

Necropolis 451

Chapter 451: The Eyes are as Moving as the Rivers, The Brows are Beautiful Like Jiangnan's Peaks

Scarlet Ape's question prompted Empress Myrtlestar, Lu Yun, and Qing Han to shift their gazes to Ge Long, eyes burning hotly with curiosity.

The old servant puffed his chest out and declared proudly, "This humble one is Ge Long, the grand steward of Lu Manor in Dusk City!"

Dusk Province had essentially declared independence from Nephrite Major and the governor's manor had been transformed into the Lu Manor, referring not to the Lu Clan, but Lu Yun.

After his statement, Ge Long bent down and fawned over Lu Yun with an ingratiating smile.

"Tsk." Lu Yun curled his lip and didn't pay any more attention to Ge Long. So far, he had yet to uncover anything suspicious about Ge Long. The old servant's name had been written into the Tome of Life and Death above the names of his Envoys of Samsara.

"You don't have to bother yourself with the seventeen crippled immortals, Senior Myrtlestar. I can deal with them myself." Lu Yun smiled and grabbed Qing Han's hands. "C'mon, let's go take a stroll. We haven't had a chance to take in the sights and sounds of Destiny City since we arrived."

The two of them walked out of Jadeite Manor holding hands.

"They... actually walked out of the manor! Do they have a death wish?!"

While the seventeen origin dao immortals had left, many immortals still stayed to keep an eye on the manor. They could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw Lu Yun and Qing Han leaving the manor.

The news quickly spread through Destiny City. Although the Sovereign Meet had ended, many people still milled around in the city. They wanted to see for themselves how those two shitstirrers died.

Most importantly, Chu Yingxin was still here. Many were still eyeing him, planning on skinning him to refine a robe. However, the seventeen origin dao immortals made them think twice before starting any trouble in Destiny City.

Some wanted to stir up chaos for a chance to kill more cultivators, much like what had happened after the second round of the Sovereign Meet. What prevented a repeat of that mayhem was three origin dao immortals allying to kill the peak arcane dao immortal responsible for agitating would-be troublemakers, then slaughtering his clan members as well.

Since that swift retribution, no one had dared cause trouble in Destiny City.

"Quick! Notify the powerhouses in the clan that Qing Yu and his Sidekick have left Jadeite Manor!"

Though the news immediately got out, no one leaped into action against Lu Yun and Qing Han.

The seventeen origin dao immortals and Scarlet Ape had a deal, and the entire world of immortals served as witness. They wouldn't go after the two youths during the next three days. These immortals cared a great deal about face and wouldn't risk their reputation by going back on their word.

Moreover, it'd be highly unwise to offend Scarlet Ape.

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"The seventeen origin dao immortals aren't going to do anything because of their image and their connection with that big monkey." Resentment brewed in many hearts. They all hated Lu Yun and Qing Han, but the deadly threat Scarlet Ape posed gave them pause.

"What if... the two of them make the first move?" An immortal's eyes lit up. "If those two little bastards attack first, we'll be able to kill them without the seventeen origin dao immortals' involvement. In fact, I'm sure they'll even protect us from Scarlet Ape!"

"You're... right. That'll work!" After a quick exchange of ideas, the immortals snuck up on Lu Yun and Qing Han. Not to ambush them, of course.

"Tsk, two men holding hands in public... That's just..." jeered a derisive voice. "Is this what people call passion of the cut sleeve? I didn't expect the two powerful youths who swept the Sovereign Arena to be into each other. What an eye-opener!"

The unwanted commentator was a golden core realm cultivator. He stared at Lu Yun and Qing Han with repulsed mockery on his face.

"If you'd dared say such things in public on Earth, you'd get a good beating," Lu Yun addressed the cultivator in a serious tone.

"Earth?" The golden core realm cultivator paused, flabbergasted. However, his comment had already triggered a corresponding clamor of insults.

The culture of the world of immortals was similar to that of feudal society on Earth; the populace still held uncommonly conservative values. Lu Yun and Qing Han would've attracted scorn for simply walking hand-in-hand in the street, let alone when someone was purposefully drawing attention to them.

All kinds of distasteful insinuations and personal attacks were thrown around; anyone else would've instantly lost control of their emotions and picked a fight.

Qing Han was trembling, her eyes blazing with fury. What those people were saying didn't even bear dwelling upon for a single second. They had absolutely crossed a line!

"Hehehe, who would've thought these two powerful youths like going through back doors? I wonder who's on top in bed?"

Hum.

Immense inner energy burst forth from Qing Han as she levelled a cold gaze at the wretched nascent spirit realm cultivator.

"What?" the man continued taunting. "You don't dare do anything to me in Destiny City!"

"Don't mind them. They're trying to taunt us into attacking them." Lu Yun patted her on the shoulder and injected her with a stream of calming energy. He was entirely unfazed by the insults. Compared to the insults of Earth, this was nothing.

“Oho, so you’re the taker and he’s the giver,” the cultivator leered lasciviously.

Qing Han flushed red in the face. “Let’s go back!”

“That’s not an option anymore.” Lu Yun shook his head. “They must’ve set up other traps for us. Let them talk, it doesn’t hurt us.”

Lu Yun was right. If they turned back, they’d be facing other trumped up provocations. He could control his temper, but Qing Han wasn’t able to do so. She threw him a disapproving look and lightly waved her hand.

A veil was gently brushed to the side and the entire city fell silent. A girl who was too stunning to exist in reality stood beside Lu Yun. Three years ago, Qing Yu had only been fifteen and bore hints of childishness on her face. Now, however, she was an adult.

Lu Yun stared at her, lightheaded and in a daze.

“The clouds are your clothes, the flowers your visage? Yours is the most beautiful landscape; your eyes as moving as the rivers, and your brows as beautiful as Jiangnan’s peaks.” He muttered various lines of different poems to himself and struggled to find the right words to describe Qing Yu. “The little fox is nothing compared to you.”

Other cultivators and immortals gaped at Qing Yu as well.

“She, she... so Qing Yu’s a girl...” the cultivators that’d been mocking them were rendered speechless.

“No wonder she disguised herself as a man. I almost lost control of my dao heart for a moment! How shameful,” an arcane dao immortal sighed, breaking out of his reverie.

Qing Yu was stunning enough to topple a nation. More importantly, as the dao sovereign blessed by the Dao Flower, there was a unique grace about her that made all other fairies in the world of immortals pale in comparison, Empress Myrtlestar and the little fox included.

“Hmph.” Qing Yu pouted and huffed. With a wave of her hand, she turned back into Qing Han.

Chapter 452: Setting Up A Formation

Both male cultivators and immortals in the surroundings gaped dumbly. Qing Yu’s parting huff was especially enticing to them.

“I think... I should find myself a dao partner...” an immortal muttered, his eyes glued to Qing Yu.

Although she’d already concealed her visage and transformed back into a regular man, her stunning appearance from moments ago was deeply branded into many people’s minds. Her beauty ran more than skin-deep. There was a unique grace and presence to her, due to her being the only dao sovereign of the immortal dao.

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“So she is indeed a woman.” A few Donglin immortals watched from atop a tall building, their expressions dark.

“A Qing surname... is she... Damn that Qing Clan, hiding the truth from House Donglin!”

A woman of cosmic constitution with the surname of Qing—that couldn’t be a coincidence.

Suspicions were rising in House Donglin that Qing Yu was the girl with the cosmic constitution born to Qing Taxian and his dao partner all those years back. The signs had all been there, but the babe had somehow ended up being male in the end.

“What can we do with that information though?” Another immortal shook his head. “The man beside the woman put a bounty of a hundred billion crystals on Taihuang as soon as he approached. He’s still in hiding even now.”

Any other time, no one in the world of immortals would dare go after Donglin Taihuang after House Donglin had made their own declaration.

However, House Donglin had fallen to the same fate as the Destiny city lord, their reputation and dignity in tatters around their ankles. Although they were extremely powerful, they’d lost all authority. They’d even been robbed of their ancestral lands. Who cared what House Donglin wanted anymore?

“We must capture that woman no matter what and present her to Taihuang as a cultivation vessel!” a Donglin dao immortal asserted coolly. “If Taihuang gains the cosmic power from the woman, there’s an eighty percent chance for him to pluck an origin dao fruit without suffering any injuries!”

“Let’s see what the ancestor has to say.” Two dao immortals from House Donglin cast their gazes into the depths of the clouds.

The seventeen origin dao immortals hadn’t returned to Destiny City, but were instead hovering in the clouds above the city. Among them was the Donglin ancestor, the man who’d split the house from the Lin Clan: Dong Lin.

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“If anyone dares kill Fairy Qing Yu, I, Yu Botong, will be the first to fight them to the death!”

“That’s right. Fairy Qing Yu is innocent. It’s that Sidekick who’s been a bad influence on her!”

“Take down the Sidekick and save her from the suffering and torment she’s in!”

The entire area dissolved into utter chaos. Many of the weaker-minded cultivators had already fallen head over heels for Qing Yu, their minds filled with only thoughts of her stunning figure.

She did this on purpose, she totally did this on purpose! Lu Yun quickly understood that Qing Yu’s presence held a fatal attraction for immortals and cultivators alike. Regular cultivators couldn’t resist it at all.

Of course, Qing Han could’ve fully retracted her attraction, but she’d decided to enact this little bit of retaliation against those who’d so grievously insulted her before.

“We need to go!” Lu Yun grabbed Qing Han. The two of them turned into particles of dust and disappeared.

“Fairy! Where’s my fairy?!” Numerous cultivators burst into tears when Qing Han disappeared from their sight, their expressions lost and forlorn.

“They turned into two particles and escaped over in that direction.” Origin dao immortals sitting cross-legged on the clouds tensed; they’d been keeping a constant eye on Destiny City with their consciousness.

“It’s just a little trick. It may be able to fool the regular immortals, but not our senses.” Dong Lin appeared to be a middle-aged man, quite unassuming in a long, gray robe. However, the other origin dao immortals present were all exceedingly wary of him.

The Lin Clan was already considered one of the top factions in the world of immortals. They were no lesser than any of the heavenly courts of the nine majors or the ten lands in terms of raw power.

However, Dong Lin had managed to win independence for his branch from the clan, breaking his family out of the clan’s blockade and bringing them to Aureate Major. There, they settled down and gradually grew into the top aristocracy of the major.

Dong Lin hadn’t even been an origin dao immortal at the time.

It was after the establishment of House Donglin that he’d entered the void and plucked an origin dao fruit, ascending to the realm. However, he didn’t escape the same fate that had befallen the other origin dao immortals.

The immortals around him expressed their agreement.

“I want that Qing Yu,” Dong Lin said suddenly. “She has a cosmic constitution and will make the perfect cultivation vessel for Taihuang.”

The others didn’t respond to Dong Lin’s declaration.

“What happens once Donglin Taihuang gains a woman with a cosmic constitution?” wondered a man with fiery long hair. He was a heavyweight who hadn’t suffered that serious a dao injury, which made him one of the most powerful among the origin dao immortals. It’d been he who’d forced Scarlet Ape to back down earlier.

“There’s an eighty percent chance that Taihuang can ascend as a complete origin dao immortal,” Dong Lin admitted candidly.

The others shook and threw disbelieving glances at Dong Lin.

“It’s not a trifling matter to become a complete origin dao immortal!” the man suddenly scoffed. “All of us know how deadly the monsters guarding the dao fruit tree are. You’ve been there yourself as well. Do you really think acquiring a woman of cosmic constitution is enough for him to defeat them?”

“I am skeptical, yes,” Dong Lin nodded. “But Taihuang says he is eighty percent confident. I will not let that opportunity slip away then.”

It’d been Dong Lin who’d personally threatened the Qing Clan into bowing their heads to House Donglin all those years back. The major factions of Nephrite Major were considered top factions, but none of them had an origin dao immortal among them.

Followers of the first Nephrite Celestial Emperor, including Lu Daoling and the Qing ancestor, had only plucked nine arcane dao fruit, and dared not push their cultivation further.

If a complete origin dao immortal ever came onto the scene, perhaps they'd be able to heal the injuries the crippled origin dao immortals had suffered through the course of their cultivation.

The nine celestial emperors wouldn't get involved, since it would interfere with the karmic retribution of the dao fruit tree. They'd avoided the monsters guarding the tree with the power of the nine heavenly mandates and weren't going to overstep where they shouldn't.

Dong Lin's words silenced the other origin dao immortals.

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After evading the ardent cultivators, Lu Yun and Qing Han found a quiet spot and used a simple transformation method. With their appearances transformed, they freely wandered around Destiny City.

There was nothing in the city that was worth Lu Yun's time. He was, in fact, secretly setting up a formation in order to help them escape. It wasn't a formation of immortal dao, but a shamanic creation. Although it fell under the purview of the immortal dao, it didn't give off the same energy that an immortal dao formation would.

After spending the day frolicking in the city, Lu Yun and Qing Han returned to Jadeite Manor.

"Ah, the two of you finally came." Lu Yun perked up when he saw the two visitors in the manor. Lin Yu and Lin Xuan! The two brothers had finally come to Jadeite Manor.

However, they spared no thought for Lu Yun, but instead stared at Qing Han with heated gazes.

"My goddess!"

"Fairy!"

"Get out!" raged Lu Yun.

Chapter 453: Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits

Lu Yun punted Lin Yu and Lin Xuan away. Qing Han ducked her head, embarrassed. She hadn't expected the reveal of her true self to have such lingering repercussions.

The Lin brothers were a pair of formidable formation masters who'd touched the ultimate heights of the formation dao, but even they'd lost their calm before Qing Han. They'd obviously witnessed the precise moment when Qing Han revealed her true self.

Lu Yun walked up to them and shot the effects of two Tranquility Talismans into their bodies, sending a shudder down their spines. Their gazes on Qing Han were no longer fervently heated. While traces of admiration remained, they were much more subdued.

Back to the matter at hand—they'd carefully made their way to Jadeite Manor, lest someone discover their involvement with the 'shitstirrers'. The Lin Clan would be in a world of trouble if they were seen entering the manor.

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Over the next three days, Lu Yun tore down all of the formations in and outside Jadeite Manor. There were no barriers left to guard the manor, and all cultivators could freely look into the premises.

Of course, they didn't dare do anything more other than simply observe with their eyes. With Scarlet Ape here, not even origin dao immortals would risk a scan with their consciousness.

At the center of the manor was a small, exceedingly barebones altar. It was less than nine meters tall, and one might've taken it as a pile of mere dirt without closer inspection. Lu Yun had somehow acquired a jug of blood, and was pouring it onto the altar, painting it red.

A faint crimson figure made a circle around the manor before disappearing.

"The hearts' blood of ten thousand spirits!" Scarlet Ape enunciated with its gaze fixed on the blood seeping into the altar. "The blood still lives, which means you took their hearts' blood while they were still alive. You humans are as cruel as you've ever been," it sneered.

Lu Yun shrugged. "What would you have done if it were you?"

"Kill them before taking their blood," Scarlet Ape responded like it was stating the obvious. "The blood would be just as potent if it was extracted the moment they die."

"Man, that's monster spirits for you." Lu Yun affected a dramatic sigh. "As bloodthirsty as you've ever been. I'm only taking their heart blood, not their lives. Why should I kill them? They were treated after having their blood extracted."

Scarlet Ape paused.

It'd been Su Xiaoxiao and Xingzi who'd collected the hearts' blood. Although Dusk Province had been blockaded, the vast North Sea bordered the province and countless living souls called the ocean home. It wasn't that difficult a task to extract the hearts' blood of ten thousand creatures.

Lu Yun wasn't the sort who reacted well to threats. He most resented any attempts at coercion by force. Since the seventeen origin dao immortals had given him an ultimatum and ordered him to leave Destiny City in three days, he wouldn't comply without giving them a surprise.

During the preparation process, Scarlet Ape had been following Lu Yun around, observing his every move with its eyes and consciousness. The more it saw, the more baffled it was.

Lu Yun reminded it of a human child making cakes out of mud, but instead of using mud, he was playing with the hearts' blood of a thousand living souls to form a crude altar.

"What exactly are you doing?" Scarlet Ape couldn't repress his curiosity.

"Remember, we're enemies," Lu Yun snorted. "Do you think I'll reveal my secrets to my enemies?"

Scarlet Ape glared back with fiery eyes but didn't say anything.

"Alright, it's been three days. You may leave now." Lu Yun's expression turned steely. "Take the Silvermoon Wolfking and silverback gorilla with you."

Scarlet Ape looked up and saw that the seventeen origin dao immortals were already showing themselves up in the clouds. Their attention had shifted from Lu Yun, the main culprit, to Qing Han, thus greatly rousing Lu Yun's ire.

"House Donglin must've seen Qing Yu reveal her true self in Destiny City," he muttered to himself. "The origin dao immortals must be after her because of House Donglin!"

"You're on your own, then. Let's hope you'll really be able to run away from them." Scarlet Ape grinned and grabbed Chu Yingxin, the Silvermoon Wolfking, and the silverback gorilla, while Lin Yu and Lin Xuan had been taken somewhere safe by Ge Long a long time ago.

Lu Yun and Qing Han were the only ones left in Jadeite Manor.

"So the two insects haven't fled yet?" An origin dao immortal emerged from the clouds with a sneer—Dong Lin. Beside him was Donglin Taihuang. The greed in the Donglin arcane dao immortal's eyes was so thick that it almost tangibly wrapped around Qing Han's body.

"You must be the woman of cosmic constitution from the Qing Clan," Donglin Taihuang murmured. "I sensed the birth of such a person in the clan eighteen years ago, but she disappeared later on."

"Are they staying in the city because you're protecting them, Destiny City Lord?" Dong Lin cast his gaze at the city lord's manor before deciding whether to make a move.

The city lord silently swallowed his pride and humiliation. Destiny City was his territory, yet the seventeen visiting origin dao immortals were doing as they pleased with no regard for his authority.

"Since you've decided to stay out of this matter, I'll take down those two insects." Dong Lin reached out with a giant hand toward Jadeite Manor and grabbed at Lu Yun and Qing Han.

In the eyes of origin dao immortals like him, Lu Yun and Qing Han were as weak as ants. Without Scarlet Ape's protection, capturing them would be as easy as flipping his hand.

Donglin Taihuang smiled as he watched his clan's ancestor take action.

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"It's time, senior." Lu Yun bowed to the altar.

"Ai." Qi Hai sighed softly and vanished from hell. "I didn't expect you to live to this day, Little Ying. You've been through a lot lately, haven't you?"

Qi Hai appeared on the simple altar and smiled at the giant hand descending from the air. "Let big brother get in a few punches."

He thrust a palm strike at the sky and scattered the giant hand.

Rumble!

All of Destiny City trembled and crimson light burst out in rays, conjuring the shade of a giant crimson beast. Qi Hai ascended the sky as if he was walking on stairs.

"Senior brother...?!" The Destiny city lord widened his eyes, staring at the faint figure in disbelief.

“That’s the Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits of the shamanic race.” The shape of a sword flashed through the sky over Destiny City as a voice identified the formation.

“Who are you?!” Dong Lin demanded with a grave look after his attack was scattered.

“Those two little ones are my kinsmen,” Qi Hai said faintly. “My name is Qi Hai.”

Chapter 454: One Stroke from the West

Qi Hai.

Qi Hai was dead. Although his spirit was intact, his soul wasn’t. That put him in a similar predicament as Empress Myrtlestar, which was why he could enter hell. He needed a special method to allow him to tap into his power; the Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits being one such example.

This was a formation set up with the hearts’ blood of ten thousand living souls and anchored to a shamanic altar. It drew upon the power of the underground vein in Destiny City and conjured a great fiend so that Qi Hai might manifest through it.

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“Qi Hai?” The seventeen origin dao immortals blinked when they heard the name. They knew each other well, but no one among them knew of any peer named Qi Hai.

The Qi Clan was an above average faction in the world, but there was only one arcane dao immortal among their ranks. In fact, Qi Hai was a name as common as mud. There were close to a million men with that same name in the world of immortals.

There had been a famous Qi Hai from the Primordial Era, but the famous pill master wasn’t a possibility at all. After all, the man had died long before the great war of immortals.

“Senior brother!” came an exclamation from Destiny City. The city lord quickly appeared before Qi Hai with an expression of excitement and delight.

“He’s the Destiny city lord’s senior brother?” The seventeen origin dao immortals gawked at the newcomer.

Many signs pointed to the city lord being one of the old eccentrics from the Primordial Era. There were immortals like him among the seventeen origin dao immortals, but none whose status and influence could rival those of the city lord. The man had been a mover and shaker even back in the Primordial Era!

The restriction against immortals had damaged the memories of many ancient immortals that’d been struck down from their immortality, and their recollections of the past were oddly fuzzy at best. Many of them had to rely on records unearthed from ancient tombs to understand a period of time they’d lived through.

However, someone like the Destiny city lord might’ve preserved his memories. Him calling the newcomer his senior brother proved the long-held theory right.

“Is he from the Primordial Era as well?” exclaimed Dong Lin.

“Hehehe, hahaha...” Qi Hai laughed suddenly. “I’d have to teach you all a lesson even if I weren’t with the two little ones. My junior brother is mild-mannered and dislikes conflict, so he often gets pushed around by others. Still, as his senior brother, I won’t stand for him getting bullied by insects like you!”

Qi Hai made a move.

Bam!

A great force rippled through heaven and earth. The crimson fiend beneath his feet transformed into Qi Hai and accommodated his damaged soul.

“Die, all of you!!” His eyes turned red as he threw a punch, the raw power threatening to puncture this area of the world.

“Dammit!” His sudden attack caught the seventeen origin dao immortals off guard.

In the blink of an eye, the crimson fist connected with an origin dao immortal who wasn’t fast enough to get out of the way and shattered his body. Ensnared in a broken origin dao fruit, his broken soul fled to the sky.

Qi Hai ignored him in favor of throwing another punch at a second origin dao immortal.

“Qi Hai!!” the man with fiery long hair shouted. “Aren’t you concerned that we’ll slaughter every living being in the city after you attack us?”

He didn’t know who Qi Hai was, but as the city lord’s senior brother, he wouldn’t just ignore the fate of Destiny City, which was why he made the threat. With a quick tremor, a burst of fire wrapped around his body.

“Someone from the Fire Spirit Tribe?” Qi Hai paused and stared at the man. “There are fire spirits in the world of immortals? Back in my day, a fire spirit would’ve been taken and refined into treasures if they dared show up in public.”

Qi Hai was talking about the era of human dao, of course.

Fire spirits were a unique species born in nature. They could control all fires between heaven and earth, and their potential rivaled that of the divine race despite not being a part of said race.

“Well, it’s no wonder. Immortals today don’t know the marvelous uses of fire spirits.”

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“Vicious, simply too vicious!” Scarlet Ape trembled from its hiding place outside Destiny City as it watched the fight play out. “It’s him, it’s really him! He was the one keeping me sealed in the dragon tomb. He’s absolutely a human dao heavyweight!”

Scarlet Ape curled in on itself and hid in a corner like a furry ball. “Only immortals of the human dao would talk about refining fire spirits into treasure. Perhaps he’ll refine my core into pills as well if he sees me!

“Thank the heavens he’s just a scrap of damaged soul. He needs that strange formation and the hearts’ blood of ten thousand spirits in order to tap into his power.

“How many monstrous beings like him are there among Lu Yun’s followers?! I’ll publicly announce that young human’s identity after he rescues my dao partner. He’ll become the foremost public enemy in the world of immortals and die without a corpse to bury!” Scarlet Ape muttered, planning out how it would deal with Lu Yun.

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The battle above Destiny City continued.

With the city as a foundation, hearts’ blood to form his body, and the underground vein to fuel his energy, Qi Hai pummeled his opponents with simple punches. The Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits made possible the perfect amalgamation of the three forces.

Every punch of his hinted at the utmost logic of the world—he’d reached heights greater than the essence of immortal dao. This was the peak realm of human dao.

Qi Hai had already killed three of the seventeen origin dao immortals, sending their souls fleeing under the protection of their dao fruit. The other fourteen dao immortals were already thinking of retreating. If this went on, they’d all be killed.

The Destiny city lord stayed on the sidelines, simply watching the fight.

“Daoists!” said a voice from the sky. “This man is but a damaged soul. He’s only able to physically manifest because of a formation in the city. Once we destroy the shamanic formation, he’ll vanish as well! The eye of the formation is the little altar of dirt in Jadeite Manor!”

Swoosh!

A beam of sword energy descended and slashed at Qi Hai.

“You’re bold for a divine whelp,” Qi Hai sneered and grabbed at the sword energy. His confidence faltered when the attack severed his hand.

“The Sword of Chaos!” blurted out Qi Hai. “The sword has been completed!”

The fourteen origin dao immortals seized the chance to bypass Qi Hai’s defenses and enter Destiny City.

“What do you take me for, to run rampant in my city like this?” The city lord finally moved, lunging at the fourteen origin dao immortals.

“Scram!” growled Dong Lin. With a push of his hands, a great force shot out and slammed into the city lord, blasting him backward.

“Impossible!!” The city lord threw up a mouthful of blood; he couldn’t even take a single hit from Dong Lin!

“Hehehe, hahaha!” Dong Lin cackled, blood seeping out from between his teeth. He reached out and grabbed at Qing Han.

Time seemed to come to a halt in that moment. His hand reached further and further into Jadeite Manor, but no matter how far he reached, he couldn’t touch Qing Han, who should’ve been right at his fingertips. Tremendous pressure loomed over him.

“Whoever hurts my master must die,” a voice declared, followed by a sword slash originating from the distant sky. Time and space lost their meaning in the face of the attack.

The sword energy pierced straight through Dong Lin’s chest. His face froze as he struggled to lift his head, staring at the sudden newcomer with shock. It was Zhao Fengyang!

Thud!

Dong Lin’s lifeless body landed on the ground, and his dao fruit... shattered.

Chapter 455: Intimidation

Zhao Fengyang.

No one had expected him to suddenly show himself and kill Dong Lin, even shattering his origin dao fruit!

Stifling silence descended upon Destiny City. The former Nephrite Celestial Emperor had been the first to pass down his throne, thus raising the curtain on a brand new era in the world of immortals.

“Haven’t... haven’t you gone into closed door cultivation? Why are you here?!” The long-haired fire spirit gawked at Zhao Fengyang, at a loss as to what to do. The other origin dao immortals didn’t dare make a move, either.

Donglin Taihuang gaped in horror. As an eight-fruit arcane dao immortal, he was able to do as he pleased and order the Qing and other major clans around only because of Dong Lin’s support.

However, his house ancestor now lay dead on the ground. More importantly, the bounty the unpredictable man from Jadeite Manor had put on him was still in effect. In that moment, many came to the same conclusion: House Donglin was doomed. They were looking at an aristocratic house without a future. House Donglin would either be destroyed by the Lin Clan, or annexed by the Aureate court.

Even so, the thirteen remaining origin dao immortals didn’t dare twitch a muscle. They’d been holed up in their clans’ territories over the past eighty thousand years while the nine celestial emperors ruled, unbeknownst to most in the world of immortals.

They’d only dared poke their heads out of hiding because the nine celestial emperors had passed the torch. Had the celestial emperors still been in power, they never would’ve come out, no matter how much noise Lu Yun made or how alluring the rewards from the Sovereign Meet were.

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Zhao Fengyang scanned the surroundings with cold, eagle-like eyes. The remaining origin dao immortals did their best imitations of statues. Sword Divine, on the other hand, had fled as soon as the former celestial emperor showed up.

“I’ve long said that rotten apples like these should be nipped in the bud or excised entirely,” Zhao Fengyang said apropos of nothing, ignoring the fire spirit’s question.

Abject terror struck the thirteen origin dao immortals, scaring the wits out of them and replacing all their emotions with despair.

The nine celestial emperors had always known about them, and a handful considered them tumors of the world. Zhao Fengyang was especially radical, tolerating no twisted origin dao immortals like them. That was why Nephrite Major was the only major in the world without such crippled origin dao immortals.

The ancestor of the Ling Clan, top clan of Nephrite Major, had once ascended to origin dao realm. However, the torment he'd undergone to pluck the dao fruit twisted him, leading to the celestial emperor personally killing him.

That had, in turn, prompted the Ling Clan to move out of Xiankan and establish Ling Province in the southern part of the major, settling down in their own territory.

Midair, Qi Hai turned and gave Zhao Fengyang a surprised look. Noticing Qi Hai's gaze, Zhao Fengyang turned and bowed at him, calling him martial uncle.

Qi Hai nodded and slowly dissipated. With a peak origin dao immortal like Zhao Fengyang here, there was no need for him to stay.

The thirteen origin dao immortals held their collective breath, terrified that the vengeful former Nephrite celestial emperor would kill them all.

"Get out!" commanded Zhao Fengyang. The dao immortals scattered helter-skelter at the rare show of mercy. "Master." He turned back to the Destiny city lord.

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It came as a surprise to all that Destiny city lord was Zhao Fengyang's master. But no matter what anyone thought, things could finally settle down in Destiny City.

Zhao Fengyang didn't stay long before taking his leave, and the city became peaceful once more.

Although everyone knew Zhao Fengyang had intervened because Dong Lin had injured his master, the former celestial emperor's influence was such that no one dared go after Lu Yun and Qing Han even after Zhao Fengyang seemed to depart.

"Was that one of the former celestial emperors?" Scarlet Ape goggled and sucked in a breath. "No wonder the two fellows on Ingress Island and the Dark North Sword Sect remain in hiding. With figures like these ruling over the world of immortals..." It cut itself off and flashed out of Nephrite Major.

"Now that the unwanted eyes are gone, let's move on as well." Lu Yun allowed himself to relax once Scarlet Ape left. It was no surprise to him that Zhao Fengyang had shown up. The Ingress Path was the greatest treasure of Nephrite Major, but it was also Zhao Fengyang's personal treasure.

Zhao Changkong, the current Nephrite Celestial Emperor, hadn't yet earned the right to wield the treasure. Thus, the Ingress Path remained in Zhao Fengyang's possession.

The Dusk lord knew as soon as the Ingress Path had appeared in Destiny City, becoming the first trial of the Sovereign Meet, that Zhao Fengyang must be there.

"So we're going to the East Sea, milord?" Ge Long emerged out of nowhere with a smile. He was so certain it was as if he was reading Lu Yun's mind.

Lu Yun nodded. He was indeed planning on heading to the East Sea. His bargain with Scarlet Ape had never been his true intention. He had a feeling that once he went to the East Sea, the ape trapped there would break out of its restraints even if he didn't want to release it.

"You mustn't go now!" Qing Han shook his head. "That big monkey will notice if you do. It's better to return to Dusk Province for a while."

Lu Yun wanted to go to the East Sea to look for the kumpeng nest and explore the desolate land so he could find the remaining pearls and cure Qing Han's poison.

However, she didn't want him to take the risk. She felt he should make ample preparations before making the trip, or at least wait until he'd digested his gains from the Sovereign Meet.

"Besides, it's been three years since we heard from my big brother and cousin," Qing Han lowered her head and whispered, "I'm worried about them."

Three years ago, after the great battle in Dusk Province, Qing Buyi and Chen Xiao had set out for the Endless Desert to the west of Nephrite Major. They hadn't returned since, nor had they sent word. Qing Han was beginning to worry, despite her confidence in Qing Buyi and Chen Xiao.

Lu Yun's expression turned grave as well—he couldn't just recklessly go into the desert himself. Ancient tombs and desolate lands were his forte, but the Endless Desert was different. Within the vast desert, the most dangerous threats were the endless monsters and beasts liable to spring out of nowhere.

"We'll return to Dusk Province first and figure out a plan," Lu Yun sighed. He knew how Qing Han felt.

The three of them left Destiny City. Although many immortals would like to make a move against them, none dared take the risk. Zhao Fengyang was too great a threat.

"Ah, I almost forgot." Lu Yun came to a sudden stop after he left Destiny City and raised his voice. "The Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits is still functional. The way to activate it can be found in Jadeite Manor."

The Destiny city lord perked up, and Xi Yingchen immediately returned to his former manor to see a scroll floating above the crimson altar.

"It is indeed a shamanic formation." The Destiny city lord sucked in a breath when he arrived and took a good look at the contents of the scroll. "Who are Qing Yu and the young man? They can't be descendants of the shamanic race..."

Chapter 456: Restarting the Sovereign Ranking

"You're the Destiny city lord's senior brother?" Lu Yun entered hell and stared at Qi Hai in surprise as the latter sat cross-legged in the center of the dragon palace.

"I am." Qi Hai nodded. "I always have been."

Lu Yun paused. "You always have been?"

"I've been his senior brother since the era of human dao," Qi Hai explained. "While I've awakened, though, his true spirit is still dormant."

Lu Yun's eyes shot wide.

"Little Ying has been the Destiny city lord since the very beginning and I've always been his senior brother." Qi Hai didn't hide anything from Lu Yun. In his eyes, the fact that Lu Yun was in control of hell made the young man the proper heir of the human dao. That conferred upon him the right to know the truth.

"Destiny City was one of the three hundred and sixty-five capitals of the human race, the cradle of human civilization. Unfortunately, all of the rest of the capitals have been destroyed.

"There exists a strange power here that attracts the living spirits that hail the city home, like me and Little Ying. Those who are able to settle down long-term in Destiny have been, and will always be, its residents. Even after death, we reincarnate back into the city," Qi Hai sighed. "Destiny City used to be larger than the current world of immortals, and there were countless living beings that called it home. Now..."

Lu Yun huffed. "Larger than the world of immortals... Can that kind of place still be called a city?"

Qi Hai smiled in lieu of a response.

"I always thought civilization has been continuously progressing, that life has been ever-developing," Lu Yun said, shaking his head. "It seems I was wrong."

"No, you're not wrong." Qi Hai shook his head. "Civilization has indeed been progressing and never declined. The world you're seeing now may not be able to rival the Primordial Era or the era of human dao, but are you so certain you're seeing the truth of the world?"

Lu Yun was reminded of what Violetgrave had once said: Even if the immortal-emperor grade dread zombie broke free from the sword, it wouldn't dare run rampant in the world of immortals. There were too many who could destroy it.

"Perhaps I've been looking at the world from the bottom of a well. Even though I feel like I'm in the air, there's still a much vaster sky above my head." Lu Yun thought back to Qing Buyi, Chen Xiao, and the stunning Mo Yi. They didn't actually seem to belong to this world.

"Besides, your idea of the supplemental paths reigning dominant and what you've been planning is also a kind of progress for civilization," Qi Hai continued seriously.

"Then it looks like the world of immortals is still in decline." Lu Yun shrugged when Qi Hai didn't understand his remarks.

.....

When Lin Yu and Lin Xuan set foot onto Dusk Province with Lu Yun and Qing Han, they finally realized what they'd gotten themselves into.

"It's you two! How is this possible?!" The Lin brothers gaped at Lu Yun once they'd entered Dusk City. "Weren't you in Dusk Province all this time? Why... How...?"

Lin Yu was doing his best goldfish imitation.

“I’m the head of the Star Demon Sect.” Lu Yun smirked. “Those clans haven’t even been able to infiltrate my sect. Did you think they’d be able to successfully plant agents in Dusk Province?”

That was the explanation he came up with, but in truth, he wanted nothing but to comb through the province and look for moles.

He was the head of the Star Demon Sect, but Dusk Province was far from immune to spies. Lu Yun had simply used Shapeshifting Talismans to turn two people into him and Qing Han, and had them go around the city every once in a while.

Qing Han had been compromised with a soul seed. That meant there must be a spy among those she was close with in the city, one controlled by Sword Divine.

Thankfully, Lu Yun had already identified a list of suspects.

The Chen Clan!

Although they weren’t a top faction in the world, they had their own guardian spirit, who’d come to Dusk Province with the clan. The Lu Clan’s guardian spirit had come as well, which was also a potential threat.

Lu Yun handed the Lin brothers a formation scroll before leaving. The brothers exchanged befuddled looks, which gave way to great excitement after they saw the formation for what it was. If the two of them could fully understand it, they’d be able to create formations without foundation like the grandmasters of the past!

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A sudden housecleaning commenced throughout the land. Countless immortals and cultivators were shackled and imprisoned, and the Lu and Chen Clans were no exceptions.

Lu Yun activated his Spectral Eye and scanned the entire province with Ruyi’s Divine Spymirror. No one with a foreign soul planted in them could escape his eyes. At the end of the day, he’d rounded up more than twenty thousand people!

The guardian spirits of the Lu and Chen Clans attempted to escape, but were quickly captured by Diexi. The one who’d planted the seed in Qing Han was a peerless immortal, Qing Han’s uncle.

Chen Dongyu, Qing Han’s grandfather and the patriarch of the Chen Clan, despaired when he learned the truth. Even he had been a victim of soul planting, but fortunately, the soul hadn’t yet matured.

As for the Lu patriarch... there was nothing Lu Yun could do. Xingzi and Su Xiaoxiao had conducted countless experiments in hell, but had thus far failed to find a way of removing the foreign souls.

Upon his return to Dusk Province, Lu Yun utilized his connections in the Skandha Range, Panorama Pavilion, Star Demon Sect, and even the East Sea monster spirits to spread the news far and wide about the divine race’s Sword of Chaos and the guardian spirits betraying their clans.

Whether the world believed him was out of his hands.

But as expected, the Mo Clan of Lazuli Major, Zi Clan of Thundergale Major, and the Immortal Martial School of Enlightened Major immediately reacted and verified the information, stating that Wu Tulong, Mo Qitian, and Zi Chen had been enthralled by the divine race.

An incredible uproar took the world of immortals by storm.

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Dusk Province.

Lu Yun struggled to come up with a solution for the twenty thousand cultivators and immortals controlled by soul planting. They couldn't be killed, but neither could they stay where they were.

Some members of the Chen and Lu Clans had learned the truth, but the majority refused to accept it. Their protestations and indignation gave Lu Yun constant headaches.

Diexi had publicly arrested the guardian spirits of the Lu and Chen Clans, which enraged most of their clans' immortals. Many of them even threatened to leave Dusk Province.

Both were major clans that'd been around for tens of thousands of years. It was already a downgrade for them to stay in Dusk Province; Lu Yun making a move on their guardian spirits and clansmen was the spark that ignited their suppressed anger.

Many felt it was Lu Yun and Qing Han who'd caused the two clans to be wanted by the Nephrite court. Those two troublemakers were the source of all their problems!

To make things worse, the genius cultivators who'd attended the Sovereign Meet arrived in Dusk Province to hold the tournament anew. They wanted to restart the Sovereign Ranking and truly determine the order of their strength!

Chapter 457: Extinction Layout

The news cast a grim shadow over Lu Yun's face. Usually, he wouldn't have minded playing with them, but he absolutely did not have time for this right now.

All of Dusk Province was in chaos. The Lu and Chen clans were rioting nonstop, and the Lus were especially uproarious. After all, their patriarch had been thrown into the dungeons due to falling prey to soul planting.

Lu Yun felt rather powerless about the situation. The Lu clan was his very own, and the Chen clan was his in-laws. His decisiveness toward outside enemies wasn't applicable here. After all, the clans were as much the victim as he. Any severe blows he dealt to them would only please Sword Divine.

The cultivators' wish to hold a new Sovereign Ranking in Dusk Province was also nothing but trouble. The first had only served to crush the Destiny city lord's renown into the ground. A hundred thousand years' worth of prestige gone, just like that!

Lu Yun wasn't interested in preserving his renown, but Dusk Province was quite unstable right now. There were divine infiltrators everywhere. A new Sovereign Ranking under these conditions would only stir the pot, and who knew what would happen then?

The immortal restriction that banned golden immortals and above wasn't foolproof. The reappearance of origin dao immortals meant that there were plenty who were able—and willing—to remove it from the province.

Regardless of whether or not he agreed, the once-sealed borders of Dusk Province were suddenly thrown wide open again. Cultivators from all over streamed in, congregating around the inheritance tower and Sword Lake to train and cultivate.

The province almost seemed to have returned to the way it was before, which meant a conspiracy was most definitely brewing beneath the surface.

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“Sir!” A day later, Yuying appeared again, looking much the worse for wear.

“What is it?” Lu Yun was reading a dao book. He'd dug it out of a burial mound in the central world, and its contents were immensely beneficial to his sword art and intent. He put down the book when he saw his envoy's expression.

“Several hundred weapons of war have been set up on Dusk Province's borders,” Yuying said very slowly. “They are aimed at the ancient tomb in the province's center.”

“They're setting their sights on the human demon, huh.” Lu Yun drew a sharp breath, things were getting really difficult now.

The human demon wasn't particularly strong; the only reason the nine celestial emperors were powerless before him was because of the immortal restriction of the tomb. However, the relationship was somewhat reciprocal. Without the demon, the restriction wouldn't be able to take full effect.

Without their dual protections, Dusk Province would surely be carved up and divided among the rest of the world as war spoils—the celestial courts had more than enough weapons of war to rival Lu Yun's own, and the inheritance tower alone was the envy of all.

Indeed, the array of several hundred weapons on Dusk Province's borders was a warning to him. If he dared open fire, they wouldn't hesitate to retaliate in kind!

“I must make another trip to the ancient tomb,” mused Lu Yun, then disappeared on the spot.

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In the world of immortals, there were four ancient tombs that surpassed emperor-grade. The ‘emperor’ here referred to immortal emperors of eld, not celestial ones.

The four tombs had existed since time primordial; records unearthed from other tombs said as much. No one knew who—or what—they held. However, no one intrepid enough to wander into them had ever lived to tell the tale. An ancient immortal emperor was even among the list of casualties.

Dusk Province's ancient tomb was a black mountain: Mount Dusk. Even the province itself was named after it.

In actuality, all of Mount Dusk was part of the tomb. Inky water flowed out of a murky cavern at its northern base. This was the source of Dusk River, a river that cut through half of the province and emptied into the North Sea.

No living creatures lived within its waters. There was only the teeming dead inhabiting the depths, and a few naturally formed feng shui horrors.

Originally, Lu Yun had thought that the river was fueled by the malicious air pent up in the tomb. But in reality, Dusk River was a terrifying, heaven-defying treasure. Some unknown master had left it here.

The young lord of Dusk Province stood in the air over the cavernous river source, bowing ever so slightly toward the tomb.

“This junior seeks an audience, senior. Please grant me a meeting in person,” he shouted.

“When you achieve immortality, we will naturally meet.” A moment later, a cool voice echoed inside his mind.

“Senior...” Lu Yun frowned in frustration.

“Go back.” After this parting word, the human demon would speak no more.

“There are people who want to harm you, senior. You should be careful.” Lu Yun glanced over the tomb’s feng shui layout with a wistful sigh. The human demon wasn’t the tomb’s owner, merely a squatter who’d made his home here after the fact.

I don’t think he’ll manage to escape his fate this time.

The layout here had changed, and now spelled extinction. There was nothing Lu Yun could do. Unless he was allowed to enter the tomb and alter its basis, the extinction layout could not be resolved. Such a layout within a tomb generally indicated its impending destruction.

Feng shui represented the natural order of the world. It was comprised of the characters for wind and water, two forces known for their persistence and inconstance.

In this world, the art of feng shui was far more marvelous and terrifying than what formations could accomplish. In addition to mere lethality, feng shui layouts had the power to alter fate and fortune!

As Lu Yun was about to leave, someone unexpected appeared before him.

Mo Yi.

Her cultivation had reached an unfathomable level. When Lu Yun looked at her, he nearly felt like he was facing down Zhao Fengyang. Her impenetrability was that of an endless ocean.

“Come with me, I will bring you in.”

Lu Yun blinked twice, then nodded.

“He is not an immortal yet. He will die if he enters,” the human demon’s voice suddenly echoed once more.

"I'm here. He won't die." Mo Yi was calm and reassured; she wouldn't be denied. "...but it looks like you don't need my protection."

As soon as they entered the tomb, a black flame spontaneously roared to life around Lu Yun's body. It cut off the malignant air of the tomb, an air so thick with malice that it was nearly strong enough to take solid form.

No wonder the human demon had warned him. Any living creature who wasn't an immortal would be zombified on the spot. Peak void realm or not, cultivation made no difference.

"A dragon sleeps in mountains coiled,
Those deathly cliffs with mysteries roiled."

Taking out his compass, he chanted the Dragonsearch Invocation and surveyed the feng shui in the tomb. Although he'd instantly seen through the extinction layout from outside, it would be much harder to actually find and break it from within.

"What are you doing?" Mo Yi glanced at him quizzically.

"I'm looking for a formation, I need to break it open." Lu Yun's eyes glowed a faint gold and he looked toward the direction his luopan pointed in.

"Take care. The malignant air isn't the only dangerous thing in this tomb," remarked Mo Yi.

Chapter 458: There Were No More Emperors After the Emperor Fell

Lu Yun nodded. The human demon had patently forbidden him from entering in order to protect him.

This tomb was far too dangerous and sinister. Despite having temporarily made its residence here, the human demon still didn't fully understand how this place had come to be. An immortal was buried here in this tomb, one beyond emperor rank. Upon entering, Lu Yun had felt an indelible shadow creep over his heart.

It was almost as if he was being watched from some forgotten corner by a horror unknown. Not the human demon, not Mo Yi, and certainly not the teeming dead; but someone—or something—entirely and inexplicably alien.

The threefold needles spun around rapidly upon his feng shui compass before finally deciding on a direction. 'Great misfortune'. Two glowing, scarlet words floated up from the compass's second layer.

"What does that mean, exactly?" Mo Yi gawked at the luopan in Lu Yun's hands with mild astonishment.

"There's a layout inside this tomb—well, you might as well call it a formation. It's capable of affecting intangible fortune," Lu Yun replied honestly. "If the layout isn't broken, the human demon senior will surely die."

Mo Yi blinked.

"The key to doing so lies in the direction my compass points... but there's also great misfortune there," Lu Yun continued, half to himself. The ancient tomb was already unlucky and dangerous enough. For there to be a place inside that was even worse... he wasn't sure whether he was properly prepared.

“Is there really a formation like that?” Mo Yi furrowed her delicate brows. She was a great formation master herself, having grasped a genius mixture of formation and combat arts, but she’d never heard of such a thing before.

“There was a formation like this inside Dusk City as well. The entire province declined because of it,” Lu Yun observed.

Mo Yi’s eyes widened in understanding, but she held back whatever she had to say in favor of looking elsewhere.

A hovering figure slowly approached them: the Celestial Emperor of Exalted Major. It was the very same that Lu Yun had seen back in the Sword Barrow. Though the emperor’s consciousness remained, he’d become the human demon’s vessel.

“That is where the tomb’s owner is interred,” said the human demon through the emperor’s body. “I dare not approach it, either.”

“Who could be buried here?” asked Lu Yun.

There were four such tombs in the world of immortals, which were scattered in four of Nephrite Major’s provinces. Every so often, outbreaks of evil spirits came forth from them to devastate the surrounding countryside.

“I do not know. He, or it, is very strong.” The human demon shook his head. “This is the resting place of the human emperor. His scattered blood infused this place with exceeding mystery, more so than anywhere else in all the majors.”

“The resting place of the human emperor. That again, huh? Can you tell me more about it?” Puzzlement flashed across Lu Yun’s face. Qi Hai had mentioned a ‘resting place of the human emperor’ before, but even now, he still didn’t know what it meant.

“After the emperor’s fall, there were no more,” explained Mo Yi. “The human emperor died here. He was recognized by the heavenly dao, and after his death, the dao no longer recognized any more emperors in all the worlds.

“The ‘immortal emperors’ that came after him in the ancient times, and the ‘celestial emperors’ we have now... they’re all just self-styled titles. Plus, anyone who’s declared themselves emperor since then has suffered a painful end.

“It was true for the ancients, just as it is for the present celestial emperors. None of them are ever granted a peaceful death.”

“She’s right.” From within hell, Qi Hai offered his perspective. “After the human emperor fell, the surviving leaders of mankind dared not take on a similar title. They called themselves kings instead, out of deference and caution. But now I hear about celestial, monster, and divine emperors? Kids these days sure are fearless.” His voice dripped with sarcasm.

As a transmigrated spirit who’d lived through countless eras, Qi Hai had access to his past lives’ memories despite not awakening in any of them. He knew many examples of what he talked about.

Empress Myrtlestar was one. She and her entire tribe had been sacrificed to the Skandha Extinction Tomb. The word 'emperor' truly had a curse on it.

"The human emperor died here for sure, right?" Lu Yun wanted to confirm.

"The last emperor, to be precise," corrected Mo Yi.

"Could he be buried here, too, then?" Lu Yun wondered.

"No." The human demon shook his head with great certainty. "The resting place has been around since the era of human rule. This immortal tomb, on the other hand, dates from the era of immortal dao."

Lu Yun fell silent for a moment before cracking a crooked smile. "Well, we'll just have to take a look ourselves then, won't we?"

A smile like this cropped up whenever he'd encountered a large, unexplored tomb back on Earth. Lu Yun never shied away from a good challenge; the harder the tomb, the stronger his determination grew.

His Dragonsearch Invocation began working overtime. A brilliant ray of gold emanated from his luopan, lighting up the path ahead. Countless dead spirits fled in every direction, unwilling to be touched by the burning light. Lu Yun's eyes turned pitch black and he walked down the path with wide, sweeping steps.

This tomb was different from other ancient tombs.

Most tombs were either complete underground palaces, or complex, interconnected mazes. This tomb had no chambers, hallways, or annexes. There was only a deep, unending nothingness. Even his Spectral Eye failed to yield any information about what lay beyond.

Ninety percent of the tomb already belonged to the human demon—he could even command the lingering dead here. The only thing outside of his control was whatever existed yonder, a place where the human demon himself dared not advance, either.

In fact, Lu Yun was quite sure that that place was the reason for the extinction layout.

"Milord, milord!" an urgent call suddenly sounded behind him. "Your old servant begs you to wait! Your servant is coming!"

Ge Long arrived only a few moments after his voice. His face carried its customary simpering smile, and the eagerness in his eyes was unmistakable.

"Golden core realm?" It was the human demon's turn to be taken aback. All he saw was an ordinary golden core cultivator. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary about Ge Long.

Mo Yi looked the old man up and down; she knew how remarkable he really was, but he certainly didn't look the part.

"Go ahead, clear the way. Eat whatever you can find!" Lu Yun smiled to see the old servant.

"Yes, sir!" Ge Long was overjoyed. He dashed into the darkness as fast as he could.

Chapter 459: Three Begets All Things

“A living soul, but one who can devour both yin energy and spirits born of that energy.” The human demon shook his head, bemused.

He could devour yin energy as well, but he was a zombie rather than a living being. He had no true form. The body he assumed, other than the Exalted and Nephrite Celestial Emperors, was created by the restriction against immortals.

Guarding it was his duty in the ancient tomb.

Ge Long had moved out of the zone of golden light emitted by the feng shui compass and entered the looming darkness of the land of yin. Incessant shrieks and screams sounded from the shadows as Lu Yun moved steadily forward with the luopan in hand.

“What is happening?” The human demon’s pale face stilled. “The spirits and creatures of the tomb are slipping free of my control.”

“That’s because the tomb owner wants you dead,” Lu Yun murmured without thinking. “They were sleeping at the heart of the tomb, but Scarlet Ape startled them awake when it invaded Dusk Province and attempted to gain control of the Dusk River.”

They had been in slumber. To tomb raiders, all those buried in ancient tombs were merely asleep, and one misstep was all it would take to wake them.

“They discover another being in their tomb after waking up... What do you think they’ll do? Destroy the outsider, of course!”

The human demon and Mo Yi listened to Lu Yun without a word.

“Finally, someone who’s mastered feng shui!” Excitement overtook Lu Yun’s face. He was very certain that the extinction layout was the tomb owner’s doing! This was the first person Lu Yun had encountered that understood feng shui since he’d arrived in the world of immortals.

“But strange, how very strange... The extinction layout here will not only destroy Senior Human Demon, but also the tomb owner himself. If they really knew feng shui, they wouldn’t have made such a basic mistake.”

He’d fully mapped out the structure of the layout that enveloped the entire tomb. If the layout was activated, everything within the tomb, or even bearing any connection to it, would cease to exist, the tomb owner included.

“What am I missing?” Lu Yun’s mind went into overdrive, analyzing the information presented to him. “Is it because of the restriction against immortals? Is that what they’re trying to destroy?”

He shook his head slightly. The immortals in the world wanted the restriction lifted so they could freely enter Dusk Province and lay hands on whatever they wanted. Without the restriction, they wouldn’t fear Lu Yun’s weapons of war.

“I’ll have my answers once I see the tomb’s owner.” Lu Yun inhaled deeply and moved along the path Ge Long had opened.

“Stop!” the human demon exclaimed suddenly, pulling Lu Yun back. “Ahead lies forbidden ground for cultivators. Those who haven’t ascended to immortality will be killed upon entry.”

The human demon’s expression turned extremely grave. They’d reached the heart of the tomb—a large clearing where the restriction against immortals was. On the other side of the clearing was where the tomb’s owner was buried.

“Ge Long!” Lu Yun called out.

“Don’t come any closer, milord... This old servant... is trapped.” Ge Long struggled to get his words out before something covered his mouth. There was a muffled grunt, then silence.

But Lu Yun knew that his old servant was still alive.

A dragon sleeps in mountains coiled,

Those deathly cliffs with mysteries roiled.

Danger shies if mountains hide,

Flowing water and wind do danger foil!

He silently chanted the Dragonsearch Invocation, prompting the indicators of the luopan to rotate at a mad pace. Its golden light surged again, ten times stronger than its previous activation. However, a strange force fought the luopan’s light. The indicators on all three layers of the compass kept circling in a frenzy.

“Transform!” Lu Yun snapped.

Crackle!

From the three-layered compass emerged the images of one potential, two principles, three essentials, four divisions, five elements, six directions, seven stars, eight trigrams, nine sectors, and ten orientations, encircling Lu Yun.

The three layers of the luopan symbolized the manifestations of all things within the universe.

The compass then broke apart and reassembled in midair. Three layers became nine, then sixty-four, then eighty-one... In the end, there emerged three hundred and sixty-five layers of the compass—a nod to a most significant number of the greater universe.

The three hundred and sixty-five layers of the luopan rotated relentlessly, projecting ten feng shui layouts around Lu Yun that constantly disassembled and reassembled themselves according to the compass’ gyrations, deducing all possibilities that were ahead of them.

The human demon and Mo Yi were flabbergasted.

Mo Yi was the greatest genius in the world of immortals, and a powerful formation grandmaster in her own right. Even Lu Yun had needed her help to complete the Great Formation of Heavenly Spirits and Earthly Demons. Meanwhile, the human demon had lived through countless aeons, from the era of human dao to the present. However... neither of them had ever seen anything like this.

Bathed in aureate light, Lu Yun hovered in the air with the multi-layered luopan on his palm.

Symbols representing the heavenly stems and earthly branches, yin and yang, the five elements, eight trigrams, and countless other symbols that Mo Yi and the human demon couldn't understand flurried around Lu Yun, breaking apart and coming together in a mixture of bizarre layouts.

The golden light grew increasingly stronger, fighting the darkness on the other side.

"Dammit!" Lu Yun suddenly landed, and the golden light of the luopan—and the images it created—vanished. His face was pale and his forehead was covered in sweat. His clothes were drenched, too.

"What happened?" Mo Yi frowned. It seemed that something had attacked and interrupted Lu Yun. The attack was so foreign that even she hadn't sensed the source.

Lu Yun allowed himself a moment to recover before taking a pill and letting out a sigh.

"My cultivation is too lacking to stop the thing in the dark." He'd noticed something watching him from a hidden corner of the tomb previously; that was what'd interrupted his invocation the moment before.

Chapter 460: The Power to Kill Cultivators

The human demon stood silently off to the side while Mo Yi alertly scanned the premises.

However, this area was simply too bizarre. Apart from where the golden light of the luopan touched, it was pitch black with not a shape to be discerned. Eerie noises traveled out of the dark, as if something was munching on a mouthful of food. Was it Ge Long devouring a big yum-yum, or was the yum-yum eating the old servant?

Lu Yun slowly sat down cross-legged, his complexion pale and haggard. A black flame gradually flared to life within his pupils, dispersing the strange power within his body.

That unknown thing earlier had not only interrupted his invocation, but also delivered a hefty blow. The attack hadn't connected with his body or spirit, but his mind. Though he looked fine on the surface, his mind was on the verge of collapse. A strange power was barreling through it, seeking to shatter it to smithereens.

Any other cultivator or immortal might've immediately collapsed on the spot and turned into a drooling idiot, but thankfully, Lu Yun possessed hellfire. When the flames roared to life, they seeped through his mind to burn away that uncanny power.

Moments later, he breathed out a turbid breath of air intermixed with black smoke.

"This is a divine obsession." It suddenly occurred to him where the strange attack had originated from. "There's a divine obsession here, so we need to be careful."

A divine obsession was a monster born after the death of a divine spirit, something akin to a fragment of memory. Lu Yun had once seen a divine obsession with a complete thought process of its own in the abyss of divines, but Wayfarer had captured it for further study.

Just now, a familiar sensation had come across Lu Yun when the hellfire consumed the strange power. It was that which sparked inspiration in identifying the source of the strange power.

A divine obsession was an entity of thought, so its method of attack was likewise via the mind. Some thought divine obsessions were a fixation on the desire to live on, so the only course of action these entities would take would be possessing the bodies of others.

Of course, divine obsessions lacked soul and spirit, so whatever they took possession of was doomed to die.

Wushen Ruyi was the incarnation of a divine obsession, but Lu Yun was the ultimate overlord of the netherworld. Her circumstances were unusual, due to Myriad Formation Summit, and she'd retained her complete memories. This was the only reason why Lu Yun had allowed her to dwell within the Divine Spymirror.

The divine obsessions here, however, were pure thought without sentience.

When he called upon his Spectral Eye, dense clusters of death information flooded his brain, sending him into a daze from the overload.

"But why would there be divine obsessions here? Did the divines once attempt to explore this tomb?" he murmured to himself. He'd overlooked the obsessions earlier, distracted as he was by the presence of so many strange things. It'd been easy for one to hide well enough that he'd failed to detect it.

...wait, is this divine obsession sentient??

There'd been some intelligence in the one at the bottom of the abyss, too. A few more sweeps of his Spectral Eye yielded nothing. There were no more divine obsessions to be found, just unending layers of soul fragments.

Dusk River lay not too far from them, its inky waters silently making their way to the outside world. The hair-raising crunching noises had ceased coming from the depths of the tomb, and it was now so silent that it made the heart quail.

"Let's try again!" Lu Yun took a deep breath. "Stand guard for me."

The feng shui compass in his hand floated up again. Mo Yi took a stance next to the youth, snowflakes drifting purposefully around her to clear away the roving ghosts and spirits. With the two humans as the center, nothing came near them within a thirty meter radius, other than the human demon.

"Waugh—" An ear-piercing shriek suddenly rang out, shaking Lu Yun's body and instantly dimming the light from his luopan. Blood seeped out of his orifices and the trails of snowflakes in the air briefly paused as well, disturbed from their original trajectories.

A pair of scarlet eyes slowly opened in the darkness. There was a human height separating the eyeballs from each other, as if a large being had lain on the ground and opened its eyes to gaze upon them.

"Waugh!" Lu Yun vomited a mouthful of blood when the strident screech came again. His bones had almost been shattered by that terrifying screech this time!

"What the hell is that?!?" He quickly crushed a medicine vial and swallowed the liquid within to somewhat tend to his injuries. He'd suffered a tremendous blow, but Mo Yi hadn't sensed any energy ripples from her position next to him. The power that'd disturbed her snowflakes was different from the one that'd attacked Lu Yun.

“The power to kill cultivators,” the human demon said ponderously. “Where I guard houses a restriction against immortals. It can kill immortals, while the power here can slay cultivators. Any who are not yet an immortal will be executed by it.

“As I have obtained two heavenly mandates, I can somewhat control the restriction against immortals, but I cannot yet affect this power that impacts cultivators.”

His appearance had undergone changes at some unknown point in time, shifting from the form of the Exalted Celestial Emperor to a miniature version of the form he’d taken when battling Scarlet Ape in Dusk.

Currently, severe gravity crossed his face. “I did not allow you into the tomb due to the presence of this mysterious power. It kills cultivators in an instant.”

“What if... what if this tomb was destroyed? What would happen then?” A sudden tremor overtook Lu Yun and his voice shook.

“If the tomb is destroyed, this power will encompass all of the land where the emperor fell. All cultivators caught within would be destroyed in an instant.” The human demon frowned.

“This ancient tomb has a very long history, and even the immortal emperor in the Primordial Era couldn’t do anything to it. Can the formation you mentioned really destroy it?” Mo Yi looked at Lu Yun.

“The feng shui can’t be wrong.” Lu Yun nodded. “If we don’t alter the feng shui here, the tomb will be set on the path of destruction. Perhaps it’ll cave in on itself, or some outside force will crush it into the ground...”

The enormous eyes of scarlet in the darkness were fixed unblinkingly on Lu Yun. This was a power that could easily snap cultivators out of existence, but it’d failed to destroy this young man. The energy either came from the eyes themselves, or their master, and its failure prompted a bit of wariness.

Setting the strange power aside, what Lu Yun needed to do was to bypass the blockade and enter where the tomb owner was buried so he could destroy the feng shui layout.

“Feinie, the Formation Orb,” he murmured. The complete yin-yang combination of the softly glowing Formation Orb landed in his hands in the next moment.