

## Necropolis 631

### Chapter 631: The Bizarre Lightning Bead

The Death Spike was precisely 3.33 meters long and as thick as a thumb. Though cast from bronze, it'd taken on a black and shadowy appearance, making it difficult to fully make out its lines. When hammered into the ground, crimson runes materialized on its surface before slowly filtering into the land like a constant dribble of blood.

Stretching across an area three meters wide that centered around the Death Spike, Lin Xuan's feng shui layout was also part of the spike itself. It endlessly absorbed the energy from the surroundings and fed it back to the shadowy spike.

In the sky above, claps of thunder roared amidst an ocean of dark clouds. A supreme demonic fiend seemed about to emerge in the land, calling down a terrible lightning tribulation to welcome its arrival.

Lu Yun found himself on the back foot. He wasn't afraid of the tribulation itself, but of the possible changes to the Exalted Divine tomb beneath the ground.

"Maybe there really is an ominous demon down there?" He was a little shaken. The lightning tribulation above was still gathering with increasingly fearsome momentum. By now, it'd far surpassed the usual heavenly tribulation sent to test a void-realm immortal.

"Lu Yun, what are you doing?" Clad in dark-golden imperial robes, the Exalted emperor stood in the void with a scowl.

Mount Exalted was the Exalted Divines' Last Repose, home to the tomb containing the primordial divine court. He couldn't allow anyone to desecrate the mountain's dignity. Even if the lightning Lu Yun had conjured wouldn't damage the mountain, it was still sacrilege and blasphemy to the heavenly court.

"Please forgive me, Your Majesty." With a furtive hand seal, Lu Yun imperceptibly altered the feng shui layouts nearby, concealing the Death Spike. "For one reason or another, I ended up inside a lineal tomb today and almost lost my life. Therefore, I have no choice but to make some preparations, or my life might truly be forfeit sooner or later."

His expression was serene and tone borderline flippant, as if he held the Exalted emperor in no great esteem. The explanation appeared valid, even right and proper. But in reality, Lu Yun was casting doubt on the emperor and slapping imperial face in public.

"Oh?" The emperor regained his composure. "In what way does calling down this lightning tribulation benefit you? If We wanted you dead, would a trivial tribulation safeguard your life?"

A murderous edge marked his tone. He indeed wanted to kill Lu Yun and Qing Yu, then claim the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals and dao weapon for himself. Now that Lu Yun had dropped all pretenses of courtesy, it was even more difficult for him to curb the urge to personally smite the impudent pup.

The authority and prestige of a celestial emperor?

Those had been dashed to pieces the moment Zhao Chong lured Lu Yun into the lineal tomb.

If not for some other guests he had to receive today, the emperor would've come in person a long time ago and executed Lu Yun for his disrespect.

Now, with the commotion the young man had raised, the emperor's suppressed impulse burgeoned once again.

Lu Yun glanced at the emperor, then gently waved his hand.

Crackle crackle crackle!

Before those assembled could react, the lightning nurtured from the heavy clouds above flowed into his hand like a river and coalesced into a dazzling lightning bead.

Death art: Thunder Palmstrike.

In the blink of an eye, all of the lightning in the sky gathered inside Lu Yun's hand. A prodigious and terrifying aura spread from his figure, and wisps of silver lightning danced around him.

"What..." The emperor's expression sank. He quickly fell back to keep a relatively safe distance between him and Lu Yun, as he could clearly sense the terrible might of the lightning condensing around the young man.

In the battle that'd made Lu Yun famous around the world, he'd sent a horrifying storm of lightning to slay several thousand immortals outside Xiankan, dao immortals included! Although the Exalted emperor was at origin dao immortal realm and protected by a heavenly mandate, he didn't dare lower his guard in the slightest.

This was too fearsome!

There was a strength inside Lu Yun that one couldn't describe with words. This strength enhanced the lightning many times over, to the point where a frontal strike would cripple the emperor at a bare minimum.

"Governor of Dusk Province, you indeed possess marvelous abilities. You have Our admiration."

Ultimately, the celestial emperor raised his hands in a cupped fist salute. He referred to Lu Yun with the governorship title as another way to belittle and avoid acknowledging the youth's status as a future sacred land's master.

But of course, Lu Yun didn't take any of that to heart.

"Governor, these abilities of yours qualify you to be involved in what comes next. Let us convene inside the celestial palace." The celestial emperor made a gesture of invitation.

No matter Lu Yun's real cultivation, the boundless lightning he'd summoned was enough to threaten a celestial emperor; this alone made the emperor acknowledge his strength.

Lu Yun blinked, then gave a nod.

At the same time, he collected the lightning that'd seeped into a karmic fruit and condensed it into a silver lightning bead, then hung it on the Sal Tree of Life and Death. The bead emitted an unrelenting sense of pressure; even Lu Yun himself felt his heart shake if he contemplated it for too long.

The Death Spike's lightning tribulation had been strange to begin with, and the solidified lightning he'd collected had gone on to absorb a karmic fruit of its own accord. As a result, the bead's power had been enhanced to a fearsome degree.

Thankfully, Thunder Palmstrike was a death art born from the Tome of Life and Death, so the book had a restraining effect on it. Otherwise, it would've been impossible for Lu Yun to exert his will on this strange silver bead.

.....

Inside the Exalted Palace, Lu Yun ran into some unexpected people: Donglin Taihuang, Ge Yanxia, as well as... Qi Hai!

Many, many days since their last meeting, he was once again face-to-face with Qi Hai.

The man's facial features were somewhat different this time. Rather than the foremost pill master of the Primordial Era, he resembled someone else entirely. Even so, Lu Yun recognized him for who he was.

Qi Hai remained deadpan when he saw Lu Yun, as though he didn't recognize the governor.

He'd schemed against Lu Yun from the start, wanting to command the master of hell just like he'd done with the primeval humans. After the two had fallen out inside the Dusk Tomb, Lu Yun had sealed off hell and barred Qi Hai from entering.

Unless Lu Yun's guess was incorrect, Qi Hai had probably sought asylum with Destiny City.

"It's you!" Many emotions flashed through Donglin Taihuang and Ge Yanxia's faces when they saw him.

Ge Yanxia in particular sprang to her feet. Her obese figure waddled forward and she threw herself at him with bared fangs.

Fierce killing intent shone out of Donglin Taihuang's eyes, but he refrained from rash movement as he'd sensed the terrifying pressure emanating from the young man. Neither did the Exalted emperor move to Lu Yun's aid; he wished to gauge the might of the heavenly lightning that had been absorbed earlier.

Boom!

The instant Ge Yanxia's obese figure came within striking distance, a deafening explosion rumbled in the air, followed by the pungent stench of roasted flesh.

### **Chapter 632: Standing Guard**

With an earsplitting shriek, Ge Yanxia's obese frame smashed heavily into a palace wall. A fraction of a second later, golden talisman glyphs twisted through the air and dispelled the rampaging silver lightning.

A beat later, silence once again descended on the palace. Lu Yun stood quietly unmoving, one hand extended forward with fingers splayed, tiny wisps of silver lightning playing around his digits.

Ge Yanxia's entire figure was charred black. Her hair, protective treasures, and clothes had all been burned to a crisp, exposing scorched skin and a waft of grilled meat.

Sharp breaths could be heard from the Exalted emperor, Donglin Taihuang, and Qi Hai. Ge Yanxia might be a mere aether dao immortal, but as a primordial immortal, she rivaled origin dao immortals in strength. Even so, Lu Yun's lightning had blasted her away and disintegrated the defensive treasures on her before breaching her defenses.

Among them, Qi Hai seemed particularly shaken. He'd previously been confident that he'd plumbed the extent of Lu Yun's trump cards and grasped what made the young man so powerful, but the scene that'd just played out before his eyes was beyond his comprehension.

It appears that legacies from the era of human dao aren't the only things he's obtained... There are things even more ancient on him, perhaps the legacy of a great emperor. Another thought sprang to his mind, unbidden. And the Tome of Life and Death he spoke of last time, just what can it be...?

.....

Ge Yanxia struggled back to her feet, then shook herself all over. Dark radiance flashed across her, restoring her to her previous appearance. Fires of anger blazed inside her bovine eyes, but she no longer dared continue the offensive.

Wreathed in silver lightning, even Lu Yun's hair had taken on a silver hue.

"A fur seal?" His lips curved up in a smirk. "I'll show His Majesty some face today and refrain from ending your life. If we were anywhere else... I wouldn't mind making barbecue out of you."

Lu Yun's leer carried just enough cold ruthlessness to induce a subconscious shudder.

"Enough, please set aside your past grievances for now. We invited you here to discuss serious matters," the emperor finally intervened.

As for Qi Hai and Donglin Taihuang, they hadn't openly chosen a side from start to finish.

"Serious matters?" Ge Yanxia grinned, baring yellow teeth that'd almost turned black with caked filth. "Fine, but before that, tell this brat to hand over my tribe's treasure first—the Demonic Sovereign Cauldron."

The Exalted emperor frowned faintly.

"Your Celestial Majesty," Lu Yun interjected before the emperor could speak. "In the ancient times, fur seals were the lowest of the low, the most ordinary of wild beasts. Given the presence of such a base creature among us, I assume that whatever you want to discuss must not be that important."

He glanced at Ge Yanxia with disgust. Truth be told, he really found this... thing... repugnant.

Ge Yanxia's wounds were healed, but being charred by lightning, her clothes remained in tatters. Despite the undulating waves of her completely exposed body, she stood there without any sense of shame.

Other than her humanoid form, there was nothing human about her. Lu Yun wasn't brave enough that he dared chance another look straight at the creature.

Struck speechless, the emperor stared vacantly at him.

“You little bastard!!” Infuriated by Lu Yun’s insults, Ge Yanxia charged again with a snarl.

Sizzle boom!

Lu Yun unleashed lightning from his hands for the second time and blasted the creature back.

“Stay your hands, both of you!” The celestial emperor found himself a little flustered. Since he’d witnessed the might of the heavenly thunder absorbed by Lu Yun, he was truly afraid the young man might kill the fur seal. The fur seal was too useful to him to be allowed to die, at least for the moment.

“The Primordial Era is long past and many things have changed since. What’s more, this is the Exalted Palace. If there is enmity between you, please wait until the end of this matter before acting on it. What say you?” The emperor unleashed a formidable aura that restrained Ge Yanxia before she raged completely out of control.

“As I said earlier, I won’t end its life this time out of respect for Your Majesty. But my tolerance has its limits if this... fur seal keeps causing trouble.” Lu Yun nodded with great indifference.

Ge Yanxia huffed and panted, the massive mounds of her chest heaving up and down. Everyone else in the hall looked away as the sight was rather nauseating.

“Let tea be served.” With a wave of a hand, the celestial emperor restored the destroyed hall back to its former appearance and invited his guests to seats of honor.

Palace maids entered with tea, alleviating the tension somewhat.

“We invited all of you here because there are two matters We desire your assistance with.” The emperor lifted his teacup and took an elegant sip.

“What fine tea!” Silent thus far, Donglin Taihuang smacked his lips in praise. “This must be the divine race’s Divine Blood Tea, irrigated by the blood of divine spirits.”

With a smile, the emperor inclined his head.

“Your Exalted Majesty, you must have summoned us for those two matters,” Qi Hai finally spoke.

“Tomorrow, my junior brother will face his immortal tribulation. We would like the four of you to stand guard over him.” The emperor’s response was solemn. “The tribulation from the heavens isn’t Our greatest concern, what We worry most about is the evil of man.”

“Your Majesty’s junior brother?” asked the curious Lu Yun.

“The only son of the previous Exalted celestial emperor, the last of his bloodline,” the emperor sighed.

“For the only son of the former celestial emperor, I will naturally rise to the occasion.” Lu Yun grew solemn.

In the past, the nine celestial emperors of the world had supported him as the foremost youth sovereign and protected him alongside Zhao Fengyang, disposing of many unseen threats before they arose.

In all likelihood, the nine emperors had disappeared from public eye, not because they’d secluded themselves to collectively break through, but to block a rift leading to the world of immortals.

So, whether for rational or sentimental reasons, he'd never refuse this request.

"Since the tribulation is tomorrow, why did you wait until today to invite us? Also, what do I stand to gain from protecting him?" Ge Yanxia asked, but not before throwing a glare at Lu Yun.

"Our court has made all of the necessary arrangements, but those who mean harm to my junior brother are also fully prepared. Therefore, we waited until today to catch them off guard." The emperor looked at Lu Yun.

The Dusk governor's arrival was the greatest gift, if an unexpected one. If the young man could absorb the entire lightning tribulation, it'd be one less thing for his junior brother to worry about.

"If Our junior brother can safely weather the tribulation, generous rewards will be gifted as a token of appreciation."

Donglin Taihuang and Qi Hai exchanged a glance before nodding at the same time.

Lu Yun fell pensive. He could tell that the emperor wanted to use him to block the lightning tribulation, but he was still happy to oblige. "What's the second matter?" he probed further.

### **Chapter 633: Sword Divine, Dongfang Hao**

"We shall discuss the second matter after Wushuang's tribulation." The celestial emperor remained guarded on the subject.

The Wushuang he spoke of was the previous emperor's only son, Zhao Wushuang, and his deflection seemed to Lu Yun that the second matter was likely related to Zhao Wushuang as well.

.....

On this moonlit evening, moonbeams scattered down upon Mount Exalted from a clear sky, lending an atmosphere of incomparable holiness to this greatest mountain in Exalted Major.

Inside the Exalted Immortal Sect, a faint black shadow stood motionlessly in the middle of Lu Yun's small courtyard, gradually melding with the dirt.

Having been thrust into the Exalted Immortal Sect's lifepoint, the Death Spike's effects would manifest after forty-nine days and destroy the sect's foundation, leading it to its inevitable decline.

Once hammered into the ground, not even Lu Yun would be able to counteract its activation. This was why the founder of his sect had labeled it a forbidden art, to be used only as an absolute last resort.

Under the moonlit sky, the sect was quiet and peaceful. Now and then, the chirping of crickets interrupted the silence, further adorning this haven of serenity.

Immortals could do without sleep, but they still meditated at night to rest, practice methods, and consolidate their cultivation. Lin Yu, Lin Xuan, and Li Youcai were already deep in meditation, and the little fox had dozed off in Qing Yu's embrace.

Left to themselves, Qing Yu and Lu Yun sat at the stone table inside the courtyard and drank tea while discussing what was to come.

In visiting Mount Exalted, Lu Yun's goal was the tomb located underneath and the treasure within it which could make Dusk Province as impregnable as Mount Tai, according to Ge Long.

However, the mountain was deep within the Exalted domain. To slip underground unnoticed was pure wishful thinking. What he needed now was an excuse to get inside the divine tomb.

A breeze suddenly blew by, the cool air tousling the pair's long hair. Narrowing his eyes, Lu Yun rose from his position and looked warily at the sky. Bathed in moonlight, a vaguely discernible figure in azure walked down from the air, a longsword on his back.

"Sword Divine." Lu Yun took a deep breath, his gaze suddenly razor sharp. "Dongfang Hao." Dongfang Hao!

The man had died inside the Firmament Prison Tomb, his corpse obliterated. Now he'd reappeared in this locale and as it turned out, was Sword Divine himself.

Lu Yun had long suspected the truth, but hadn't been able to confirm his hypothesis until now. This time, Dongfang Hao had come wearing his true features, the Sword of Chaos strapped to his back.

"So you haven't reached immortality yet, after all." Lu Yun saw through Dongfang Hao the moment he laid his eyes on the man.

Dongfang Hao was a peak returned void cultivator, not yet a void-ascended immortal. It wasn't the first time Lu Yun had run into Sword Divine after leaving the celestial master tomb. Every time he'd met the man, Lu Yun had sensed the power of a void-ascended immortal from him. But after reverting to his true appearance, the cultivation level he now revealed was peak returned void realm.

Even so, Lu Yun had the slight feeling that he was... perhaps not Dongfang Hao's match.

Dongfang Hao's appearance was ever the same, a young man around eighteen years old with eyes bright as the stars and eyebrows straight as swords. He was as uncommonly handsome as before, but gone were his spirited temperament and sunny exuberance.

Instead, there seemed to be an invisible burden weighing down on him.

"Yes, I'm not an immortal yet." Upon landing, Dongfang Hao made himself at home and dragged a stone stool over to the table, then took a seat beside Lu Yun and Qing Yu.

"You must have faked your death inside the Firmament Prison and escaped afterward, correct?" Qing Yu looked at the newcomer, her voice warm like she was greeting a close friend.

Together, the three of them had broken into the Firmament Prison, explored the ancient tomb, and excavated the Dao Flower buried inside. Although Dongfang Hao hadn't accompanied them to the end, his contribution was nevertheless recorded in the immortal dao.

Dongfang Hao shook his head. "I really did die in that tomb."

Lu Yun remained silent. Nothing of life or death could hide from his Spectral Eye and back then, Dongfang Hao had indeed died.

However, some kind of miraculous power had brought him back to life again. At a guess, it must have been the power of the Sword of Chaos. As for why the sword had chosen a human instead of a divine...

Dongfang Hao's sword intent was so sharp that it could cleave the sky in twain. Indomitable in spirit, eternally unyielding, he would never bow his head to the heavens. His temperament agreed with the sword's own, hence why the sword had chosen him.

"Should I call you Dongfang Hao or Sword Divine?" Lifting his teacup, Lu Yun brought it close to his nose and savored the smell, but didn't drink from it. He peered at Dongfang Hao instead.

Ringing silence answered his question.

"Are you truly going to help Zhao Wushuang face his tribulation?" he asked, skirting around Lu Yun's question.

Dongfang Hao was a friend, Sword Divine was an enemy.

"Is this why you came to find me?" Lu Yun looked at him with a smile that wasn't one.

Dongfang Hao nodded. "Zhao Wushuang is a pureblood Exalted Divine. Once he becomes a void-ascended immortal, he'll certainly be the progenitor of a new generation of divines, and the primeval divine dao will rise again in his wake."

He knew that as long as Zhao Wushuang gained Lu Yun's help, a successful ascension was inevitable. But without said help, Zhao Wushuang's tribulation was doomed to be a daunting one, the most fearsome of lightning tribulations between heaven and earth. The challenge would be far too great for him to face alone.

"I've already given my word to the Exalted emperor and I'm not the sort to go back on it." Lu Yu nodded, indicating that he was aware of the situation. "As for you... you've obtained the ancient divine court's Sword of Chaos. Logically speaking, you should've inherited the will of the sword to revive the divine race as well, so why—"

"What I wish to revive is my own divine race." Dongfang Hao shook his head. "Zhao Wushuang... and the Exalted Divines, in their current state, are tumors for the divines as a whole.

"Therefore, I'm going to keep you here for three days, until Zhao Wushuang dies from his tribulation. As for you..." Dongfang Hao turned toward Qing Yu. "I already have three master swordsmen under my command. I lack only you..."

Hummm!!

Space shook as a giant illusory sword split the sky and sealed off the surrounding area. In an instant, the small courtyard had vanished into thin air, but no one in the Exalted Immortal Sect had sensed anything amiss.

"The Scroll of Shepherding Immortals has been sealed." Qing Yu frowned slightly. Empress Myrtlestar was still inside the scroll, so the seal had severed the connection between them.

"Dongfang Hao, do you really think you can stop me just because you've obtained the ancient divine court's final hope?" Lu Yun stood up with a frosty smile.



“Lu Yun, I know that you’ve inherited the human dao from the primeval humans, but human dao has long been phased out of this world. This era belongs to immortal dao, to which I am connected through the Sword of Chaos.

“The small world that we are presently in is born from a fragment of the immortal dao and belongs to me alone. Even the arts of the immortal dao’s founders have no effect in this place!”

Zing!

The Sword of Chaos flew out of its sheath.

“I’m still waiting for the sacred land of immortal dao to take form, so I won’t kill you yet.” The Sword of Chaos transformed into a dusky current of air that bore down on Qing Yu.

“A fragment of the immortal dao? Good, very good!” A dangerous smile played on Lu Yun’s lips. “Then let me help you experience for yourself the extent of the immortal dao!”

Boom!

A tricolor blaze erupted from him.

#### **Chapter 634.1: Divine Sea**

Flames of three different colors swirled in Lu Yun’s hands. The Emerald Mistfire, Lucent Voidfire, and Daevic Skyfire blazed with waves of heat, sending a series of minute changes through Dongfang Hao’s face.

Swoosh!

The three immortal fires surged and created a great barrier around Qing Yu, keeping the gray current flowing from the transformed Sword of Chaos at bay.

“The Dao Flower was in the Firmament Prison, which is where you acquired the Sword of Chaos. That makes you somewhat of a dao sovereign.”

Clang!

A black jar landed before Lu Yun with a whip of his right hand. The demonic energy it contained flooded into his body, propelling his cultivation level to that of a void-ascended immortal.

“The Demonic Sovereign Cauldron, treasure of the demon celestial master of the Primordial Era.” Dongfang Hao’s sharply-angled brows drew together before relaxing in a dismissive quirk. “Without its three feet, though, the treasure that can rival the Skyturning Seal is nothing but damaged goods.”

He recalled the Sword of Chaos with a wave and returned it to the form of an ancient, simple longsword.

“It doesn’t matter, I can defeat you first before dealing with that fur seal.” Springing to action, Dongfang Hao became one with his sword and slashed down at Lu Yun. Although he’d said he wouldn’t kill Lu Yun, the force and angle of his attack was meant to kill.

Lu Yun retaliated in kind.

A burst of eerie violet light bloomed from his palm with a twist of his hand as Violetgrave shot out from its sheath. Her sword dao unfurled slowly in Lu Yun's hand like a violet Hell Flower.

Clink clang clink!

Two swords crossed and clashed again and again in the air.

Lu Yun maintained a death grip on the cauldron with his left hand, drawing its roiling waves of demonic energy into his nascent spirit. The six paths of his nascent spirit blossomed in his consciousness, and the two dao treasures he'd incorporated into them glowed faintly with readiness.

Kaboom!!

The Sword of Chaos exploded with a burst of azure into radiance that contained tens of millions of sword techniques. It flung an off-guard Lu Yun backward and his sword dao shattered.

"That's a decent sword dao you've got there, but unfortunately for you, it isn't yours." Dongfang Hao drifted down from the sky, then suddenly sped up and approached Lu Yun as a blurred form, swinging the divine sword down in an arc of ruthlessly cold brilliance.

Clang!

A flicker of emerald light flashed by, sending Dongfang Hao into a hurried retreat when his arm went numb. A young woman looking identical to Qing Yu stood before Lu Yun, wearing an emerald-green dress and wielding a bamboo stick.

It was Qing Yu's Embittered Bamboo replica.

The bamboo stick she wielded wasn't the Embittered Bamboo, though, but a treasure Wayfarer had refined and passed on to Qing Yu through Wanfeng.

Qing Yu strode forward, bamboo staff in hand blurring into tens of millions of shadows and slamming into Dongfang Hao. Seemingly transcending time and space, he couldn't dodge or defend himself against the endless shadows, no matter what he tried.

"Harrumph!" With a huff, Dongfang Hao took a step forward. The Sword of Chaos burst into multiple shadows and cut into each bamboo outline.

Whoosh!

A violet sword shadow suddenly erupted from the void and swung ferociously at Dongfang Hao's chest. His expression tightening, the Sword of Chaos seemed to come alive as well, swiftly drawing a neat circle of sparks in the air to knock Violetgrave away. With a quick spin around, he bristled with endless waves of sword energy.

Bam!

The very air seemed to explode, raising powerful currents of sword energy. Dongfang Hao revolved in the air, attracting the currents to him until they radiated out over the minor world.

"The supreme reaches of sword dao... Return to Origin!"

Boom!

Thunderous noises echoed as sword energy filled the realm created by a shard of immortal dao, turning it into a world of swords.

Lu Yun's lips thinned; he hadn't expected such a great display from Dongfang Hao! Almost reflexively, he flipped the Demonic Sovereign Cauldron over and used it as an enormous pot lid to shield him, Qing Yu, and her replica.

Boundless sword energy blasted into the cauldron, rebounding as sound waves so ferocious that Lu Yun felt the reverberations numb his teeth and ears.

"Before today, he may really have been able to keep me trapped here for three days, but now..." Lu Yun's eyes turned silver and he placed a hand on Qing Yu's shoulder to restrain her from unleashing her starstones.

"Allow me." Lu Yun rose to his feet. Silver lightning crackled around him before it spread and enveloped the cauldron, snapping the sword energy in its vicinity into brittle pieces. "I wanted to match you with sword dao, but it seems that I'm far from your equal in that regard."

He took flight with the axe in one hand and the spear in the other. A sparkling sheen of electricity sizzled in the air and ensconced his entire body.

"I am the sovereign of sword dao. As long as I exist in the world of immortals, I will always be the greatest master of swords." Dongfang Hao sniffed and pointed his sword at his opponent. With a concerted tremor, careening rays of sword energy gathered and rained down on Lu Yun as a dense hail, leaving no possible cover. Every razor-sharp droplet moved at the same speed as the others. There were an innumerable amount of them, but they came together as a single sword!

An endless descent of sword rain cut down upon Lu Yun with the power of heaven and earth.

"Open!" Lu Yun roared and shifted both dao treasures to his left hand. With his right hand splayed outward, he shot out snakes of silver lightning from his palm. His long hair stood on end with silver currents crackling through every strand. He was as if a thunder god, bathed in a firestorm of electricity.

Sizzle boom!

Wild lightning came together in a fury of criss-crossing sword energy. The resulting shockwaves ferociously slammed into the barrier of the minor world, shaking the premises.

Smashed backward, Dongfang Hao stared at Lu Yun with incredulity.

"How is this possible?! Why do you possess such great strength without first ascending to immortality?" Blood trickled out of the corner of his mouth and his widened eyes shone with a trace of shock, but mostly confusion.

"Even Ge Yanxia of the fur seals almost died at my hands, let alone you. I might've considered you a threat if you were a void-ascended immortal." A leer tugged at Lu Yun's lips. He trod on air toward Dongfang Hao, leaving behind a trail of crackling footprints.

“So I’ve underestimated you, Lu Yun!” Dongfang Hao’s expression calmed. He suddenly let go of the Sword of Chaos, which fell to the ground.

Lu Yun frowned. The bead of concentrated thunder was half consumed; he didn’t know how long he could maintain this state. However, Dongfang Hao plainly had other tricks up his sleeve.

“The firmament as the sheath!” Dongfang Hao suddenly howled. A gray sword shadow fell from the sky and wrapped around his body, driving Lu Yun’s lightning away.

“The earth as the hilt!

“Slaughter as the edge!

“All lives in sacrifice!

“Sword of Chaos... Unsheath!!”

Boom!

### **Chapter 634.2: Divine Sea**

Sword intent as weighty as heaven and earth radiated from Dongfang Hao.

Lu Yun had the suffocating feeling that he faced not the man nor his sword, but the entire world. Expression grave, he held the axe and the spear and stared coldly at Dongfang Hao.

There seemed to be a barrier wrapped tight around him, isolating him from the outside world. Lu Yun’s attacks weren’t able to even touch him.

Hum!

After an indiscernible period of time, a giant sword slowly materialized from the air: the Sword of Chaos in its true form.

“Die!!” Dongfang Hao took flight again. With a powerful battle cry, he swung the heavy sword at Lu Yun from above, as if he wielded the very world.

Giant sword looming in his sights, Lu Yun felt as small as an ant, helpless as heaven and earth rushed up to crush him.

“So you’ve got a world, do you?” He took a deep breath and somehow, time seemed to slow around him.

Swoosh!

The spear in his hand flared with a strange color as time slowed down in a nine meter radius around him. The world sought to crush Lu Yun, but the protective vacuum around him knocked it back.

This was a defense of Time Reincarnation.

The axe in Lu Yun’s other hand exploded in power as well, and he suddenly vanished. When he next appeared, he’d teleported above Dongfang Hao’s head.

“Cut!” Lu Yun boomed like a thunder clap, bolts of silver lightning running wild around him.

Dongfang Hao's face turned beet red. He reached out and grabbed the falling axe and spear, allowing the lightning to tear into him.

"Hahahaha!" he burst into hearty laughter. "I underestimated you this time, Lu Yun. I didn't expect you to possess such strange lightning. The next time we meet, I will kill you!"

True killing intent had only now arisen in his heart. Before Lu Yun could respond, Dongfang Hao's body disintegrated into ashes and scattered on the wind. He hadn't come here in his true form, after all.

Rumble.

As Dongfang Hao's body fell, so did the minor world collapse into faint spots of light before fading away.

Lu Yun fell to the ground, panting heavily as the silver lightning around him dissipated completely.

Qing Yu walked out of the barrier of the three immortal fires. She wasn't feeling too well, either. The minor world created by the shard of immortal dao had been deployed to deal with her, and it'd successfully taken a great toll. Fortunately, the Embittered Bamboo was within her body, which she could deploy as a replica at any time.

With a wave of her hand, a soul seed appeared in her palm. Dongfang Hao had somehow planted one in the midst of that battle. With her replica, however, she was now able to discern anything unusual about her condition. Thus, she hadn't been distracted by the events happening in the minor world and had fished out the foreign intruder before it could take root.

.....

"That sword..." Qing Yu came up to Lu Yun and replenished his inner energy with hers. "Is it really a sword of the divine race?"

Lu Yun gave her a curious look. "What did you notice?"

"I read the immortal dao within the sword. It... shouldn't be a weapon of the divine race, but of immortal dao," she said with a frown. "It won't revitalize the divines, just incorporate them into the immortal dao itself."

Lu Yun stared in blank confusion.

"Dongfang Hao first brought Wu Tulong, Mo Qitian, and Zi Chen to heel, turning them into his sword divines. Then he keeps going after you..." Lu Yun mused. "Even if it's a sword of the immortal dao, Dongfang Hao must be planning to rule over the immortal dao as its new master."

Qing Yu nodded quietly.

Moonlight shone upon a peaceful world, as if nothing had taken place at all; the epic clash had attracted no attention. The minor world Dongfang Hao had brought with him imitated the properties of a seed storage. It blended into the world like air, invisible and untraceable.

"The divine race may not return to wreak havoc in the world," Qing Yu murmured, "but I know that Dongfang Hao is certainly up to no good."

“Hmm?” Surprise gripped Lu Yun once again. To the world of immortals, the divine race was the common enemy of all beings. They’d ruled over and enslaved the entire world, treating all living beings as livestock for their butcher block.

It wasn’t until eighty thousand years ago that the immortals of the world had banded together to topple their rule and exiled the divines. Even today, the divine race searched for an opportunity to strike back, eager to claim the world as theirs again and regain their throne as master of all.

“I once perused an incomplete text that wasn’t a jade slip created with the nascent spirit, but a record kept on the skin of a dao immortal divine.” Qing Yu dug through the cobwebs of her memories. “Eighty thousand years ago, the divines did indeed rule over the world of immortals, but according to that record, they didn’t enslave all beings. Instead, they were protecting the world from something else...”

“Do you mean...” Lu Yun’s heart sank, a frighteningly dire possibility coming to him.

“That’s right—I suspect that all living souls of that time had their memories tampered with!” Qing Yu postulated gravely. “If the divines really did rule over the world and enslave everyone, slaughtering all geniuses of other races that appeared, however did the immortals of the world fight back? Why are there no records left of the resistance in any of the ancient factions from the twenty-four facets?”

“Recountings of the great war against the divine race were passed down via oral history, or written by later generations. Those from eighty thousand years ago left no jade slips regarding the fight... I’ll ask the desolate willow in the Skandha Range when I go back,” Lu Yun said with a slow nod.

The Skandha Range had something to do with the four evil coffins, and the desolate willow was no regular being, either. If there had been a mass memory reset eighty thousand years ago, the willow shouldn’t have been affected.

If even its memory had been tampered with, the ramifications would be downright terrifying.

“Then, what you’ve done to the Exalted Divines...” Qing Yu brought up worriedly.

“The Exalted Divines and four cardinal tribes didn’t exist eighty thousand years ago.” Lu Yun shook his head. “The Exalted Divines are after you. I don’t know what will happen if they’re allowed to rise to power.”

The shorter Death Spike should shatter the Exalted Immortal Sect’s fortunes, but the strange tribulation that’d ensued might’ve planted a seed of unexpected consequences. Lu Yun had no idea precisely what would happen.

Since the Exalted Immortal Sect was Zhao Zhicheng’s home, Lu Yun had promised to pull his punches here.

The sect’s fortunes were no more. Without it, the Exalted Divines would have trouble amounting to anything major even if the heavenly court fully came into its power. Lu Yun didn’t have to worry about what Zhao Wushuang might do in the future.

However, he didn’t think Dongfang Hao had told him the truth about the prince’s identity. Lu Yun had seen two pureblood Exalted Divines before, but both had been refined into corpse coffins. A singular pureblood Exalted Divine wasn’t enough to change the course of the world of immortals.

.....

The Exalted celestial emperor didn't send his delegates until the afternoon of the next day. Lu Yun knew that the celestial emperor didn't want him to see how they'd set up the location where Zhao Wushuang was to undergo his tribulation. After all, it pertained to the secrets of the heavenly court.

The attempt was to take place in an area called the Divine Sea, a vast lake the size of a province. Legend spoke of primordial divine survivors that lingered in its waters, but no one had ever seen any with their own eyes.

"The Divine Sea forms a standalone space." Lu Yun looked around and scanned the area upon entry, muttering with a frown, "There are indeed divines in the Divine Sea... They're the sea divines of the Primordial Era, and look to be the secret weapons of the Exalted court. I wonder how many of them survived the great battle a hundred thousand years ago."

Qing Yu, the Lin brothers, the little fox, and Li Youcai hadn't come with him. A cruel battle would break out during Zhao Wushuang's tribulation, which meant his companions might be in danger if they'd followed him.

"Hehehe... Lu Yun." A pungent smell washed over him as Ge Yanxia sashayed toward him in a tight black dress.

Lu Yun pinched his nose and moved away after throwing her a sideways glance.

"You've used up the strange lightning stored in you, haven't you?" she said in a loud voice, attracting the attention of Qi Hai and Donglin Taihuang.

"I have." Lu Yun nodded forthrightly.

Thud!

With a wave of his hand, a black cannon landed with a loud boom, aimed at Ge Yanxia with brewing white light.

"That's why I brought a crystal cannon with me. Don't worry, I'll pull my weight."

Boom!

A beam of white light shot out of the cannon mouth straight at Ge Yanxia.

### **Chapter 635: Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement**

Caught off guard, Ge Yanxia shrieked once again and was sent flying by the cannon shot.

"Oops, sorry." Lu Yun scratched his head.

She came screaming back from the distant sky, her eyes blazing with fury.

"I grabbed the wrong one," Lu Yun grumbled and put away the crystal cannon before manifesting a main cannon. "Should've been this one."

Ge Yanxia shuddered violently. She was a primordial dao immortal, which placed her on the same level as a void-ascended dao immortal. Basic weapons of war and crystal cannons posed no threat to her. The

main cannons that burned through ten billion crystals per charge, however, could not only cripple her, but kill her.

“That was an accident. If you dare get another thirty meters closer to me, though, I’ll butcher you right where you stand.” He leered at Ge Yanxia and aimed the cannon at her, whereupon she quickly hopped away and put thirty meters between them.

Seeing the crystal cannon put a smile on the Exalted celestial emperor’s face. Although many had bought such weapons from Dusk Province since the auction, very few used them with such a lack of restraint.

The cannons were voracious, insatiable monsters when it came to immortal crystals. Each blast cost billions of crystals; not everyone in the world of immortals was wealthy enough to afford that. Even the six profligates Lu Yun had befriended would only crush people with giant crystal mountains, rather than burn it all.

Things like crystal cannons and weapons of war were great strategic treasures that wouldn’t be used until the eleventh hour. No one would casually fling them around like toys, as was Lu Yun’s style.

In addition to Ge Yanxia, Donglin Taihuang had shifted away from Lu Yun as well, worried that the youth would turn the cannon on him in a fit of pique. The bad blood between them was irreconcilable, and the bounty of a hundred billion crystals Lu Yun had levied on him in Destiny City was still in effect.

Donglin Taihuang was far from Ge Yanxia’s level as the most basic weapons of war would reduce him to ashes from this distance.

.....

Lu Yun ignored them and scanned the area within five thousand kilometers with the Spectral Eye.

“As expected, the sea divines have put in a showing.” He saw a dense population of living creatures beneath the Divine Sea. Although something was concealing their life energy, Lu Yun could still see them clearly.

There wasn’t just one, but a whole colony of them. They bore unique life signs, but weren’t particularly powerful. However, Lu Yun could sense the danger latent within them.

Zhao Wushuang was dressed in pristine white robes with a sword upon his back. Chiseled features set into a handsome face, he radiated a unique grace.

What the feck, another girl? Lu Yun frowned. His Spectral Eye saw through all of Zhao Wushuang’s disguises and gave him a glimpse of her true self.

Zhao Wushuang was a girl!

However, her disguise was much inferior compared to Qing Yu’s, as even the current Lu Yun wouldn’t be able to see through Qing Yu’s true self when she disguised herself as Qing Han.

Tribulation clouds gathered in the sky, obscuring the vast, clean blue. Faint shadows in the air around the Divine Sea revealed the presence of immortals who bore the participant ill intent.



Zhao Wushuang was the only “son” of the former Exalted celestial emperor, and a pureblood Exalted Divine. There were many in the world who wouldn’t allow her to overcome her tribulation and ascend to immortality from the void realm.

“My friends from the East Sea, please show this humble one some face.” Lu Yun took a step forward and bowed toward an empty corner of the sky.

“We naturally will since it is your request, Sir Lu,” a voice responded, followed by a small ripple suggesting their departure.

“Friends from the Lin Clan...” Lu Yun bowed again. He repeated his request four times, resulting in the retreats of the Lin Clan, Mo Clan, Unsullied Sea, and South Sea.

Immortals from Exalted Major shared a surprised look. No one had expected the youth to command so much respect that he could persuade five peak factions of the world of immortals to stay their hand. So it would seem that while Lu Yun had made many enemies in the world, he also boasted of many friends.

The Exalted celestial emperor sighed in relief. Thank heavens he hadn’t made an enemy out of Lu Yun last night! Things would be much more troublesome today, otherwise. Although there were still a great number of hidden threats lurking in the area, the departure of five factions lifted an enormous weight from his shoulders.

Rumble!

A dull rumbling sounded from the sky as tribulation clouds gathered at great speed and slowly descended upon all of the Divine Sea. The mounds of thick clouds were a brooding black, but a patch of deep scarlet was found at their center. From that center traveled incessant demonic baying.

“There’s... no hope...” The celestial emperor stared at the crimson tribulation clouds with a despairing expression. “A Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement... Do the heavens wish to erase the divine race?”

This was the most terrifying of all lightning tribulations, a harbinger of certain death! No one, not even in the era of the human dao, had ever survived such a trial. Failure and death were a foregone conclusion, and there would be nothing left but a wasteland after it ran its course!

The divines who’d stood in wait along the shores scattered in fear when they saw the tribulation clouds.

“We would surely like to help, but this... is beyond us.” Qi Hai shook his head. “Even without sabotage, Zhao Wushuang won’t be able to overcome this tribulation. You should prepare for his funeral, Your Majesty.”

A multiple-time survivor of the era of human dao, Qi Hai had awakened his memories of all his past lives. This kind of ultimate trial was no stranger to him.

“Hehehe, well well well, looks like that brat Lu Yun’s run away. I don’t see him anywhere, but he’s the clever one for doing so,” Donglin Taihuang snickered, his voice dripping with schadenfreude.

The help that the Exalted celestial emperor had recruited this time bore no relationship with Exalted Major—Qi Hai from Destiny City, fur seals from the West Sea, and House Donglin from Aureate Major. Although there wasn’t any bad blood between the three factions and Exalted Major, they still didn’t

want the major to rise in power after the only son of its previous celestial emperor overcame his tribulation.

Lu Yun... was purely an accident.

The Exalted celestial emperor blanched, but he still held out hope. That no one had ever survived a Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement before didn't mean it couldn't be done. He hadn't completely given up on Zhao Wushuang.

.....

Zhao Wushuang stood beneath the tribulation clouds, long hair dancing in the wind and white robes flapping around him. His expression remained calm and free of fear.

Mountainous tribulation clouds brewed in the sky, as if there were countless demons waiting at the end of them. In addition to the endless lightning, faint silhouettes of ancient beasts also lurked about in the clouds.

A hair-raising howl was followed by a lightning strike.

Kaboom!

Zhao Wushuang's tribulation had begun.

### **Chapter 636: All Sides to the Stage**

The Diabolical Formation of World Refinement had begun. A field of crackling electricity transformed into a great mountain, from within which agitated a swarm of demonic fiends. They howled and struggled and ripped into whatever they could, seeking to unleash destructive intent that could destroy the world.

Swoosh!

The longsword on Zhao Wushuang's back flew out of its scabbard with a hazy hue of cyan sword energy.

.....

Currently in the form of a dust particle, with the use of Shapeshifting, and completely obscuring his life signs, Lu Yun was within the tribulation's area of effect. He could still clearly perceive the environment around him with his senses and consciousness.

"That's..." He widened his 'eyes', overwhelmed by his discovery. "The Sword of Chaos! That's the Sword of Chaos!" His heart spasmed painfully. "But... but she's neither Sword Divine nor Dongfang Hao, so how is that the Sword of Chaos? ...this must be why Dongfang Hao came to me last night!

"Even if it's not the divine sword itself, it must be connected to the Sword of Chaos somehow. It mustn't fall into Dongfang Hao's hands!" Lu Yun calmed his breathing and heart rate, reinforcing his Shapeshifting and Size Manipulation arts to conceal the ripple of lifeforce he'd revealed in his moment of shock. "Dongfang Hao must be around here somewhere."

Whoosh!

Lu Yun returned to humanoid form, but as a completely lifeless stone sculpture. His death arts were derived from the Tome of Life and Death, which made them connate combat arts that eluded the heavenly dao. Not even heavenly tribulations could sense his existence in this state.

He planned to devour the Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement with his Thunder Palmstrike, but this was a secret weapon he didn't wish to reveal to the world.

He'd once used the combat art in the presence of witnesses before, but almost everyone thought it was an art to draw lightning. The lightning tribulation yesterday was no exception; even the Exalted celestial emperor had thought that Lu Yun had simply summoned lightning to enhance his strength.

Lu Yun waited patiently; Dongfang Hao would come.

Boom!

The overwhelming flood of tribulation lightning surged, and mountain upon mountain fell from the sky to crush Zhao Wushuang. Demonic fiends snarled and grimaced in each of the mountains, as if the geographical features were beehives. However, Lu Yun could clearly sense the life energy from the fiends. They weren't manifested by the lightning, but actual beings!

Instead of the mountains being their homes, they were prisoners. The Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement was a prison!

A morass of lightning, mountains, and demonic fiends circled around Zhao Wushuang. Countless horrors growled and snapped, throwing themselves at their challenger the moment they were released.

Lu Yun remained unmoving.

At the edge of the Divine Sea, color drained from the Exalted celestial emperor's face. Even those who'd planned to enter the tribulation in order to sabotage Zhao Wushuang refrained from acting.

Plainly, none of them deemed it possible that he would overcome the tribulation. Once he failed, death would be his only fate.

Hum!

Suddenly, cyan sword energy surged within a lightning mountain and hewed it in half, decimating countless creatures.

Eyes steely, Zhao Wushuang hovered in the sky with his sword in his right hand. Hazy cyan light shrouded the exterior of his white robes. Without a beat of rest in between, two more mountains came howling at him, accompanied by a tremendous chorus of demonic cries and shrieks.

Zhao Wushuang maintained his unusual calm and cut down the mountains one after the other with his sword.

.....

"Well done!" Hope rekindled in the hearts of the Exalted immortals outside the tribulation. Zhao Wushuang had managed to hack open the tribulation, keeping at bay the lightning that would invoke fear in anyone's heart.

“Something’s amiss here. Zhao Wushuang is living up to his bloodline as a pureblooded Exalted Divine. We can’t allow him to pass this tribulation!” Immortals from Primus Major looked on with stern expressions. “Deploy the lord-grade fortress ship and kill him!”

Rumble!

The fortress ship that the ninth prince of Primus Major had obtained from the Dusk auction slowly sailed out of the void. As soon as it emerged, a white beam of light lit up from the mouth of the main cannon at the ship's bow, charged to the maximum with ten billion crystals!

Threatening heaven and earth, the powerful offensive almost punched a hole into the sky.

“Here it comes!” The Exalted celestial emperor sprang into action the moment the fortress ship appeared.

Boom!!

With a light wave of his hand, the Divine Sea exploded. Piercing shrieks rang through the skies, eliciting strange reverberations throughout the energy of the land. These were the sea divines, finally revealed in their full glory!

Somehow, their shrieks proved effective against the pillars of light spewing forth from the crystal cannons. Auxiliary cannons firing in conjunction with the main cannon, they were all aimed at Zhao Wushuang. The attack was gradually offset, rendering it ineffective when it reached the tribulation.

“A lord-grade fortress ship?!” With an ear-piercing cry and a quick shake, Ge Yanxia transformed back to her true form. The enormous black fur seal twisted her bulbous body into a charge at the fortress ship.

“No!” The Primus dao immortal steering the ship changed course in panic and rammed Ge Yanxia.

“Hehehe!” Cackling, Ge Yanxia retaliated in kind with black, rotten seawater seeping out of her skin.

Rumble!

Knocked off-kilter, the giant fortress ship spun in place. Meanwhile, other spectators in the area made their moves as well. Blinding rays of sword energy pierced through the sky, arcing toward Zhao Wushuang. All sorts of treasures, talismans, and even formations were activated to attack him.

Even dao immortals would be critically injured by such a barrage, let alone a void realm cultivator attempting their ascension.

“Hmph.” Donglin Taihuang and Qi Hai acted as well. They didn’t put their backs into it like Ge Yanxia had, but merely blocked the terrifying attacks with a few simple flicks instead.

Nevertheless, there were too many who’d plumbed the depths of Exalted Major’s capabilities. In addition to the human race and the monster spirits, even some fellow divines were attacking Zhao Wushuang. The melting pot of immortal swords, treasures, and combat arts in the air seemed even greater than the tribulation itself!

Faced with this very real secondary threat, Zhao Wushuang had to deal with the attacks and fight the tribulation at the same time. Blood quickly drenched his clothes and he seemed on the verge of collapsing.

Within the tribulation clouds, otherkind creatures more deadly than the lightning gradually sharpened into focus.

The Exalted celestial emperor roared with hapless rage. He was blocked by two figures of his level, as two celestial emperors had come to intervene in person!

Kaboom!

An earth-shattering explosion rang out from the tribulation clouds, turning the clouds covering the Divine Sea scarlet. The power of the lightning grew exponentially as well, marking the evolution of the already deadly Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement into something else, something unknown.

A figure descended from the air with the Sword of Chaos in hand.

Dongfang Hao, Sword Divine.

### **Chapter 637: Lu Yun Makes His Move**

Wild lightning swept over the Divine Sea and charged the water. Tribulation clouds loomed over the surface, expanding its area of effect. Immortals in the vicinity scattered in panic when the mutated tribulation brought down new bolts of lightning.

“What’s going on?! Why would someone trespass into the tribulation?!” the Exalted celestial emperor roared with confused fury. A flash of dark light surged from his body and knocked away the two celestial emperors dogging his footsteps.

“The intruder must be that Sword Divine,” mocked a celestial emperor with a sneer on his face. “The sea divine tribe that you hold in reserve has defected to his side.”

Despair flashed through the Exalted celestial emperor’s eyes as hearty laughter rang out from the sea divines. They transformed into vibrant blue fish and disappeared into the depths of the Divine Sea, never to be seen again. They would be safe there as the rampaging lightning couldn’t penetrate the bottomless sea.

“It seems that Zhao Wushuang will die even without our intervention now,” spoke the new celestial emperor of Primus Major. Primus was the most powerful of the nine majors, and her celestial emperor was the second to ascend to origin dao realm after Witherdew’s celestial emperor. That put him a peg above the Exalted celestial emperor.

It was very rare for the nine celestial emperors to depart from their territories, so the Primus and Enlightened celestial emperors had sent only their replicas.

Overwhelming hopelessness and despondency wrapped around the Exalted celestial emperor. His predecessor had risked his life to defend the rift to the world of immortals, and his current status remained unknown. Zhao Wushuang was his only child. If the child died here, history would forever condemn the current celestial emperor as a sinner and ignoble failure.

Pure black lightning swirled over the Divine Sea, brewing a storm of destructive energy. The Exalted celestial emperor wanted to rush in and help, but the restrictions levied by the rules of tribulations kept him outside the Divine Sea.

Wham!

A luopan-like treasure appeared over his head to protect his body—the Exalted Chart. The Exalted court's treasure, similar to the likes of Nephrite's Path of Ingress and Witherdew's Blithe Entrapment Formation, it was more powerful than a connate-grade treasure.

As he forced entry into the tribulation under the compass's protection, a giant dragon's tail swept out of the air and knocked him backward, breaching the defenses of the Exalted Chart.

He spat out a mouthful of blood, highlighting the severity of his injuries.

“What in the heavens was that?!” The celestial emperor of Enlightened Major was horrified. The Exalted Chart was plainly the Exalted celestial emperor's last resort. Despite putting his life on the line, he'd still been sent flying by the dragon tail!

“It appears to be a dragon... Why would there be a dragon in a tribulation?!” The Primus celestial emperor's expression darkened as well.

Void-realm immortal tribulations always featured the appearance of vicious monsters and exotic beasts, but never a dragon. It was apparent from a single blow just how strong the dragon was. If it was appearing in Zhao Wushuang's tribulation, it would appear in the tribulations of others in the future as well.

.....

Black lightning intertwined in the skies to form a net, settling down over the area like ever-present fog. Zhao Wushuang and Dongfang Hao were embroiled in combat, and both had suffered serious injuries.

Sword Divine, however, was better prepared. A faint golden glow outlined his body, sending the tribulation lightning rebounding away whenever it struck. He still suffered from the reverberations of the strikes, but he was in an infinitely better state than Zhao Wushuang.

“You're dead without a doubt this time, Zhao Wushuang.” Dongfang Hao slashed forward and knocked the Zhao genius nearly three hundred meters away. Meanwhile, lightning continued tearing into Zhao Wushuang, and the defensive treasure hovering beside him swayed on the verge of destruction.

“You have no honor!” Zhao Wushuang despaired. The black lightning alone was enough to destroy him, even without Dongfang Hao's intervention!

If he didn't possess the defensive treasure his father had given him, the Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement would've easily killed him. Now that even the powerful treasure was teetering on the edge of shattering, despair extinguished what little hope he'd nursed.

“Since you're unwilling to return the heart of the Sword of Chaos, I will take matters into my own hands.” Dongfang Hao's lips twisted into a cold smile.

The faint golden hue around him brightened, obscuring his life force. Abruptly losing one of its targets, the ferocious black lightning shifted direction entirely and came screaming at Zhao Wushuang.

Even if he hadn't possessed the heart of the Sword of Chaos, Dongfang Hao would've gone after Zhao Wushuang in any case. His own tribulation of ascension would've certainly been another Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement, or something on the same level. It would be almost impossible for him to overcome it on his own.

Therefore, he'd trespassed into Zhao Wushuang's trial and triggered his own at the same time. Then he somehow hid himself from the tribulation, placing Zhao Wushuang under their combined might!

No, it was even worse than that! Their tribulations combined were even more powerful than the sum of their parts.

Dongfang Hao hovered quietly in the sky, doing nothing but watch as Zhao Wushuang made desperate attempts to stave off the joint tribulation. Once he dies, the heart of the Sword of Chaos will return to its rightful place, thus completing the sword.

Zhao Wushuang's defensive treasure was unusually powerful. Even though it was falling apart, it stalwartly protected its owner.

"That's the Exalted Chart!" Dongfang Hao frowned when he noticed the glowing shards floating in the air. "It's been divided in half."

An integral treasure of Exalted Major, the Exalted Chart was stronger than regular connate-grade treasures. Though still powerful when divided, it'd been substantially weakened by the division. Hence, the Exalted celestial emperor had been slapped out of the tribulation and seriously injured by the lurking dragon, even with the treasure's protection.

.....

"That compass..." Lu Yun watched from a close distance in his particle form. He'd recognized the compass when it was shattering. "It mustn't be destroyed!"

He took a deep breath and activated Thunder Palmstrike.

Rumble!

Black lightning raining down from the sky converged into a flood and rushed into his palm.

### **Chapter 638: Transformation Into Kui**

The abrupt development flabbergasted onlookers.

Greater than the Diabolical Tribulation of World Refinement, the mutated tribulation had converged into a current streaming in a single direction. In the blink of an eye, the seemingly endless storm of lightning dissipated completely, taking with it the scarlet tribulation clouds.

Though the sky had returned to a clear blue, the foreboding atmosphere of the tribulation lingered on. Heavier shadows loomed over the Divine Sea in place of the clouds, equally weighing on the crowd's hearts.

An enormous beast lay coiled above the Divine Sea after the scene cleared, spanning almost the entire body of water. It looked extremely odd, unlike any exotic beast the immortals had ever encountered before. It bore the head of a tiger, the body of a turtle, the wings of a phoenix, and the tail of a dragon!

The tail was what had knocked the Exalted celestial emperor and his compass away. More surprisingly, there were two dragon claws attached to the bottom end of the dragon tail. It looked as if the tail had been hacked off from another dragon.

The terrifying chimera came with a terrifying aura. Dancing with rage, its scarlet tiger's eyes were fixed on an empty point in the sky.

.....

"What is that?!" Dongfang Hao goggled at the beast with shock in his eyes. He usually had a handle on everything, but even he was feeling a little out of his depth now. He could tell that the vicious beast would be able to crush him just by twitching its giant turtle feet.

The petrifying sight presented by the horrifying monster shoved bafflement over how mysteriously the lightning tribulation had vanished from everyone's minds.

"A tribulation beast... Can this be Wushuang's tribulation beast?" The Exalted celestial emperor took several steps back. Even he didn't dare draw close now.

"What manner of monster is this? Why is there such a thing in a heavenly tribulation?" The Primus and Enlightened celestial emperors were apprehensive as well.

.....

"It's discovered me." In his statue form, Lu Yun lifted his head to meet the monster's eyes. "...the dragon tail is the lower half of the Azure Dragon King," he muttered, recognizing the tail immediately.

The upper half of the dragon king's body had managed to survive by becoming one with the Sal Tree of Life and Death in the tomb realm. The presence that Lu Yun had sensed when the Azure Dragon King fought Empress Myrtlestar perfectly matched that of the dragon tail attached to the beast!

Caught between death, neither dead nor alive!

When Lu Yun sailed through the Blood Sea after acquiring the Dao Flower, he and his companions, including the Azure Dragon King, had seen the great skeletal tail flailing about in the bloody depths, fighting another vicious beast.

It was then that the Azure Dragon King had given up on recovering its lower half. But now here it was, part of an enormous beast!

Lu Yun had trouble wrapping his mind around the discovery.

"Does... this tribulation have something to do with the Blood Sea?" He wasn't afraid of the beast's attention, just confounded by what everything entailed.



The lightning he'd absorbed from the tribulation had collected as a black lightning bead on the golden Sal Tree of Life and Death, merging with another piece of karmic fruit. He'd never felt so powerful before, like he'd gained the power of a peak origin dao immortal via the corpse puppet.

"If that's the case..." An idea came to him, putting a smile on his face.

"Moooo!"

A powerful ox bellow split the air. Surging black lightning whipped through the air, overtaking the Divine Sea as a great figure emerged.

Kui!

Lu Yun had transformed into a kui and brought with him an endless realm of lightning. His transformation was thorough, changing him into the real thing.

Although he wasn't as powerful as a real kui and couldn't call upon as much strength, he possessed a black lightning bead instead. The power of the mutated tribulation it contained was even purer than a real kui's innate lightning.

Inky lightning crackling around his pitch-black body of a kui, Lu Yun seemed even more like a tribulation beast than the giant chimera. His body solidly occupied a corner that spanned a thousand kilometers over the waters, yet was still dwarfed by the giant beast coiled high in the sky. The Divine Sea was as large as a great province in the world of immortals, measuring a million kilometers across.

.....

"Kui! Is that the same one that appeared in Azure Province of Nephrite Major?" Countless immortals watching from outside the Divine Sea sucked in sharp breaths.

Back in Azure Province, the kui had only been thrown out of Nephrite Major with Scarlet Ape's intervention and Zhao Changkong's sacrifice. Thus, it was an unwelcome sight to register in Exalted Major.

"It looks like the kui devoured the lightning tribulation... That's right, Kui is the primordial thunder god, keeper of lightning punishments in the primordial immortal court! Legend has it that the primordial world of immortals was the center of the many worlds. Kui was in charge of the lightning tribulation that all cultivators in the multiverse encountered upon ascension."

Hope shone out of the Exalted celestial emperor's eyes. Salvation had arrived in the form of the kui devouring the terrifying lightning, but was swiftly followed by persisting despair at the sight of the enormous beast. This thing couldn't possibly originate from the world of immortals!

Beasts lurked within the tribulations for void-realm immortals, yes, and the more powerful the cultivator, the stronger and more tangible the tribulation beast. However, tribulation beasts were typically manifested by lightning. Once defeated, they returned divine tribulation essence, which was highly beneficial to an immortal's constitution.

True geniuses encountered real giant beasts when ascending to immortality. Upon their victory, they gained powerful treasures from the carcasses that made the divine tribulation essence pale in comparison.

This beast, however, was something that no one had ever seen before. Even the great geniuses who had brought about great phenomena of ascension hadn't encountered it.

.....

"No! That's not a kui, but Lu Yun..." Dongfang Hao paled. Gone was the lightning, but not the heavenly tribulation itself. He could clearly sense that the kui that'd emerged from nowhere was his greatest fear at the moment, Lu Yun!

"Which human king's heritage did he acquire?! Or a human emperor?? How did he transform into a kui?!" He himself couldn't determine if this was a true kui, but the Sword of Chaos wouldn't lie to him. It was indeed Lu Yun.

"Oh, I didn't expect you to recognize me." In its next step of evolution, the Sal Tree of Life and Death was able to capture and reveal Dongfang Hao's reaction. "Well then, I guess it's time for you to complete your unfinished tribulation."

Boom!

Black lightning spiraled from Kui's single horn, striking Dongfang Hao with great ferocity.

### **Chapter 639: Karmic Tree**

An endless flood of black lightning crashed into Dongfang Hao, drowning him. He almost threw up blood from the collision.

According to his original plans, all he needed to do was to reveal himself to the tribulation the moment it dissipated to successfully ascend to immortality. It didn't matter if the Exalted prince overcame his trial or not.

Lu Yun, however, had completely disrupted this idea. The roiling black lightning he'd directed Dongfang Hao's way was incredibly destructive. His treasure might be able to protect him from heavenly tribulations, but not from anything Lu Yun might pull.

Lightning smote him relentlessly, sending him flying this way and that.

Imbued with the power of karmic fruit, the black lightning was exponentially more powerful than the bolts from the lightning tribulation earlier. A prolonged cacophony of screams and yelps rang out as thunder and lightning consumed Dongfang Hao.

Bam!

A beam of sword energy exploded from his body as the giant Sword of Chaos emerged, reaching high into the sky. Even the giant beast laying in the air shifted warily when it saw the sword light.

Lu Yun, however, was entirely unfazed. Under his control, the lightning targeting Dongfang Hao grew even more relentless. After all, it'd be most ideal if he could excise a serious threat like Dongfang Hao now.

"Lu Yun! I will not suffer you to live beneath the same skies as me!!" With that final shriek, the Sword of Chaos burst into numerous strands of sword energy and shot in all directions.

Dongfang Hao had escaped, the moment of his departure making the end of his involvement with the tribulation. He would still be a void realm cultivator even if Zhao Wushuang somehow overcame his tribulation in the end.

.....

“Lu Yun? What did he mean?” Dongfang Hao’s parting words surprised everyone. Hadn’t Lu Yun fled? Was he still lurking around somewhere? Or had he summoned the giant kui?

Another glance at the imposing beast dismissed the last speculation. A primordial divine beast who ruled over all lightning would never follow the orders of a mere cultivator. Besides, if Lu Yun really could summon kui, he wouldn’t have been bogged down by that absolute mess in Dusk Province when he tried establishing his dao.

“Lu Yun... Which emperor’s legacy has he acquired?” Qi Hai frowned deeply. As the lord of the first capital of the primeval human race, he was highly knowledgeable and enormously experienced. So far, though, he hadn’t been able to determine whose heritage Lu Yun had acquired.

“How unfortunate that he refuses to restore the era of human dao and the dominance of our race over all, despite being human himself. Whatever heritage he’s gained, he doesn’t deserve to keep it.”

A cold smile tugged at Qi Hai’s lips, while Donglin Taihuang remained wholly unconcerned. He had no reason to worry. As long as he took Qing Yu and made use of her cosmic constitution, he would become a flawless origin dao immortal. He would even gain a unique heritage, making the world of immortals his oyster.

And now, Qing Yu was in Mount Exalted.

The Exalted Immortal Sect wanted something in her possession, so they would hardly let her leave without getting what they wanted. Naturally, neither would Donglin Taihuang.

.....

Zhao Wushuang’s sole focus was on the giant chimera in front of him. Lu Yun stood beside him as Kui, but he didn’t even seem to notice the thunder god’s presence, his eyes fixed on the beast looming over them instead.

“That’s the Azure Dragon King’s tail,” Lu Yun’s voice suddenly echoed in Zhao Wushuang’s mind. The prince widened his eyes at the kui beside him, taken aback. “If my speculations are right... its head belongs to the White Tiger King; its body, the Black Tortoise King; and its wings, the Vermilion Bird King! Who could’ve hacked apart the kings of the four cardinal divine tribes and pieced together such a monster...”

The chimera in the air remained unmoving, its glance fixed in turn on the transformed kui. Lu Yun’s brows knit together when a thought struck him. With that, he deployed the Boundless Step and left the tribulation area on impulse.

“At least the immortals of Exalted Major aren’t entirely heartless.” Upon his departure, a great amount of goodwill flowed into the Sal Tree of Life and Death in his body. The faint glow of the sapling deepened to pure gold from the immense nourishment.

“Hmm, that’s not right... Zhao Wushuang is simply too important to them!” Lu Yun’s eyes turned golden as gratitude from countless immortals in Exalted Major streamed into him as well, to be absorbed by the Sal Tree of Life and Death.

Hum.

A golden tree barreled out of him, covering the entire world of immortals. All twenty-four facets, the four immortal seas, and in fact the subordinate worlds, all planes, and ruins... were graced with the shadow of a golden tree!

Every living soul looked up at the giant tree in shock and terror. Even the giant beast crouched over the Divine Sea was no exception.

“What... is that...? Is it a phenomenon of ascension?” someone murmured. “It’d be terrifying if it is...”

A phenomenon of ascension spanning the entire world of immortals!

All eyes were on the tree. The two scarlet apes, the Dark North Sword Sect, the two sovereigns of Ingress Island, Truespirit Major, and the old freaks residing within primordial ruins all looked up at the golden tree.

No one knew what it was. Not even Qi Hai, in the untold years of his many lives, had ever seen the tree before.

“Can it really be a phenomenon of ascension? Whose? Lu Yun’s?” Qi Hai shook his head in earnest. “No, it’s too early for his tribulation.”

“Grrr!” The giant beast looming over the Divine Sea suddenly threw its head back and howled at the sky, its body disintegrating into four beams of light that shone down on Zhao Wushuang.

However, most of the spectators by the Divine Sea had their eyes glued to the enormous tree. Almost no one noticed the beast’s disappearance. Gone was the beast and the tribulation. Zhao Wushuang ascended to immortality when everyone was distracted.

.....

“This is virtuous merit... It’s more than the goodwill from the immortals of Exalted Major. I’m... receiving virtuous merit from the heavens!” Lu Yun watched in disbelief as the Sal Tree of Life and Death evolved at a tremendous speed.

There must be more to Zhao Wushuang, if helping the disguised prince overcome her tribulation earned him virtuous merit from the heavens.

“Karmic Tree...” Lu Yun murmured when the small tree took root in his body. “The Sal Tree of Life and Death has completed its evolution into the Karmic Tree!”

A sea of golden light washed over hell. The innumerable legion of vicious spirits in the undefined abyss screeched and wailed with anguish as they were purified by the tree’s power. Distilled into their truest forms as souls, they took root in hell as new Hell Flowers.

While rejuvenation suffused the netherworld, three white figures hastily shot out of hell. If Lu Yun had seen them, he would've recognized them for what they were.

Akasha ghosts.

### **Chapter 640: Big Fur Seal**

The golden tree faded away, but many still reeled from or savored the awe-inspiring sight.

"Who was it?!" growled the Exalted celestial emperor. "Their phenomenon of ascension spanned the entire world... Investigate! We must find out who that was!"

What they'd witnessed weighed heavily on them. The bigger the phenomenon, the greater one's potential, and the higher the heights they would reach.

How talented must the cultivator be for their phenomenon to cover the entire world and beyond? The ramifications were beyond their imaginations. More importantly, the phenomenon had originated in Exalted Major!

This led the Exalted immortals to believe that someone had seized the opening when everyone was focused on Zhao Wushuang's tribulation to overcome theirs without being disturbed, making fools out of them all.

Hum.

To their great surprise, a cyan beam of light suddenly erupted from the center of the Divine Sea and projected an image that shadowed every facet of the world as well!

However, it slightly paled in comparison to the golden tree from earlier. While this phenomenon of ascension reached all twenty-four facets of the world, it didn't reach the four seas connecting them.

"Zhao Wushuang's ascended to immortality? How did he defeat the terrifying tribulation beast?!"

"How is this possible?!" The Primus and Enlightened celestial emperors were dumbfounded. With the phenomenon of ascension manifested, they wouldn't be able to hurt Zhao Wushuang even if their true selves were present.

Moreover, they were in Exalted Major, and Zhao Wushuang was the Exalted celestial emperor's junior brother. The Exalted heavenly army had now gathered, accompanied by many powerful protectors in the major. It was set in stone—Zhao Wushuang had overcome his trial.

Meanwhile, the disguised prince herself was confused. She had no idea why the great chimera had disintegrated so suddenly and entered her body, not as divine tribulation essence, but four beams of light. They seemed to have made something whole inside of her that'd been incomplete before.

As for her phenomenon of ascension...

The images of the Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Black Tortoise intertwined in midair, foreclaws upraised in support of a luminous orb.

It took a long while for the phenomenon to dissipate. Zhao Wushuang hovered in the air all this time, radiating a strangely imposing aura. She was now a true immortal, one that had ascended from the void realm.

However, she was much more powerful than other void-ascended immortals. Every move of hers contained the power of heaven and earth, and a different kind of force brewed within her.

“Die!” a sudden snarl rang out.

The lakewaters beneath her feet surged as a giant figure rushed out. He possessed the upper body of a human, lower body of a dragon, and deep blue light flickering all over him.

A sea divine!

The most powerful of the sea divines made his move the moment Zhao Wushuang successfully ascended, stabbing at the human’s head with a deadly trident.

“You court death!!” The Exalted celestial emperor widened his eyes so ferociously that the corners threatened to crack.

Mightiest of his tribe, the patriarch of the sea divines was a crippled origin dao immortal. Even the Exalted celestial emperor would have some difficulty defeating him. Having just set foot into immortality, Zhao Wushuang was far from his match. His ambush had almost reached her when—

“Hahaha! Sea divines!!” An enormous shadow suddenly propelled itself up from the depths of the Divine Sea, pungent maw yawning wide open to bite at the patriarch.

“What is this?!” Panicking, the patriarch’s trident had just about touched Zhao Wushuang when the large mouth from the depths below bit into his dragon tail and dragged him down.

Boom!

The Divine Sea exploded again as an enormous fur seal more than five hundred meters long leapt out and swallowed the sea divine. It munched and gnawed on its prey, the patriarch’s deep blue blood filling its mouth as tormented screams rang out.

“This seat saved the life of your junior brother, Celestial Emperor of Exalted Major. Remember what you’ve promised us, and not a crystal shard less! Since the sea divine tribe betrayed your major, this seat will help you with some housecleaning and kill them all!”

Wham!

The fur seal dove deep into the Divine Sea, bringing about a great powerful wave with a twist of its body.

“No!” Zhao Wushuang blanched, but she couldn’t stop the barbaric fur seal. Being too injured to intervene, the Exalted celestial emperor could only watch the slaughter of sea divines occur right beneath his nose.

“Hahaha! You’re here, father!” Ge Yanxia brayed with laughter. The giant fur seal was her father, the greatest of their clan. He was a real arcane dao immortal from the Primordial Era! Not even a true origin dao immortal like the previous Exalted celestial emperor would be his match, let alone a crippled one.

Things gradually settled down in this corner of the world.

Zhao Wushuang, junior ‘brother’ of the Exalted celestial emperor, had successfully weathered his tribulation, and his resulting phenomenon of ascension had shadowed a shocking twenty-four facets.

Though that should’ve placed him as the greatest among his peers, the subsequent golden tree manifestation completely overshadowed him. There was more discussion in the general public about who’d triggered the golden tree than the Exalted prince’s breakthrough.

.....

Lu Yun had returned, and with him came a Sal Tree of Life and Death newly evolved into the Karmic Tree. Ever more crystalline and translucent, the tree seemed sculpted from gold and jade, and the energy of virtuous merit contained in the karmic fruits was purer as well.

“The prisoners trapped within the void have been purified into Hell Flowers.” Lu Yun immediately realized what had happened upon a quick inspection of hell.

Hell Flowers carpeted the region of hell touched by light, their buds fostering pure souls. Once the flowers matured, the soul within would become a new native.

“Shouldn’t we do something, Lu Yun?”

Within the small manor that Lu Yun and Qing Yu resided in, three peak aether dao immortals and a group of humanoid beings dressed in strange clothes snuck around, carefully looking for something.

Or rather, they thought they were looking for something, but had in fact fallen prey to the little fox’s illusions.

The bell she’d acquired in the celestial master tomb had raised her skill with illusions to even greater heights, and peak aether dao immortals were no longer a match for her. The immortals and humanoid creatures were here to take Qing Yu, but the little fox had managed to trap them first.

“Of course we should.” The couple shared conspiratory grins.

Lu Yun contacted Wanfeng with a transmission talisman. “Have the Skandha Range spread rumors via their planted agents, Wanfeng. Tell the world that the phenomenon of ascension covering the entire world belonged to Sword Divine, and that Sword Divine’s true identity is Dongfang Hao!”