

## Necropolis 511

### Chapter 511: Ghost Realm

Lu Yun moved at great speed and travelled five hundred thousand kilometers with every breath, but it still took him a full day to traverse the East Sea and reach its end.

According to legend, this was where the Fusang Purewood grew and the sun in the primordial world of immortals rose. It also marked Empress Myrtlestar's territory—the East World of Immortals. However, a question had always floated in Lu Yun's heart: Why would Empress Myrtlestar become the empress of the East World of Immortals when her Imperial Star was of the north?

"This clearly isn't the East World of Immortals in the past, where countless immortals made their pilgrimages." Lu Yun stared off into the distance from the edge of the East Sea, his brows furrowed as he looked upon the world in front of him.

"It isn't." Qing Han nodded. "The East World of Immortals has fallen and turned to ashes. This place is something else."

Before them was a coastline that seemed to demarcate the other end of the East Sea. It outlined a dark continent shrouded with sinister energy. No one knew how or where it'd come from—it'd simply sprung into existence one day, to the great surprise of the East Sea monster spirits. Countless ghosts, undead, and other things that went bump into the night charged out from the continent, inflicting horrendous casualties on the marine inhabitants.

The East Sea court used to be the peak faction in the world of immortals. Previous emperors had even nursed the ambition to invade the rest of the world and conquer the nine majors, ten lands, and other three immortal seas.

Then, however, emerged the ghost realm bordered by this coastline. A zone taboo to life itself and a realm of death, the East Sea court had its hands full with the hordes of monsters that poured out of it every now and then.

In other words, this ghost realm was akin to the ancient tombs in the four provinces of Nephrite Major, the ones where tides of yin spirits reared their heads every once in a while.

However, enemies from the ghost realm were much more numerous than the occasional flare-ups from the four ancient tombs. Every instance took a great toll on the East Sea, claiming many of the court's dao immortals. Even a number of East Sea emperors had gone down fighting in these historical outbursts.

The current emperor had ascended to the throne not long ago. He'd been working hard to recover the East Sea to its former glory, and Xiangliu Hongzhen, the Deaf Prince, was his son.

Lu Yun could clearly see a natural barrier dividing the East Sea from the ghost realm, which was too powerful for even his Spectral Eye to penetrate. He couldn't get a good look at the world on the other side.

However, he could see cracks and scars on the barrier. Tiny yin spirits were tearing into the cracks with claws and fangs, attempting to burrow through.

The barrier was coalesced by the power of heaven and earth in the world of immortals, which made it the natural bane of the yin spirits on the other side. They disintegrated as soon as they passed through.

Nevertheless, there were far too many yin spirits on the other side, steadily weakening the barrier bit by bit.

“Lu Yun...” Qing Han began with a slight tremor in her voice. “Don’t you find the world on the other end of the coastline very familiar?”

Lu Yun paused, then nodded.

“It does feel very familiar. It’s like I’ve been there before...” With a frown, he chewed on how that world made him feel.

“The central world... the Sovereign World!” Qing Han’s voice gained an edge of inexplicable fear. “It feels like the central world... no, it is the central world! The presence is the same!”

“The central world is a dead world!” Lu Yun continued. “If my guess is right, this should be the edge of the world of immortals and the end of the East Sea. We should be seeing a boundless, vast cosmos here. Why is there a dead world here instead?”

Lu Yun scanned the area with his Spectral Eye.

The crippled origin dao immortals had caught up to Lu Yun and Qing Han, but couldn’t overhear the conversation.

“I can tell that the barrier formed by the world of immortals can’t keep the dead world at bay forever. The ghost realm is encroaching upon the East Sea at a barely perceptible speed, and it’ll one day devour it!”

The East, West, South, and North Seas were interconnected with each other, surrounding the twenty-four facets—including the central world—and keeping the world of immortals in one piece. Once the ghost realm devoured the East Sea, the world of immortals would fall apart. The complete major world would separate as shards with no singular heaven and earth.

“The central world is a dead world too. Or rather, it’s a world that was devoured by the ghost realm! Someone pulled it out of the abyss of death!” Qing Han froze in place as her mind flew through theories and speculations, inferring the truth of the central world thanks to the wisdom of the Dao Flower and support of the immortal dao.

“Come on, let’s go check it out!” Lu Yun took a deep breath.

Many immortals had entered the ghost realm while Lu Yun and Qing Han were having their discussion. The barrier could stop yin spirits from passing through, but not immortals from this side.

Although the ghost realm abounded with dangers so severe they could claim even dao immortals, with high risk came high reward. There were many tombs in the realm, all of which buried powerful immortals.

There were also many tombs interring ancient lords; the desolate land housed dead beings from many eras.

“You must not enter!” The dao immortals tailing Lu Yun and Qing Han hurriedly intervened.

The ghost realm was unpredictable, alternating between completely harmless to extremely dangerous in split seconds. When it was safe, even a mortal could enter and acquire countless valuables. When it was dangerous, however, even personages such as the nine celestial emperors would be killed upon entry.

Three of the origin dao immortals stepped forward to obstruct Lu Yun and Qing Han when they saw where their quarry was headed.

“Get out of our way,” Lu Yun growled with a dark look. He’d tolerated their ‘protection’, but he wouldn’t allow them to interfere with his business.

“The ghost realm is too dangerous. You two haven’t ascended to immortality...”

“Get out of our way!” A black cannon emerged before Lu Yun, mouth flickering a deathly white as it aimed at the three origin dao immortals. The Black Emperor was charging to its full power!

The origin dao immortals scowled. They hadn’t expected such a strong reaction from Lu Yun.

“Do you really think you can have your way just because Qing Han and I are alone?”

Rumble!

The Divine Glory appeared beneath the two youths’ feet, transforming from a fortress ship into a terrifying cannon. The Formation Orb embedded within glowed faintly of doom.

## **Chapter 512: Devouring the World of Immortals**

Both the Divine Glory and Black Emperor emerged at the same time to take aim at the three origin dao immortals.

Numerous heavyweights hidden in the void were caught off guard. Even at returned void realm, Lu Yun was but a mere cultivator, easily squashed by dao immortals. Aether dao immortals would be able to kill a void realm cultivator without breaking a sweat, let alone origin dao immortals.

However, Lu Yun, an elite among the weaklings—but a weakling nonetheless—was able to threaten origin dao immortals with death by calling out the two weapons of war!

There were many weapons of war in the world capable of decimating crippled origin dao immortals, but they were attached to earthen veins, making them more akin to giant, immobile formations.

Such weapons also couldn’t be controlled by a mere cultivator.

Lu Yun, however, had hauled out two weapons of war at the same time. Terrifying white light gathered at the mouths of the weapons, unfurling an advent of death that made these lofty origin dao immortals fear for their lives.

Supplemental paths as king.

They were suddenly reminded of what Lu Yun had said back in the North Sea dragon tomb. The idea was later spread by those who'd sought to capitalize on it, but a majority of immortals had considered it nothing more than a joke and paid it no mind.

Lu Yun did possess such weapons, however, and he'd killed origin dao immortals with them. Still, no one treated him seriously.

All nine heavenly courts in the world of immortals possessed their own war treasures. To use the regular ones, though, one had to connect the weapons to earthen veins and set up all the necessary formations, which took an extraordinary amount of work.

A full day was the minimum, and even more time might be needed.

Yet here Lu Yun was, casually floating two weapons of war in the air as if it took him no effort to do so, and the cannons were primed to fire.

The origin dao immortals were quite unnerved.

A cultivator possessing the power to kill origin dao immortals... If Lu Yun popularized this new and improved version—extremely likely, considering the kind of person he was—the consequences would be unthinkable.

Every faction would then possess weapons like these, and the crippled origin dao immortals would enjoy no further advantages in the world of immortals. The structure of power would be completely toppled.

Mum was the word when faced with the cannons, and they had no choice but to let Lu Yun and Qing Han pass.

"Lu Yun has to die... He's too big a threat to us alive!" An origin dao immortal stared darkly at where Lu Yun had vanished into the dark continent.

"We must use everything in our power to acquire a complete formation of heaven and earth in the Dusk auction two months from now," interjected another origin dao immortal. "Lu Yun is but a cultivator. No matter what opportunities he's encountered, or what he's gained, he's no more than a cultivator at the end of the day!"

He held the other immortals' gazes. "Between us, we possess the wisdom of half the world of immortals..."

"That's right! We'll obtain one complete formation and summon all the masters of formations and other supplemental paths in the world to study it!"

"The moment the auction ends is the moment Lu Yun dies!"

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"Those old cripples will never give up on killing you now," Qing Han said with a smile, looking around in the ghost realm. She was referring to the origin dao immortals injured in the course of their ascension.

"What else is new? They were just too worried about dying to kill me before." Lu Yun shrugged.

The origin dao immortals had threatened Scarlet Ape in Destiny City as a desperate gamble they knew they would win. Scarlet Ape was unlikely to take the risk, which was why they dared threaten it with mutual destruction. Actually die? These immortals were far too crafty for that.

Lu Yun's weapons of war, on the other hand, could easily kill them. They would be able to kill the youth if they attacked with abandon, but they would never run the risk of doing so.

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The ghost realm was full of ruins and yin spirits. However, what remained suggested a once glorious world more prosperous than even the current world of immortals.

These spirits weren't as vicious as those that had invaded Azure Province. They didn't attack Lu Yun and Qing Han after the humans entered, but instead drifted about aimlessly in the air. Every once in a while, some would be attracted by the heavenly energy seeping through the cracks and attempt to struggle to the other side.

However, Lu Yun didn't see the East Sea when he turned around, just a vast expanse of nothing but crystalline blue.

"What's going on?" Qing Han frowned. "This place feels like the central world, but it isn't."

"That's because the central world once fell here, but was then dragged out!" Lu Yun took in a deep breath and cast his Spectral Eye over the pale earth—bone powder, to be more precise. He identified the dead in a particular spot to be a regular person who'd died hundreds of millions of years ago.

"This is a world that's truly dead. It died a long, long time ago. And now... this world is going to devour the world of immortals." Lu Yun approached the barrier for a close look. "The cracks result from the pressure applied by the dead world. I'm afraid this barrier won't hold for much longer. Something has to be done." He shuddered in spite of himself.

The yin spirits here were meek and harmless... because this was their home. Once outside, the spirits would instantly turn vicious and prey on the living.

He'd discovered that the closer the yin spirits were to the world of immortals, the more aggressive they became. Those who were halfway out of the barrier were even more terrifying, baring their teeth and brandishing their claws in a threatening manner.

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"Here's the celestial master tomb." Lu Yun took out the jade slip Xiangliu Ting had given him. Once injected with inner energy, a detailed map emerged in the air.

With the tomb at the center, the map covered an area roughly a million kilometers across. In addition to the tomb, Lu Yun noted other marks on the map—the tortoise nest and the qilin tomb. Both had arrows marking their move to the celestial master tomb.

"Is the kungpeng nest here, Beigong Yu?" Lu Yun opened the Gates of the Abyss and summoned the kungpeng.

"It is!" Beigong Yu cast his gaze in the distance, his eyes bright. "Over there!"

Lu Yun nodded. Beigong Yu was pointing at the celestial master tomb.

“Milord... I’m afraid I cannot serve you further, milord...”

Beigong Yu’s body suddenly began rotting, and his bones deteriorated into powder that drifted to the ground. His soul broke apart and turned into a yin spirit, drifting toward the celestial master tomb.

### **Chapter 513: Combat Art of Deduction**

Beigong Yu’s abrupt death was quite the shock. Lu Yun didn’t even have time to resurrect him. After his body disintegrated, his fragmented soul immediately turned into a yin spirit and was lured over by the celestial master tomb.

Lu Yun had wanted to summon Cangyin to check if the qilin tomb was in the area as well, but now thought better of it.

The celestial master tomb had devoured the kungpeng nest, which was closely linked to Beigong Yu. Beigong Yu’s demise must have been the result of some strange bloodline power.

“The Ingress Path is there as well!” Lu Yun sensed a slight tremor from the branch of the Ingress Path in his possession; it seemed eager to make its way to the tomb as well. He quickly circulated his inner energy to restrain the treasure. “Come on, let’s head to the tomb!”

Looking off in the direction where Beigong Yu had vanished without a trace, Lu Yun conjured another small boat and ferried himself and Qing Han toward the tomb. The Kungpeng King was only an Infernum, but he was an important asset to Lu Yun.

Hell was no longer the barren, lifeless world it had been. With the City of Life as the central hub, countless Infernum and the Dusk inhabitants brought in by Su Xiaoxiao and Xingzi had formed a full fledged society like those of the real world.

Beigong Yu played an important role in hell as one of the deputies of the City of Life. With his sudden and inexplicable death, the city would fall into temporary confusion.

Moreover, he was one of Lu Yun’s first batch of Infernum. He possessed great strength and the potential to become even stronger. There was a chance for him to reach the dao immortal realm, so Lu Yun wasn’t going to just let him die like this.

The Sal Tree of Life and Death in Lu Yun’s dantian had a good number of karmic fruit swaying on its branches. One of them would be more than enough to resurrect Beigong Yu.

First, though, he would have to find Beigong Yu’s yin spirit.

The celestial master tomb was about two hundred and fifty thousand kilometers away, which wasn’t that great a distance for Lu Yun to traverse now. With Boundless Step, he could make his way to the tomb in a single stride.

“Oh?” He stopped himself just short of utilizing the death art, expression grave.

“What’s wrong?” Qing Han asked, noticing his change in mood.

“My death art is amplified at least a hundred times in this world!” Lu Yun’s face gained a tinge of shock. “One single step will take me twenty-five million kilometers in this unknown world. Why is this?” He stared at the land with confusion. “My death art being buffed to this extent... that’s only ever happened in hell. What does this place have to do with hell?”

Whoosh!

Lu Yun extended his hand and ignited a wisp of hellfire from his palm. His mastery over the flame had improved more than a hundred times as well, just like how things were in the netherworld.

Within the netherworld, Lu Yun’s strength could reach peak origin dao immortal realm, on par with the celestial emperors. Here, however, his death arts and hellfire were the only things being strengthened.

“This world must be connected to hell somehow! No wonder whatever’s in the celestial master tomb can break the power of the Tome of Life and Death and turn Beigong Yu into a yin spirit!” Lu Yun turned to Qing Han, hesitant.

“Don’t even think about sending me away,” Qing Han said without missing a beat. “I’m not going anywhere.”

Lu Yun was reluctant, but he could never say no to Qing Han.

“Alright. But if we run into danger, I’m taking you to hell!” There was a resurrection layout in the netherworld that was the greatest layout Lu Yun had encountered thus far in the world of immortals. It’d managed to create a lively world in hell, and Qing Han would be able to safely take up temporary residence if she stayed in the layout.

The disguised girl nodded slightly.

“Boundless Step is too powerful here. If I make a mistake in my calculations, we may end up somewhere dangerous.” Lu Yun had only acquired the death art when he ascended to the returned void realm, which enabled him to easily traverse the ocean.

He’d experimented with the death art during the trip to this ghostly land, calculating the maximum travel distance of the art and identifying its unique properties.

Here in the ghost realm that brimmed with the unknown, the death art was even more powerful. Far from happily surprised, Lu Yun was on his guard instead. He’d merely estimated that the art had been strengthened a hundred times, but that was just an initial guess.

He needed an exact number and understanding of how much force he should put behind each step to travel the right distance.

Decisively returning to hell, Lu Yun began studying the death art with the support of the Tome of Life and Death.

He first deconstructed the art and returned it to its original state, studying its most basic runes and patterns. Then, he calculated its strength and deduced what had changed based on its trajectory and frequency of the patterns.

Lu Yun continuously moved between hell and the ghost realm, experimenting and measuring results to obtain an answer.

In hell, he was able to deconstruct the death art with the power of hell pushing him to peak condition. In the ghost realm, he tested the improved death art again and again.

Qing Han had been sent into the resurrection layout a while ago. Bored from her position atop the floating summit, she watched as Lu Yun moved around busying himself.

“I feel like you can study other combat arts this way too,” she said suddenly, cocking her head at Lu Yun. “The combat arts in the current world of immortals are much weaker than those of the Primordial Era, and most of them are incomplete. If you can deconstruct and revert them back to their most basic forms, you should also be able to restore them to what they should be, or even invent new combat arts.”

She’d changed back into Qing Yu at some point and opted for women’s clothes as well. She’d found a river somewhere and was happily kicking her feet in the clear water.

Realization of her change struck Lu Yun mid calculation. He turned around and gaped at Qing Yu.

Qing Yu winked at the overlord of hell.

“Teach me how you’ve been studying your combat art, and I’ll see if I can improve it.”

Hum.

The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals circled around Qing Yu, isolating her from the oppressive death energy in hell as she walked up to Lu Yun. Upon entering hell, the treasure began naturally exuding a power that separated the world within it from the netherworld. Empress Myrtlestar, the Azure Dragon King, and the Dragon and Tiger Princes seemed to have been sealed in the scroll as well.

“Alright!” Pointing, Lu Yun transmitted the knowledge to Qing Yu.

#### **Chapter 514: Wandering Step**

Qing Yu made a face at Lu Yun upon receiving the information. His method was crude, one that simply broke apart combat arts with raw power. The power of hell made him almost omnipotent; he would even be able to deconstruct immortal dao there, to say nothing of piddling combat arts.

Unfortunately, the immortal dao in hell was only a projection and not the real thing, so this wasn’t a method Qing Yu could use. She needed to find another way to deconstruct combat arts.

Other than Yuying, who’d remained in Dusk City to keep things in order, all of the other envoys had returned to the underworld.

Qing Yu pushed Lu Yun away and engaged his envoys in rapidfire discussion. They wanted to create another method to deconstruct combat arts and study them. Lu Yun could already foresee how this method would revolutionize the world and immortal dao, should it come about.



It would be priceless for cultivators and immortals alike to be able to create their own combat arts. When Lu Yun had invented Vast Dragon Seaturner back in the Dusk tournament, the act had also benefited countless cultivators.

He got out of Qing Yu's hair and continued studying Boundless Step. As a death art, and one of the greatest combat arts in the world of immortals, Lu Yun could only use brute force if he wanted to deconstruct it. The process would've been much easier with regular combat arts.

Although Qing Yu couldn't access the direct strength of hell, she was the dao sovereign of the Dao Flower. Imbued with the immortal dao, her intelligence rivaled that of Lu Yun's. With the aid of the seven envoys, she, too, had the support of all of hell in a way.

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Time passed strangely in hell. It might've been a hundred years, or a thousand, or perhaps ten thousand years.

Lu Yun's eyes suddenly fluttered open; he'd improved and perfected Boundless Step.

The death art had previously been imprecise, the only parameter he could control being the approximate distance he travelled. There was no telling where he would end up. Now, though, he'd combined the structure of the Boundless Step and Spectral Eye to create a new combat art, one that could take him anywhere his Spectral Eye could see.

At the moment, his Spectral Eye could see all living and dead beings within five thousand kilometers of him. That meant he would be able to bridge the distance to any of those places at will with the Boundless Step.

He could no longer travel as far as five hundred thousand kilometers in one step, but it was much safer and more precise this way.

Of course, Boundless Step remained a complete combat art existing in the Tome of Life and Death. Lu Yun could still use Spectral Eye and Boundless Step as they were, should he wish to.

"Since it's no longer boundless, I'll call the new combat art 'Wandering Step'!" Lu Yun's eyes flared with black radiance.

Spectral Eye had been a combat art that allowed him to see everything there was about life and death. With its new modifications, however, it could now take in everything within five thousand kilometers.

Both Spectral Eye and Wandering Step required the power of karmic fruit to activate, as neither were the death arts they had been, and they weren't usable by cultivators either. Since they were derived from death arts, they could only be activated with the power of karma.

Meanwhile, experimentation by Qing Yu and the other envoys reached a fever pitch. Even Yuying entrusted Dusk City to Qing Ruyan and joined in the group. Formations, talismans, pill dao, treasure refining, shamanic and medicine dao... the envoys contributed their expertise in a joint testing and analysis experiment.

In response, Lu Yun noticed the projection of immortal dao in the skies of hell trembling as it absorbed the findings from Qing Yu and the envoys. It drank in all of their results and conclusions like a sponge.

“If they really figure out the method and the projected immortal dao in hell absorbs it, the projection will transform into the real deal—a complete, growing immortal dao!” Lu Yun observed the projection floating through the cosmic sea with the Spectral Eye.

This projection had followed Qing Han into hell the last time she’d entered and set down roots in the netherworld, which Lu Yun hadn’t stopped. Its presence was necessary for the living souls in hell to cultivate like those in the outside world. Otherwise, hell would be nothing but an empty world deprived of any vitality.

The power of hell was suited for Lu Yun, but not for the Infernum and living souls who’d reincarnated in hell through the Hell Flowers.

Born from the flowers, these living souls were the first natives of hell. Without being nurtured by the immortal dao projection, they would’ve been born as ghosts or undead instead of living souls.

Since Qing Yu and the envoys were preoccupied with the formation of their method, Lu Yun left them to their work and exited hell by himself, returning to the ghost realm.

“Wandering Step?” His lips curved with the hint of a smile.

Swoosh!

With a single step, he vanished into thin air and accurately traversed five thousand kilometers to the relatively safe destination he’d sighted.

Another step, another five thousand kilometers!

The celestial master tomb was roughly two hundred and fifty thousand kilometers away from the barrier. Lu Yun leisurely picked his way there through the ghost realm with Wandering Step.

“Oh?” He suddenly stopped in his tracks. A giant, pitch-black mountain lay before him, radiating chilling ghostly energy.

“This is a trace left by the combat arts of the Silvermoon Wolfkings!”

Lu Yun squatted down at the foot of the mountain to take a closer look and frowned slightly when he discovered faint traces of moonlight. In addition, there were other traces of fighting and harrowing streaks of blood.

“This is from the Star Demon Sect’s combat arts!” Lu Yun’s frown deepened, identifying another set of tracks.

“As for the presence left on them... it’s Wanfeng’s junior sister! The traces left by a Silvermoon Wolfking... were left by the little nun. What’re they doing here?” Lu Yun rose to his feet and activated his New Spectral Eye, which allowed him to see not only the dead in five thousand kilometers, but also all flora and fauna.

“There!” He vanished into thin air.

**Chapter 515: Who Are You Looking To Kill**

It was a tombstone roughly forty meters in height and covered in weathered cracks. Still, Lu Yun was able to make out the scarlet characters etched into the stone: Tomb of the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign.

It was written in the language of the primordial world of immortals, seemingly with fresh blood. The blood was still flowing, not yet dry even after such a long period of time.

The little nun and Wanfeng's junior sister stood before the tomb, the latter looking ahead nervously. Their pale complexions made clear the magnitude of their severe injuries.

A swarm of powerful zombies slowly approached them.

"You fled with your tail between your legs after the sect head gave you a beating back in Dusk Province, Jiangchen Xie, and now you only dare bully those at a disadvantage to you. How shameless you are!"

Despite being roughly seventeen, the holy girl appeared more mature than her age, her curvaceous figure highlighted by a black chiffon dress. Holding an emerald bamboo staff that radiated with an intense glow, she kept the great number of zombies at bay.

Dressed in a black robe, a pale Jiangchen Xie flickered in and out of view among the dark shadows. His colorless lips curled into a vicious leer when she mentioned Lu Yun.

"Lu Yun is the head of the Star Demon Sect, and you are its holy girl. Consider me refining you into a battle zombie as prepayment of interest. Kill!"

At his command, hundreds of zombies charged and broke the light barrier erected by the bamboo stick.

The corner of her mouth still stained with blood, the daoist nun summoned a sword atlas with a wave of her hand that slashed at the zombies. However, her atlas paled in comparison to Lu Yun's.

Lu Yun's atlases consisted of a thousand and eighty immortal swords. As his cultivation improved, he'd incorporated more immortal swords within, especially after refining his replica, Xing Chen.

The daoist nun's atlas, on the other hand, contained only three hundred and sixty-five immortal swords. However, since that was a powerful number that matched the days it took for the world to complete an orbit, she was still able to create a powerful sword formation.

Every cycle of the formation killed countless zombies. Back in the Sovereign Meet, her nascent spirit had been too weak to copy Lu Yun's Sword Atlas. But when the void realm geniuses attacked Dusk Province, she'd already ascended to the returned void realm and copied the combat art when Xing Chen used it.

With inferior talent compared to Lu Yun's, though, she could only incorporate three hundred and sixty-five immortal swords in a single atlas. Upon releasing five atlases, the dense sword energy within rained down on the zombies, tearing apart everything within fifty kilometers.

However, Jiangchen Xie was able to summon forth more zombies with a quick shake of his tattered Bag of Corpse Refinement. The little nun was now covered in bleeding gashes. She'd been injured to begin with, and exerting herself had only caused her wounds to open again.

The holy girl of the Star Demon Sect turned the bamboo staff into a flute, playing an alluring song that spread in all directions. Their enemies, however, were heartless zombies and immune to the music she played.

“Stop! Stop it at once!” Countless zombies crashed into the daoist nun’s atlases, sending her closer to collapse. “My master won’t forgive you for this!”

Facing the shadows of death, the daoist nun had no choice but to invoke her master.

“Your master?” Jiangchen Xie paused, and the speed at which the Bag of Corpse Refinement released zombies slowed. Those that’d already been released, though, still tore frantically into the atlases.

“The one who drove away the North Sea’s old lion in Dusk!” White as a sheet, blood seeped out at the corner of the little nun’s lips. The orderly sword atlases in the sky had been knocked away by the endless swarm of zombies.

Jiangchen Xie’s expression darkened further to hear the girl’s words.

“That nun is your master?” he scowled. “Then I’ll have to eliminate you completely!”

Roar!

Countless skeletons emerged before the tomb of the Demon Sovereign, assembling in the air into a giant skeletal monster. It was so powerful that its presence alone instantly destroyed five of her atlases.

Throwing up blood, the little nun was slammed violently into the tomb.

“Despicable!” The holy girl turned her flute back into a bamboo staff and flashed over to guard the little nun, sweeping and waving the staff to knock away the lunging zombies. “Duel me if you dare! I can take on ten pathetic worms like you with one hand!”

Shouting, the holy girl knocked the zombies away with a flurry of hits, the staff moving so quickly it left numerous afterimages in the air.

This length of bamboo was similar to the one Wanfeng wielded, and powerful enough to keep regular zombies at bay. When facing the terrifying giant skeletal beast, though, her weapon was nothing.

“What did you say?!” Jiangchen Xie’s eyes blazed with crimson light. Pathetic worm?!

Those two words were the worst humiliation he’d ever suffered! They were a cut that had festered and almost caused a cultivation deviation!

He’d suffered the first failure of his life at Lu Yun’s hands in Dusk, and now the Star Demon Sect’s holy girl rubbed salt into his unhealed wounds. Overwhelming murderous intent that couldn’t be contained reared in his heart.

Rumble!

The newly-formed skeletal beast broke apart and an ocean of skeletons emerged out of nowhere.

“Die, die, die!! Die at once!!” Jiangchen Xie’s teeth were bared in a grim smile. The skeletal ocean circled around him like it was part of him. Just a single move was enough to create a tall, powerful wave of bones.

The daoist nun and holy girl watched in despair.

“We’re doomed... The skeletal ocean is the bearer of Hadal Bonfire...” Fear drained all color from the holy girl’s face. Even dao immortals might not be able to counter this ocean of bones. The Hadal Bonfire fostered within would burn anyone dead.

“You want to duel me? Come on then!” Jiangchen Xie cackled, his face shrouded in ghostly energy. “I’d planned on a killing spree after my skeletal method came into fruition. I’ll start off by slaughtering you base wenches first, then go after Lu Yun in Dusk Province!!”

Bam!

The ocean of bones turned into a giant vortex. At its center emerged a spark of stark-white flame. Closer inspection revealed that the bones within the waters had turned into skeletal beasts, snarling and baring their teeth.

In the blink of an eye, the ocean of bones swept over the little nun and the holy girl, along with the tomb of the Demon Sovereign at large.

“Who are you looking to kill?” questioned a chilling voice at Jiangchen Xie’s ear.

“Lu Yun!!” Jiangchen Xie couldn’t help but scream, reminded of his worst nightmares.

### **Chapter 516: Zombie King Method**

Lu Yun threw out a punch the moment he appeared. The delivery involved no methods or combat arts whatsoever, just pure strength!

Crack... pop! Scatter.

The sea of bones shuddered violently. Its calcified components rubbed against one another with a sound that threatened immediate dissolution.

Landing neatly before the little nun and Star Demon Sect’s holy girl, Lu Yun cut a sharp figure in his pristine white robes. The sea of bones was split asunder and surged uselessly toward the sides.

“You don’t need to come to Dusk Province, Jiangchen Xie. You can try killing me right here.” The young man’s eyes carried a hint of scorn for his adversary.

Jiangchen Xie shivered convulsively. His body hunched in of its own accord and fear flashed across his face. Then, he recalled something that helped him straighten up again.

“Well met, Lu Yun!” Looking at the youth in the air above him, Jiangchen Xie released the hidden light of blood in his dark eyes. It flew out and circled all around him.

Fwoosh!

The sea of bones stitched itself back together and bleached-white flames began burning within it.

Hadal Bonfire.

Glancing at the blood-light all around Jiangchen Xie's body, Lu Yun slowly turned grave.

"You turned yourself into a zombie king... no wonder you dared challenge me." He breathed in sharply.

Jin Heyi of the Jin clan had tried a similar tactic after forcibly taking Diexi's origin sphere, but had failed.

Jiangchen Xie, on the other hand, appeared to have succeeded completely. Not precisely a mere zombie king, but one perfected from the dual state of being alive and a king of the undead.

Lu Yun had a hard time describing exactly what it was. He'd never seen a zombie king who'd successfully bridged the gap from death to life—even Diexi was a step short.

Jiangchen Xie had achieved it as a living man.

.....

Jiangchen Xie was spurred into motion. He cast a glance in Lu Yun's direction, enveloping his general surroundings in bloody light. Mountains of bloody corpses piled up around the Dusk governor in a single moment.

These corpses weren't the illusions Diexi could create, but real zombies.

The zombies from the Bag of Corpse Refinement were likewise bolstered to unprecedented levels by their king's power. Lu Yun's countering arts became completely ineffective against these strange creatures.

Lu Yun narrowed his eyes. He opened his arms, protectively ushering the holy girl and the little nun behind him.

"Be careful, Sect Head!" the Star Demon Sect holy girl said hurriedly. "In our records, the Corpse Refiners was founded by a zombie king. Their zombie methods come from the same source!

"Now that Jiangchen Xie is a zombie king himself, he'll be able to unleash their true potential!"

The holy girl occupied a lofty position within the sect, giving her access to secrets that most didn't have. She was also smart enough to connect those dots with what she was seeing.

Though the Star Demon Sect came from the Skandha Range, their five lords had traveled all over the world. The factions they'd wiped out and tombs they'd dug up in their travels were a trove of information for their sect.

Many historical records about the Corpse Refiners were stored, reliable or otherwise. According to legend, the founder and first head of the Corpse Refiners was a zombie king who had reversed death to life. Every method they had, including those for commanding zombies, were zombie king methods.

If someone became a zombie king on the same level as their founder, they would be able to make use of the full potential of their methods.

Furthermore, Jiangchen Xie had Hadal Bonfire, its carrier, and an endless sea of bones to reinforce him. As long as he didn't die before reaching the zenith of his strength, he would surely surpass the Corpse Refiners' founder one day.

As for exactly how strong that ancestor once was, the books the Star Demon Sect had didn't mention that. Since he'd existed before the Primordial Era, he was likely on the level of an immortal emperor.

With enough time, Jiangchen Xie would be able to reach the same lofty heights.

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"Zombie king methods?" Lu Yun sneered. He raised a hand to the sky, unleashing a torrent of blue-black lightning upon the gory mountains of corpses. The Azure Dragon King's Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder!

"Break!" He clenched his fist for another punch. Electricity wrapped around his knuckles, and as he slammed them forward, they cascaded into an ocean of thunder.

Boom!

The graphic scenery Jiangchen Xie had conjured was obliterated. Zombies and bone fragments flew in every direction.

Jiangchen Xie zoomed across the air, red in the face from the collision. The bloody light around him had been dispelled by the blue-black lightning.

"The Azure Dragon King's Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder!" he cried out in slack-jawed terror.

The zombie methods of the Corpse Refiners were accounted among immortal dao's manifold arts. Thunder was effective against it, but not particularly so. Only one kind of thunder was anathema to it: the Azure Dragons' Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder.

After the death of the Azure Dragon King in the ancient times, his tribe was hunted to near extinction. The kui was responsible for some of that, but the Corpse Refiners bore the majority of the blame.

Jiangchen Xie had known Lu Yun could use Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder, but he didn't expect his zombie king methods to crumple like paper in the face of it!

"Rumor has it that the first head of the Corpse Refiners was killed by the Azure Dragon King..." His heart sank into further fear, but he remained reasonably calm. Forcibly settling himself into a stable stance, he summoned a rising mountain of bone beneath his feet.

His Hadal Bonfire set it aflame, and the frigid bonfire illuminated the surrounding skies with chilling clarity. The blue-black lightning disappeared as soon as it approached the flames.

"Just as I thought, your Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder can't defeat my bones." Jiangchen Xie let out a sigh of relief.

The mountain of bone underfoot sank into a sea once more. This time, each chunk of bone glowed with bleak Bonfire, turning the landscape into a sinister inferno. The arcing thunderbolts were scattered by the frigid blaze.

“Your Yi Wood Cleansing Thunder can’t win against my Bonefire, Lu Yun!” The zombie king wiped away the blood at the corner of his mouth. His sea of burning bone whipped up an even bigger tide, roiling once again toward his opponent.

“You just never learn, do you?” Lu Yun snorted in resignation.

Fwoosh!

A ball of black fire appeared upon his fist and he punched out once again. Just like before, the fist crashed into the sea of burning bone with pure strength.

Boom!

Another deafening crack rang out, and the Hadal Bonefire and its rippling fuel were fragmented into a thousand pieces.

Simple, straightforward, pure strength.

### **Chapter 517: Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign**

Jiangchen Xie’s body was sent flying and the fiery sea once again dispersed. Tiny cracks began spreading all over his body.

“How can this be?!” he cried out in confusion.

One punch.

He’d transformed himself into a zombie king and had obtained the strength of the Corpse Refiners’ founder in his youth. His bone arts and Hadal Bonefire could even burn dao immortals alive!

But... he couldn’t take even one punch from Lu Yun.

Just that one punch had been enough to utterly humiliate him. No methods or combat arts were involved, just a man and his fist.

A deep sense of failure rose from Jiangchen Xie’s heart. He remembered the path to the void realm that had appeared to him thirty thousand years ago and how he’d felt the same powerlessness before the black, long-haired monsters wielding dao weapons.

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“You are afraid,” Lu Yun sighed wistfully. “You lost to yourself thirty thousand years ago. And after all this time, you still can’t get over it.” He strode over thin air toward his adversary. “That’s why I said you’re a pathetic worm, an utter and complete loser.”

“But I’m still alive!” Jiangchen Xie’s whole body began convulsing and he glared at Lu Yun with maddened intensity. Bloody light bloomed from every orifice of his body, fusing with the Hadal Bonefire in a rosé burst of energy.

Black fire rippled upon Lu Yun’s body and he dismissed the attack with a casual wave of his hand.

“Impossible. Impossible! As long as I live, I can rise again. The day I waited for has finally come! The void realm is here! I haven’t lost!” Jiangchen Xie shrieked hoarsely as the dread in his eyes intensified.



“Jiangchen Wushang was the body your ancestor chose to eventually possess. Do you know why he didn’t choose you?” Lu Yun walked up to his hysterical opponent.

By this point, Jiangchen Xie was kneeling impotently on the floor. His hands were the only thing that kept him upright. He panted in fearful exhaustion, no longer possessing the courage to raise his head.

“There is only fear in your heart. Not the invincible courage that should have accompanied your excellent talent.” The young master of hell cast a pitying glance at him. “Your fear and cowardice has seeped into your flesh and bone and drives your every instinct.

“You’re a coward hiding behind the halo of a genius. Do you think just living is enough to win? No.

“Some people are alive, but are already dead. Some people are dead, but still live on.” Lu Yun shamelessly stole a renowned quote from a famous personage on Earth, and it proved to be the last straw that crushed Jiangchen Xie’s heart like a terrifying combat art.

Gray floated to the fore as the light in Jiangchen Xie’s eyes began to dim.

“Hahahahaha—” Sinister laughter suddenly echoed behind them. “Loser? Coward? Pathetic worm?”

The cackling transitioned to a low, sonorous voice. “What gives you the right to judge others so?” The words it uttered were tinged with a deep grudge of resentment and indignation.

Rumble!

The ground began to quake. The tomb of the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign behind Lu Yun slowly cracked open and a huge hand of bone three hundred meters long reached out.

“Not good! The master of this tomb...” Lu Yun whirled around. “I tried destroying Jiangchen Xie’s dao heart and zombie king form with words, but it garnered the sympathy of the old thing in the tomb as well!”

He opened his Spectral Eye and cast his gaze toward the hand of bone.

“An enduring true spirit! This Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign died with tremendous resentment! He must’ve had his dao heart crushed by the pangs of conscience as well.” Lu Yun’s face flickered with unease.

The creature of bone was struggling for dear life in order to break free from its prison. Its tombstone, the one that carried its title upon it, emitted a restricting halo to keep it restrained. However, the rifts upon the stone were widening by the moment. It looked like it was about to crumble.

To a tomb raider, a tombstone was the boundary between life and death. On one side of this gate was the world of the living, and on the other was where the dead rested. Once a tombstone was erected, a barrier was formed that prevented the living and dead from meeting. The living were forbidden from entering, while the dead could not leave.

Tomb raiders generally dug a tunnel into a tomb from the side. Barely anyone directly broke in from the front, lest the tombstone be broken and the buried dead released into the world.

Generally speaking, tomb raiders lived short lives and rarely had good endings. Prolonged journeying in the world of the dead tended to elicit curses from their inhabitants that shortened lifespans and caused misfortune.

The resentment of the Great Demon Sovereign inside the tomb was so heavy that an enduring true spirit had formed. The body was dead and the soul was gone, but the spirit had endured.

An enduring true spirit was a kind of dead spirit that kept every memory and grudge from life; its singular purpose for existence was revenge.

The words that Lu Yun had used to strike at Jiangchen Xie's dao heart had caused the enduring true spirit to commiserate. The profoundly hateful Demon Sovereign was thus revived through its spirit, and was now trying to break out from its tomb.

"If things keep on like this, it really will get out." Lu Yun cocked his head at the disheartened Jiangchen Xie. "I... suppose that's not a big deal. Considering that it's already a ghost realm and dead world here, whether it stays in the tomb or not won't make much of a difference."

After a moment of hesitation, he turned and pulled the stunned girls nearby away with him. His Wandering Step carried them off in the next instant.

Aside from its resentment and obsession, Lu Yun knew that the main reason the Great Demon Sovereign could break free was because the ghost realm was fundamentally in the same world as the tomb.

If they were in the outside world, there was no conceivable way the Demon Sovereign could break free—not even with a hundred times its current resentment.

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Crack, clatter, rumble...

The tomb and the surrounding ground shook violently, and the humongous tombstone cracked apart into chunks. Another hand reached out from the cracked tomb, tearing the ensnaring earth apart.

A tattered corpse burrowed out from underground. Its flesh had already rotted away. The sight of loose muscles and tendons hanging upon a bleached frame was frightening indeed. A wisp of its enduring spirit slowly rolled around inside its skull, the source of the voice from earlier.

"Descendant of Jiangchen...!" the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign roared as it left the tomb.

Dazed, Jiangchen Xie raised his head toward the skeleton. His eyes had already lost focus.

Thirty thousand years ago, his choice to avoid the long-haired monster had planted the seeds of failure inside his heart. After being so completely defeated by Lu Yun, the latter's curse-like words caused those seeds to germinate.

His dao heart was on the brink of destruction.

The Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign was a colossal being. Its skull alone was as big as a house. Its greenish spirit fixated upon the small lifeform at its feet through empty eye sockets.

“That short-sighted Jiangchen bastard... he nearly ruined a demonic talent. Why would he teach you the old zombie’s methods... Are you willing to be my disciple?” The Demon Sovereign’s voice boomed louder and louder to a deafening crescendo.

Jiangchen Xie shook himself awake.

### **Chapter 518: Hordes of Wives and Concubines**

As the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign emerged, the very earth began trembling. A heavy presence oozed in all directions like mercury, sending countless yin spirits fleeing and crushing those too slow to escape.

“The demon sovereign has exceeded the dao immortal realm!” Lu Yun dashed out of the oncoming danger with the Wandering Step.

If the demon sovereign’s eternal true spirit in death exceeded the dao immortal realm, it must have ranked among the mightiest when it were alive, rivaling at least the Azure Dragon King, if not Empress Myrtlestar.

The inscription on its tomb was in the primordial writing system, indicating that the demon sovereign must have been a powerhouse from that era, or that it’d died from having its dao heart shattered back then.

With the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals sealed by the power of hell, Lu Yun couldn’t contact Empress Myrtlestar or the Azure Dragon King to find out more about the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign. Su Xiaoxiao didn’t remember this demonic personage either.

In less than a breath, he moved several thousand kilometers away, but didn’t dare move out of the explored area.

The East Sea court had spent the past tens of thousands of years exploring the ghost realm, paying the price of numerous dao immortals, but only managing to map out the terrain five hundred thousand kilometers from the barrier.

Those who’d gone further into the unknown had never returned. Even the brand of their nascent soul had disappeared.

Outside the explored land was an area of darkness.

Lu Yun stopped in a mountain col near the celestial master tomb and dropped off the little nun and Star Demon Sect’s holy girl. He casually attached a few healing talismans to them to address their injuries.

“What are the two of you doing here?” Lu Yun asked, frowning at the two girls.

“Servant Yu Hengluo greets the sect head!”

Lu Yun stopped the holy girl before she could get to her feet. She hadn’t yet made a full recovery and should refrain from moving at the moment.

The little nun stared unblinkingly at Lu Yun, face flushed and eyes bright. She idolized Lu Yun and had claimed to be his dao partner in the last Sovereign Meet. Now that he was in front of her in the flesh and had even rescued her like a knight in shining armor, her heart was threatening to jump out of her chest.

Lu Yun rubbed his forehead. That's right, the little girl still had no idea who he was.

A month ago, Xing Chen had put in an appearance when the geniuses of the world attacked Dusk Province. Almost everyone now believed Lu Yun and Xing Chen were two different people. The little nun was no exception, and her admiration for Lu Yun had reached new highs after that battle.

"I, I..." she struggled to put her thoughts into words, her eyes glued to Lu Yun.

"I hear that I've gained a dao partner," Lu Yun blinked. "Back in Destiny City, a young girl dressed like a nun went around telling people she was my dao partner. Is that true?"

The little nun's face became as red as an apple.

"That's not... I..." she continued to stutter.

"That wasn't you?" Lu Yun snorted. "Good."

Yu Hengluo snuck a few glances at Lu Yun. This was her first time meeting the sect head. She'd always pictured him as a burly man of three meters in height with ruthless eyes and a rugged appearance, but Lu Yun had turned out to be the fair, slender, scholarly type.

Thinking back to what the Star Demon Sect and the world at large said about Lu Yun, Yu Hengluo couldn't stop her heart from racing either.

Lu Yun rubbed his forehead and repeated, "So what are the two of you doing here?"

"In response to the sect head," Yu Hengluo broke out from her trance and hurried out. "We're here for the Ingress Path of the Nephrite Court. This servant isn't the only one here, either, as many elites from the sect have come as well."

The holy girl was the top genius among the youths of the sect, her cultivation reaching returned void realm, yet she referred to herself as a servant when talking to Lu Yun. That made clear the heights of his status within the sect.

Lu Yun nodded.

The Ingress Path had attracted the attention of the entire world of immortals. Almost all of its elites had gathered here in search of the treasure; it was unlikely for him to find it first on his own.

Upon entering the ghost realm, Yu Hengluo and a few other sect immortals had encountered Jiangchen Xie. Words were exchanged, which quickly dissolved into a fight that ended with all of the sect's immortals being slaughtered by the latter's zombies.

"And you?" Lu Yun turned to the little nun. "You aren't here for the Ingress Path, too, are you?"

His head was throbbing after Yu Hengluo's explanation. Since when did these two know each other?

"I, I've joined the Star Demon Sect as well," the little nun said with a faint blush. "I came with Hengluo."

Lu Yun's eyes shot wide open. "You joined the sect?!"

Flustered, the little nun nodded.

Lu Yun rubbed at his forehead with exasperation, uncomfortable with the development. The fidgeting, bashful little nun before him seemed completely different from the lively, outgoing, and exuberantly straight-shooting girl he knew.

She most likely joined the sect for me. Lu Yun shot the girl another glance and noted the peculiarities in her gaze.

After some deliberation, he shifted and transformed himself. After a mystical shimmer of light, he turned into a young man dressed in a black robe, one with determined eyes that caught attention despite him not being particularly good-looking.

The little nun looked incredulous and Yu Hengluo almost screamed.

Xing Chen!

The shitstirrer from back in Destiny City!

"How is this possible?!" the little nun cried out, her voice almost cracking from overwhelming shock.

Lu Yun then turned back to himself.

"There's nothing to it." He smiled at her. "Those idiots were just fooled by my replica."

Thinking back to what had happened in the Sovereign Meet, the little nun wanted nothing more than to dig a hole and hide herself. After the initial shock wore off, though, knowing Lu Yun was Xing Chen allowed her to be fully at ease with him.

After all, theirs was a friendship forged through life and death.

"Wait, if you're Xing Chen... then Qing Han must be Qing Yu, right?" the little nun asked weakly.

Lu Yun nodded. The two girls' gazes dimmed and he could almost hear the sound of their hearts breaking.

Damn, since when did I become such a catch? I've made two little fairies fall head over heels for me. Lu Yun had to admit he was a little pleased with himself.

"Sect... Sect Head..." Yu Hengluo murmured bashfully. "I've heard that many of the demon sovereigns of our sect have hordes of wives and concubines..."

### **Chapter 519: Tomb Front Doors**

Lu Yun fidgeted in mild discomfort. It was normal for any man to dream of a harem, but his heart was already completely filled up by one person. He couldn't fit anyone else in there.

"Ahem!" he cleared his throat. "Well, you two should rest up before you go find Situ Zong."

The leader of the Star Demon Sect expedition was once again Situ Zong.

He was a nine-fruit peak aether dao immortal, but he could hold his own against opponents an entire realm beyond. The Pelagic Realm of the connate Pelagic Orb had turned his constitution into a connate-grade one, and he was already able to wield its full potential.

A connate treasure would be a powerful guarantee for any top clan in the world. Situ Zong wouldn't have been able to keep any other connate-grade treasure for himself—the Star Demon Sect's senior council would've taken it away from him as soon as he returned to them. However, the Pelagic Orb was special: Lu Yun had given it to him personally.

The same Lu Yun that was now the head of the sect.

The senior council didn't dare take the sect head's gift to another. Indeed, the five demon sovereigns helped Situ Zong fully refine the Pelagic Orb for his own, fusing its energy into his body.

Though Situ Zong wasn't yet an arcane dao immortal, he had no problem dueling any eight-fruit arcane dao immortal. That he was heading the expedition into the ghost realm was an acknowledgement of his current strength.

However, Lu Yun couldn't establish communication with Situ Zong on his own. The little nun and Yu Hengluo would need to try their luck at the celestial master tomb.

The main reason he'd come here was to look for the Skyqilin and Skyturtle Orbs in order to fully resolve Qing Han's underlying issues. He didn't need extra baggage dragging him down.

After using a dozen healing talismans each on the two girls, Lu Yun finally managed to heal their wounds. He took them on his skiff and once again set course for the celestial master tomb.

There was quite a hubbub now before it; many experts surmised this was where the Path of Ingress had ultimately landed.

From the outside, the tomb was a mountain roughly fifty thousand meters high. It was impossible to see its peak with a casual glance. The sky-sundering mountain was entirely pitch black, made of a kind of stone not found anywhere else in the world. Upon the mountain, innumerable piles of bleached bone could be seen.

It seemed that millions and millions of living creatures had once died here, their carcasses piling up into this terrifyingly huge mountain. The celestial master tomb lay beneath the mountain of bone.

A gargantuan tombstone five hundred meters tall marked where it stood. Its surface was entirely flat and nondescript, free of any inscriptions or markings whatsoever—even those left behind by natural wear.

Those who drew near it could see their reflections surprisingly clearly.

Behind the gravestone was a giant door, ancient and etched full of primordial dao runes, and in front of all this was a large, open plain. Clearly, it hadn't been like this for long. The plain was the obvious result left behind after a brawl between two enormous creatures.

The kui's fur and scales were scattered everywhere upon the flatland. Scorch marks left behind by its unique thunder art abounded. There were round pockmarks in the ground, too, left behind by Scarlet Ape's iron staff.

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When Lu Yun arrived with the two girls in tow, numerous immortals were entering the tomb through the door of light.

“They’re going in through the front door?” He opened his eyes incredulously.

“What is it?” The little nun sat red-faced upon Lu Yun’s boat; she still hadn’t gotten over her embarrassment.

“The front door of a tomb is the exit left behind by the architect. When a tomb is completed, sealing the front door and setting down a tombstone is the last step. The front door is the boundary between life and death, and sealing it marks the eternal separation of the two.

“The dead aren’t allowed to walk out, and the living aren’t allowed to enter.” Lu Yun shook his head slowly. “A door as blatant as this shouldn’t exist at all. In theory, whoever built the tomb should’ve sealed it off. This ancient door was created because someone or something triggered a restriction of some sort.

“The immortals going in this way are pretty much committing suicide.”

“Huh?” The two girls were stunned by his remarkable claims and couldn’t understand half of what he was saying.

“The living invite disaster by entering a tomb through its front doors. They might meet with an inexplicable and mysterious end, or simply become some sort of undead creature.

“Avoiding the front door is standard practice for any tomb raider. One that’s strangely open like this only makes it worse. A thief’s tunnel is the best way to get in. Digging one is the same as sneaking in by avoiding the laws governing life and death,” Lu Yun murmured.

Although many ancient tombs had holes in the front that led directly to their depths, they were generally more loopholes and flaws than actual doors. The door in front of the celestial master tomb, on the other hand, was absolutely a proper door that had stood open before.

“Sect Head, Senior Situ and the others have probably gone in through there already...” Yu Hengluo didn’t entirely understand Lu Yun’s words, but she could grasp the general gist of his explanation.

“Don’t worry, I’m here.” Lu Yun summoned his feng shui compass with a wave of his hand.

After his work on the interment of heaven and earth and the bronze palace, he’d reached a new level of feng shui through melding with the grand layout over the world. Enhanced knowledge and usage of the luopan was part of that.

There were already dark-golden runes coiled upon the compass, and it still had three layers, signifying the principle that three begets all. However, the information the luopan showed was even more mysterious and enlightening than before.

Hum...

A radiant world appeared before his eyes.

“Hmm?” Lu Yun widened his eyes. Every feng shui layout and formation upon the mountain of bone was revealed to him, available for study and analysis at the lift of a finger.

Not only that, but the world revealed by the luopan included everything else in the mountain as well. Lu Yun could ascertain the details of pretty much everything he saw. For example, the compass showed that the center of the mountain was hollow. Human skins floated inside it, and he saw Situ Zong’s among them.

## **Chapter 520: Dismemberment**

Lu Yun put his compass away to see that increasing numbers of immortals had gathered around him in the meantime.

They all knew who he was, of course. Dusk Province aside, his exploits in the North Sea skydragon tomb had showcased a multitude of methods that not even dao immortals could match. He’d saved quite a few of them from the ghost tree and the terrible formation there as well.

Even now, the immortals he’d helped were immensely grateful to him. They did indeed want to repay the favor, but what they could do was quite limited, compared to how strong his enemies were.

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“Enough with your deception, Lu Yun!” a snicker cut through the crowd. A shining blade slashed down upon him from the void; impossibly quick, it reached him nearly instantaneously.

“Insolent cur!” Yu Hengluo colored slightly. She adroitly shifted to the side, lightly flicking her bamboo staff upward to parry the attack. Following this, she delivered an overhand smash toward a seemingly empty spot.

Crack!

The verdant rod shattered the fabric of space, forcing a golden shadow to fall out from midair. Killing intent flashed in Yu Hengluo’s eyes and she pressed forward for a second blow at the golden immortal.

“Witch!” an aether dao immortal sneered, then repelled her with a flourish of his ivory sleeves. “Die!”

A hail of swords rose into the air in answer to his soft exhortation, ready to fall upon Lu Yun and the others.

“Stop!” came another loud cry. A brilliant sword-sweep cut across the sky, clearing away the gathered swords.

A sleekly dressed youth intervened before Yu Hengluo, broadsword in hand. He was a peerless immortal, and a powerful one at that. He was at his current realm’s peak, having understood the fundamentals of aether dao. All that remained was for him to seek out his aether dao fruit.

“What do you want, Zhao Zhicheng?” Minute changes flickered through expressions when nearby immortals saw the youth dressed in battle gear.

“Zhao Zhicheng of the Exalted Immortal Sect!” the aether dao immortal in ivory robes addressed him coldly. “Isn’t Lu Yun a mortal enemy of your sect? Why are you protecting an enemy like him?”



Zhao Zhicheng spared a glance for Lu Yun before turning back with a smile. “He’s the Exalted Immortal Sect’s enemy, yes, but he’s also my benefactor. I will humbly accept any internal condemnation I might receive.

“Rabble like you, on the other hand—why don’t you come forward and try my sword?”

Hum...

The broadsword in his fingers burned with a blinding light. It rippled outward, carrying a trace of heavenly power.

The other immortals gasped.

Zhao Zhicheng wasn’t a void realm immortal, nor had he fused a formation of heaven and earth into himself. However, he was one of the hundred and eight peerless immortals that Lu Yun had called upon to enact the Formation of Heavenly Spirits and Earthly Fiends, the prototype for a formation of heaven and earth.

Lu Yun had chosen people based on their nature and character alone, rather than cultivation or potential. Some of them had come from enemy factions—the Exalted Immortal Sect and the Ling and Donglin Clans, for example—but he had taught the entire formation to them regardless.

The immortals in question had benefited a great deal from the experience. In addition to breaking through the barrier to understanding aether dao, they had gained a sliver of heavenly power in their true spirits, enhancing the potency of all their attacks.

These immortals couldn’t compare to real void realm immortals, but they were certainly much stronger than their peers. Zhao Zhicheng himself had once dueled an aether dao immortal to a standstill.

If the hundred and eight peerless immortals gathered to deploy the Great Formation of Heavenly Spirits and Earthly Fiends once again, they would be able to advance it into a real formation of heaven and earth, granting every participant strength equal to a void realm immortal.

Even though Zhao Zhicheng was alone, he protected Lu Yun and the two girls behind him with fearless confidence. Drawing more natural energy to him, the immortals approaching them were forced back by the fierce power.

“Ling Jing! I recognize you, Ling Jing of the Ling Clan!” Suddenly, a grin crept over Zhao Zhicheng’s face. “There’s only two months before the auction in Dusk Province. Why are you trying to kill Lu Yun at a time like this?”

The aether dao immortal in ivory turned the color of his robes.

“Hmph!” he sneered. “Why? Oh, nothing at all... just that the Ling Clan hasn’t received an invitation to this auction.

“Lu Yun’s motives for not inviting us are entirely selfish. His murder of our genius, Ling Ruyun, must be repaid by in blood, so I have every right to kill him now.” As he spoke, an aura of aether dao immortality radiated from Ling Jing. His two dao fruits floated out of his body and wove a web of empowering runes all around him.

“If you don’t want to die, get out of the way.” Ling Jing stepped forward very slowly. A number of Ling immortals rushed into place behind him, including the golden immortal responsible for the sneak attack earlier. They gathered into a mysterious battle formation, resonating with their leader’s aether dao fruit runes.

Bang!

A muffled explosion rang out as Zhao Zhicheng grunted weakly. He stumbled backward a fair distance with a trickle of blood coming out of his ears.

“Still alive? Not bad.” Ling Jing took another step forward.

Zhao Zhicheng limped back another step. This time, blood streamed out of his other orifices as well and he looked like he was going to collapse.

The crowd of bystanders were shocked at the results.

Zhao Zhicheng had come out evenly matched with a one-fruit aether dao immortal upon exchanging a single blow with the other, but here, a two-fruit one had inflicted a devastating injury upon him just by taking two steps!

“How is this possible?!” The Exalted youth felt like his body was disintegrating. The sliver of heavenly power he possessed was out of control and beginning to destroy his spirit and consciousness.

“You’re not the only one who has that kind of power of the world. The Ling Clan had a peerless immortal who was the same way.” Ling Jing smiled gently in recollection. “Too bad he was just as stubborn as you are. Since he didn’t want to give it up to the clan, we had to dismember his body and crack open his soul to take it from him.”

His expression grew nastier by the second. “If we pluck the power from all hundred and eight of you and put it together, we won’t need Lu Yun’s formation of heaven and earth to make a void realm immortal...” he murmured inaudibly to himself.

Zhao Zhicheng shivered at the malice in Ling Jing’s gaze.