

## Necropolis 601

### Chapter 601: Fuel to the Flames

Wanfeng's mellow tone held a barely-perceptible, chilly edge.

Scarlet Ape bared its teeth at her, eyes blazing with fury. It would've gone on a killing spree if the circumstances were different. But being that the auction was jointly hosted by another twelve big merchant guilds aside from Lu Yun and the Panorama Pavilion, no one could do whatever they wished, not even Lu Yun.

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Once Wanfeng explained the stone turtle's background and its combat art, the venue fell silent. Everyone's heart rate seemed to have slowed by half a beat.

A void-ascended immortal naturally came with a void realm cultivation method. Nevertheless, everyone in attendance hailed from the top factions in the world of immortals. They had no shortage of cultivation methods of their own.

A flawless primordial combat art like Universe-Encompassing Palm, on the other hand, was something many had coveted, but couldn't acquire. Void-ascended immortals could only tap into their true strength with flawless primordial combat arts, and the stone turtle in front of them possessed one!

Many factions possessed members who'd ascended to true immortality from the void realm, but very few of them had access to flawless combat arts. Most primordial combat arts unearthed from the ancient tombs came out as tattered pieces.

That Ding Lei knew many secrets about the North Sea due to its previous post didn't matter to potential buyers; its value lay in the palm combat art. Void-ascended immortals could evolve their phenomenon of ascension into a combat art, but it was always the more the merrier when it came to something like this.

"Two billion!" a highly excited voice called out after three breaths. "I bid two billion premium crystals!"

"Two billion? How embarrassing," drawled another voice. "Eight billion!"

"Ten billion!"

"Twelve billion!"

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Voices rose and fell in a heated clamor of bidding. The price of the stone turtle quickly rose to an astronomical twenty billion premium crystals, and there looked to be enough momentum to push it even higher.

Twenty billion crystals was a price too high for most, as very few in the world could pay such a great sum. These participants, however, were bidding on behalf of their factions, and the most powerful ones in society at that.

The North Sea court, a faction with only ten thousand years of history, had accumulated trillions of premium crystals in their time. Older factions that had been around for eighty thousand years or more would've accumulated an unimaginable reserve of wealth.

In the end, the stone turtle went to the Zi Clan of Thundergale Major—the home of Zi Chen—for eighty billion crystals.

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“Man, only eighty billion premium crystals...” Lu Yun was a little disappointed. “I thought the turtle would at least earn me hundreds of billions.”

“That’s not a small number.” Qing Yu sat comfortably beside him. “This is only the first item being auctioned off. I’m sure some people have already guessed what you’re selling next. But,” she continued in a warning tone, “they aren’t going to be grateful even after you sell the flawless primordial arts to them.”

The next lots on the list were the legacies Lu Yun had brought back from the Sovereign World—or the central world, if his speculations were right. Buried in various tombs, most of them were fragmented and incomplete.

They were from the Primordial Era, but they were flawed.

With Qing Yu’s deduction method perfected, however, she’d easily restored the combat arts to their original state.

“Why do I want their gratitude? Those flawless combat arts will end up in the world sooner or later. It’s better to use them to turn a quick crystal first.” Lu Yun smiled faintly. “Besides, these arts were left behind by the losers of the era. They’re failures, just like their masters. I don’t believe that the combat arts of losers will pose any threat to me after entering the world.”

Qing Yu cracked a smile in full agreement. There had been no weapons of war in the Primordial Era, yet here they were now. There had been no deduction method to derive and build upon combat arts back then, yet she had invented one.

With the deduction method, she could easily work out any combat art, and even identify their weak points. Selling flawless primordial arts wouldn’t do Lu Yun any harm.

Within the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals, Empress Myrtlestar and the Azure Dragon King uneasily listened in on the conversation. According to Lu Yun’s words, they were failures as well. They may be alive, but only barely.

More importantly, Lu Yun was doing all this to prevent the Primordial Era’s survivors, such as the fur seals, from using flawless combat arts to earn favors and garner loyalty. He’d taken a subconscious dislike to whoever remained of that era.

“Come, I’ll teach you the deduction method.” Qing Yu pointed her index finger at the center of Lu Yun’s forehead, but he swiftly dodged away and caught her hand with a grin.

“It’s not yet time for me to learn the method. Once you overcome your tribulation and ascend to immortality, you should incorporate the method into the immortal dao and become the bonafide dao

sovereign. There are too many unresolved karmic issues about me that may lead to unexpected consequences. If I learn the method now, I may end up taking away what should be yours.”

Qing Yu’s nose wrinkled and she grumbled, “You’re the one who invented it...”

“I know, I know,” Lu Yun interjected. “But I created a deduction method for combat arts. After your research, it can not only be used to study combat arts, but also cultivation methods, formations, talismans, treasures, and pills. It’s more than a combat art deduction method now. It needs a more encompassing, more awe-inspiring name.”

“What do you think it should be called?” Qing Yu snuggled into Lu Yun’s arms rather than pulling away.

Lu Yun lightly caressed her hair with a smile. “What makes up the components of formations and pills... a method for refining talismans and treasures... their formula! Your method... No, it should be considered a type of dao now. Let’s call it the formula dao!”

“Formula can be applied to everything in the world. From now on, your combat art deduction method will be known as formula dao.”

As they chatted, Lu Yun isolated his voice with a combat art to prevent it from traveling beyond the two of them, lest the immortal dao sense it and incorporate formula dao within, leading to Qing Yu’s premature tribulation and ascension.

Her curse hadn’t yet been resolved, so the time wasn’t ripe for her to become an immortal.

Qing Yu nodded in agreement.

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The venue boiled over with exhilaration as proceedings continued.

The presentation of flawless primordial arts sent frissons of excitement through the attendees. Those lucky enough to be the winning bid on any of them began cultivating them on the spot.

These primordial arts were more than just combat arts; they contained a great variety of techniques and cultivation methods as well. As the distilled wisdom of the primordial immortals, they contained a complete legacy of dao.

Each primordial art was worth more than hundreds of billions of premium crystals. Many void-ascended immortals bankrupted themselves to acquire one, ignoring the formation of heaven and earth that would be placed on the block at the end of the auction.

“What?!” Another commotion spread throughout the summits. “That’s Xing Chen’s Sword Atlas. Why is it on sale as well?!”

Its power had been proven to the world back during the Sovereign Meet and in the battle of Dusk Province. It was no exaggeration to call the Sword Atlas one of the best of the flawless primordial arts.

But Lu Yun was auctioning it off now!

This was a combat art without an accompanying cultivation method or other techniques. Otherwise the Sword Atlas would’ve been buried in a tomb, rather than a burial mound.

“Why is this combat art in your possession, Lu Yun?” demanded a Ling immortal.

While the Ling Clan originally hadn't been invited, an invitation had later been issued after the thirteen merchant guilds decided to organize the auction together, along with other factions that'd been previously passed over, like House Donglin and the Corpse Refiners.

None of the belated invitees would miss the opportunity. They wanted the Sword Atlas more than anything else, and couldn't retain their composure when it was put up for sale.

“Didn't you guess it already?” Lu Yun yawned and walked out lazily. “I am Xing Chen. Xing Chen is me.”

He'd originally planned on continuing the act, but Scarlet Ape had spilled the beans immediately upon arriving in Dusk. Qing Yu wasn't disguising herself as Qing Han anymore, either, so there was nothing stopping Lu Yun from revealing his identity.

In the end, it all came down to power.

Compared to who he'd been in Destiny City, Lu Yun was now powerful enough to not have to bother with concealing his actions. Xing Chen had ascended to the golden immortal realm from the void realm; even arcane dao immortals would only take a punch to kill.

“Nonsense!” A Fangyang immortal shot to his feet. “Our arcane dao immortal examined you with an immortal mirror. You and Xing Chen are two different people...”

“Tsk, believe what you want.” Lu Yun waved his hand dismissively. “Since no one's gonna bid for the Sword Atlas, Wanfeng, we're buying it in. Next!”

“Understood.” Wanfeng beamed widely when she saw Lu Yun.

“Don't! I'd like to bid—” Immortals hurried to shout prices.

Sword Atlas was a powerful combat art that enabled one to wield tens of thousands of swords at the same time. With enough inner energy, that would kill almost anyone. However, Wanfeng waved the art off the block and motioned for the next item to be brought on stage.

Killing intent permeated the air as many directed resentful glares at the Ling Clan and the Fangyang Nobles. The two clans kept their mouth shut; they knew they'd angered the room.

“I believe many will be interested in this next lot,” Wanfeng announced. “The trump card of every heavenly court in the world of immortals is a weapon of war.”

Everyone in the room gaped at the young woman, their expressions filled with dread and anticipation.

“Weapons of war tend to be extremely complicated to set up. Formations must be established and the weapons have to be connected to an earthen vein. One misstep can send all your efforts down the drain. The weapons of Sir Lu Yun's invention, however, don't require these extra steps.”

With a wave of her hand, a giant black veil slid off to reveal ten pitch-black cannons.

The crowd shot to their feet, eyes threatening to pop out of sockets. Had Lu Yun really lost his mind?! Why would he put such things on sale?!

The world of immortals was already on the brink of a great war. Him selling the weapons was adding fuel to the flames!

“These aren’t regular weapons of war, Sir Lu Yun has named them crystal cannons.” Wanfeng scanned the venue with a smile. “I’ll cut to the chase. A set of ten crystal cannons, if imbued with the power of three billion crystals for full capacity, can severely injure or even kill an arcane dao immortal. The starting price is fifty billion crystals.

“Bidding may begin.”

### **Chapter 602: Immortal Crystals, O Immortal Crystals**

Everyone’s mouths went dry. Some had hoped beforehand that Lu Yun would auction off his weapons of war—or crystal cannons, as they were called—but no one had expected him to actually do it!

Here they were, ten of them on the auction block!

Apart from the Panorama Pavilion, the other twelve merchant guilds were at a loss as well. In their eyes, many things could be sold, such as cultivation methods and combat arts, but items like weapons of war should be off limits!

Unforeseen consequences would arise when these items freely circulated in the market, but Lu Yun didn’t seem to care. Although he wasn’t selling the most powerful crystal cannons in his inventory, these specimens still possessed great destructive power. Wasn’t he worried at all that the cannons could end up aimed at Dusk Province if they fell into enemy hands?

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Bids were called all over the venue, quickly pushing the set of ten cannons beyond five hundred billion with no signs of stopping. The heavenly courts were among the most avid participants. They were going to raise the price so high that not even peak factions could hope to pay for it!

Weapons of war were exclusive to the heavenly courts of the twenty-three facets, empowering them to exert dominance over the factions under their rule. They stood to lose the most with the cannons being auctioned off.

When the cannon reached nine hundred billion premium crystals, many immortals from peak factions gave up vying for the set.

“A trillion,” sounded a voice familiar to Lu Yun’s ears. Eyebrow arched, he turned to the floating summit belonging to the Fangyang Nobles. The bidder was Fangyang Xing!

The man had ascended to immortality from the void realm, but hadn’t been able to undergo his tribulation while in the celestial master tomb. He represented the mysterious faction known as the Firmament Palace.

He was a stunning genius who’d sensed the existence of the void realm thirty thousand years ago. Not even a pause had marked his footsteps before he set foot onto the path and ultimately lost his life at the hands of a black long-haired monster. After his death, he’d joined the Firmament Palace and become a yin divine spirit.

Upon his return to the world of immortals, he was much more powerful than when he'd been in the celestial master tomb. The power of heaven and earth in the venue followed his words as he spoke, forming the character zha for trillion in the air.

"The Fangyang Nobles sure are wealthy and aren't shy about it," echoed a chilling voice. "Indeed worthy of a primordial noble clan! Two trillion!"

Bam!

A shockwave shattered the zha hovering in the air as a man rose to his feet on another floating summit: Jiangchen Xie. Emerging in opposition to Fangyang Xing, he resembled evil incarnate with faint white flames flickering around him.

They were geniuses from the same era. Although there was a generation between them, Jiangchen Xie refused to bow his head before Fangyang Xing.

Back in the underworld, Jiangchen Xie had almost died from a shattered dao heart at Lu Yun's hand. But under the guidance of the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign, he was able to start anew and cultivate the Hadal Bone Method, ascending to immortality from the void realm and becoming one of the greatest geniuses in the world, and a worthy rival of Fangyang Xing.

This doubling of the price put a frown on Fangyang youth's face, while the other guests sucked in sharp breaths. It'd taken many rounds of bidding for the crystal cannons to be valued at a trillion crystals, but Jiangchen Xie had oh so casually added another trillion.

"Why don't you let me have the cannons, senior brother Fangyang?" Jiangchen Xie smiled merrily at Fangyang Xing, his expression dripping with threatening spite.

"That'll depend on how many crystals you have," Fangyang Xing said with an impassive face. "Three trillion."

Jiangchen Xie maintained his smile. "Four trillion."

"Five." Fangyang Xing clearly wasn't going to let a junior of his time walk all over him. As a member of the Firmament Palace, immortal crystals were nothing but a meaningless number to him. Yin spirits didn't need them for cultivation.

"Six trillion." Jiangchen Xie frowned, surprised by Fangyang Xing's stubbornness.

"Seven," Fangyang Xing responded with the same deadpan look.

Immortals in the venue held their breath and waited for the clash between two geniuses from thirty thousand years ago to play out. However, no matter who won the bid, Lu Yun would be the greatest winner in the end.

"Eight trillion," Jiangchen Xie declared, a vein bulging on his forehead.

"Junior brother, you may have the cannons, since you like them so much," Fangyang Xing said with a faint smile.

Jiangchen Xie responded with a grin of his own. "You have my thanks, senior brother Fangyang."

With a wave of his hand, he sent a storage treasure with eight trillion crystals to Wanfeng on the center island, seemingly very pleased with himself. In a quiet voice that just so happened to be audible to others, he murmured, "With these ten precious babies, the Truespirit court will be able to manufacture similar weapons as well."

He shot Fangyang Xing a gloating smirk.

Fangyang Xing scowled, his brows tightly knit together. It wouldn't be good for the Fangyangs if the Corpse Refiners learned the techniques to refine such crystal cannons as well.

"The next lot." Wanfeng suddenly lifted her hand. "Another set of ten crystal cannons with a minimum price of fifty billion premium crystals."

Stunned, Jiangchen Xie tasted blood at the back of his throat and demanded in disbelief, "Another set? Since when did these things become common cabbages sold in the street?"

"While there are cabbages in the world of immortals, they will never reach the price of eight trillion premium crystals." Wanfeng smiled. "The bidding may begin."

Jiangchen Xie turned green while Fangyang Xing frowned in bafflement, puzzling over what Lu Yun's plan was. Anyone else would've kept the cannons under tight lock and key, lest others reverse-engineer the refining techniques, but Lu Yun was putting them up for sale!

And after selling ten, he put another ten on the block!

Fangyang Xing's thoughts were interrupted by a noisy din of bids. He refrained from participating this time, and the ten cannons ended up going to Lazuli Major's Mo Clan for nine hundred billion crystals.

Jiangchen Xie's heart didn't know whether it should bleed or stop beating altogether. He'd paid nearly ten times the price!

"Next lot, the third set of ten crystal cannons. The starting price is once again fifty billion crystals."

Everyone lost their calm. What was Lu Yun thinking?! Weren't crystal cannons Lu Yun's secret weapons? Was he trying to make them a household staple?!

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"Can't help it, I need the immortal crystals..." Lu Yun seemed visibly troubled. "It'll take too long for me to go to the Endless Desert to find the Ancient Tree of Life, so my only option is to lure it here."

"Immortal crystals, o immortal crystals. How lovely are thy sparkle."

### **Chapter 603: Primus Major**

A total of fifty cannon sets, which amounted to five hundred crystal cannons, were sold at the auction. The cheapest of them sold for nine hundred billion crystals, while Jiangchen Xie paid the highest price of eight trillion crystals.

All of the guests had lost themselves in the auction. They didn't even care what else awaited in the lots to come, they needed to get their hands on a set of cannons! These crystal cannons posed greater threats than even weapons of war.

It would be one thing if all of the cannons went to the heavenly courts of the twenty-three facets. The power structure of the world of immortals would then remain unchanged.

But when numerous top factions and reclusive clans began acquiring cannons for themselves, those that missed out couldn't afford to be complacent. No one knew how many crystal cannons would be put on the block. These weapons would topple the status quo—no matter how high the price was, they had to make their bids.

When all fifty sets were sold and the next lot was something different, many a sigh of regret could be heard from the floating summits. Factions that'd been unsuccessful in their pursuit agitated with frustration; they wanted nothing more than to seize the cannons from others. However, they couldn't risk doing so in Dusk Province.

Even Scarlet Ape and the North Sea monster spirits under its command had suffered a defeat here. The powerful Dusk restriction had been able to defeat Scarlet Ape, despite the restriction being unarmed and the monster ancestor wielding a connate-grade treasure.

Moreover, Lu Yun wouldn't have auctioned off the crystal cannons if he wasn't prepared to face them in battle.

The venue erupted in an uproar again when the next item was revealed: it was a fortress ship! Although there was only one ship sealed behind a faint barrier of light, every one could clearly see it.

Running fifteen hundred meters long, its pitch-black hull seemed to be covered in fine dragon scales, further accentuating its dominating presence. At the bow of the ship sat a giant crystal cannon, clearly of a much higher grade than the five hundred auctioned before it.

"This is the latest invention by Sir Lu—a lord-grade fortress ship. Equipped with thirty-seven crystal cannons in total, there are thirty-six secondary cannons apart from the main cannon. In addition to the cannons, the fortress ship itself is a mighty rank-exceeding treasure. Each of its three layers of defensive formations can withstand the full strike of a nine-fruit arcane dao immortal.

"This fortress ship possesses even more functions that are no less impressive than the defensive formations. I will leave it up to the buyer to discover its full potential." Wanfeng purposefully leaving some things unsaid enraptured the attention of all the guests.

This lord-grade fortress ship was akin to a moving bastion on the battlefield, which made it even more terrifying than weapons of war. In fact, the fortress ship was enough to compromise the authority of the heavenly courts in all of the facets.

Of course, the ship would be too prohibitively expensive for regular factions to buy.

"The lord-grade fortress ship will start at a minimum price of ten trillion crystals. May the bidding begin." Wanfeng's voice was as pleasant as ever, but it doused many immortals' fervor with chilling coldness.

Ten trillion premium immortal crystals! Many wouldn't be able to afford it even if they sold their entire clan, unless they sold their greatest treasures and heritages to boot.

No one made any bids in the next three breaths.

“If no one’s going to make a bid, then—”

“Ten trillion and a hundred billion crystals,” declared Fangyang Xing. In a blunt tone, he continued, “Something that can change our world order must not be allowed to circulate freely. On behalf of the Firmament Palace, I will buy it with ten trillion and a hundred billion crystals.”

That had been the reason why he’d bid on the first set of crystal cannons, then given up after seeing more cannons brought to the auction block. However, he wasn’t going to let this bastion of a fortress ship fall into the hands of any other faction.

Disaster would follow if the ship was allowed to circulate in the world of immortals.

Additionally, he didn’t believe that Lu Yun would just sell something like this without a plan. Ten trillion crystals was an astronomical sum, but it wasn’t that expensive for the truly powerful factions in the twenty-three facets.

There were much fewer immortals in contemporary society, roughly one-ten thousandth of the count in the Primordial Era. But after the great destruction befalling the world of immortals, the qi and laws of the world had been disturbed and thrown into disarray. Great turmoil represented great opportunity, and the resources nurtured by such an environment were richer and more varied than before.

After eighty thousand years of accumulation, the various factions in the world had likely accumulated a wealth greater than the primordial world had possessed over their hundreds of thousands of years.

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“The Firmament Palace? Hehehe, how very impressive.” Jiangchen Xie narrowed his eyes. He could be viewed as the successor of the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign, and the demon sovereign saw the Firmament Palace as an archenemy.

The Skyturning Seal from the celestial master tomb, for example, had been snatched by the Firmament Palace just when the demon sovereign was about to acquire it.

Fangyang Xing scowled, seeing Jiangchen Xie intervene again.

“Twenty trillion, I bid twenty trillion! The Firmament Palace’s coffers know no bounds. Twenty trillion isn’t that much for you, is it?” Jiangchen Xie smiled merrily as he spoke, but his brows and eyes suggested a certain viciousness.

“Are you really able to pay twenty trillion crystals?” Fangyang Xing cast a suspicious look at Jiangchen Xie. He didn’t think the Corpse Refiners or the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign could afford the bid, either.

“Don’t you worry.” Jiangchen Xie grinned. “I wouldn’t raise a bid I can’t afford.”

Thirteen of the greatest merchant guilds in the world of immortals had jointly organized the auction along with Lu Yun of Dusk Province. If anyone started trouble here, they would be making enemies of them all. All thirteen of these companies together intimidated even the heavenly courts of the world.

“Alright then, show me your twenty trillion crystals!” Fangyang Xing stared angrily at Jiangchen Xie, his gaze brimming with killing intent.

“Twenty one trillion,” called out another voice. “You’re here on behalf of the Truespirit Court, aren’t you, Jiangchen Xie? There’s nothing surprising about Truespirit being able to afford twenty trillion crystals.”

The speaker was a youthful void-ascended immortal. Dressed in a long violet-gold robe, he appeared extraordinarily noble.

“Primus Court will pay twenty-one trillion premium crystals.” He folded his hands behind his back, casting a prideful look at Jiangchen Xie and Fangyang Xing.

The two men’s expression darkened—they hadn’t expected Primus Major to get involved as well.

Primus Major was the most powerful of the nine majors, their strength exceeding all of the other facets. Even after the nine celestial emperors passed down their thrones, Primus’ dominance remained unchallenged.

None of the factions within Primus dared even think about toppling their heavenly court.

#### **Chapter 604: Arrival of the Fur Seals**

Dressed in purple, the young man held himself with great aplomb and regality, just a hint of arrogance tinging his expression. At the wave of his hand, twenty-one dragons emerged to circle around him.

They looked like dragon veins, but they were manifestations of immortal crystals at a certain concentration.

Mines of immortal crystals derived from earthen veins. Once crystals reached a level of certain concentration, they would return to their original state or even evolve into dragon veins.

“Since the ninth prince of Primus Major has made a bid of twenty-one trillion crystals, I will step back.” Jiangchen Xie was reluctant to admit defeat, but the Truespirit court couldn’t rival the Primus court by any means.

Fangyang Xing returned to his seat without a word.

“I will bid another twenty-one trillion premium immortal crystals for a second lord-grade fortress ship,” said the Primus prince, waving his hand to conjure another twenty-one dragons.

“Only one lord-grade fortress ship will be sold at this auction,” Lu Yun’s voice traveled out. “If Your Highness needs another one, the Panorama Pavilion will take the order from Primus Major.”

“The ship will be slightly pricier at the auction, of course. After the auction, well...” after a bemused pause, Lu Yun continued, “The ship will be sold for fifteen trillion crystals. I hereby designate the Panorama Pavilion as the sole authorized retailer of lord-grade fortress ships.”

‘Authorized retailer’ wasn’t a phrase used in the world of immortals. Given his origins, Lu Yun found the occasional Earth saying slipping out of his mouth.

“Orders can be placed with the Panorama Pavilion for fifteen trillion crystals each, but a deposit of five trillion must be made at time of reservation. Crystal cannons will be available for a hundred billion crystals each, but there are still a lot of them, so pre-orders won’t be necessary.”

This inventory announcement attracted many heated gazes, while Fangyang Xing, Jiangchen Xie, and some other void-ascended immortals felt a deep sense of dread.

If such things were made mainstream in the world, void-ascended immortals would enjoy no advantages against regular immortals, even without formations of heaven and earth. Fortunately, fortress ships and crystal cannons came with very steep price tags. Smaller factions wouldn't be able to afford the two, even if they liquidated all of their assets. Otherwise, there would be no more order to be found in the world of immortals.

Still, the prospect of a different future unnerved many. The heavenly courts of the nine majors, ten lands, and four immortal seas, for example, would lose some of their edge once the ships and the cannons became widely distributed.

The Primus prince simply nodded in response to Lu Yun's statement. If he was displeased in any way, he didn't show it.

The auction continued amidst great hustle and bustle.

Although many tantalizing treasures were brought to the auction stage, including Principal Nineheavens Talismans that repelled immortal ghosts, most of the guests were dazed and distracted. Their thoughts lingered on the fortress ships and the crystal cannons, and only when the thousand formations of heaven and earth were to be auctioned did the immortals snap back to reality.

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None of that mattered to Lu Yun anymore. However, Qing Yu was rather worried about him. Hadn't Lu Yun gone too far this time? Dusk Province was bound to become a common target after the auction.

Worrying her lip between her teeth, Qing Yu finally asked what she'd long wanted to ask, "Am I... worth it?"

Am I worth it?

For the longest time, Qing Yu had lied to Lu Yun and assumed another identity in his presence.

However, he hadn't grown angry upon finding out the truth. He'd even feigned ignorance out of consideration for her feelings. The issue had now become an internal demon lodged deep in the depths of Qing Yu's heart.

"What do you think?" Lu Yun smiled as he caressed her long hair. "I chose you. There is no price I wouldn't pay for you. In life, it's rare and a very lucky thing to have someone we're willing to throw all caution to the wind for." He flashed her a carefree smile.

Seeing her reddened eyes, he quickly changed the topic. "Come on, let's see how many crystals we've earned so far."

"A hundred and thirty-seven trillion, if we round it up," Qing Yu quickly responded.

"A hundred and thirty seven trillion..." Lu Yun stroked his chin. "We need a little more. Let's check how much the markets outside have earned."

A hundred and thirty-seven trillion was an astronomical number in the world of immortals. No one throughout the current eighty thousand years of history had ever seen that many crystals. It was impressive even by the standards of the Primordial Era.

“What a shame that the Witherdew Court and Witherdew’s dozen peak factions have all been destroyed. Otherwise we’d have gained another few trillion,” Lu Yun sighed. “Not enough, it’s not enough! We must gather two hundred trillion crystals more in order to lure the Ancient Tree of Life to us.”

They still had half a year before Qing Yu’s tribulation struck. Lu Yun had to gather two hundred trillion crystals and use the Key of Life to guide the Tree of Life to her. Otherwise, the only outcome for Qing Yu would be death. She wasn’t even able to sever her own cultivation.

He’d acquired the Skyqilin Pearl during this time. After some negotiations, the Lin Clan had just outright gifted him the treasure without asking for anything in return.

Now, he just needed the Skyturtle Pearl and the Ancient Tree of Life.

The Skyturtle Pearl... was in the Ling Clan’s hands.

Light flickered in Lu Yun’s eyes. Over the past few days, he’d utilized his connections to confirm that the Ling Clan did indeed possess the Skyturtle Pearl, and that the clan knew he needed it.

However, they hadn’t said anything to him in all this time.

“Sir Lu, Miss Qing Yu.” Wanfeng entered the minor world they were in, bringing with her a faint fragrance on the air.

“All thousand formations have been auctioned off, but the prices weren’t very high,” Wanfeng reported unhappily.

In her eyes, the formations were much more valuable than fortress ships and crystal cannons, yet all thousand formations together had earned them less than a trillion crystals. In fact, many had been sold for a low price.

Of course, that had something to do with the low starting bid Lu Yun had set for the formations.

The auction had come to an end, but many remained in the venue to negotiate amongst each other. Even more were waiting to order crystal cannons or to reserve lord-grade fortress ships from the Panorama Pavilion.

“That’s to be expected. By the way, where’s Senior Wayfarer, Wanfeng?” Lu Yun thought about Yu Hengluo, still unconscious in hell.

With the severe injuries she’d suffered, she was only alive because Lu Yun had put her in the resurrection layout. There was nothing else he could do for her; he needed Wayfarer’s help.

“Master set out for the underworld. He said he needed to resolve some unfinished business—” She was interrupted by an explosion that shook the entire venue ever so slightly.

“Kekeke—I hear that the world’s so-called greatest auction is being held here,” sounded a piercing and grating voice. “Who dares call themselves the greatest without the permission of the immortal race?”

Chaos ensued as a group of terrifying figures swarmed into the venue.

“Void-ascended dao immortals?!” someone screamed.

Lu Yun narrowed his eyes. “That must be the Ge Yanxia I’ve heard so much about. So the fur seals have come, hmm? And they dare call themselves the immortal race?”

### **Chapter 605: Civilized**

A... woman... probably a woman... sashayed into the venue with an escort of strange-looking creatures.

A tight-fitting black dress clung closely to her swollen, distended figure. Her face was incredibly large at thirty centimeters across and covered with a field of pockmarks and repulsive pimples. Deep-set ox-like eyes darted rapidly around over a garlic bulb of a nose, making for an unusually hideous appearance.

She scanned the surroundings as she walked in, self-satisfaction and pride on her face suggesting a firm belief in her superiority.

“Um... What are those things?” From a floating summit, Jiangchen Xie stared dumbly at the creatures swarming in after the woman.

“Fur seals, it seems, as recorded in our historical texts.” An elder of the Corpse Refiners stood by Jiangchen Xie’s side, his expression tight. The fur seals were so hideous to the eye that it hurt to even look at them.

“Fur seals...” Jiangchen Xie frowned slightly. “I saw that woman in the celestial master tomb before. I think she calls herself Ge Yanxia.”

He couldn’t conceal his disgust of the fur seals, not because of their appearance, but for the repulsive presence radiating from their very beings. In fact, a faint pungent stench had wafted into the venue after the creatures arrived.

Rather than the smell of decaying corpses, it was the sour taste of someone who hadn’t taken a bath for hundreds of years. Even the Corpse Refiners, used to the smell of decomposition, had difficulties dealing with the stench.

Immortals closer to the entrance couldn’t resist the urge to throw up, and a chorus of retching soon filled the venue.

“What in the heavens are they?” screamed an immortal. “They brought poison with them!”

Immortals were free of dirt and resisted all filth, yet these things seemed to have an innate grime about them, despite the proper garments they’d donned. The stink rolling off them was so strong that it was like poison.

Regular immortals, and even cultivators, had never vomitted in their lives. So when their bodies heaved from the nauseating funk burrowing into their noses, they thought they’d been hit with a potent poison.

"It's said that the fur seals lucked out and were trapped in a ruin with a complete immortal dao when the primordial world of immortals shattered. That ruin is isolated and untouched by sunlight. Does the polluted air ingrained in the fur seals come from that ruin?"

Those who believed that they'd been poisoned were the minority as the majority of immortals present had realized what these things were.

"That's not right," said Fangyang Xing. "Fur seals were the lowliest and foulest of species in the primordial world of immortals. They were born this way. Apparently, even the seawater in their territory is foul and pungent."

His frown made it clear that he couldn't stand the fur seals' stench, either. He turned to Lu Yun with a questioning gaze. "Sir Lu, you didn't invite the filthy fur seals, did you?"

"Uh... no..." Lu Yun stammered slowly. He was as caught off guard by the fur seals' arrival as anyone else.

"What did you just say?!" Ge Yanxia's expression turned thunderous when she caught what Fangyang Xing and the other immortals were muttering about, her oppressive presence flaring dangerously

With a simple lift of the hand, she pushed a giant black hand projection forward and smashed it into one of the floating summits with great viciousness.

Bam!

The floating summit exploded, all of the immortals representing their clan decimated.

"Who else?!" Ge Yanxia soared into the air, bursting through her tight black dress when she gathered power, revealing her pitch-black, gelatinous body for all to see. Layers of lard undulated like waves of dark sewage.

"Why didn't the Dusk restriction do anything even after she used the power of a primordial dao immortal?!" someone screamed.

Belated realizations were dawning that the restriction against immortals remained inactive, even though Ge Yanxia had entered the province with her strength as a primordial dao immortal fully on display.

An immortal like her bearing a complete immortal dao and inner world put her in an entirely different league from contemporary dao immortals. She'd more than proven herself with her previous attack, yet the Dusk restriction hadn't stirred at all.

Boom!

A beam of white light slammed into Ge Yanxia at this moment, sending her bulbous form flying backwards with a scream. The fur seals that hadn't fully transformed were disintegrated beside her.

An enormous fortress ship had suddenly appeared over the auction's venue. The ninth prince of Primus Major stood atop the bow of the ship with a murderous look on his face.

"The last time I traveled to the West Sea, I ran into a group of fur seals and almost didn't survive the occasion." The prince smiled darkly; it was plainly an encounter he didn't care to recall.

“You aren’t going to object if I slaughter this group of fur seals, are you, great monkey?” He raised his eyebrows at Scarlet Ape.

“Fur seals? They’re nothing but simple beasts, rather than monster spirits.” Full of schadenfreude, Scarlet Ape wanted nothing more than to see the auction disrupted. Although the auction proper had ended, what came after was what truly mattered.

“Ah!” a piercing scream rang from the outside of the venue. “My children, my children—who ambushed me?! I’ll kill you!” Ge Yanxia sounded overcome with grief.

“Those... were all her children?” Immortals had gasped with surprise and envy when they witnessed the demonstration of the lord-grade fortress ship, but Ge Yanxia’s exclamation stunned them further.

“Ge Yanxia is a female fur seal, isn’t she?” Fangyang Xing asked woodenly. “Do fur seals lay eggs? Or do they carry their young to term?”

He cast his eyes toward Scarlet Ape, who was equally surprised.

“Should be the latter... are all those fur seals her children? Hasn’t she done anything other than give birth over the past hundreds of years?”

“I think I saw... descendants of her and her children in that group,” suddenly offered a small monster spirit with large eyes.

“What do you mean?” Not everyone understood the strange-looking monster spirit.

“It means that Ge Yanxia copulated with her children, or even grandchildren to give birth to more offspring,” the monster spirit explained with a deadpan look.

“Um...” Scarlet Ape turned around stiltedly to look at the monster spirit.

“That’s how fur seals are,” it said seriously. “This is perfectly normal for them. Lord Ancestor is right, fur seals aren’t monster spirits. Monster spirits are civilized, while fur seals aren’t. Back in the Primordial Era, the fur seals wanted to join the monster spirits, but the forefather at the time turned them down.”

By now, the ninth prince had directed his fortress ship out of the venue in pursuit of the fur seal.

### **Chapter 606: The Dao Flower Blooms Again**

Uncivilized, uncultured, and ignorant of what constituted normal relations. Such were the differences between monster spirits and mere beasts.

It was said that the monster spirit ancestor had attempted to educate the fur seals in the Primordial Era in order to make them part of the monster spirits, but she had no choice but to give up after they refused to change and continued to do as they would.

Although the fur seals were powerful beings that could transform into humans, monster spirits still didn’t consider them part of the same race. Ge Yanxia had called herself the immortal race when she entered. That, however, was plainly an insult to all immortals.

Explosions boomed and blasted outside; the lord-grade fortress ship was tangled in battle with Ge Yanxia. Immortal crystals were all that the great ship needed to generate unimaginable power.

However, Ge Yanxia managed to block its ramming via a giant seal projection outside her naked, bulbous body, albeit at the price of her nearly collapsing.

She was a primordial dao immortal. Though her cultivation had only reached aether dao immortality, her true strength exceeded that of even contemporary peak arcane dao immortals. Moreover, she had a great treasure in her possession.

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“Ge Yanxia is an aether dao immortal from the Primordial Era, one who has plucked at least eight dao fruits. Why is she able to tap into her full strength here?” Immortals in the venue brought up the same question again.

“Has... the Dusk restriction disappeared?” They thought of the city beneath their feet. Lu Yun had razed the ancient Dusk tomb, and that was where the restriction had resided.

“Cease your wild speculations,” Lu Yun spoke up. “The restriction hasn’t disappeared. The fur seal has something on her that isolates her from the restriction. It creates a standalone minor world around her, which is what allows her this freedom.”

Another explosion rang out as he spoke, sending a slight tremor through the city.

A sneer floated onto Lu Yun’s lips. The ninth prince of Primus Major had started the conflict on purpose; he wanted to destroy the newly built city with his fortress ship.

A single ram from the ship would’ve destroyed any other city, but this particular one had been built upon the North Sea Palace, which was sealing the underground fissure in place of the original Dusk tomb. What could be seen above ground was merely the tip of the iceberg.

That foundation alone made the city incredibly sturdy. Even the human king of the Primeval Era might not be able to destroy the city, let alone a mere lord-grade fortress ship.

The human demon had spearheaded the construction of the city. He was the guardian of the land of Emperors Fall, the sacred land of the primeval human race. As part of the senior council of the human race at the time, it was as easy as flipping his hand to retrofit the palace that primeval humans had built for the dragons.

The others were skeptical of Lu Yun’s explanation.

Still, even with Ge Yanxia’s demonstration of power exceeding the golden immortal realm, none of the immortals with self-imposed suppression dared attempt the same. They wanted to take some fur seals alive to peer at the truth.

The fur seals possessed an innate power of heaven and earth, like the primordial immortals. But with so many void realm cultivators present who’d ascended to immortality, they didn’t fear the uneducated fur seals.

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“Alright, we’ll let them be,” said Lu Yun. “Recipients of the thousand formations of heaven and earth have been decided. The buyers may come in.”

With a wave of his hand, a white path slowly extended into the venue. It was the branch of the Path of Ingress that'd been in his possession all this time. Lu Yun hadn't returned the branch when he'd brought the main treasure back to the Nephrite Court. In fact, he'd been studying it in an attempt to restore its combat art counterpart.

The thousand immortals perked up and hurried onto the path, entering a strange space.

Qing Yu had emerged from her closed door cultivation with the completion of formula dao, which enabled her to reverse-engineer even formations and talismans. With her deduction, the formations of heaven and earth had been perfected. She'd even theorized dao immortal-grade formations, and made redundant many extra steps that were previously necessary in the etching process.

An enormous formation lit up and enveloped the thousand immortals. Fine lines of formation runes materialized in the air, slowly sinking into their bodies. The immortals were all geniuses in their own rights, and a good number of them were actually formation masters as well.

Eyes wide open and consciousnesses fully deployed in observation, they found the formation in front of them too complex to comprehend. There were profound mysteries to it that they couldn't even begin to understand, ones that reached beyond the immortal dao they knew.

Hum!

A burst of dazzling golden light overwhelmed them.

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"Are you sure you want to make the announcement now?" Qing Yu asked worriedly by Lu Yun's side. "Maybe we should wait until you ascend to immortality..."

"No, that won't do." Lu Yun shook his head with great determination. "The top factions of the world can just pretend ignorance then. With the attention the auction has gathered, now is the perfect time to make the announcement. The fur seal and the ninth prince are perfect to make examples of."

The Primus prince was plainly up to no good. He would destroy the city, or if he failed, he would demand an explanation from Lu Yun regarding the ineffectiveness of the new fortress ships to undermine the Dusk lord's reputation. That was why Lu Yun had to act now.

Boom!

A thundering impact rippled through the auction venue as a pillar of golden light shot into the sky, conjuring a giant dao character in the firmament. Lu Yun emerged in midair, hovering beneath the character.

"Oh? What's he up to now?" Attention drawn, all eyes shifted from the battle in the city to Lu Yun.

"In the name of dao, I, Lu Yun, do hereby establish the sacred land of immortal dao." His voice spread outward like rolling waves, making everyone in his proximity dizzy. A sacred land of immortal dao?

Lu Yun was going to establish a sacred land now?

It was common knowledge that the inheritance tower in Dusk Province housed the complete legacy of a primordial lord. Combined with the Sword Lake, the perfect training ground for sword dao cultivators, the province was indeed shaping up to be a sacred land of immortal dao.

However, no one had expected Lu Yun to make it official right at this very moment. Did he think his wings were filled out and that he was ready to take flight?

Before they could recover from the shock, an enormous flower slowly unfurled in the air. It was the Dao Flower, and it was blooming again!

### **Chapter 607.1: Dao-Establishing Tribulation**

Pure white petals blossomed gently in the sky and covered the entire world. In that instant, every single soul in the world of immortals looked up in wonder at the Dao Flower.

It was larger than the one that'd emerged with the appearance of the void realm. It was so large, in fact, that it sprawled across the entire sky and blotted out the sun. Its petals were engraved with profound runes that seemed to depict the deepest truths of the universe, laws that governed the existence of all living things.

Along with the blooming of the Dao Flower, Lu Yun's voice also reached every corner of the world. The appearance of the flower was a surprise for him as well. He hadn't imagined that he'd summon it in his quest to establish a sacred land.

What's engraved on the Dao Flower are the runes of the immortal dao... which means the immortal dao now reigns supreme in this region!

Fresh insight surfaced in his mind. The runes of profound mystery on the Dao Flower belonged to the immortal dao itself!

"During the Primeval Era, the ancient divine court destroyed the immortal dao to establish their divine dao's ascendancy. It follows that the divines must have engraved their runes on a Dao Flower as well."

Light dimmed and sparkled in Lu Yun's eyes as the Tome of Life and Death steadily released a strange power inside him to help uncover the truth of what he saw.

This Dao Flower isn't the Dao Flower's physical self, it's only a projection. A sacred land of immortal dao is something of utmost importance... There was a similar sacred land in the primordial world, one that stood on equal footing with the immortal court. However, no Dao Flowers manifested themselves when it was established.

For contemporary immortals, a Sword Lake and an inheritance tower were enough to establish Dusk Province as a sacred land. But for the inscrutable heavenly dao from above, they were nothing but fleeting dross.

Nevertheless, the will of the heavens had responded to his attempt to found a sacred land, and the Dao Flower's projection had come to acknowledge and approve of his efforts. As long as he integrated the Dao Flower into himself and engraved the immortal dao's runes into Dusk Province, the great dao would accept Dusk Province as a sacred land.

Light cascaded down from the Dao Flower and poured into Lu Yun.

“Damn it, we can’t let him succeed!” When the Dao Flower materialized, Primus Major’s ninth prince and Ge Yanxia stopped their fighting.

Ge Yanxia had reverted to her fur seal form some time ago. Resembling a tattered cloth bag after their clashes, she cut a sorry figure. Hence, the moment she saw the ninth prince stop his assault, she immediately turned into a streak of dark light and disappeared from sight.

“A sacred land recognized by the Dao Flower... Lu Yun’s standing in the world of immortals will be unshakable. Even establishing an ancient immortal court would be child’s play for him if he so wishes!

“Kill him!!” the ninth prince howled suddenly. The lord-grade ship’s main cannon lit up bright enough to blind the eye as he fueled it with ten billion premium immortal crystals.

Boom!

The cannon fired at the figure of Lu Yun standing in midair. Dimming mountains and rivers, extinguishing the light from the sun and the moon, the giant pillar of light pierced the heavens.

Gibbering with fear, the crowd stared, dumbfounded. They hadn’t expected the prince to be so decisive that he’d bombard Lu Yun almost as soon as the Dao Flower bloomed.

Hum!

Before anyone could react, light suddenly flared from the great city below. A hazy hue flashed through the air and dissolved the thick pillar of golden light almost as soon as it barrelled out of the cannon’s mouth.

“There’s a formation inside in this city that, once activated, negates all weapons of war and crystal cannons within its confines,” Qing Yu stated in her melodious voice.

The formation hadn’t been operating earlier when the prince attacked the fur seal; she’d activated it as soon as Lu Yun made his announcement.

This formation was a true formation of heaven and earth, one that could alter the land itself, while the power released by crystal cannons also came from the land. However, the power of the cannons couldn’t contend with the formation, which was why the shot had been instantly dispelled.

The ninth prince flushed red and white.

“Hmph!” After a beat, his expression turned ferocious as he steered the ship around and rammed it at Lu Yun.

He wasn’t the only one to attack; some dao immortals outside Dusk Province also sprang into action. One after another, combat arts streaked across the dome of the sky like a meteor shower in an all-out bombardment on Lu Yun.

Although the Dao Flower floated right above him, it remained indifferent to his plight. This was his dao-establishing tribulation. A genuine sacred land was the equivalent of a grand dao, its every word and action representing the will of the world itself. To establish such a dao, one had to weather such a trial.

Boom!

A pagoda radiating biting cold sword light appeared above Lu Yun: the Sugato Sword!

Countless immortal crystals combusted inside the pagoda to form rays of silver sword lights that coalesced into a giant curtain that fell around Lu Yun and shielded him within.

The combat arts unleashed by the dao immortals landed ruthlessly on the sword curtain.

The Sugato Sword shook furiously, but held firm. Ripples undulated through the sword curtain as it protected Lu Yun without fail.

He gripped the phantasm-like Violetgrave and turned his gaze to the southern sky with a solemn expression. A thick overhang of heavy clouds now covered the land inside Outré Province.

Bursts of a putrid stench spread from those dark clouds, as through they were spawning a giant, decaying corpse. Suddenly, the clouds were pushed aside as a big black head poked out above Outré Province.

The head was immense in size, perhaps a thousand kilometers wide. When it opened its mouth, it belched a dark beam of light that fired straight at Dusk Province, or more precisely, at Lu Yun.

Terrifying beyond measure, the attack overwhelmed the mind with horror. As if it were made of solid iron, space groaned in the black pillar's wake and tiny spatial tears formed a smoke-like tail behind it.

Kaboom!

The very world shook as an eerie violet light blasted the terrible beam to pieces on the cusp of entering Dusk.

Violetgrave had shifted outside the province at some point, and was now grasped by a towering figure. Sword atlases radiating with the brilliance of the stars unfurled behind the figure.

One hundred and eight thousand swords: it was none other than Xing Chen, Lu Yun's replica.

### **Chapter 607.2: Dao-Establishing Tribulation**

"You must be Jiang Chen. No wonder you need to possess a junior... This head is all that's left of you, isn't it? Your very life hangs by a thread, it seems." Xing Chen looked at the head with a forbidding curl of his lip.

Flames of three different colors flared from his eyes as the Emerald Mistfire, Lucent Voidfire, and Daevic Skyfire inside him blazed simultaneously. Sheathed in the three immortal fires, the heart gifted by Ashu pounded and generated a mighty force that revolved inside Xing Chen. Meanwhile, the giant lungs began to inhale the energy of the land and convert it into a tremendous power that circulated around him.

The only issue was that the heart was of the fire attribute, while the lungs were of the metal attribute. The two elements were diametrically opposed, so an ever so slight friction resulting from the conflict prevented them from operating in complete harmony. Even so, the generated power was more than enough for Lu Yun's purposes.

“Xing Chen?” The eyes of the giant head shot wide open. Dozens of kilometers in size, they were immense. But rotten as they were, they looked more like two giant lakes filled with wastewater.

“Die!!” came Jiang Chen’s sudden roar, producing frightening sonic waves that turned into a hurricane howling toward Xing Chen.

The storm was filled to the brim with corpse and yin energies. If not for Xing Chen being from the Nine Yin Soul-Parting Wood and by the lungs and heart of heaven and earth, he would’ve been spontaneously zombified.

Even so, his heart lurched and his skin felt as though it was being gnawed upon by millions of ants.

“Piss off!”

Crackle!

Three immortal fires erupted along with his shout, the raging inferno splitting the black hurricane. Then, a hundred and eight thousand swords illuminated by violet sword radiance rose behind Xing Chen and struck at the same time.

Dancing in perfect coordination, the swarm of swords coalesced into a single entity in the air and drew an enormous purple sword projection. Struck by the giant sword, the enormous hurricane instantly vanished.

Jiang Chen gaped, and a gasp of dread escaped his lips. “Sword dao!!”

Sword dao, wielding dao through the sword!

The violet sword swung with the mysteries of sword dao and tore through space, slicing down toward Jiang Chen’s head. In response, the head squirted out an endless river of pus and blood that corroded the earth and destroyed all life when it landed on the ground.

Right before the projection found its target, a young, red-haired man suddenly descended from above and punched out at the giant illusory sword.

Rumble!!

A clap of thunder rang in the air as the sword dao that Lu Yun had unleashed through Xing Chen’s hundred and eight thousand immortal swords shattered from the weight of the punch.

A sudden weight bearing down on his chest, Xing Chen violently coughed up a mouthful of blood while the impact sent him flying north from Outré Province all the way into the North Sea.

The red-haired young man stood in the void, unflinchingly releasing the aura of a peak arcane dao immortal.

Indeed, a peak arcane dao immortal with nine arcane dao fruits!

But rather than a contemporary immortal... he was one from the primordial times! Compared to the group of barbarous fur seals, his combat arts and strength were on an entirely different level.

Inside Dusk Province, the scarlet ape's eyes began burning, a hint of fear flashing deep inside them as he looked at the red-haired young man. While the young man's aura did indeed belong to that of a peak arcane dao immortal, the scarlet ape could clearly tell that his true strength went far beyond his cultivation realm.

"Jiuying... you've emerged from seclusion?" a hoarse voice rasped from Jiang Chen's giant mouth.

"Go back and look for an appropriate junior to possess." Yin Jiuying's voice was somewhat somber. "A mere golden immortal almost killed you..."

Jiang Chen turned his gaze toward Dusk Province and stared intensely at Jiangchen Xie. Without a doubt, Jiangchen Xie was one of the possession candidates on his list.

"Forget Jiangchen Xie, he's the Demon Sovereign's heir now. We Corpse Refiners can't afford to offend the demon sovereign at the moment." Yin Jiuying glanced sideways at Jiang Chen.

The latter's head deflated like a balloon as he beat a hasty retreat out of Nephrite Major. He'd sensed a fearsome presence incoming and the newcomer already had him in his sights. If he were to tarry... he might very well die today.

Striding through empty air, Yin Jiuying sauntered into Dusk Province, each of his steps generating a ripple in the void. Inside Dusk, a scintillating pair of giant eyes slowly manifested in the sky and stared at Yin Jiuying's approaching figure without a word.

"I can't overcome the immortal restriction, but if you dare show yourself, I'll make certain to eradicate you." Yin Jiuying didn't even look up as his voice spread through Dusk Province.

It was a challenge to the restriction, pure and simple! Irreverent and delivered without care. Onlookers froze stiff at this display of sheer power.

Yin Jiuying!

It was a name that'd once been unfamiliar to most, but after the Corpse Refiners seized control of Truespirit Major, he'd made a name for himself by killing many of the powerhouses who launched invasions at the foremost hated sect of the world, including several crippled origin dao immortals!

No one had expected him to appear in Dusk Province on the day of Lu Yun establishing his sacred land.

The man in question continued walking at an even pace, shortening the distance between him and the governor. Space rippled with each of his steps, and in the sky above, a crack spiderwebbed through the human demon's eyes.

Crackle crackle bang!

Nine steps were all it took to shatter the eyes conjured by the human demon and the immortal restriction.

"Who are you going to eradicate?" A voice frivolous yet sinister echoed when the eyes fell into dust, followed by the rise of an evil wind. An eerie figure radiating dense ghostly energy slowly floated out of the emptiness.

Ashu.

He'd once said that he wouldn't help Lu Yun, yet here he was nonetheless. He was even hefting a rotten head in his hand.

Jiang Chen's head.

Yin Jiuying stopped in his tracks, his eyes narrowing ever so slightly.

"A holy lord from the underworld, I see." Yin Jiuying flashed an ominous smile. "I don't mind fighting you... but do you think this measly Dusk Province can withstand an all-out battle between us?"

"The Corpse Refiners' lair won't be able to withstand a palm strike from me, either." Ashu's grin was positively wicked. "Let's fight beyond this world, my dear, or I'll eradicate your sect right this instant.

"I am a living dead, after all. The palace of the Green Firmament can't stop me, and the Purple Firmament can't restrict my actions. I can snuff out whomever I want. Want to give it a try?"

Yin Jiuying's face fell. "Fine, since you wish to die, I will fulfill your wish. We fight outside this world!"

The two powerhouses streaked into two pillars of light and shot up into the clouds, soaring past the highest reaches of the heavens and arriving outside the world of immortals.

Silence returned to Dusk Province.

Hovering beneath the Dao Flower, Lu Yun gracefully refined the light pouring down from the flower's petals while the Sugato Sword floated over his head.

Meanwhile, after witnessing the obliteration of the human demon's eyes by Yin Jiuying, the dao immortals lingering outside Dusk Province mustered their courage and charged past the borders.

But the moment they set foot inside the province, they found themselves annihilated by a fearsome force.

However, no one paid attention to the death of those dao immortals at that particular moment in time, because scarlet had dyed the sky above the province, and a stifling presence like no other descended from the heavens. Every living creature in the province felt a smothering sensation of suffocation.

Boom!

In an earsplitting explosion, a bloodstained avenue slowly unfurled from the sky above, admitting passage for a monster covered in long black fur from head to toe, a somewhat crude-looking axe in hand.

## **Chapter 608: Fate?**

When the Dao Flower blossomed during the void realm's restoration, four bloodied paths had emerged in the air, each taken by one such long-haired monster menacing down the path. At that time, Lu Yun had stood guard over Qing Yu and the other three youth sovereigns by killing the long-haired monsters and shattering the blood-stained paths.

One of their kind now returned as he underwent his tribulation for establishing a sacred land.

Relief washed over Lu Yun. How fortunate he made his announcement now than after his ascension to immortality! Otherwise, he'd be facing something far stronger than the black long-haired monster.

Although the monster was powerful and its cultivation level impossible to fathom, he was certain that it hadn't ascended to immortality yet.

Within the unnamed, central city of Dusk, Jiangchen Xie fidgeted uneasily. He'd encountered the long-haired monsters before, but he'd chosen to run away rather than set foot on the bloodied path.

Meanwhile, Fangyang Xing stared at the creature with fear in his eyes. He'd been helpless against this creature on the bloodied path and was slain by a single slash. He hadn't even had the chance to fight back, and the monster had been his inner demon ever since.

"He killed four of these monsters last time?" murmured Fangyang Xing.

"No, only three," a Fangyang youth answered timidly. "The last one was slain by a sword slash from Sword Divine outside Dusk Province."

Fangyang Xing scowled without a word; that made no difference to him.

From Dusk City, five hundred kilometers away from the unnamed city, Lu Feng stared at the black long-haired monster and swallowed with difficulty.

"Man, trouble sure follows you around. You even poked this kind of monster out of hiding..."

With a slight shake of readiness, Lu Feng was about to go to his little brother's aid when a waft of fragrance gave him pause and a woman in men's clothes appeared out of nowhere.

Mo Yi.

"Eh? What are you doing here?" Lu Feng's expression grew serious. A trace of appreciation flashed through his gaze, but it was mostly filled with fear and respect.

"This is his tribulation, unexpected consequences may follow if you intervene," Mo Yi sighed. "Just as heavenly tribulations faced by cultivators and man-made tribulations in various pursuits permit the presence of guardians only around the perimeter, he's on his own when facing this tribulation."

Yin Jiuying was his man-made tribulation, while the black long-haired monsters were the heavenly tribulation. Lu Yun could rely on only himself.

Lu Feng nodded and merrily approached Mo Yi with a grin, who frowned and shot him a glare. Two snow-white streaks flashed through her eyes in warning. Freezing in place, Lu Feng trembled before awkwardly clearing his throat and shuffling to the side.

"Qing Buyi and Chen Xiao are trapped in the Ancient Tree of Life. Is there any way to get them out?"

"Lu Yun tried so hard to collect crystals for the tree," Mo Yi sighed. "The Ancient Tree of Life concerns not only Qing Buyi and Chen Xiao, but also Qing Yu's safety. If you really want to help your ready-made little brother, follow me to the Ling Clan."

"The Ling Clan?" Lu Feng frowned. "The Ling Clan are descendents of the primordial nobles. There's likely to be an old freak among them who's lived beyond their expected lifespan..."

“That’s why I ask you to come with me.” Mo Yi nodded. “There is indeed an old monster in the Ling Clan who merged himself with a fortress ship and became half immortal, half treasure. That’s how he evaded the great calamity in the Primordial Era and survived to present day.”

A shudder ran down Lu Feng’s spine.

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“Grrrraw!!”

In midair, the long-haired monster stalked along the bloodied path and came up to Lu Yun with impressive speed, swinging its dao treasure at the human from overhead.

Bam!

The Sugato Sword shook fiercely and morphed the scintillating barrier of light into a waterfall of swords, cutting down at the long-haired monster with great ferocity. Meanwhile, Lu Yun manifested a dao treasure of his own—a sharp, black axe.

Shwing!

Clang!!

The long-haired monster broke through the river of swords with a mighty swing of the axe, then collided with Lu Yun’s weapon and generated a black ripple of energy from the collision.

The Sugato Sword, unmoving even when several dao immortals attacked in unison, was knocked awry, and the sword curtain shattered into dissipating sword energy.

Blood trickled down from the corner of Lu Yun’s mouth.

“Yu Hengluo,” he said to the long-haired monster with a slight tremor to his voice.

“This servant didn’t expect you to recognize me, Sect Head.” The long-haired monster responded in a pleasant voice that belonged to Yu Hengluo!

Lu Yun stared at it in utter disbelief. He... was right!

He projected a sliver of consciousness into hell and found Yu Hengluo’s body lying peacefully on the floating summit with the resurrection layout. But the long-haired monster here was Yu Hengluo as well!

He was reminded of the two Yu Hengluos in the celestial master tomb... and both of them were real. A sudden possibility came to him.

“Fate? Destiny? I’ll change my so-called fate today!” He tilted his head back with a howl, combusting ten billion crystals to fuel the Sugato Sword. An endless supply of sword energy converged to form a stunning sword projection.

Bam!

It bit into the bloodied path behind Yu Hengluo. He had to destroy the path and cut off Yu Hengluo’s route of retreat. That was the only way he could capture her.

However, a spear shot out of the path and offset his attack.

A hulking crimson figure emerged from a distance with a primitively simple spear in hand—another long-haired monster, but this one with hair the color of blood.

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“That’s the one! That’s it!!” Crippled origin dao immortals who had been keeping an eye on Dusk Province looked on in abject terror.

They’d encountered such a crimson long-haired monster by the dao fruit tree in the void. It’d used the same spear to destroy their body and newly acquired dao fruit, crippling the freshly-ascended origin dao immortals and sending them tumbling down from their rightful place as rulers of the world.

And here it was again.

All of them were certain that it was the same one they’d encountered by the dao fruit tree!

Treading along the bloodied path, the crimson monster suddenly threw its spear forward. It wasn’t aiming at Lu Yun, but the Dao Flower’s projection over his head!

The spear put a hole into the image, pinning it to the air. Ugly cracks splintered the flower, only then did the long-haired monster shift its crimson eyes to Lu Yun.

### **Chapter 609: Spatial Reincarnation**

Reeling from the damage to the Dao Flower, Lu Yun spewed up a mouthful of blood.

While everyone had expected the crimson-furred monster to target him, it’d instead pierced the flower with a thrust of its spear. Although the projection still hovered in the air... there was no hope left for Lu Yun to refine and integrate it within him even if he were to successfully weather the tribulation.

On the flip side, many took pleasure in his misfortunes as they recovered from the shocking turn of events. Such an outcome both delighted and relieved the mind. After establishing his dao, Lu Yun most likely would’ve obtained a legitimate mandate from the world to reinstate the ancient immortal court.

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“Kill!” the crimson-furred monster uttered in human speech as it suddenly broke into an ear-splitting warcry. The ancient spear in its hand flared with a misty blue halo that swelled into an enormous illusory spear stabbing straight at Lu Yun.

His mouth filled with blood, Lu Yun clenched his teeth tight as sword radiance poured out of the Sugato Sword above him. Like a flood of seawater, it thundered toward the illusory spear.

Boom!

A great ball of light inflated in the air, the terrifying energy within exploding into a prodigious shock blast that surged outward.

At the same time, the three hundred sixty-five cities inside Dusk Province lit up and sent three hundred sixty-five golden beams of light connecting the sky and the land. The entire province began shaking, but the pillars defused the shock blast before it could reach the ground.

Deathly pale, Lu Yun couldn't stop trembling. The crimson-furred creature's strength was immeasurable. Not even dao immortals were its match, let alone a cultivator.

He'd powered the Sugato Sword with ten billion immortal crystals. The resulting power brought to bear was beyond imagine, yet all it'd achieved was forcing the creature back!

The Sugato Sword had birthed its own spirit and been augmented with its crowning jewel, thereby negating its sole flaw. As the foremost man-made treasure, it was a weapon as terrifying as the Skyturning Seal, but it couldn't even scratch this monster!

With a wave of his hand, Lu Yun conjured the black water jar he'd obtained from the fur seals, the one Lu Feng called the Demonic Sovereign Jar.

In the span of a breath, the jar's demonic energy gushed into his body and dramatically heightened the pre-immortal energy inside him, granting him the strength of a genuine void-ascended immortal.

At the same time, a figure slowly walked out of nothingness: Xing Chen, returning after being pummeled into the North Sea by Yin Jiuying's blow. His wounds were now healed, thanks to his heart and lungs and the power of the yin arcane fruit he'd fused with.

Rays of violet sword light lingered around him as a hundred and eight thousand swords once again emerged behind his figure. But he wasn't looking at the crimson-furred monster. Instead, his eyes landed on Yu Hengluo, who'd set foot on the blood-stained path.

She, too, was covered in long black hair. If it weren't for Lu Yun remembering her presence, he never would've guessed her identity.

"Sure enough, her presence distracts you. Die!" The crimson-furred monster snarled as it pointed its spear at Lu Yun and thrust forward.

Springing into action at the exact moment the monster attacked, Xing Chen jumped onto the bloody path and chased after Yu Hengluo.

For his part, Lu Yun swooped down on the crimson monster, dao weapon in one hand, water jar spinning in the other, and the Sugato Sword floating over his head. He was well aware that what made the monster so threatening wasn't the creature itself, but its ancient spear.

Without a doubt, the unremarkable-looking weapon was also a dao weapon, one that magnified its wielder's power and struck with the might of the dao itself.

The black axe could also attack with the essence of the dao when wielded by the black monster, and while Lu Yun could achieve the same feat, it drained too much of his energy, so much so that his entire reserve would be gone after a few blows.

Likewise, the same applied to the spear.

True to its straightforward style, the crimson-furred monster simply stabbed forward. The stab contained the essence of the dao, just like the axe, but it was even more elusive in nature. As it flew forward, time itself seemed to lose all meaning.

Indeed, time!

Puncturing time and bypassing the time continuum, the attack was impossible for Lu Yun to defend against, leaving his figure drenched in blood. While he hadn't been fatally injured, thanks to the Sugato Sword's protection, he still made for a very sorry figure.

"Time? Space?" An idea suddenly popped into his mind as he thought of something. If the ancient spear's power represented time, then the black axe in his hand must contain the power of space!

Through the simplest essence of the dao and the trajectory of space, it combined all spatial dimensions to deliver an attack of prodigious destructiveness.

"Time... Space... Yu Hengluo! The celestial master tomb, the underworld!" The look in Lu Yun's eyes suddenly turned sharp. "Does all of this originate from the underworld?"

Boom!

Abandoning all forms of defense, Lu Yun casually tossed the Demonic Sovereign Jar aside and brandished his dao weapon with both hands. The black axe glowed with a dim black as it drew a crude, wobbly line through the air.

This time, he carefully immersed himself in his dao weapon, using his nascent spirit to resonate with it. Against all odds, the feedback from the black axe was identical to the one he'd received from Vastspace Mountain.

His heart throbbed as a familiar sensation surfaced from his nascent spirit. Behind him, the projection of a towering azure mountain came into existence and ensconced his figure in its midst, as well as the Sugato Sword above him.

Moreover, as if his attack had been enhanced in some way, the shaky trajectory spontaneously became a perfectly straight line, radiating spine-chilling ripples in a display of the essence of the dao's true might.

Boom!

In a sudden burst of dazzling radiance, six giant globes of light appeared above him. All six shone with magnificent, exquisite luminescence. As it turned out, the illusory azure mountain's insubstantial existence was emanating out of these very six globes. They were none other than the six paths of his nascent spirit, ones that embodied the six paths of reincarnation!

Lu Yun had yet to deploy his nascent spirit to its full potential since cultivating it, but he now employed every weapon in his arsenal against the crimson monster. His nascent spirit drew the image of Vastspace Mountain and enhanced his attack into a brand new combat art: Spatial Reincarnation!

Hum!

The Dao Flower's projection trembled. On the verge of breaking, a moment prior, it began healing little by little, while dao light spilled down from it like a waterfall and gushed into Lu Yun. In that moment, his nascent spirit erupted with sheer brilliance, melting the azure mountain projection into a stream of light that blended into his figure.

"Down you go!!" he thundered. With savage momentum, the axe hacked down and heavily struck the spear.

Bang!

### **Chapter 610: Blood Sea in the Skies**

Black and azure radiance clashed against each other. The spear proved on the losing end of the collision, flying backward and putting a hole through the crimson monster, then vanishing into who-knew-where like a shooting star.

Disbelief overtook the crimson monster's dark gaze. A human had countered their combat art and knocked its dao treasure out of its hand! Without the treasure, the long-haired monster was similar to a defanged tiger. As vicious as ever, but lacking ninety percent of its power.

"If I can't capture Yu Hengluo, then you'll do as well!" With a push, the six strands of nascent spirit over Lu Yun's head evolved into a giant hand of six interweaving colors that grabbed at the hairy monster.

He wasn't going to kill it since it couldn't become his Infernum. The black long-haired monsters he'd killed before had entered hell, but they'd disintegrated not long after.

Their kind didn't have souls.

He had to find out what'd happened to Yu Hengluo, and currently his sole hope was to take the monster alive. The giant hand conjured by his nascent spirit transcended the limits of space with the power of Spatial Reincarnation and grabbed at the hairy monster.

"Grrrawl—" Sensing the incoming danger, it emitted a series of grating howls. The hole its spear had punctured through its body kept splattering crimson blood, and the red sky dimmed to the same color of blood.

The monster's long hair turned into viscous blood, and the hand crushed it as soon as it touched it.

Lu Yun's expression darkened with gravity. He scattered the hand of Spatial Reincarnation and summoned the black water jar again with a wave of his hand. Waves of demonic energy rushed into his body.

All living beings in Dusk stared dumbly at the crimson sky, their faces drained of all color. It looked like the very sky was bleeding.

Qing Yu had taken flight with the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals circling around her, the Cosmic Skycarver radiated blinding starlight as well. The Cosmic Eyes emerged above her head, and harbored Empress Myrtlestar's damaged soul fragment, from which she looked warily at the crimson light in the sky. It seemed that a terrible demon would be born there.

Mo Yi and Lu Feng, having departed Dusk Province and on their way to the Ling Clan, came to a stop.

“We need to go back!” Expression tight, Lu Feng vanished in a flicker of cyan light. Mo Yi sighed and followed suit.

The human demon’s shattered eye appeared above Dusk Province again. For once, a hint of apprehension appeared in its coldly aloof gaze.

Bam!

The entire province shook.

North of Dusk Province, close to the vicinity of the North Sea, a giant black willow suddenly soared into the air. Its great branches obscured the sky and cascaded down like a black barrier, protecting the Skandha Range.

Above its canopy materialized five giant demonic figures—the five demon sovereigns of the Star Demon Sect.

The crimson color in the sky thickened until it seemed to become a sea of blood, nurturing all manners of terrible beings. At the same time, the projection of the Dao Flower grew brighter, and its pure white light radiated in all directions in opposition to the sea of blood in the skies.

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“What’s going on? What happened here?” Fangyang Xing blanched, staring at the bloody sky. He was a yin spirit of the Firmament Palace rather than a living soul, but even he didn’t understand what was happening now.

How did the sky turn into a Blood Sea?

He knew what the Blood Sea in Life Province was. A powerful immortal had laid down the foundation for its emergence since the Primeval Era and ultimately succeeded after overlaying the power of the world again and again.

The Blood Sea in the sky, though, wasn’t the one in Life Province!

It felt like this one had been here above Dusk Province since time immemorial, its existence eternal and never-ending!

“It’s born out of the blood of the human emperors.” Scarlet Ape struggled back to its feet with black iron rod in its hand, its fiery cape burning fiercely on its shoulders.

“Dusk Province is where human emperors fell. Countless human emperors have died here, and their blood converged into a sea of blood. It’s been hiding in that patch of sky ever since.” Scarlet Ape bared its teeth. “What a shame that the emperor’s blood here is dead, or it can be used to refine medicine.”

Bam!

As soon as it finished talking, the Blood Sea in the sky roiled violently. A rotten arm probed out and grabbed at the Dao Flower projection above Lu Yun’s head. It was five hundred kilometers long and ripped with gray-yellow corpsewater, making for an extraordinarily repulsive sight.

The arm was tremendously powerful, however, and undermined the integrity of the Dao Flower projection with a simple grab. The flower trembled and threatened to collapse at any second.

The crimson monster re-emerged on the bloodied path, its steely gaze fixed on the battle before it. The ancient spear had returned to its hand, its cold light glinting faintly as a silent declaration of its readiness to attack again.

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“All of you, get out of the way!” Lu Yun snapped.

Qing Yu, Lu Feng, and Mo Yi halted midway through their charge over to him. Before they could react, a giant black coffin materialized out of the air and slammed into the rotten arm.

Hoisted by nine giant dragon corpses, the coffin spanned five thousand kilometers in length. Bearing powerful momentum, the arm was shattered in an instant.

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Xiankan, Life Province, Nephrite Major.

“It’s that. It’s emerged again...”

Art and Zither Saint stood shoulder to shoulder, facing north in the direction of Dusk Province from the highest vantage point of the Nephrite Palace.

Art Saint trembled as soon as the Enneaworm Coffinbearers appeared, his face radiating fear and crimson light.

Zither Saint frowned at his counterpart’s pale face. “Did you deviate because of that coffin?”

“No, I didn’t. It was something else. A crimson fiend almost dragged me into the reincarnation cycle of time.” Art Saint exhaled slowly. “The coffin saved me. It compelled me to set up the Enneaworm Provenance Formation in Dusk Province and scatter the dragon veins there. To think it’d be with Lu Yun!”

In the past, his gaze always turned murderous when mentioning Lu Yun. If Ashu hadn’t followed Lu Yun to Xiankan, he would’ve killed the boy. Now, however, the killing intent was replaced by veneration and respect.

Zither Saint hadn’t noticed the change; his brows remained tightly knitted.

Crimson fiend?

Yu Hengluo had seen the same thing.

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The Enneaworm Coffinbearers soared into the Blood Sea in the sky after shattering the great arm while the waters frothed and churned in response. Suddenly, nine great dragons emerged and roiled in the sea. Their piercing dragon howls echoed throughout Dusk Province.

Hum.

The crimson monster struck again. This time, it remained on the bloodied path and attacked Lu Yun from all directions with navy shadows shooting out of its spear.

Every single one of its attacks embodied the profound mysteries of time.

Wielding the water jar in one hand and the dao treasure in the other, Lu Yun deployed Spatial Reincarnation with the six paths of his nascent spirit. A tremendous amount of energy rippled from the axe and isolated the space around him.

Exceptional clashes rang out repeatedly; this was a battle between time and space—two sovereign level powers.

Lu Yun was dripping with blood as, at the end of the day, he had yet to ascend to immortality. The Demon Sovereign Cauldron had merely injected him with an outside force that wasn't his own strength.

Xing Chen had reached the end of the path, but Yu Hengluo was nowhere to be found. He was struggling to stay alive among a group of long-haired monsters instead.

"It's ten times stronger on the path than off the path!" Lu Yun was fighting his own belabored battle when a strand of sword light flared through the sky and slashed through the bloodied path.

Schwing!

The severed path began crumbling while a faint figure stood outside Dusk Province, gazing upon his handiwork. The Sword of Chaos radiated faintly in his hand, but his face was still obscured by a faint haze.

Sword Divine.

Again, he'd intervened and destroyed the bloody path.

The long-haired monsters mobbing Xing Chen disappeared along with the path, while Xing Chen returned to the world of immortals.

The crimson monster growled in fury and turned around, staring at Sword Divine. The divine grinned broadly and turned away in a leisurely manner, vanishing into thin air.

"Down!!" The short reprieve allowed Lu Yun to conjure another great hand of six colors and slap the creature downward. It snarled ferociously as it slammed into the ground.

Lu Yun followed it closely as a flash of light.

"No!!" Sudden shock and fury exploded within him as Lu Yun hurriedly clapped the Demon Sovereign Cauldron over his head.

Bam!

An enormous crimson mushroom cloud bloomed into the air and resulting turbulence shot out in all directions. The three hundred and sixty-five cities of Dusk Province shook continuously to offset the destructive power.

The crimson monster had detonated itself.

“Damn shame,” Lu Yun sighed, emerging from the water jar.

Meanwhile, the great battle within the Emperor Blood Sea continued; that was a fight Lu Yun couldn't intervene with. The Enneaworm Coffinbearers wasn't under Lu Yun's control. It'd flown into the outside world of its own accord. As for the three other coffins, they seemed to have returned to life after their battle in Vastspace Mountain as well.

They were currently in hell, keeping order in the netherworld. A riot had been started in the depths of hell by the prisoners trapped in the unknown space.