disguised himself or Qing Han before entering the tomb, precisely so they could lure in those who wanted them dead and teach those would-be villains a painful lesson.

Moreover, Lu Yun had a specific goal in mind. He wanted to show the world his ability to navigate ancient tombs with trivial ease.

Among his followers were two arcane dao immortals, three peak aether dao immortals, and... almost all of the elites of the North Sea court. Lu Daoling, the Lu ancestor, would also come out of hiding to protect Lu Yun when circumstances called for it. The young man now possessed enough power to rival any top faction in the world.

The only thing that was lacking was his cultivation, and he needed goodwill to bolster that. For that, the best way to gain goodwill was to voluntarily help others, thus garnering their gratitude, and in turn, their goodwill.

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The formations at the entrance had been broken long ago. They weren't from the ancient times, but had been set up ten thousand years ago by the North Sea dragons to protect the tomb.

This tomb was in essence a dragon nest. Although its layout didn't match that of a dragon nest, Lu Yun could see it for what it was. The real nest existed elsewhere in the tomb. Layout upon layout had formed to conceal and protect the true core of the dragon nest.

"Strange. How did Xiaoxiao and Diexi find their way here in the first place?" After entering the tomb, Qing Han followed closely behind Lu Yun with a hand on his shoulder, while the expert tomb raider looked around thoughtfully.

The skydragon tomb had emerged because Diexi had accidentally torn down the coiled mountains outside the tomb, but she didn't know how to enter it. In the end, Su Xiaoxiao and she had miraculously shown up on Levitating Island and led a two-headed zombie from this tomb to a giant corpse coffin in the inner sea.

There were a good number of two-headed zombies in the skydragon tomb. According to information from Canghai Chengkong, an arcane dao immortal of the Dark North Sword Sect had been torn to pieces by one such zombie, their arcane dao fruits consumed as well.

Neither Lu Yun's envoy nor the zombie king had entered the tomb with the two young explorers, but had instead headed to the Dark North Sword Sect and Ingress Island, respectively, to keep an eye on the two factions. Lu Yun could deal with the North Sea court, but if the two other marine factions made a move against Dusk Province, he'd be in real danger.

Although Su Xiaoxiao and Diexi hadn't ascended to the dao immortal realm, they each had their own set of unique skills. Equipped with Size Manipulation and Shapeshifting Talismans, they could absolutely create enough mayhem to keep the two factions busy.

Meanwhile, Aoxue entered the tomb from another side with Beigong Yu, the Scaled-Dragon King, and Xue Daozi.

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With the dragon nest as a foundation, the dragon tomb expanded from it as an isolated patch of space, paths crisscrossing it like a giant maze. Among the paths were smaller burial chambers; not annex rooms, but standalone tombs.

The skydragon tomb was a gargantuan mausoleum, burying not only draconic elites, but also immortals from other races. Over the past month, the tombs on the fringe had been thoroughly emptied, leaving not even a floor or wall tile behind.

Lu Yun and Qing Han followed Canghai Chengkong's guidance and cautiously made their way to the heart of the tomb.

"It's been a while, Lu Yun. I didn't expect to run into you here," a chilling voice suddenly sounded at Lu Yun's ear. Heart pounding, Lu Yun whirled around and found Jin Heyi and Jiangchen Wushang emerging out of the blue with a large group of zombies. He hadn't noticed their presence at all.

"So it's senior brother Jin and senior brother Jiangchen. It has indeed been a while." Lu Yun took a closer look at Jiangchen Wushang; he'd ascended to the void realm as well. The fact that the Corpse Refiners had gifted him with a skeletal fortress ship and Bag of Corpse Refinement made it apparent that he was no regular genius.

Stirring up trouble in the tomb, the two had taken advantage of the confusion to refine a good number of elites into zombies. Even some of the zombies that'd originally been in the tomb had come under their command.

Jin Heyi stared at Lu Yun with a delighted expression. He'd suffered quite a few defeats at Lu Yun's hands, and even his Celestial Mistfield Banners had been taken away.

"Fate has guided us to meet here." Jin Heyi smiled. "The tomb is dangerous, but the knowledge of the Corpse Refiners enables me to safely navigate the tomb with no need to fear any zombies. Why don't we team up?"

"Sure." Lu Yun beamed widely as well. "Qing Han and I were just worrying how we were going to make it through. Now that senior brother Jin is here, we have nothing to be afraid of."

Qing Han could tell from Lu Yun's smile that he was plotting against Jin Heyi.

Jiangchen Wushang didn't say anything, since he wasn't in a position to. He'd refined a good number of zombies and acquired many treasures along the way, thanks in great part to Jin Heyi's protection.

"Strange, why is my sleeve always sopping wet?" Jiangchen Wushang shook his left arm and dried his sleeve with inner energy.

Despite being underwater, the dragon tomb existed in an isolated space with no water around them. However, he'd noticed that, upon entering the tomb, his left sleeve would become dripping wet every once in a while.

Lu Yun subconsciously turned to him and froze.