

Necropolis 471

Chapter 471: Who's the One Going Extinct?

Lu Yun could clearly sense that each soul emanating from the rotten flesh was connected with a spirit as a single entity. They were the souls of regular beings, rather than those of cultivators.

That meant that in the human dao era, or the eras before it, all living beings had a soul, and one fully fused with their spirit. Modern times, on the other hand, saw living beings beneath the dao immortal realm with just souls and no spirits.

Only by reaching the dao immortal realm would one's true spirit take form and lodge itself in the soul.

However, Lu Yun had only studied the souls and spirits of aether and arcane dao immortals, and those were separate, rather than a single entity like the souls of the rotten flesh. As for origin dao immortals, he didn't have followers of that level available to study.

Hum.

A whir traveled through the air as a pillar of golden light blasted down from above, barrelling into Lu Yun's body. The Sal Tree of Life and Death within him trembled violently and grew at tremendous speed, faint golden flowers instantaneously blossoming along its branches and bearing fruit.

Moments later, the spindly and frail sapling had grown into a large tree of more than twenty meters tall. A hundred and eight sparkling golden fruits hung on its branches.

"This is the true fruit of karma. The tree has collected great wisdom and merit and transmuted them into the fruit it now bears. This is so much more than the goodwill fruit I consumed before!" Lu Yun cracked a smile.

He'd freed the rotten flesh from its torment with the Scripture of Salvation and guided their soul fragments into hell to become Hell Flowers—a deed of incomparable virtue and merit.

The goodwill of the damaged souls had transformed straight into virtuous merit and entered the Sal Tree of Life and Death in his body. As a result, Lu Yun's cultivation made another leap from the perceived void realm to the unravelled void realm, and one of his death arts evolved as well.

"Instant Thunder Palmstrike!" Lu Yun's eyes shone with excitement. It was such a pleasant surprise that his palm strike method had evolved!

The original death art had required an unusually complicated activation sequence. He first had to attract lightning from the nine heavens to charge the palm strike before attacking. Now, he could summon heavenly lightning in an instant!

He'd previously saved Thunder Palmstrike as a secret weapon for special occasions, but now he could deploy it whenever he needed to.

"Now it's time to deal with that latent threat."

Crackle!

Lu Yun clenched his fist, prompting strands of navy blue lightning to burst forth from his palm and dance a frenzied circle around him.

“This is... Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder of the Azure Dragon tribe!” Qi Hai started. “What was the Azure Dragon King thinking, passing down the combat art of its ancestor to Lu Yun...”

Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder was an innate talent of the azure dragon ancestor and a secret kept firmly within the confines of the azure dragon tribe. Any outsiders who learned the combat art would be chased down by not only the azure dragons, but also the other three tribes.

Thinking of what’d become of the four cardinal tribes, though, Qi Hai sighed. “Perhaps it wished to be friends with Lu Yun and have him resolve the bad fortune plaguing the four tribes.”

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Crackling with cleansing thunder, Lu Yun made his way to the strange withered tree.

With the departure of the pair of eyes, the crimson light was slowly dissipating as well. Darkness returned to the locale, leaving Lu Yun’s lightning as the only source of illumination. The tree carrying the extinction layout once more presented itself before him.

“Waughh!!” A scream traveled out from the darkness, followed by black shadows rushing toward Lu Yun. They were the evil spirits of the ancient tomb, responsible for the waves of spirits that used to regularly plague Dusk Province. With the human demon sealed away, the yin spirits seemed to have fallen under the control of the extinction layout.

Evil spirits of different forms lunged at Lu Yun one after another, trying to tear him to pieces.

Crackle!

The Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder around Lu Yun flared with navy blue lightning and tore into any spirits that dared approach him. His cultivation was limited, but the thunder possessed great capacity for exorcism. Not even peerless immortal spirits could survive an encounter at close quarters.

Gaze steely, Lu Yun waded through layers of darkness before finally reaching the tree. The waters of the Dusk River flowed beneath his feet. The great river running across half of Dusk Province seemed to be a treasure of a great personage, and it originated from this tomb.

“Waters of utmost yin are capable of fostering a certain treasure of great yin. The treasure itself lies hidden beneath the tree. Dusk River, the wilted tree, and something else established the layout together... Ah, the Enneawym Coffinbearers! It was here first, then left for Dusk City!

It wasn’t until the Enneawym Coffinbearers departed that the extinction layout started taking shape... Wayfarer became Governor of Dusk a thousand years ago and set up the Enneawym Coffinbearers layout in the province, destroying its fortunes.

That was when the extinction layout started fleshing out... What role did that Wayfarer play in all of this? Lu Yun put everything together once he got a good look at the layout. All the events that had occurred in Dusk Province from beginning to end were in service of this extinction layout.

Was everything just to destroy the thing Ge Long ate? Lu Yun hesitated when his thoughts reached this point.

Ge Long was an enigma, but his strength could at most rival an advanced arcane dao immortal. Something he could easily deal with wouldn't have made Chen Xiao and the human demon spend a thousand years of planning to destroy, would it?

The Enneaworm Coffinbearers, Nine-Phoenix Casket, and Enneaqilin Coffinbiers shook in unison, as if trying to prevent Lu Yun from breaking the layout.

"What's the true purpose of the extinction layout? The eyes... they did this on purpose. They instantly destroyed all the other layouts in the tomb, but left the extinction layout intact." Lu Yun came to a halt before the wraith-like withered tree and muttered, "Extinction layout, extinction layout. Who is it trying to make extinct?"

Chapter 472: Audacious in the Extreme

Lu Yun stood at the center of the extinction layout, needing only to twitch a single finger to break it. The layout was powerful enough to destroy the world once activated, and was one of the most destructive layouts recorded in the texts of his sect.

Extinction layouts were in a category of their own in the records, separate from feng shui formations, feng shui layouts, feng shui influences, and grand influences over the world. At the same time, it was unusually fragile, and anyone who knew feng shui could easily break it. However, feng shui was a lost art in the world of immortals.

Lu Yun stood before the extinction layout and extended his hand, then pulled it back.

Qi Hai abandoned the body of the Infernum and sent him back to hell, returning to Lu Yun's side in the form of a damaged soul. The evil spirits here wouldn't attack mere scraps of a soul.

"Let's go," Qi Hai said gravely, noticing that something was off with the extinction layout. "This isn't something we should touch."

"Say, doesn't all this look like a game of chess to you?" Lu Yun suddenly remarked. "Two sides are playing against each other, with the extinction layout as the chessboard. Which side the layout destroys depends on whoever has the more comprehensive set up!"

"The Exalted Celestial Emperor was placed here not to set up the Sacred Origin Runes, but to release the pair of eyes and be a vessel for them, so they could freely leave the tomb!"

"The human demon was kept in the dark about that," murmured Lu Yun. "His existence was obviously a hindrance, thus someone wanted to destroy him. He was set up so that he would willingly sacrifice himself."

Qi Hai felt a chill run down his spine. Destroy the human demon?

The human demon was the guardian of the resting place of the human emperor, and one of the greatest heavyweights of the human race. Although he'd transformed into a zombie upon death, his status in the human race remained unchallenged as its greatest protector. Who'd want to destroy him, and in a way that made him willingly open his arms to death?

“Is there really someone bold enough to do such a thing in the world of immortals?” Qi Hai frowned ferociously. Even if this was a game of chess between two powerful factions, he believed that the human demon should be one of the players, not just a piece.

“The pair of eyes would’ve destroyed the extinction layout, if the Exalted Celestial Emperor hadn’t been present.”

Qi Hai’s faint shadow stood next to Lu Yun. “What about you? What are you planning to do next?”

“Screw up the game, of course.” Lu Yun’s lips twisted in a vicious smile. “Dusk Province is my territory now!”

Qi Hai threw him a disbelieving look. The boy didn’t even know who was behind all of this, nor what they wanted, yet he would make such a bold claim?

“The true form of the extinction layout is the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood. Only that can be used to set up this kind of layout.” Lu Yun found records of the wood in Xingzi’s memory.

The Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood was a sacred material that only the shaman kings of yesteryear had a right to use. Its greatest use was to be refined into replicas. The grain of the wood was unusually similar to the blood vessels, muscles, and meridians of a human body. Other than the ten connate spirit roots, it was the best material for replicas.

Some among the shamans had once theorized that some strange lifeforms must transform into the wood after their deaths, but no one had ever been able to prove it.

Incidentally, an endless supply of yin and malevolent energy could be found inside the wood. Regular folks would be contaminated and zombified once their nascent spirits entered the material. Moreover, there was a terrifying power within the wood that could sever the soul, one that could easily tear apart soul-parts and destroy nascent spirits.

Apart from the shaman king of the three main tribes, none other in the shamanic race could bear the brunt of the yin energy and soul-severing power.

Lu Yun could tell that the extinction layout in front of him originated from those two deadly forces in the wood and was facilitated by the Dusk River beneath his feet, as well as the departed Enneawym Coffinbearers. The layout now circled around the wood to form a complete entity.

“Who did the river belong to?” Lu Yun suddenly asked Qi Hai.

“A vicious fiend from the era of human dao. With the sheer magnitude of slaughter he’d committed, all races in the world considered him their worst enemy. The human demon couldn’t destroy him, so he was sealed away in the resting place of the human emperor. The Dusk River was his personal treasure.” Qi Hai sighed with emotion when he spoke about this ancient enemy.

The human demon had been the most powerful being in the human race after the fall of the human emperor, but not even he had been able to kill the fiend. The impact from that battle had shaken every world and the human demon had been severely injured, thus planting the seed of the destruction of the human dao era.

Dusk River remained present in the tomb as a quietly flowing entity of water. When the monster spirits had invaded Dusk Province last time, the river had surged and killed countless invaders. That meant the vicious fiend was still alive, and that he was here, in the ancient tomb! His treasure had merged with the setup here as part of the extinction layout!

“What are you doing?” Qi Hai widened his eyes when he realized what Lu Yun was going to do.

“Don’t worry, I won’t touch the river. Everything else, however, is mine.” Lu Yun scattered the Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder circling his body, allowing thick darkness to return and shroud the area.

Swoosh!

Fire darker than even the pitch-black void around them slowly flared into existence around Lu Yun. He lifted his hand and sent hellfire to envelop the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood. A faint scream seemed to cut off prematurely when he did so.

That had been the feng shui spirit residing within the wood. It’d come infinitely close to becoming a real living being like the Dragon and Tiger Prince. However, the true form of the extinction layout was extraordinarily fragile and the feng shui spirit weak as well. All it took was a touch of hellfire for it to be disintegrated.

A ray of crimson light shot out of Lu Yun’s body and slowly melded into the wood. This was how the shamanic race refined replicas. He was going to refine the wood—and the extinction layout around it—into his replica!

Seeing what Lu Yun was doing, Qi Hai was petrified with shock by Lu Yun’s insane plan. He wanted to refine the chess game between two great figures into his personal replica? What was he thinking?! Wasn’t he afraid that the great figures would murder him for the offense?

The world of immortals was vast and boundless. The nine majors, ten lands, and four immortal seas made up but a small corner of the world in Qi Hai’s eyes. The setup here was clearly the doing of some heavyweights outside the world they knew.

Lu Yun wouldn’t have caught their attention whether he destroyed the layout or kept it as is, but no, the boy had to pick the most dangerous route and take what was theirs!

Chapter 473: Shaman King of the Dark Moon Tribe

Ever since his return from Destiny City, Lu Yun had been looking for the right materials to refine a replica, so he could give actual form and figure to Qing Yu’s Sidekick.

It had to be a separate entity from Lu Yun. Otherwise, Dusk Province would be razed to the ground by the sheer number of enemies Qing Yu’s Sidekick had made during the Sovereign Meet.

All eyes would be on Lu Yun if there was a hint that someone pulled the strings from behind the scenes. Even if he himself put up a perfect act, there were enough signs left in Dusk Province that might attract suspicion, such as the Lin brothers.

Although their relevant memories had been severed, leaving behind a belief that they’d entered Dusk of their own volition in pursuit of the peak of formation dao, their presence in the province was still a risk.

Sword Divine knew of Lu Yun's true identity, but he himself had to keep a low profile. If someone learned about his existence, the world of immortals would turn itself upside down. All immortals would band together to destroy the divine race.

That was why Sword Divine had kept Lu Yun's identity a secret, lest he, too, go down in a blaze of mutual destruction. Worse still, he'd drag his race down with him.

The Mo Clan knew the truth as well, but they were counting on Lu Yun to remove the soul seed in Mo Qitian. Given that, they weren't foolish enough to reveal his identity. Besides, they'd never harbored hostility toward Lu Yun.

Nevertheless, one could never be too careful. It was best to have Qing Yu's Sidekick publicly show his face and fight Lu Yun. Then, even the Lin Clan and Sword Divine would question what they knew as the truth.

Lu Yun had refined a few replicas and secondary nascent spirits before this, but those couldn't fool heavyweights above the arcane dao immortal realm. That was why Qing Yu's Sidekick had yet to appear again.

Here, he saw hope in the form of the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood. Its grain was remarkably similar to the pattern of human blood vessels, muscles, and meridians. Add to that unique shamanic refinement methods, it would make for a final product that not even the shaman kings of the past would be able to see through.

Not only was Lu Yun going to refine the wood as a replica of himself, he was also incorporating the complete extinction layout within, making the replica a fully-primed bomb. In truly desperate times, the layout embedded within it could detonate and slaughter everything.

A burst of thick crimson light blossomed from Lu Yun's body and slowly seeped into the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood—his blood.

Shamanic methods centered around blood and souls, perfectly inheriting the cruelty and merciless nature of the human dao era. Bloodshed and death swirled in their wake; if something could be resolved with a fist, they'd never go for the peaceful route of communication.

They took lives and refined medicine and pills out of blood and souls. Most shamanic treasures were refined from the bones of their victims as well, just like Lu Yun had done in the Sovereign Arena.

Back in the Primordial Era, the shamans would hunt down other races and refine them into corpse coffins while their victims were still alive, displaying an even greater level of savagery. Here, Lu Yun was refining the replica with the shamanic method, bolstering the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood with his own blood.

A thick blanket of crimson light had draped over the wood, rejuvenating the shriveled branches, restoring its luster, and turning it a blood red.

"This is indeed a technique of the shamanic race," Qi Hai murmured softly, watching the crimson light wash over Lu Yun and the blood-colored wood.

His spirit had also gone through the era of the shamanic race, and it happened to be the worst experience in all of Qi Hai's many lives. He'd reincarnated nine times during the rule of the shamans, and in all nine lifetimes, he'd been brutally killed and refined into items.

It was the most barbaric era he'd ever lived through, and although his true self had now awakened, he was still reluctant to recall his time under shamanic rule.

"That little shaman girl, Xingzi, must have been her race's last princess. It's a pity that she died before coming into her full power." Qi Hai sighed, lamenting Xingzi's fate despite his previous happenings.

If she'd been able to fully come into her power, she would've been a great personage like the human kings of the Primeval Era. Then, perhaps, the shamans might've existed longer. Although the shamanic race was cruel and violent, they were the legitimate successors of human dao.

Now, although the immortal dao remained, all races prospered under the dao that humans had created. Even monster spirits, once nothing but servants and food, dared stick their necks out and vie for dominance with the human race.

Why, a gnat like Scarlet Ape even dared lead monster spirits in an assault on the resting place of the human emperor! That was sheer sacrilege in the eyes of a human dao purist like Qi Hai. He'd been trying to subtly influence Lu Yun, hoping that the successor of hell would conquer all of the other races and restore human rule, but the young man didn't seem all that interested.

Qi Hai sighed again and struck his forehead with the side of his hand, erasing some memories he shouldn't possess. "Perhaps I was the one who erased my memory about the separation of souls and spirits."

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"Hehehe, what a perfect body!" a sinister voice suddenly cackled in Lu Yun's ear, dripping with the worst of ill intention. A tremendous consciousness then rushed into his body. "I've waited countless years for a host like you... Merge with me and become the greatest existence in the world!"

The consciousness beat upon Lu Yun's mind like powerful waves. The boy immediately froze, a pained look on his face.

"Oh?" Qi Hai tensed as he turned to Lu Yun.

"Old thing!" A human face appeared on the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood and glared ferociously at Qi Hai. "I can sense your unusually old true spirit, but you cannot take this body from me."

"You are the Dark Moon Shaman King," Qi Hai said in surprise. "It is said that you were claimed by misfortune when trying to ascend to the emperor realm, but it turns out you were swallowed by the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood instead!"

The Dark Moon Shaman King paused. "You know me."

"Of course I do," Qi Hai responded darkly. "The first time I reincarnated during the rule of the shamanic race, it was your people who killed me."

At the time, the Dark Moon Shaman King was missing and considered dead, but the Dark Moon branch of the Moon Shaman Tribe remained dominant. Qi Hai had been a powerhouse in his own right, but he was nothing when facing the Dark Moon shamans. He was killed and later refined into a treasure.

"I thought you were an ancient spirit, but you're nothing but a piece of trash killed by my descendants!" sneered the shaman king.

Qi Hai gave a bark of laughter. "How I died is none of your business, but I do know that... you're doomed."

"What?" The shaman king tensed. Only now did he realize that the sliver of consciousness he'd extended into Lu Yun's body was being devoured. The seemingly harmless young man with a perfect constitution had metaphorically transformed into an ancient wild beast and was leering ferociously at him.

"How?? Why?!" he wailed.

Chapter 474: True Nature

"Hehehe..." Lu Yun cracked a delighted smile when he saw the face that the Dark Moon Shaman King had manifested. "In order to refine a replica that can fool anyone, the only way is to shroud it with the soul of another!" He stared at the shaman king, his gaze calculative.

The man had been trapped here for so long that his mind was twisted, and he'd inherited the cruelty and bloodthirst of the human dao as a shaman king. If he managed to escape the tomb, who knew what would happen?

Lu Yun had discovered his existence a long time ago. Like the young man had just said, he was going to take everything in this place, the shaman king included.

The Dark Moon Shaman King shrieked as the strand of consciousness entering Lu Yun's body scuttled away in terror, his ghostly face twisting in recognition.

"Hellfire! You're not the successor of the azure dragon ancestor, but of hell!!!"

Lu Yun had hidden the properties of hellfire when he'd refined the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood earlier, so the shaman king had taken it to be regular fire. Plus, the young man's earlier demonstration with the Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder had led him to believe that Lu Yun was an heir of the azure dragon tribe.

He didn't know anything of events earlier than that, as he was trapped in the wood and unable to extend his senses further. It wasn't until his consciousness had reached the depths of his new body's mind that Lu Yun released his hellfire all at once.

The shaman king had long met his death in the twists and turns of the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood, the fragments of his dead soul trapped within his murderer. Hellfire just so happened to be his bane.

However, his mind remained keen even after death. If Lu Yun had used hellfire as soon as the intruder entered his mind, the shaman king would have retreated immediately and buried his soul further in the depths of the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood, becoming a potential threat that could rear its head at any time.

Now, however, Lu Yun had trapped the shaman king's sentience in his own consciousness, allowing it no wiggle room.

"You can't do this to me!" snarled the Dark Moon Shaman King. "You're the successor of hell, the legitimate heir of human dao. I am, too. If you refine my soul into a tool for disguise, you will be betraying human dao!!"

"Betraying human dao?" Lu Yun paused and gave the face a strange look. "This man here represents the legitimacy of human dao, yet your successors refined him into a treasure."

"He's useless trash!" screamed the Dark Moon Shaman King. "How can he compare to me, a shaman king!"

Lu Yun turned to Qi Hai, who sighed and posed softly, "You are in the presence of the Skydusk City Lord, the greatest capital of the human race. I'd say I was more important than a little shaman king."

The revelation dumbfounded the Dark Moon Shaman King.

Swoosh!

Seizing the momentary opening, Lu Yun's fingers flashed through a hand seal. Hellfire surged and enveloped the shaman king's damaged soul. With a final wail, his soul shrunk into a small ball. Lu Yun wasted no time embarking on the shamanic method to refine it into a soul shroud.

When all was said and done, the man had been a shaman king from the Primeval Era. It should've been impossible for a cultivator like Lu Yun to refine his soul. Only by compromising the shaman king's mentality and seizing a split second of weakness did Lu Yun's plan succeed. Even so, he still spent eighty-one karmic fruits in the process.

Born out of virtuous merit watering the Sal Tree of Life and Death, karmic fruit was much more powerful than goodwill fruit. However, it still took eighty-one of them for Lu Yun to boost his hellfire to sufficient heights and fully refine the shaman king's soul.

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"Happy now?" Qi Hai asked coldly, staring at Lu Yun.

The young man shrugged noncommittally.

"It doesn't matter to me who you were," he said slowly. "I just don't want a stranger following me around, seeing all of my secrets. Although you've severed some of your memories, it wouldn't be difficult for someone like you to recover them."

Qi Hai's spirit flickered, making his agitation clear.

"I'll be honest with you." Lu Yun pulled his hand back and turned to face Qi Hai. "If I didn't encounter the shaman king, I would've refined your soul into a shroud and sent your true spirit into the wheel of reincarnation."

He opened his hand to reveal a faint golden dot hovering over his palm—the shaman king's spirit. He blew softly on it, sending the dot into the netherworld and sinking into a Hell Flower.

Qi Hai shuddered at the prospect. His spirit had been endlessly reincarnating through the ages since the era of human dao, facilitated by the power of hell. It'd taken him countless years to repair his spirit enough to recover his true sense of self.

If Lu Yun made him go through the cycle of reincarnation again, he would most likely be forever lost in the endless cycle of death and rebirth.

"You'd better forget about your schemes and refrain from sticking your nose into my business. Don't try forcing your human dao era beliefs on me, either." Lu Yun had always been wary of Qi Hai. Back in Destiny City, he'd set up the Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits to test the man. Even now, he didn't fully trust the ancient.

City lord of the greatest human capital? Lu Yun didn't give a rat's ass about that. Qi Hai had been using Lu Yun as a tool to restore human dominance, despite Lu Yun being the successor of hell.

In fact, he'd proposed the use of the Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits in order to attract the rotten flesh of many lives to control Lu Yun. He just hadn't counted on Ge Long and the Scripture of Salvation releasing the rotten flesh from its torment.

Naturally, Lu Yun also knew that Qi Hai had been refined into a shamanic treasure by the shaman king's successors.

The position of the Dark Moon Shaman King was widely renowned, and though whoever held it fully embodied the cruelty and bloodthirst of the shamans, they were still royalty at the end of the day. They wouldn't just refine a random person they grabbed off the street.

That was something Lu Yun had scrounged up from Xingzi's memories.

In his time, Qi Hai had hardly been a good man; he'd been far crueler than the shamans. The Dark Moon Shaman King's successor had done the world a service by killing Qi Hai. Although Qi Hai's real sense of self had been slumbering deep in his soul at the time, his true nature remained unchanged. It was who he was.

The Qi Hai of contemporary times was no different; he wanted to control Lu Yun!

Chapter 475: Xing Chen

Lu Yun wasn't opposed to the beliefs of the human dao era. In fact, as someone who'd reincarnated into the world of immortals from modern Earth, he held the very same principles. What he disliked, however, was someone attempting to force those beliefs onto him in order to change his thoughts against his will, which was precisely what Qi Hai had been doing.

Moreover, there was something from Su Xiaoxiao's memories that made him see Qi Hai in a negative light even before he'd met the man.

Qi Hai was the reason why Su Xiaoxiao was known as Doctor Poison, and why her tomb had taken on the layout of pearl-in-jade, teetering between the saint of the world of immortals who'd saved countless lives and a demon who'd reaped endless souls.

She'd slaughtered all of the inhabitants of some major worlds because they'd all been turned into zombies via corpse poison—a development orchestrated behind the scenes by Qi Hai.

The ancient had taken up residence in the dragon palace upon entering hell, whereupon Su Xiaoxiao had paid him a visit, but her attitude was far from friendly. Qi Hai, on the other hand, had been paying her a lot of attention.

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Qi Hai's soul shuddered when he heard Lu Yun's threat, but he swallowed his protests.

"I'll give you two choices: either stay in the dragon palace and don't do anything, or go wherever you should be." With that, Lu Yun bent his mind to refining the soul shroud and replica.

Qi Hai sighed and turned to leave. He didn't return to hell, but instead went where he needed to go.

Lu Yun looked up in the direction he'd left in, his gaze frosty. If Qi Hai insisted on becoming an enemy, Lu Yun wasn't opposed to sending him back through the reincarnation cycle.

Upon his departure, a ripple spread from the enormous Enneaworm Coffinbearers, Nine-Phoenix Casket, and Enneaqilin Coffinbiers. Something seemed to have been lifted, and hell seemed to further sharpen into focus.

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Bam!

A terrible crimson light washed over the ancient tomb. Lu Yun hovered in midair with blood seeping out of every pore, painting the tomb red.

The shamanic race was vicious in nature to other races, and even more so to themselves. When refining and nurturing a replica, shamans made use of their own blood. That was the only way for the replica to become a perfect copy of one's self.

Rather than a method to refine replicas, this was a technique invented by great shamans to create new bodies for themselves. However, the race hadn't reached a point where they could control the powers of creation. Unable to create real bodies, they'd instead turned to refining replicas with the same method.

The shamanic method of creating replicas was the greatest of all. Not even the replicas of the human dao era could rival its results. The Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood was now the same scarlet as Lu Yun's blood, and the tree slowly took human form.

The Dark Moon Shaman King's soul had been refined into a shroud, entering the wood with part of Lu Yun's nascent spirit. Suddenly, a terrifying soul-severing power shot out from the tree and slammed into Lu Yun's consciousness.

"Is this the power of severing the soul?" Anguish flashed through Lu Yun's eyes and blood drained from his face when the power threatened to tear apart and crush his three ethereal and seven corporal soul-parts. "What the hell is this?!"

A possibility came to him through the harrowing pain.

“Living spirits after the human dao era have no true spirits... Is it because they’ve been pulled out by something like this?” Hellfire burst out from Lu Yun’s eyes, but it still wasn’t enough to counter the strange soul-severing power.

Even the Tome of Life and Death had retreated to the side; Lu Yun had to endure this himself!

Great pain hammered at his mind like tidal waves. In the era of shamanic rule, only the shaman kings were able to endure such terrible power. Lu Yun stayed rooted to the spot, cocking his head as he endured the pain coming from deep within his soul. It should’ve been unbearable, but he’d once experienced pain much greater than this.

Death!

He’d died before coming to the world of immortals, right in front of the Tome of Life and Death. The tome had brought his soul to this world before it could scatter. That experience had branded itself into Lu Yun’s mind. The moment between life and death had nurtured his will like the greatest panacea.

He wasn’t Qi Hai.

Though Qi Hai had traveled along the wheel of reincarnation, he’d done so in a way that was more like a parasite finding a new host. He’d take over a host body and use its soul to nourish his own true spirit.

He’d never been through death himself, and his true spirit always left before its host died in search of his next body. It wasn’t until his true spirit awakened in the Primordial Era and became one with his soul that he’d returned to being Qi Hai.

That wasn’t really death. Great power could be found at the brink of life and death, and Lu Yun had absorbed that power. The only thing that could cause one to retain their memories while experiencing death was a treasure like the Tome of Life and Death.

Much of that experience was despair. Currently, the soul-severing power reignited the experience of hovering near death, sending looming terror and despair percolating through his mind. Torment and fear tore into him at the same time.

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It was a delicate act, enduring the pain of having one’s soul ripped apart and avoiding the yawning maw of destruction. What kept him buoyant from the bottomless abyss was the power of that fine line between life and death.

Lu Yun’s soul maintained a careful balance as it advanced slowly.

Moments later, he opened his eyes, his expression returning to calm. His hands made quick hand seals and sent compressed crimson light into the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood.

Just refining a regular replica isn’t useful. If I am to create a replica, it has to be the best! Flames burst out of Lu Yun’s eyes as he changed the movements of his hands. One continued refining the replica while the other drew upon hellfire to refine a treasure. He was doing both at the same time with aid from the Tome of Life and Death!

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After some time, the crimson light in the air vanished and an unassuming young man appeared before Lu Yun.

Qing Yu's Sidekick.

Known as the shitstirrer of the world of immortals, the young man who'd disrupted the Sovereign Meet finally truly descended upon the world.

"If you weren't my replica, not even my Spectral Eye would see through you. This soul-shrouding method of the shamanic race sure is something!" Horror shadowed Lu Yun's expression as he looked at the replica.

The Spectral Eye could see through life and death, and had gained even more mysterious abilities in its improved form. Even so, it couldn't see the replica as what it was.

"From now on, your name is Xing..." Lu Yun paused bemusedly, "Xing Chen, the successor of the primeval Star Shaman Tribe!"

Chapter 476: What a Waste

Dusk Province.

The blockade of the province had been lifted with the arrival of geniuses from the Sovereign Meet. With Dusk's restriction against immortals, no power from the golden immortal realm or higher could be deployed here. Thus, this province would allow them to demonstrate their true talents.

Most of the visiting geniuses had ascended to the void realm, and many of them had reached returned void realm.

August immortals?

Those wouldn't survive a single punch from void realm geniuses! In fact, some top geniuses could actually rival golden, arcane, or even peerless immortals. Dusk Province was a paradise in which they could frolic to their heart's content. Even dao immortals had to docilely bow their head to the new pecking order here.

The most famous among the cultivators were the forty-six geniuses, consisting of the ten lords of the Sovereign World and the thirty-six champions of the Sovereign Arena.

Although they'd been swiftly dealt with by Qing Yu and her Sidekick, that hadn't compromised their reputation. They hadn't been able to tap into their full power in either the Sovereign World or the arena.

In recent history, the world of immortals had seen a decline in combat arts and a rise of the supplemental paths. Unable to bring their personal treasures with them into the second and third stage of the Sovereign Meet, the geniuses had access to at most half of their power.

That was why the ten lords and thirty-six champions had come to Dusk Province for a rematch, fully confident in their abilities. Of course, they also wouldn't turn down the opportunity to beat up the two shitstirrers too, if those two dared enter Dusk Province.

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“But the current top youth sovereign of the world of immortals is still Lu Yun,” snickered the Fallen Lord. “We should take care of this so-called number one before our two targets come.”

He looked at Dusk City in front of him from his vantage point in the air, his hands placed behind his back.

Dusk City had once been torn down and rebuilt into an even more impressive city by the Feng Clan. However, the invasion of the monster spirits had left the city walls cracked and teetering on the verge of falling apart.

Months had passed since then, but Lu Yun didn't seem keen on rebuilding Dusk City. The other cities in Dusk Province, on the other hand, had all been restored, albeit empty of any living residents still.

“Perhaps... Lu Yun is the shitstirrer.” The Thunder Lord looked over at Dusk City as well, his eyes cold and his body encircled by whips of crackling purple lighting.

“Purple hair!” the Monster Lord sneered. “If he were Lu Yun, why would my ancestor protect him in Destiny City?”

“Hmph!” The Thunder Lord shot the golden lion a silent look.

After their internal division, monster spirits from the ten lands and Levitating Island were now bitter rivals. Each side wanted to conquer the other, so it was no wonder that the Thunder Lord and Monster Lord couldn't stand each other.

“Lu Yun is a snivelling baby, look at how he doesn't even dare open the city gates. Is he waiting for us to kick his front doors in?” The Fallen Lord remained calm and composed throughout. He appeared to be a delicate-looking young man, but he'd almost broken Chu Yingxin's dao heart with just a few choice words after losing to him in the arena.

“Show yourself, Lu Yun, or Dusk City will be no more!” In addition to the ten lords and thirty-six champions, tens of thousands of genius cultivators had also flocked to the city. They'd all improved exponentially after digesting what they'd gained from the Sovereign Meet and were in fine fettle, sure that they'd be able to easily conquer Dusk City.

Located within the provincial capital was the complete heritage of an ancient lord who'd exceeded the dao immortal realm! The cultivators had gained many treasures and legacies in the Sovereign Meet, but none had won anything beyond the dao immortal realm. Challenging Lu Yun was merely an excuse for them to break into Dusk City.

They were here on a mission.

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“Let's besiege the city.” The Fallen Lord nodded to the cultivators around him. These tens of thousands of geniuses had waited long enough. They wanted nothing more than to rush in and loot the inheritance tower in the city!

Bam!

Countless sword slashes made for the city gates, but they were blocked by rippling energy just outside the city. A figure emerged atop the city walls.

“Do you all have a death wish?” Qing Han uttered frostily, looking down at the swarms of cultivators below.

They stopped attacking when they saw him.

“Traitor!” shouted someone from the Qing Clan. “Open the city gates and make amends for your wrongdoings!”

Qing Han responded with a nonchalant wave of her hand; inky-black weapons of war emerged atop of the city walls.

The cultivators paused when they saw the cannons, then burst into an uproar of laughter.

“Do you know how many weapons of war there are aimed at the city?” a Qing void realm genius laughed in Qing Han’s face. “Three hundred and sixty-five! The heavenly courts of the nine majors have set up three hundred and sixty-five weapons around Dusk Province!

“Your weapons of war? Just try using them, why don’t you!” Named Qing Hong, this cultivator was a secret genius of the Qing Clan. Although he wasn’t of the Qing patriarch’s bloodline, his talent was one of the best in the clan.

He’d ascended to returned void realm during the Sovereign Meet, making him only slightly lesser than the thirty-six champions and ten lords. He was now the top genius of the Qing Clan. But despite his cultivation level, he didn’t possess his own void realm methods, which prevented him from proceeding any further.

Bam!

As soon as Qing Hong delivered his taunt, one of the weapons of war lining the city wall lit up and he disintegrated in a beam of light.

Silence fell.

Cultivators and immortals observing from the dark alike gaped at Qing Han, caught off guard by the sheer audacity. There were three hundred and sixty-five weapons of war around the province, all aimed at Dusk City! How had Qing Han dared make a move?

What they didn’t know was that Qing Han had been pushed to the limits of her patience. The Lu patriarch had been assassinated, sending the clan into a frenzy, and even the Chen Clan jumped at the slightest shadows now. More importantly, Lu Yun had been missing for a month...

One last lingering shred of reason was the only thing keeping her from blowing all of the cultivators outside the city into bits. Her attack on Qing Hong was a message to these people: she was well past making empty threats and would kill them if they tried anything.

“What a waste,” Qing Han huffed, her gaze sweeping over the cultivators.

Shocked realization rippled through the crowd; Qing Han meant it was a waste to kill them with weapons of war!

“Qing Han! Dare you leave the city and fight me?!” A peak returned void realm cultivator among the thirty-six champions took flight and flashed Qing Han a mocking look. “You’re a dao sovereign under the immortal dao. Are you afraid of accepting my challenge because you have nothing to back up your title?”

This champion was human and wearing a full set of golden armor, imitating a miniature sun.

“Piss off.” Qing Han aimed another weapon of war at him.

Chapter 477: Fangyang Nobles

“You!” Panic overtook the young man in golden armor when Qing Han summarily aimed a weapon of war at him.

He fancied himself an important figure, one much more superior than the rest of the cultivators in today’s world by a large margin. However, he couldn’t do anything when Qing Han acted with no concern for face.

“So this is the true character of the Youth Dao Sovereign! You don’t even have the courage to face me in a fair fight.” With a huff, the young man slowly sank to the ground.

He really was worried that Qing Han would dust him with a shot like what had just happened moments ago. That would be the most worthless way to go.

It’d greatly frustrated him to have been taken out by Qing Yu in only a few moves back in the Sovereign Arena, but that was nothing compared to what he was now experiencing in Dusk Province.

At the time, Qing Yu had activated the treasure of immortal dao under the arena with the combat arts of the founders of immortal dao. That was how she’d been able to kill all thirty-six champions in one go.

They didn’t think Qing Yu was actually better than them, and were thoroughly confident that any one of them would be able to defeat her under different circumstances.

Facing Qing Han, the young man in golden armor was even less impressed. Despite his reputation, Qing Han didn’t have any notable feats under his belt. He was only known for restoring the void realm and becoming a dao sovereign appointed by the Dao Flower.

To many, Qing Han was nothing but an attention-seeker, fishing for praise he didn’t deserve.

“The courage to face you in a fair fight, you say?” Qing Han beamed brightly, her foul mood seemingly fading away because of something delightful occurring.

“Alright, I’ll give you the chance for a face-to-face exchange.” She stowed the weapons of war with a wave of her hand, then descended from the city wall to face the champion in golden armor.

“Identify yourself.” Qing Han released the full power of an unravelled void realm cultivator as she spoke.

Her cultivation had progressed greatly after the Sovereign Meet and she’d broken through to a new realm. She’d also found an inheritance—the dao book she was reading in the tomb—in the Sovereign

World. More importantly, the power of the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals increased as her cultivation level improved. That, along with the starstones, were the greatest aces up her sleeves.

“A fame-seeker bold enough to fight me?” the youth in golden armor scoffed after a surprised pause. He’d ascended to returned void realm, so he didn’t consider an unravelled void realm cultivator a threat at all.

“My surname is Fangyang,” he smiled proudly. “As for my name... I’ll tell you if you can survive three hits from me.”

“Fangyang?” That gave everyone pause. Fangyang was a surname so rare it was nearly unheard of. The young man introducing himself as Fangyang was a stranger to them as well. His debut in the world of immortals had been during the Sovereign Meet in Destiny City.

He was powerful enough to be one of the thirty-six champions of the Sovereign Meet, and he’d ascended to peak returned void realm. No run-of-the-mill small faction could’ve raised someone like him.

“Fangyang?” an immortal muttered. “I once saw this name in an ancient tomb... They seem to have been a noble clan in the Primordial Era.”

The ancient lords were those who’d exceeded dao immortal and reached the ingress realm. Clans who had such heavyweights among them were considered nobles, and grasped the power to rule over parts of the world of immortals.

However, when the ancient great war befell the immortals, all of the ancient clans were destroyed. The lofty immortals lost their immortality and their memories, and the Fangyang Clan was no exception. Even survivors of the clan didn’t know they were once nobility.

“But the Fangyang Clan was destroyed,” continued the immortal. “Did you stumble upon their heritage somewhere?”

“Fool!” scoffed the young man. “The Fangyang Nobles weren’t destroyed and our heritage remains unbroken!”

Rumble!

Radiance as blinding as the sun burst forth from the Fangyang scion’s body.

“The restriction against immortals is so powerful as to sever the immortal dao and knock all lives back into the dust of the mundane, erasing memories as immortals fell... However, those who were powerful enough could endure the restriction and maintain their memory!” Deep pride flashed across the Fangyang scion’s face. “My ancestors were such individuals. Although they fell from immortality, they retained their memories of the immortal dao!”

Deafening silence descended. Memories of the immortal dao? The implications of this were tremendous.

With the immortal dao severed, the ancient combat arts had been lost. What was unearthed from the ancient tombs were mostly incomplete fragments. Only a few perfect ancient methods existed, such as the flawless, complete heritage hidden in the inheritance tower at the center of Dusk City.

It appeared that the Fangyang Clan had access to such perfect ancient methods as well!

“The Fangyang Clan now returns to the world to take our place as its ruler!” the youth declared with great solemnity.

“What a joke,” snorted a voice from midair. “The Fangyang Clan? Your cowardly excuses for ancestors only retained their memories by a stroke of luck because they fled and hid outside the realm. They were later exiled by the divine race and nine celestial emperors. Now you have the audacity to claim to be the rulers of the world?”

“Your clan wouldn’t dare emerge in the world, had the nine celestial emperors not passed down their thrones and removed themselves from the conflicts of the lands!”

“Who is it?!” an immortal lurking on the other side demanded before the Fangyang scion could say anything.

The voice didn’t speak again, and the young man’s expression was as black as foreboding night, thoroughly humiliated. However, neither he nor the other Fangyang members could offer any counterarguments. What the voice said was the truth. There was no arguing that the Fangyang Clan had only shown themselves because of the nine celestial emperors’ abdication.

“Show yourself, lurking vermin!” The young man in golden armor made a sudden move, striking at a portion of the sky with his palm.

A gray figure tumbled from midair, shrouded by a gray presence and wreathed in a pungent, rotten smell... a zombie!

“Corpse Refiner scum,” snarled the Fangyang scion, taking a step forward and smacking the zombie with a palm strike. It fell apart and died then and there.

The Corpse Refiners hadn’t participated in the last Sovereign Meet. They were still the public enemy of the world, despite having established themselves in Truespirit Major. Any of their members would be torn apart if they dared show up.

With countless geniuses flocking to Dusk Province to hold another Sovereign Meet, though, the Corpse Refiners couldn’t stay on the sidelines. They were a mysterious faction that’d been around since at least the Primordial Era. Their heritage had never been lost, and they knew about the Fangyang Clan.

“Hehehe, bold of you to kill a battle zombie of mine, Fangyang. Tsk, tsk, that’s all you’ve got though, isn’t it?”

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Qing Han rubbed her forehead in exasperation at seeing the Fangyang Clan fighting with the Corpse Refiners instead.

“I’ll deal with you cockroaches after I take care of this so-called dao sovereign.” Failing to locate the zombie’s owner, the Fangyang scion shifted his attention back to Qing Han. “We fight!”

Chapter 478: A Flawless Combat Art of the Immortal Dao

Glittering golden light bathed the Fangyang youth, turning him into a blinding, blazing sun. He manifested a golden lance and leveled it at Qing Han.

“Survive three of my moves and I’ll tell you my name.” His lips quirked in a derisive smile.

Qing Han nodded noncommittally, standing where she was with no attempt to show off her strength.

“This is just as well. We’ll let the Fangyang cultivator test Qing Han first, and find out if she’s one of the two shitstirrers of Destiny City!”

Outside of Dusk Province, a few heavyweights conversed among themselves through transmission as they watched the fight play out. They were looking for a man and a woman, some suspected one of the two to be either Qing Han or Lu Yun, but they didn’t have any proof as of yet.

“Perhaps Qing Han is Qing Yu!” an elite of House Donglin suggested. With the clan’s ancestral lands destroyed and Dong Lin slain by Zhao Fengyang, House Donglin had fallen far down the pecking order.

However, a dying camel was still bigger than a horse. There remained many top powerhouses among the Donglin ranks, peak arcane dao immortals included. Thus, their influence and status in the world of immortals remained steady.

“Qing Yu has a cosmic constitution and is of a similar age to Qing Han. Perhaps someone in the Qing Clan transformed Qing Yu into Qing Han to disrupt House Donglin’s plans! The way Qing Yu’s Sidekick acted back in Destiny City was telling enough!” That speculation hit a nerve.

To everyone’s great surprise, Qing Yu had turned out to be a woman. Following that logic, why couldn’t Qing Han be Qing Yu in disguise? If she could disguise herself as someone else, it would be easy to disguise someone else as her.

Therefore, it’d make perfect sense if Qing Yu was Qing Han and Sidekick was Lu Yun. A strange atmosphere permeated the air.

“That’s only a speculation, though,” interjected a dao immortal. “This matter cannot be made light of. We must make sure that Qing Han is Qing Yu before committing to anything, as there are still factions supporting Dusk Province even now. Aside from the Star Demon Sect, both the East Sea Court and Panorama Pavilion have an undefined relationship with the province. If we make a move without evidence, those two factions may not react well.”

The East Sea Court occupied a fertile oceanic region, while Panorama Pavilion was among the top three biggest merchant guilds in the world. Their influence extended far beyond a single major, and in fact reached throughout all of the land.

If they threw their weight behind Dusk Province, many would refrain from attacking Dusk Province out of fear of the repercussions.

But if Lu Yun and Qing Han were responsible for the utter shambles of the Sovereign Meet, even the reemergence of the nine celestial emperors wouldn’t be able to prevent public backlash, let alone the Panorama Pavilion and East Sea Court.

Zhao Fengyang had killed Dong Lin because the latter had injured the Destiny city lord, his master. The former celestial emperor's actions were perfectly justified. But if anyone dared protect Qing Yu and her Sidekick, they would be going against the entire world of immortals.

The crime of disrupting the Sovereign Meet and skinning and deboning the geniuses of the world of immortals was too great. What the two youths had done there had made them public enemy number one.

"Let's see how the battle between Qing Han and the Fangyang youth turns out, first," said an arcane dao immortal. "The one from the Fangyang Clan is indeed strong to rank among the top half of the thirty-six champions of the Sovereign Meet. Qing Han won't be able to hold back when fighting him. We'll be able to tell who he is then."

The Donglin dao immortal was certain that Qing Han was Qing Yu.

It also went without saying that Donglin Taihuang was nowhere to be seen. There was still a bounty of a hundred billion crystals on him, one that proved too great a temptation despite many seeing the two shitstirrers as their enemies.

If Donglin Taihuang dared show himself, an origin dao immortal might kill him with a casual backhand.

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Qing Han crooked his finger in a beckoning gesture. His lackadaisical dismissal put a furious grimace on the Fangyang scion's face.

"You court death!" Brilliant luminescence burst out from his polearm. He made an overhead swing at Qing Han with all of his strength, slashing down at his opponent from above. Rather than pulling his punches to test Qing Han, the youth wanted to kill the arrogant brat in front of him with a single hit.

The attack's impact was tremendous. Three thousand meters in every direction turned into a golden ocean, and the land beneath them and the energy in the area began to evaporate.

"That's an immortal dao combat art from the primordial times rather than a technique of a cultivator!" many immortals cried out in shock.

The Fangyang youth wasn't using the combat art of a cultivator, or even one of the current immortal dao. The primordial immortal dao had been prosperous and its combat arts flawless, much more powerful than the ones today.

He should've gone on a killing spree and taken home the championship in the Sovereign Arena. However, when Qing Yu activated the power of the arena with the combat arts of the founders, it'd prevented him from tapping into his full power.

Now that there was nothing restraining him, Fangyang was able to unleash the full power of the ancient arts with his primordial treasure, pushing his strength to unprecedented heights. In the eyes of the crowd, Qing Han would be crushed like an insect under the might of this terrifying primordial art, youth dao sovereign or not.

Bam!

The blazing sun descended, scattering deadly solar flares in all directions. All but the ten lords and remaining thirty-five champions had fled the area of effect. Those whose cultivation was slightly lower were disintegrated beneath the terrifying might.

Such overweening audacity! The young man clearly considered himself above all others and didn't spare a single thought for potential casualties. Even the immortals watching outside Dusk Province shied away from the light.

"What a perfect primordial combat art... and what a shame it's tied to bloodline. Only those of the Fangyang Clan can practice it!" A few dao immortals had identified the combat art for what it was, and the comprehension disappointed them. If that hadn't been the case, they would've loved to emulate it.

"It's likely only bloodline-related combat arts like these were preserved in the face of the restriction's destructive power against immortals." The dao immortals shook their heads.

"It doesn't matter who Qing Han is anymore. He's dead without a doubt, as that perfect combat art will kill any cultivators of the same level. If the Sovereign Meet hadn't been disrupted, the young man from the Fangyang Noble Clan would've ranked first and been the top sovereign."

Some began currying favor with the Fangyang Clan in anticipation of the clan's victory. It was, after all, a noble clan from the Primordial Era. Apart from the nine celestial emperors, there were none who could rival them in the world.

"Not necessarily! The world of immortals is vast, and geniuses are abundant as carp in the river. Flawless combat arts of the immortal dao are powerful, but they aren't the only paths to supremacy. The ten lords and other thirty-five champions may not be weaker than the Fangyang Clan."

Naturally, there were dissenting voices as well, but all of them agreed on one thing about the fight: Qing Han was doomed.

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"Hmph, overly confident fool." The Fangyang youth smirked derisively and muttered at Dusk City, "It's your turn, Lu Yun."

"Eh... didn't you say you'd make three moves? There's two more to go, don't keep me waiting," a rather bored voice sounded out. "If three aren't enough, I'll let you have ten. If you still aren't satisfied, we can make it a hundred."

Chapter 479: Business of Us Cultivators

General astonishment reigned. What was going on here? The last bit of light dissipated, revealing a slightly frail figure.

Qing Han!

The disguised girl remained where she was, completely unfazed. Not even her clothes were ruffled.

Disbelief took everyone's breath away.

That perfect combat art would allow a void realm cultivator to fully tap into the power of their realm, bestowing upon them the power to render even an arcane dao immortal into ashes. Qing Han was but an unravelled void realm cultivator, which was nothing special after the Sovereign Meet, given that void realm cultivators could be found by the handful on the streets.

However, she'd taken the flawless attack head-on without twitching a muscle.

All the hype that'd built up for the Fangyang youth came crashing down. He froze, not knowing what to do. He'd presented himself with the superiority of giving Qing Han a lesson, but now he was regally bestowed a hundred attacks instead.

Though many wanted to laugh, they couldn't give voice to their mirth. Even the dao immortals watching from outside Dusk Province grew wary.

How powerful was Qing Han? Was this the true strength of the young dao sovereign appointed by the Dao Flower?

"Impossible!!" Galvanized by witnessing the inconceivable, the Fangyang youth attacked Qing Han with reckless abandon like he'd lost his mind. Again, he deployed flawless immortal dao combat arts, thirty-six different ones at the same time.

Great power swept over Qing Han like unstoppable tidewater. Cultivators in the vicinity fled from the indiscriminate attack, including the ten lords and other thirty-five champions.

"That Fangyang boy's character is too weak!" someone lamented from outside the province.

Previously, the young man had stated he would have Qing Han take three attacks from him, but he'd actually planned to kill Qing Han with a single blow to triumphantly announce the return of the Fangyang Nobles. All of that was a lost cause now that a frenzy had overtaken him in a moment of weakness.

"Hmph!" a Fangyang heavyweight huffed and reached into Dusk Province.

The young man hadn't hurt Qing Han at all. She remained where she was, smiling faintly with no intention to make a move.

Bam!!

The Fangyang dao immortal's hand arrived in the province. It appeared to be just a giant hand, but it was also a flawless primordial method, combining the power of heaven and earth and the immortal dao to conjure an image projection.

The attack encompassed all of Dusk City. Plainly, the dao immortal intended to destroy the city along with Qing Han.

However, snowflakes fluttered from the sky and enveloped Qing Han in their wake, disintegrating the powerful hand upon contact and leaving only a gust of wind in its wake.

"Would you like to die?" A girl dressed in man's clothes walked out of the air and descended upon the wall of Dusk City. She wore no rouge or powder, but there was a dashing grace to her all the same. It was as if she were the heart of heaven and earth simply by existing.

“Mo Yi!” Countless immortals and cultivators shifted ardent gazes to her.

“Fairy Mo Yi!”

“It really is Fairy Mo Yi! She showed up!” Cheers and shouts roared out from the cultivators.

From his hiding place, a highly envious Lu Yun could see thick currents of goodwill streaming into Mo Yi from all directions. If he could collect all of that goodwill, he’d be able to distill it into a strand of virtuous merit and coax another karmic fruit from the Sal Tree of Life and Death.

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The Fangyang dao immortal stared at Mo Yi with an equally heated gaze. There were many beauties in the world, but very few with her achievements. She’d been the first to ascend to the void realm, then the first to ascend to immortality. And now, she’d reached incredible heights in cultivation.

Her beauty ranked among the top of the world, and dressing as a man brought her a different kind of allure. Almost every man who’d ever seen her would be attracted to her.

In the end, the Fangyang dao immortal schooled his expression and demanded coldly, “Are you going to shelter a demonic fiend who’s stirred up endless trouble in the world of immortals?”

“A demonic fiend?” Mo Yi questioned with steel in her voice, casting a confounded gaze at the Fangyang immortal. “Dao Sovereign Qing Han restored the path of cultivation and brought great benefit to all lives in all the worlds. His feats are distinguished and eminent. If you call him a fiend, what does that make you?”

Her retort made the dao immortal’s expression darken.

“Because Qing Han is Qing Yu!” A dao immortal of House Donglin revealed himself and pointed at Qing Han with a huff. “He is Qing Yu, the girl of a cosmic constitution born eighteen years ago to the Qing Clan. I don’t know how she disguises herself as a man, but she is Qing Yu!

“And her Sidekick is Lu Yun! The two of them stirred up chaos in Destiny City and ruined the great Sovereign Meet. Isn’t that a great enough crime?!” The dao immortal spoke with righteous, pompous tones, but his eyes remained glued to Mo Yi.

“Cat got your tongue?” the Fangyang dao immortal followed up. “Harboring her makes you an accomplice, Mo Yi. I suggest you two bind yourselves and walk out of Dusk Province to pay for your crimes, or all will be destroyed by the weapons of war.”

He was now after Mo Yi.

Mo Yi paused, reminded of what Lu Yun had told her in the tomb. Even if she never competed for anything, there’d still be people looking to gain something from her.

“Weapons of war?” Qing Han scoffed. “If you all want to die, then I shall grant you your wish.”

Rumble!

All of the weapons of war lining the city walls lit up and took aim at the dao immortals outside the province.

“All of you old freaks need to shut your mouths!” suddenly snapped the Dragon Lord. “This is the business of us cultivators. What the heck does it have to do with you immortals?! The Sovereign Meet is our Sovereign Meet, too. We don’t need you meddling in our affairs.”

“The Dragon Lord is right, this is business between cultivators. You old farts dare not even enter Dusk Province, so what else can you do other than yap yap yap outside? Attacking Dusk Province with weapons of war? Do you really dare do that?” the lion with a sparkling mane—the Monster Lord—said with great authority, its voice dripping with contempt. “We cultivators will resolve this issue ourselves... Idiot from the Fangyang Clan, I won’t forgive you for coveting Fairy Mo Yi. Your head is mine once I ascend to immortality from the void realm!”

Chapter 480: Lu Shenhou Reveals Himself

This was business between cultivators—a sentence that resonated with many cultivators present.

It was those old farts who’d shamelessly killed the genius cultivators with no regard for propriety. If not for the Life Glyphs, more than half of the geniuses would’ve died at their hands. In some ways, the cultivators hated the dao immortals much more than the two shitstirrers.

Qing Yu and Sidekick had only prevented them from harvesting gains, while the immortals wanted them dead. In fact, organizing another Sovereign Meet in Dusk Province had been the immortals’ idea.

They’d wanted to test Lu Yun and Qing Han through the cultivators to see if the two youths were indeed the two infamous troublemakers, and they hadn’t taken no for an answer.

Resentment building up in young hearts had finally reached a tipping point.

As the cultivators jeered and booed, the faces of the dao immortals outside Dusk Province darkened ominously. However, they still didn’t dare enter the province. If their cultivation was suppressed to the august immortal realm, those cultivators would tear them to pieces in no time.

Having silenced the immortals outside, the cultivators within Dusk City turned their attention to Mo Yi.

She fidgeted uneasily when she sensed the heated gazes, then disappeared from the sky like the pop of a bubble.

Qing Han threw the Fangyang youth a gaze and declared, “Continue.”

The young man brooded; he knew by now that he wasn’t Qing Han’s match.

“If you don’t, I’ll make my move.”

Hum!

Scintillating starlight followed when Qing Han lifted her hand to consolidate into a silver star. The entire area was awash in silver, a sight that drained the color from the Fangyang youth’s face and sent him stumbling backward.

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“That’s the power of starstones!” exclaimed a dao immortal outside Dusk Province. “He’s able to make starstones’ power his own! How is that possible?!”

It was common knowledge that starstones couldn't be refined. Their power could only be borrowed, not acquired. However, Qing Han had tapped into the infinite power of starstones, making it clear that he'd refined a stone, or even more than one.

"Because Qing Han is Qing Yu!" growled the Donglin dao immortal. "He has to be Qing Yu, even if he isn't her!"

He turned to a peerless immortal next to him—one who looked quite unassuming. However, if anyone from the Mo Clan were present, they would've recognized the peerless immortal as an elite of the main branch that'd been secretly raised as the bulwark of the clan's forces.

This immortal was actually a spy planted by House Donglin. When the house declined, all the setup they'd made beforehand had emerged to pull House Donglin back from the edge of the cliff.

Many dao immortals cast their gaze in the direction of the inheritance tower at the heart of Dusk City.

Home to the complete heritage of an ancient lord, even noble clans like the Fangyangs coveted it. Perhaps therein lay the secrets to ascending to the origin dao realm, or healing the injuries the origin dao immortals had suffered during their journey.

Although the cultivators were defiant and unwilling to work with them, that wouldn't stop the dao immortals from moving on Dusk Province. In fact, many of them wanted to kill the genius cultivators while they were at it!

If the geniuses were allowed to come into their power, the dao immortals' dominance over the world of immortals would be compromised.

Void realm cultivators were already able to destroy golden and arcane immortals, and rival peerless immortals. Upon ascending to immortality, they might be able to defeat dao immortals at the level of true immortals!

That was a future the dao immortals were unwilling to allow to come to pass.

"Don't show yourself yet. Wait until Lu Yun comes." The Donglin dao immortal put a hand on the Mo peerless immortal's shoulder and shook his head lightly. "Qing Han isn't the threat here, Lu Yun is. We don't want him to sense danger and escape before the trap is sprung!"

The Mo immortal nodded and remained where he was.

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Faced with Qing Han's cosmic power, the Fangyang youth completely lost his courage to fight. Perfect immortal dao combat arts were his greatest weapons, yet he'd failed to even ruffle his opponent's clothes.

"I... admit defeat..." he said dejectedly. "My name's Fangyang—"

"I'm not interested. Next... or you may all attack at once." Qing Han reeled in her cosmic power and looked over the cultivators around her with clear eyes.

They took a collective step backward. If even flawless combat arts couldn't hurt Qing Han, it'd be impossible for them to defeat her.

Swoosh! Thud!

A dark navy sword fell from the sky and buried itself into the ground nine meters before Qing Han. A tall, strapping young man walked down from midair.

"I shall be your opponent, Qing Yu."

Qing Yu, not Qing Han.

"Lu. Shen. Hou." Qing Han bit out.

"Lu Shenhou? Isn't he dead?!" Shock and astonishment rippled through the crowd.

The day that the Dao Flower was restored, Lu Yun and Qing Han had made it clear that Lu Shenhou and Dongfang Hao had died for the cause.

However, the dead man was alive and well, and had shoved his sword into the ground before Qing Han! It was an obvious gesture of the greatest hostility.

"Perhaps Lu Shenhou never died—Lu Yun and Qing Han just wanted to claim all of the credit and glory for themselves. Or perhaps they tried to get him killed, but failed?" Some didn't hesitate to smear Qing Han and Lu Yun's reputation.

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Qing Han scowled. She knew full well what Lu Shenhou was doing. She knew who the man was, but hadn't expected him to show up in public so boldly.

This means Lu Shenhou isn't Sword Divine himself. As Mo Yi said, he's doing this on purpose!

Lu Yun had told Qing Han about what'd happened in the ancient tomb so that she would be prepared.

"Qing Yu is the dao sovereign appointed by the Dao Flower and she's learned the combat arts of the founders of immortal dao. That's why perfect immortal dao combat arts won't work on her." Lu Shenhou didn't explain who he was or how he'd survived, but instead talked about Qing Han with an impassive expression. "In fact, flawed combat arts are the only ones that can hurt her."

That injected some life into the despairing Fangyang youth.

"Qing Yu only defeated the champions because she activated the immortal dao treasure under the Sovereign Arena with the founders' seals," Lu Shenhou continued, seemingly to himself.

"So it is indeed Qing Yu!" The dao immortals outside Dusk Province noted the new development with avarice glinting in their eyes, but didn't make their moves just yet. They were still waiting for Lu Yun to show up.

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"Then you can try and see if you can hurt me with the combat arts of your divine race," Qing Han said noncommittally.

