

Necropolis 721

Chapter 721: Writing Off Past Enmity

The demon sovereign!

Lu Yun hadn't expected to run into this old enemy as soon as he entered the immortal emperor's tomb!

Just like the shamanic divine, the demon sovereign had used an art similar to Spirit Fragmentation to leech off the bodies of countless followers and disciples. But what the demon sovereign had sent wasn't his nascent spirit, but rather his primary self—the Hadal Skeleton!

With the demon sovereign's outstanding mastery of the Hadal Bone Art, he could transform himself into an indestructible skeleton.

"Hadal Bonfire, Hadal Bone Art... Hadal Bone Mountain..." Lu Yun suddenly recalled the white creature that'd once crawled out of hell's abyss and invaded his kingdom... It'd also cultivated the Hadal Bone Art, and its Hadal Bonfire was a million times stronger than the Demon Sovereign's.

That creature was an extraordinary existence that'd summoned a world with a single punch. Even imbued with the power of hell, Lu Yun hadn't been its match. If not for Ge Long's timely arrival, his replica would've been destroyed and hell would've gained a new master. Now that he saw the demon sovereign's bone appearance, it brought to mind the white creature that was suppressed in the boundless void of the netherworld.

That creature was still in hell as of this moment, but hadn't shown itself during the akasha ghosts' rampage, proof that they were existences it was wary of, too.

In addition, Lu Yun had glimpsed another existence similar to the demon sovereign in Exalted Major's lineal tomb. Hadal Bonfire likewise burned in its eyes, and the corner of hell born from a fragment of the Gates of the Abyss also originated in hell.

Did the demon sovereign hail from the netherworld as well, and was some sort of connection between him and the white creature lurking in the depths?

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The demon sovereign had split himself into a thousand and eighty bones, entrusting them to a thousand and eighty true immortals. When they simultaneously deployed the Hadal Bone Art, they could instantly manifest the demon sovereign's true form, as if through a battle formation of prodigious power. Since his strength was fragmented over a thousand parts, that freed the demon sovereign from the immortal restriction at the same time.

His true skeleton self slowly stood up, a cold, eerie, white fire burning deep in his skull. Like two white eyes, the fires stared fixedly at Lu Yun.

"Who did you say couldn't protect himself?" the demon sovereign asked again.

"Honored Demon Sovereign, there's no real enmity or grievance between us. What contradiction there is was caused by your disciple, Jiangchen Xie," Lu Yun steadied his nerves and responded calmly. "But

he's dead now and possessed by his ancestor Jiang Chen. Therefore, it's not impossible to resolve the differences between us!"

"No enmity?" There was no flesh or blood on the demon sovereign's face, but Lu Yun could sense the malevolence emanating from it.

Last time, the demon sovereign had paid a visit to Dusk Province when Lu Yun established his dao. His would-be glorious arrival was interrupted by a few well-placed slaps from Lu Feng. For that very reason, he'd become the butt of countless jokes in the world.

He'd been an invincible existence inside the celestial master tomb, one even stronger than Silverlight. There, he'd obtained countless treasures, used the energy released from the fusion of the Yin and Yang Realm Tombs to come back to life, then erased every last wisp of death energy from his enduring true spirit.

But after his revival, he'd chosen to cultivate the Hadal Bone Art anew. As a result, he was weaker alive than he had been as a dead spirit. Nevertheless, he was still the equivalent of a flawless primordial origin dao immortal and could easily crush Lu Yun with one hand!

Not even in his wildest dreams had Lu Yun expected to see these mighty figures use such means to avoid the immortal restriction and enter the central world.

The immortal restriction here was different from the one in Dusk Province. The latter was controlled by the human demon and resembled a shield that protected the land. In comparison, the restriction here was closer to a rule of nature... and like every rule, there were loopholes that could be exploited.

He'd first encountered a shamanic divine that'd used Spirit Fragmentation to send his nascent spirit inside, and here was a demon sovereign who'd split himself into a thousand and eighty bones.

Alas, the shamanic divine had been rather unlucky. It should've been invincible inside the central world, but it just had to come across Lu Yun and his tribulation lightning. This time, however, there was nothing the young man could do against the demon sovereign.

He had the Sugato Sword and his crystal cannons of course, but those things were simply black holes, guzzlers of immortal crystals.

He'd spent a fortune building the immortal crystal garden and luring in the Ancient Tree of Life, going so far as to borrow tens of trillions from the merchant alliance. He was now a debt-ridden man who almost saw mirages of his crystals magically duplicating themselves in his ardent desire for more.

If possible, he'd rather cut down on his spending and use good ole fashioned weapons instead. Moreover, fully-powered attacks from the crystal cannons or Sugato Sword might not be enough to slay this old skeleton.

The demon sovereign's wrath seethed like a constant inferno after his humiliation in Dusk Province. He itched to crush Lu Yun dead right this instant, but had hesitated over the boy's claim that he couldn't protect himself. Ultimately, he withstood his anger and chose not to kill the young man on the spot, because he knew Lu Yun wasn't spouting mere nonsense.

“Resolve our differences? Do you think the humiliation I suffered at Lu Feng’s hands can be forgotten with just a few choice words from you?” The demon sovereign leered with an ugly grimace. “Though you said this seat cannot protect myself, let’s see who’s the one who can’t protect himself now.”

“Correct. Like I said, you can’t protect yourself!” Calm and collected, Lu Yun tilted his head up and observed the more than three-hundred-meter-tall giant skeleton. “If you run into someone from the Green Firmament, how many blows from the Skyturning Seal do you think you’d be able to withstand?”

“The Green Firmament!” The demon sovereign shook. “You say the Green Firmament is also here? And they brought the Skyturning Seal with them?”

“Yes, the Green Firmament’s Fangyang Xing is here with the Skyturning Seal. When I fought him outside the World Boundary, he used the seal to dispel my sword energy,” Lu Yun answered calmly.

“A trivial Fangyang Xing...” the demon sovereign snorted in contempt.

“Hahahaha!” Lu Yun burst out into hearty laughter. “Trivial, you say? Demon Sovereign, you yourself used a special method to sneak into this realm, do you think the Green Firmament’s powerhouses won’t possibly do the same?”

The demon sovereign fell silent. There were indeed countless experts in the Green Firmament. Were it not for certain limitations, the entire world of immortals would’ve long become theirs.

A single powerhouse could use the Skyturning Seal to shatter his skeletal body in one blow. After coming back to life, his enduring true spirit had begun to dissipate and transform into regular nascent and true spirits, further weakening his current form.

“So what are you proposing?” the skeleton sneered. “Do you perhaps wish to join forces with that laughable strength of yours? This seat could kill you by just blowing in your direction! Or are you going to block the Skyturning Seal for me?”

The demon sovereign didn’t dread the Green Firmament’s powerhouses; what he was wary of were terrible immortal treasures like the seal.

“I can’t deter the Skyturning Seal, but this can!” With a flip of his hand, a nine hundred and ninety-nine storied pagoda—the Sugato Sword—appeared in his hand.

Hadal Bonfire twitched fiercely in the demon sovereign’s eyes.

“I’ll lend you the Sugato Sword so you can withstand the Skyturning Seal. In exchange, we’ll write off any past animosity between us. How about it? As for Lu Feng humiliating you, you can seek vengeance once you grow strong enough.” Lu Yun stood in the air, his tone brimming with confidence.

“Aren’t you afraid I’ll renege on our agreement and kill you off here and now once the sword is in my possession?” The skeleton smiled coldly.

“You are the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign! Although I was born in this era, I have heard of your illustrious name! You fought against the immortal emperor in the Primordial Era, and while history labels you a demon, you are also a great figure of indomitable spirit and righteousness. How would you possibly covet the possession of an insignificant true immortal?” Lu Yun casually tossed the Sugato Sword to the skeleton. “You can return this to me after you take the Skyturning Seal.”

“Very well!” The demon sovereign blinked, then nodded. “Since you’re being so straightforward, let it not be said that this seat is a hypocrite. Our previous grudge shall be written off, and when I take the Skyturning Seal from them, I will return your Sugato Sword!”

Chapter 722: The Heart to Change the World

In the Primordial Era, the demon sovereign and immortal emperor had fought to a stalemate that the latter ultimately broke by shattering the demon sovereign’s dao heart.

Upon his fall, the demon sovereign’s obsession had transformed into an enduring true spirit. From this process, it could be seen that he was an exceedingly proud and opinionated individual.

Only one who valued the weight of their words in gold could form an enduring true spirit. If the demon sovereign were to break his word after being reborn, he would be breaking his dao heart again and truly meet his end.

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“Additionally, the Green Firmament isn’t the only party you should be wary of. If my speculations are right, the demon god will also visit the central world,” remarked Lu Yun, who then raised his eyebrows when a sudden realization dawned on him. “The demon god is searching for a new body, and currently in the entire world, there is none more suitable than yours!”

"The demon god?" The demon sovereign trembled involuntarily and the Hadal Bonfire in his head flickered uneasily.

The demon god had gained his strength by merging with the true spirit of the Exalted Divine emperor. As long as he could find a fitting body and soul to possess, he would become a great emperor in no time at all.

When that happened, the entire world of immortals would become demonic soil.

Fortunately, there were only a few bodies and souls in the world that could withstand the demon god’s true spirit. Unfortunately for one of them, the demon sovereign happened to be a prime specimen.

Previously, the demon god had attempted to make use of a stone spirit. However, since a stone spirit was only the empty shell of a body and lacking in spirit, flaws abounded without the anchoring force of a soul. Unleashing his true strength proved impossible, and it was little better than having no body at all.

Just like Lu Yun said, the demon sovereign’s strongest opponent may not be the Green Firmament, but the demon god. In the prolonged silence, Hadal Bonfire once more flickered anxiously, betraying his current state of mind.

He’d been pinned down by the demon god once, but was able to escape by utilizing a hidden ace. Escaping possession a second time wouldn’t be so easy.

“Rest assured, Demon Sovereign. After the fusion of the Sugato Sword and its crowning jewel, its weapon spirit has greatly increased in strength. As long as you possess sufficient immortal crystals, you’ll be able to deploy the Sugato Sword to its fullest potential.

“Moreover, I can see that your nascent spirit is refining the Hadal Bonefire. Not even the spirit of an emperor will be able to possess you once you fully integrate the fire with your nascent spirit.”

As he spoke, Lu Yun was suddenly struck by a stray thought that caused his heart to skip a beat. Merge Hadal Bonefire with the nascent spirit?!

A nascent spirit method?

He immediately sat down cross-legged and called upon the formula dao. Following that flash of inspiration to further conclusions, he began deducing a nascent spirit method.

Meanwhile, the demon sovereign’s body rapidly shrank to the size of a regular person, and his appearance also changed from white bones to human flesh and blood. He was a slender, middle-aged man with black hair, a beard, and a dark glint twinkling ominously in his eyes. Since his true body was formed from the coalescence of a thousand and eighty real immortals, he wasn’t affected by the immortal restriction.

He gaped at Lu Yun, confused by what the young man was doing. Why had he suddenly started... cultivating?

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“No, that’s wrong! It’s impossible for an ordinary nascent spirit or a true spirit to withstand a real flame, and the possibility of failure is even greater when the two are merged! That path cannot be pursued!” Lu Yun muttered to himself.

“The nascent spirit of the demon sovereign is formed by the combination of his nascent spirit and enduring true spirit, so it can resist a real flame... so near, yet so far...”

“A real flame, a real flame! A nascent spirit can’t refine a real flame, nor can it refine another source of real force... but if that force is false... if it’s intangible... if it doesn’t exist...!”

When Lu Yun’s eyes shot open, two rays of black light beamed sixty meters ahead into the darkness.

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“Scram!!” Situated at the core of the central world, Xing Chen bellowed fiercely. The Sword Atlas flew out from behind him, split into a hundred and eight sword dragons, and slashed through space. In a quick instant, the immortals besieging them were wiped out by the terrifying sword energy.

“Feinie, Xuanxi, Xiaoxiao, Xingzi, do everything within your power and kill whoever dares to draw close!” Lu Yun’s voice rang out coldly.

His six nascent spirits were inside hell, and since he was one with his replica, Xing Chen could also call upon the realms of yin and yang.

“Understood!” Four Yama Kings walked out of the void. They quickly began setting up formations, drawing talismans, and creating poisons, while Yuying and Zhaoqing remained hidden in the void as concealed weapons for times of need.

Xing Chen sat down beside Qing Yu and sent his consciousness into Yuying's Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.

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"You're deducing a cultivation method!" Sensing the fluctuations from Lu Yun's body, the demon sovereign's expression changed drastically.

Deducing a cultivation method!

To think this young man would leave himself in such a vulnerable state and try to theorize a method right in front of an enemy! More importantly, the way he was going about his hypotheses was entirely visible to the demon sovereign!

"He's not deducing an ordinary cultivation method, but a complete method that may even qualify as a dao!" The revelation shocked the demon sovereign. "A nascent spirit method... he's deducing a nascent spirit method! The nascent spirits of immortals are fragile and completely lack protection without a physical body. Certain death in battle is inevitable if they lack defensive support, but the method he's deducing is intended to temper the nascent spirit itself and utilize combat arts in conjunction with it!

"...Hmm? He's using my method of fusing Hadal Bonefire with my nascent spirit..."

Hum!

Upon realization of this, the demon sovereign activated the Sugato Sword and sealed off the premises with a curtain of blue light. He greatly understood the significance represented by the advent of such a nascent spirit method. Not only for him, but for the rest of the world at large!

"This will change the immortal dao! So his ambitions extend as far as a revolution of the immortal dao... no, not only that, but of the entire world! This nascent spirit method will change the world of immortals!" The demon sovereign felt his throat go dry.

"The successor of the ancient primordial emperor? Qi Hai underestimates Lu Yun far too much! It was only by luck that the immortal emperor was able to obtain... obtain... that item and become the sovereign of the world of immortals! He isn't qualified to have Lu Yun as his heir!"

Two white flames flared up within the demon sovereign's pitch-black eyes, flickering with a mixture of killing intent and anticipation.

"No, I can't kill him! If I break my word and kill him here, my newly recovered dao heart will shatter again! I will be erased from existence!

"Moreover, the nascent spirit art he's creating will actually... greatly benefit me." As he spoke, the demon sovereign sat down and looked at Lu Yun with an expectant gaze. "It will enable me to completely merge the Hadal Bonefire with my nascent spirit, thus protecting it, my soul, and my true spirit! I will have a complete soul again!"

Chapter 723: Facet Observation Method

Lu Yun split his attention between deducing the nascent spirit method and exploring the secrets of the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals on his grand tour of the treasure.

“Wait! That’s right, the nascent spirit exists between a state of reality and nonbeing. If something that only exists in reality cannot be absorbed by the nascent spirit to enhance it, then... what about something that is a nonentity?”

“If the nascent spirit were to evolve to a state of nonbeing and return to reality, then... it would also become something real!”

“When a sacrifice-born divine spirit is born of accumulated offerings, that is a process of turning unreality into something tangible, something real!”

“If all living beings were to light incense in worship of the Dusk River, then the river would give birth to a god, the god of Dusk River! If all living beings were to worship Mount Exalted, then a god of Mount Exalted would also come forth!”

“No, there’s no need to offer sacrifices. I only need to utilize thoughts and will to transform what is non-being into something that exists. In order for a divine spirit to be born—”

Boom!!

Lu Yun's six nascent spirits churned into motion with a surge of action, and the full power of hell was bestowed upon them. Tides of deduction surged from Xing Chen into the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals.

Everything contained within the scroll flashed before Lu Yun’s eyes. “The key to drawing something real out of emptiness is in here... I see... I understand now.”

Celestial Master Zhang had drawn the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals using the essence of God, depicting every secret he knew about the origin of divine spirits in the treasure. Lu Yun’s six nascent spirits circulated furiously, greedily absorbing the core secrets of the divines.

“With the nascent spirit as the altar and thoughts as the god, I observe the world!”

Boom—

The six paths trembled and an enormous amount of power flooded out of hell into Lu Yun’s body. A part of his nascent spirit shuddered violently and projected a real world.

“This... this is a projection of the twenty-four facets! How is this possible?!” The demon sovereign sprang up from his seated position and looked incredulously upon the sight.

Lu Yun’s nascent spirit had manifested the twenty-four facets of the world, including the heretofore unexplored central world! His nascent spirit was like a real world that truly existed!

“Is this the nascent spirit method he’s invented?” Amazement shone out of the demon sovereign’s eyes as he took a deep breath. “The nascent spirit hovers between the realms of what is real and what isn’t, but he’s fully transformed it into something real. If he passes this kind of method on to me... bah! What do I speak of? If he does, won’t I have become his disciple?” He shook his head in vehement rejection.

“My nascent spirit observation method was inspired by you, Demon Sovereign. It’s an opportunity I was able to grasp only because of you, so even if I pass it on, we’d only be fellow daoists, not master and disciple.” Lu Yun opened his eyes, having caught the demon sovereign’s mutterings.

“Fellow daoist.” He bent in a deep, ceremonial bow and shared the first draft of his nascent spirit method.

“Fellow daoist!” Caught off guard, the demon sovereign quickly returned the courtesy.

“The initial stages of the nascent spirit observation method are complete. There are no corresponding combat arts or other techniques, it's just a simple, entry-level observation method. If the honored sovereign finds success in cultivating it and unearths new advancements, I hope to benefit from your generous tutelage, or witness it spreading far and wide in the world of immortals,” Lu Yun chuckled.

“Your words are too momentous, fellow daoist!” The demon sovereign nodded. “Your vision and scope of mind is great and encompasses the world. If the immortal emperor had possessed such awareness and foresight, would I have risen up against him in those times? Only... are you not concerned, fellow daoist, that once this method is disseminated in the world...”

“Two heads are better than one!” Lu Yun stood with his hands behind his back. “How is the world to improve if everyone hangs onto everything for dear life simply because it is their own? If this nascent spirit observation method is truly to be perfected, it needs the collective wisdom of all living beings.

“One person can create a cultivation method by themselves, but alone they cannot hew a great path. The dao is the fruit of accomplishment from the joint intelligence of all, and the dao of all is what we call the great dao!

“It was only after the founders of the pill, equipment, formation, and talisman daos popularized their paths in the world that the four supplemental paths truly became a great dao between heaven and earth.” Lu Yun spoke assertively and with great conviction. As he spoke, the energy of the land pulsed around him.

The great dao was the dao of all!

The same was true for Qing Yu's formula dao as well. Once the Dusk sacred land was established, she would pass on her formula dao and utilize the combined wisdom of all living beings to raise it to greater heights.

The demon sovereign jerked involuntarily, and the light in his eyes flickered with varying intensity. After processing everything he'd heard, he heaved a great sigh.

“It is I who don't have the courage to pass on the Hadal Bonefire Method, thereby enabling it to become a great dao as well!”

It was in that moment that the demon sovereign who'd dominated the Primordial Era truly bowed his head in defeat.

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The Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign left.

If he didn't leave now, he couldn't promise that he wouldn't give in to the urge to kill Lu Yun. The boy was too frightening, not just in terms of possessions and territory, but also mentality and foresight. He was destined to become a sovereign of this age, sooner or later, uniting the world of immortals and becoming the second immortal emperor.

However, the demon sovereign refused to bend the knee to anyone. He'd already fostered true killing intent toward Lu Yun, and he really couldn't promise anything if he didn't leave now.

"What kind of person is the demon sovereign?" Lu Yun cocked his head at his new ally's departing figure. He could tell from Su Xiaoxiao and Cangyin's memories that this personage seemed to have suddenly appeared in the world one day, become a demon sovereign, then faced off with the immortal emperor.

One could plainly tell even back then that the sovereign had exceeded the principal realm.

"Hmm?" Lu Yun's expression changed as a pillar of white light behind the tombstone shot up to the skies, illuminating a great seal in the firmament—one that was milky-white and glittered with aureate radiance.

It drew the attention of everyone within a four thousand kilometer radius.

"The Immortal Subjugation Seal?!" Lu Yun's jaw dropped. "No, not the Immortal Subjugation Seal, but a projection. Someone's broken into the emperor's tomb!"

Just as he was about to charge over himself, he forced himself to calm down.

He'd spent seven days deducing the nascent spirit method, which meant there were less than ten days until Qing Yu fully refined the mandate of the central world.

"The seal's just a smokescreen, there's something else here that's even greater than it! That's the true ultimate treasure of the immortal emperor. Lu Shenhou's probably here as well, so he'll want it too!" Lu Yun whipped his head toward a corner of the realm.

There, within a fifty kilometer radius, was a zone that his Spectral Eye couldn't penetrate. If some other treasure was to be found in the tomb, it had to be located there. To think was to take action, so Lu Yun called upon the Wandering Step and landed beside it in a single stride.

Boom! Boom!!

Dull thuds traveled into his ear as soon as he arrived.

The Sword of Slaughter and the Skyturning Seal!

Two of the greatest man-made treasures clashed against each other, but what made for a bizarre sight was that their movements were completely restricted to that circle a hundred kilometers across.

"You're finally here, Lu Yun... dare you battle me?"

An enormous spear of light fell from the heavens and pierced straight down toward Lu Yun's head.

Wu Tulong!

Chapter 724: The Dao Tree

Wu Tulong's spear landed the moment his voice fell; Lu Yun leaned slightly to the side to evade the foreboding edge.

Boom!

The spear buried its tip in the ground in a massive cloud of gray dust.

Retrieving his spear, Wu Tulong didn't press on any further. Hovering in the sky, he looked down at Lu Yun as Mo Qitian and Zi Chen came into view. Both wielding keenly honed divine swords, they looked at their former companion with cold, ruthless eyes. Evidently, they intended to keep him cornered here and prevent him from entering the circular area a hundred kilometers across.

"Senior brothers, so we meet again." Lu Yun made a deep bow of greeting. "Unless I'm mistaken, all of you have freed yourselves from the soul seeds and regained your autonomy. Why then do you still let Dongfang Hao order you around?"

"Dongfang Hao?" Zi Chen's expression remained chilly, a hint of derision flashing in his eyes. "Who is he to control us?"

Lu Yun's heart sank upon hearing the response. Since it wasn't Dongfang Hao... then it had to be Lu Shenhou!

In Lu Yun's eyes, Dongfang Hao was little more than a lucky bastard who'd chanced upon the Sword of Chaos. But Lu Shenhou was different. He was the real enemy, someone the primordial immortal emperor himself had considered an enemy!

He was a character who'd played a part in the fall of the Primordial Era! Compared to Dongfang Hao, Lu Shenhou was the one to guard against!

"I see, so Dongfang Hao is also being played by Lu Shenhou!" Lu Yun's eyes narrowed.

"Lu Yun, it's time we finish the battle we postponed all those years ago." Wu Tulong's spear vibrated as its light rose again, glinting viciously at Lu Yun. "You two, don't interfere. He's mine."

Both Zi Chen and Mo Qitian nodded. Forming a triangle with Wu Tulong that trapped Lu Yun in the center, they showed no signs of participating in the fight to come. However, if Lu Yun tried charging out of the encirclement, they would surely retaliate with no reservations.

"Under any other circumstances, I would've been happy to settle the question once and for all, Senior Brother Wu. But forgive me for lacking the time to play with you right now," Lu Yun replied slowly.

"Do you think you can leave?" Mo Qitian snorted coldly. "We've sealed off the entire area, not even a speck of dust can slip out."

Offering no reply, Lu Yun sat cross-legged in the empty air.

Hum!

A second, identical Lu Yun walked out over the seated one and halted over his head.

"The nascent spirit?" His three opponents blinked. "Do you think to overwhelm us with just your nascent spirit?"

Nascent spirits could only unleash their proper battle strength by remaining inside the body and acting in concert with the flesh. For example, the Exalted Immortal Sect's Method of the Great Peng could

transform one's nascent spirit into that of a great peng, but the user's own immortal force was needed to deploy the mythical bird's combat arts.

To fight with the exposed nascent spirit alone was only possible when one held an overwhelming cultivation advantage. Take the previous shamanic divine as another example; he could easily overpower everyone in the realm, which explained why he'd felt safe sending his nascent spirit piecemeal into the central world.

Under the immortal restriction's influence, Lu Yun's nascent spirit was restricted to the true immortal realm, just like Wu Tulong, Mo Qitian, and Zi Chen, so to face them with his nascent spirit alone was simple suicide.

What they didn't realize was that the "nascent spirit" they saw wasn't Lu Yun's primary one. Rather, the energy leaking out of his nascent spirit in hell had formed a replica spirit within Lu Yun.

Shaped after the six paths of reincarnation, his nascent spirit was too powerful for his body to accommodate. Even a single strand far surpassed the nascent spirits of other immortals.

"Senior brothers, this inept Lu just comprehended a brand-new great dao not long ago. I look to you for some guidance."

His replica spirit opened its eyes and gathered its will. With the nascent spirit as the altar and will as the god... it conceptualized the world!

Boom!

Space fractured as a world slowly came into being.

"The world of immortals! This is the world of immortals! His nascent spirit's transformed into an entire world?! Impossible!" The normally-unruffled Wu Tulong completely lost his composure, eyes bulging in disbelief.

Boom!!

Manifesting the twenty-four facets, Lu Yun's nascent spirit engulfed Wu Tulong, Mo Qitian, and Zi Chen.

"Though I've created a nascent spirit observation method, its combat arts and fighting techniques aren't yet complete. Since you senior brothers have come, please graciously help this little brother perfect the style of fighting with one's nascent spirit."

A long peal of laughter sounded out even as Lu Yun conjured a myriad of variations and relentlessly pummeled the three peerless geniuses.

The world created through nascent spirit observation possessed power beyond compare... but even so, it wasn't a fighting technique in the truest sense. By acting together, the three geniuses could easily ward off its attacks.

However, escaping from it was another story entirely.

As long as Lu Yun's nascent spirit lived on, it could split into endless replicas to maintain the might of the twenty-four facets, unless the opponent possessed a nascent spirit stronger than his and could break the projected world through brute force.

In the meantime, Lu Yun's physical self finally set foot into that circular area.

"His nascent spirit method is very strange. It isn't particularly lethal, but it comes in wave after wave and keeps us trapped inside." Wu Tulong growled deep in his throat. "We need to be careful just the same. He's using us as grinding stones to hone this method!"

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"What?!" The scenery underwent a radical shift when Lu Yun set foot in the new area, and he saw something he hadn't expected even in his wildest dreams. "So it was this thing! No wonder, no wonder!"

His chest heaved fiercely up and down, and his heart pounded loudly in his chest. "With this in his possession, it's no surprise the immortal emperor became the lord of the multiverse, the emperor of all!

"In anyone's hand, it would be a sword hanging over the immortal dao's proverbial head!

"The Immortal Subjugation Seal is little more than a fragment of the immortal dao, a weapon that can subdue those who belong to the immortal dao. But this thing... this thing is the truest supreme treasure of the immortal dao!"

Lu Yun's eyes were glued to the immensity in his vision. Seen from the outside, the area measured only a hundred kilometers in width, but once inside, there was another dimension entirely to it.

In the sky, the Skyturning Seal and Sugato Sword repeatedly smashed against each other with tremendous force, while a throng of mighty immortals below was either busy tearing into each other or trying to refine the treasure.

"They're dreaming if they think they can refine it... Who under the heavens possibly can? Not even the immortal emperor truly did so!" Lu Yun took a deep breath. In the depths of his consciousness, the Tome of Life and Death vibrated and released ice-cold waves to protect his clarity of mind.

"It must be a trap set by Lu Shenhou... Otherwise, how could this thing even be here?!" Lu Yun had once spoken the name of this treasure aloud. In fact, every immortal had done so at some point in the past. Never a taboo before, it was now impossible to voice its name because so many knew of its location and that it could be found right here. The world's inexorable laws had acted swiftly to shield its existence and censor its name.

Chapter 725: Rebuild The Immortal Dao?

The Dao Tree!

Never in his wildest dreams had Lu Yun expected to find it here, so the moment he laid eyes on it, he was certain this was all a trap. Of course, he'd never seen it in person before, but he remembered its appearance from Cangyin's memories.

"Dao Tree, Dao Tree... this thing shouldn't be part of the immortal dao!"

Strictly speaking, the Dao Tree wasn't a towering tree, but a tree-shaped world that was divided into three layers. One could find star-like fruit growing within each layer: dao fruits!

Aether dao fruits were located in the outermost layer, arcane dao fruits in the middle, and origin dao fruits in the innermost. When plucking a dao fruit, dao immortals traveled through the void and arrived at the Dao Tree to pick one of its fruits.

The three kinds of fruits were found in successive layers, each of which imposed strict limitations in terms of cultivation realm. Only those in the corresponding realm were permitted entrance into one of the tree's layered worlds to obtain a fruit. Such were the rules set by the immortal dao.

But if one roamed free of those stipulations—like right now, for example—this tree was then the greatest treasure of immortal dao. By refining its core, one could rule the immortal dao itself through it.

Most of the dao fruits growing on the tree were mere mirages for the immortals present. Without the appropriate cultivation realm, it was impossible to actually touch the fruits.

Lu Yun looked at the majestic tree, then at the immortals madly fighting one another nearby, a little uncertain of how to proceed.

Grab the tree and run? Anyone in possession of the Dao Tree would be a walking target and be quickly blasted into oblivion. He'd already noticed five unbelievably powerful minds locking on to him. Any unusual twitch out of him would be met with a barrage of attacks in a split second.

"How did those fur seals get in here..." Lu Yun hovered unmoving in the air, his eyes on a patch teeming with fur seals.

Zhao Shenguang had proclaimed the disgusting creatures as enemies of Nephrite Major. Any fur seal reckless enough to set foot on Nephrite soil was to be given no quarter. Furthermore, he personally held down the fort in Destiny City, bringing to bear the might of the heavenly mandate, but these fur seals had still somehow made it in.

Lu Yun even glimpsed the big fur seal. Just like the demon sovereign and shamanic divine powerhouse, the giant fur seal had split himself into the flesh of his many descendants. However, for him to fool the Nephrite mandate's vigilance and enter the central world was still rather unexpected.

"Milord, destroy it!" Ge Long's voice suddenly reverberated in Lu Yun's consciousness. "Destroy that Dao Tree! It shouldn't exist in the first place!"

"What??" Lu Yun froze.

"There was no such tree when the immortal dao first came into existence. Someone planted the tree in the immortal dao as a trap by which to control immortals!" The old servant's tone was extraordinarily solemn. "Does milord recall the monster that feeds on the energy of cultivators? This is a similar case before us, this tree is the one that swallowed the void realm back in the day!"

Inside the Dusk Tomb once resided a strange force that could devour a cultivator's energy. It left their bodies intact and only fed on their cultivation realms. Every time the force manifested itself, it'd consume the cultivator's realms and plunge them back to mortality.

But according to what Ge Long was saying, that force had been... the strength of a living entity?

Shocked incredulity draped over Lu Yun.

“Wait, since there were no cultivators back in the Primordial Era, was it all because that monster ate their realms?” His eyes grew round. Something that fed on a... cultivation realm?

A creature that could eat cultivation itself?

How’s that even edible?

“That monster was born from this Dao Tree.” Ge Long breathed deeply. It was only after he’d eaten the monster in question that he’d recovered his sense of self.

“As long as the Dao Tree lives on, it will continue to spawn similar monsters... What’s more, when wielded by certain things, the tree becomes an obstruction to the immortal dao itself! So, destroy it and rebuild the immortal dao!” The old servant’s eyes glinted sharply as he spoke with unyielding resolve.

“Rebuild the immortal dao?” Lu Yun trembled violently. He was nothing but a weak immortal that’d barely begun his journey on the immortal dao, a newborn having just taken his first, halting steps. For him to rebuild the immortal dao was a fable straight out of the Arabian Nights.

He projected his consciousness inside the kingdom of hell and looked the old servant in the eye.

“It’s not as complicated as it might seem.” Realizing that he might have sounded too sensational, Ge Long hastened to tone things down. “Due to the Dao Tree’s existence, the dao immortal realm deviated from its intended path. So long as you destroy the tree and find a new way to cultivate the dao immortal realm, you’ll be able to reconnect the fractured immortal dao.

“The tree’s taken root in the immortal dao and become a poisonous tumor, so we must excise it!”

“I see now.” Lu Yun let out a faint sigh.

“As for how to reach the dao immortal realm without the tree, milady will be able to deduce it in her capacity as the Dao Sovereign once she’s accomplished enough in formula dao,” Ge Long added.

“In that case, the question is... how do I destroy the tree? With my current strength, I can’t even scratch it with my final trump card—an emperor’s battle zombie,” Lu Yun asked with a frown.

“Milord, this old servant’s swords...”

Lu Yun interrupted Ge Long as soon as the man began his response.

“I’ve more or less guessed your identity by now, so don’t call yourself ‘old servant’ anymore. And stop calling me ‘milord’, too, you’ll give me a heart attack one of these days,” Lu Yun grumbled ill-humoredly.

For one thing, Ge Long was speaking of rebuilding the immortal dao. Added to that the four swords and the sword formation... Lu Yun would be a blithering idiot if he still failed to guess the man’s identity.

There weren’t many legends pertaining to Ge Long in the world of immortals, but on Earth, the fame of this ancestor was known far and wide.

Ge Long grinned from ear to ear. “You’re the master of that supreme treasure, and this old ser... I came back to life through it, so that obviously makes you my master.”

“Forget about it. What were you saying about your swords?” Lu Yun fidgeted awkwardly.

“My four swords rule over destruction. Respectively, they represent ruin, devastation, obliteration, and annihilation. What lies inside the four coffins are the souls of the swords. As for their physical selves... someone refined them into the focal points of four great sealing formations and capped them over fissures in four corners of the world,” Ge Long explained. “Sir, if you can retrieve the swords’ physical selves and reattach their souls, the resulting sword formation will be strong enough to destroy the Dao Tree.

“The tree doesn’t need to be destroyed right at the moment. When your ten Yama Kings reach the dao immortal realm, they’ll be able to bring you back here. In the meantime, with these deathsworn guarding the tree, no one will be able to lay their hands on it.”

Chapter 726: Self-Detonation

At Ge Long’s reminder, the truth of the situation suddenly dawned on Lu Yun.

The Dao Tree wasn’t a treasure without an owner. There was a group of crimson long-haired monsters protecting the third layer and stopping immortals from plucking their origin dao fruits. For that very reason, the path of immortality stopped at the origin dao realm.

The tree’s core that these immortals were fighting over was most likely a fake. Lu Yun smelled foul play at work here. With that in mind, he slowly backed away, ready to leave. Noting his intentions, those keeping watch relaxed inwardly.

After all, the prevailing rumor in the outside world was that the immortal emperor had chosen Lu Yun as his heir and that this tree was a gift left for the young man. Therefore, seeing him withdraw from the competition was quite a relief.

Hum!

Space trembled as a bronze spear tore through the void and landed firmly next to Lu Yun, cutting off his retreat. A crimson ripple undulated in the air, followed by a humanoid monster covered in thick, blood-colored hair. Beckoning with its hand, it summoned the spear back into its grip.

“You’ve finally come.” An eerie, putrid smell wafted from the crimson monster, and its arrival tainted the space dark red.

Movement petered out across the scene as every immortal stopped to gaze at the monster that’d severed the immortal dao and blocked their access to origin dao fruits. In the sky, the Sugato Sword and Skyturning Seal also stopped clashing against each other and fell back to the ground.

The demon sovereign blurred to Lu Yun’s side, a sight that disgruntled more than one immortal.

“Sure enough, you’re the head of demons in the world of immortals, Lu Yun! You’ve allied yourself with a primordial demon!” someone shouted at the top of his lungs. However, no one paid him any heed as everyone’s attention was firmly occupied by the crimson monster.

Lu Yun opened the Spectral Eyes and scanned the crowd. While he didn’t spot any shamanic divines, other divine tribes had come en masse.

“How about this: if you’re willing to stay and die here, I’ll let all the immortals leave alive,” the crimson monster offered, its mouth stretched wide in an ugly rictus.

A strange hush descended upon the crowd.

“Are you saying you can kill all of us by yourself?” chortled the demon sovereign beside Lu Yun. He was still in his human form, rather than his skeletal self. Even so, two eerie white flames burned in his eyes, and the Sugato Sword in his hands unleashed a legion of spectral swords that hovered around him.

The Skyturning Seal also revealed its true form, the air trembling in response. A pale blue figure landed in its wake—a powerhouse from the Green Firmament. In his grasp, the Skyturning Seal could unleash its greatest power.

They’d been battling each other in a no-holds-barred clash moments ago, but had unexpectedly joined forces at this juncture, the full brunt of their auras aimed at the crimson monster.

Their target’s face was inscrutable as it was fully hidden beneath its crimson hair. Only two bloody eyes shone through, fixed squarely on Lu Yun.

“Kill it!!” someone roared. “That’s the monster that guards the Dao Tree. If we kill it, the immortal dao will be mended and we’ll be able to safely reach origin dao realm!”

The immortal’s presence was as vast as the sea. His cultivation marked him as a humble true immortal, but his superb mastery over his immortal force and nascent spirit clearly demonstrated that he was a dao immortal who’d severed his cultivation to cultivate anew into the void realm!

Such cases weren’t all that rare in the world at large. Many immortals who possessed a resolute will had decisively severed their cultivation after the emergence of the void realm in order to start again from the beginning.

At the man’s urging, the rest of the crowd stepped forward and glared menacingly at the monster. None of them were concerned that Lu Yu might die; all they cared about was slaying this monster.

“None of you make a move!” Startled, Lu Yun hastened to stop them. “You’re not its match. Fall back and evacuate the premises! Forget about the Dao Tree. With this group of crimson monsters here, no one will obtain it.”

“What?!” The demon sovereign and powerhouse from the Green Firmament shook, because they’d noticed Lu Yun’s wording. “Their” and “a group!”

This monster wasn’t the only one of its kind here?

As if on cue, the world darkened like a bloody shadow was settling down on this land. A viscous, crimson liquid akin to blood appeared in the sky above, and pairs of eyes glowing crimson blinked inside it one after the other. In the depths of the dark sky, many a dao weapon hung in the air, radiating a cold light and poised to strike at any second.

An eerie chill ran down the backs of everyone present.

One monster wielding a dao weapon could be easily dealt with if everyone attacked together, but a legion of the long-haired creatures? Even the nine celestial emperors of the previous generation would be obliterated all the same.

In this realm, immortals weren't limited by the immortal dao and were free to approach the Dao Tree, but likewise, it also meant the crimson monsters populating the tree's third layer were at full liberty to indiscriminately unleash their full force and kill everyone here.

"Lu Yun, I will let them go as long as you remain here. How do you decide?" With a ruthless leer, the crimson monster repeated its earlier question.

This time, the eyes of the crowd landed on the young man. However, no one truly believed he'd sacrifice his life for the sake of strangers, to say nothing of those who were hostile to him.

"Alright!" Lu Yun suddenly spoke. "I'll stay here, so let them go."

"Hmm?!" The crimson monster froze for a split second, while the gathered immortals also gaped at him.

Boom!

Lu Yun held his arm aloft and released the white Path of Ingress out of his palm. The treasure tore through the void inside the Dao Tree's realm and formed a path leading to the world outside. Following which, he spread out his arms and stilled the circulation of immortal force inside him in a gesture of surrender.

Uncertainly flashed across the faces of the monsters in front of him and the legion waiting in the sky. Lu Yun had indeed surrendered and abandoned all forms of resistance.

Swish swish swish!

Vein-like things unfurled from the firmament and coiled around him.

"These are... the serpentine creatures in the outer regions of the divine tomb under Mount Exalted." Lu Yun frowned slightly, but made no move to resist.

"You have three breaths to depart. Tarry too long and you die," the crimson monster declared frostily.

"We go!" Everyone reacted promptly. Immortals all around the area sprang into motion and maneuvered their immortal swords to fly along the Path of Ingress and out of this realm.

In less than three breaths, the crowd had retreated like the receding tide. In the process, Lu Yun received boundless goodwill that coalesced into a gleaming karmic fruit, even as the blood-vessel-like serpentine creatures encased him in a giant cocoon.

"I know this is your primary self, so this time you, you... are you self-detonating?!" the crimson monster shrieked in the middle of his sentence.

KABOOOOOM!!

Chapter 727: Time Domain

Roaring and howling with disbelief, it'd never occurred to the crimson monster that Lu Yun would detonate himself on a whim! The human blew himself up so thoroughly there wasn't even a shred of a soul fragment left behind in the dust!

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The immortal emperor's tomb, outside the confines of the Dao Tree.

Wu Tulong, Mo Qitian, and Zi Chen cut sorry figures, trapped as they were inside the world of immortals manifested by Lu Yun's nascent spirit. However, they were slowly gaining the upper hand by coordinating their efforts. Numerous powerful combat arts sailed out in tandem, battering the image again and again. Soon, it seemed, the nascent spirit art would finally crumble.

Hum!

Lu Yun's nascent spirit suddenly contracted on itself and dispelled the world, even as his physical self slowly coalesced into existence.

"My nascent spirit is inside hell and I've stored all my valuables inside the Tome of Life and Death. Even if my physical body dies, I can reforge it with the power of reincarnation. To top it off, the physical body purified by reincarnation isn't even a new body, but my original one... I suppose I'm as good as 'undying' at this stage," Lu Yun murmured to himself as he hovered in the air.

"But that's still no reason to be careless! There are many powerhouses out there who can attack my nascent spirit through my physical body." He heaved a long sigh. Had he been truly caught by the crimson monsters, they could have located his nascent spirit through his body. In all likelihood, they probably had a special method that would enable them to pull his nascent spirit out of hell and trap it inside his body.

"What are you talking about? Undying?" Wu Tulong and the other two had heard every syllable he'd uttered.

They looked at him in shocked stupefaction. He'd obviously left his nascent spirit behind with them, but his physical self had also reappeared out of nowhere. Such a phenomenon defied their comprehension!

"It seems to me that you three serve neither Sword Divine nor Lu Shenhou... You tried to stop me from entering that realm so that I wouldn't be caught by the long-haired monsters, correct? You already knew the truth of that place." Lu Yun cocked his head and observed the three men. "Senior brothers, I can sense a power inside each of you that influences your mind. Allow me to—"

Swish!

His hand shot forward and clutched the air and a bronze spear appeared in his grasp. His nascent spirit shook inside hell and circulated a prodigious amount of immortal force within his body at great speed.

"Time Reincarnation... kill!" With another whisper, Lu Yun took careful aim and struck decisively.

"What?!" Wu Tulong and the others froze in place, caught off-guard by Lu Yun's sudden attack, and through a dao weapon, no less!

The power of time revolved around Lu Yun and froze everything within twenty meters around him! He thrust forward three times in quick succession with the spear, each movement landing at the center of the men's brows with pinpoint accuracy. The time domain shattered after the span of a breath, leaving a pale Lu Yun trembling and shaking.

Thud!

The young man panted heavily and took a knee.

"I can only use the time domain for the duration of a single breath, and it's consumed all of my energy after doing so!" He'd continuously studied the two dao weapons after obtaining them, calling them the time spear and space axe. After ascending to immortality, he'd used formula dao to infer two stunning combat arts from the two weapons: Time Domain and Space Domain.

Inside the kingdom of hell, with the power of an entire world at his disposal, he could deploy these two domains at will. Time Domain, in particular, could stop and even invert the flow of time.

But outside the netherworld, he could only rely on personal reserves of energy, so his freezing of time lasted for all of one second and consumed all of his immortal force in the process.

"It looks like I really shouldn't rashly resort to these two combat arts before I reach the dao immortal realm." Lu Yun took a few pills to restore some immortal force, then bounded in front of the three men.

"I don't know who's pulling your strings, but since we restored the Dao Flower together, I can't just idly sit by and watch you be under someone else's thumb," he heaved a sigh.

They should've been Dao Sovereigns as well. But after falling victim to the soul seeds, the flower's blessing upon them had been dispelled and converged instead on Qing Yu. By tapping their brows with the time spear, Lu Yun had sealed away their nascent spirits, an action that couldn't be undone unless by another time combat art.

"Thankfully, my nascent spirit observation art expended most of your strength, or my Time Domain might not have held any of you in place." With a wave of his hand, he sent the three young men into his kingdom in hell. Or, more precisely, into the domain of life born out of the resurrection layout.

"I feel like Ge Long had me go after that thing just so I would find out what it really is..." He felt like he finally understood the old servant's intentions.

It was impossible to refine the Dao Tree. Without the limitations of the immortal dao, the long-haired monsters would swarm the land as far as the eye could see. Whoever tried to refine the treasure would quickly find themselves on a death mission.

However, if he could slip inside the Dao Tree realm through his ten Yama Kings, there'd be a chance for him to destroy the tree there.

Since the world itself was protecting the tree and preventing anyone from uttering its name, Ge Long had had no other choice. In order to convey the truth of the matter to Lu Yun, the only resolution was to enter the Dao Tree's world. Only there could its name and the method to destroy it be spoken.

“But that still doesn’t answer why the immortal emperor wanted me to go there... Well, since the Dao Tree is a no-go, I might as well go get me an Immortal Subjugation Seal!” Lu Yun looked up at the center of the tomb.

There, the Immortal Subjugation Seal illuminated the firmament with its glorious radiance. Above it, the faint shadow of a great seal could be seen. It didn’t possess the same high and mighty aura exuded by the Skyturning Seal, but there was an otherworldly quality about it, as if it stood above all living beings.

“Heh... some little rats want to take the Path of Ingress from me, hmm? Is this how you express your thanks?” A sneer suddenly floated on Lu Yun’s lips. Beckoning with his hand, he turned the treasure connecting the Dao Tree to the tomb back into a beam of white light that flew back to his palm.

As he did so, a full hundred immortals followed the path and surrounded him.

“Hand over the Path of Ingress... Wait, it’s you, Lu Yun!! You’re not dead?!” The immortals froze when they recognized him.

“I’d already figured out the truth behind that place, so I simply sent in a replica to bring all of you out.” Lu Yun didn’t bat an eye before delivering a blatant falsehood. “Are you here to steal my treasure now? Talk about gratitude!”

Swoosh!

A bewitching purple light flashed between his fingers as Violetgrave appeared in his hand.

“Get lost!” he ordered coldly.

“There’s no need to be afraid of him!” someone urged. “Don’t forget, our clans have formed the ‘Lu Yun Killers’ alliance! Here he is, right in the flesh!”

Purple lightning wreathed the speaker, as if he were bathed in electricity. He was someone from the Zi Clan of the Thundergale Major!

“There’s a hundred of us and just one of him. In fact, all of us are true immortals too. Are we supposed to fear him all by his lonesome?”

Those who could enter the immortal emperor’s tomb were all elites of their factions and genuine void-ascended immortals. Moreover, quite a few were dao immortals who’d severed their cultivation to step into the void realm.

Anyone brave enough to do so was an exceptional figure of great resolve and willpower, so of course they wouldn’t obediently toe the line before Lu Yun.

Chapter 728: No Regrets!

“Moreover!” shouted another immortal of the ‘Lu Yun Killers’, “I could tell that the Lu Yun we saw earlier was his true self. That he’s made it out in one piece means he’s an ally of the fiends that’ve severed the immortal dao. They simply put on a show for us!

“We must slay the demon to right the wrongs of the world!” The speaker was a monster spirit whose true form was that of a silver sea snake. Blue fog puffed out of its mouth whenever it spoke, a clear sign of potent poison.

“Have the monster spirits of the South Sea joined that shitty alliance as well?” Lu Yun narrowed his eyes.

These immortals had just escaped thanks to his Path of Ingress, but he hadn’t received any goodwill from this particular group. Moreover, they’d gone after his treasure immediately after making it out, and not only had they not retreated once Lu Yun re-emerged, but instead attempted to overwhelm and kill their benefactor.

They were more than ungrateful for what Lu Yun had done for them; they were going so far as to bite the hand that fed them! This truly roused his ire.

The silver sea snake was plainly a member of the South Sea court. Although the South Sea emperor hadn’t announced an alliance with Dusk Province, the two were allies in everything but name. Lu Yun had even once sent a large shipment of treasures to the South Sea.

But the sea snake clan of the South Sea had started a ‘Lu Yun Killers’ alliance with other factions! That ignited his rage, and to add further insult to injury, he could tell that the big snake was carrying around numerous talismans and pills produced in Dusk.

“Lu Yun, head of the Star Demon Sect, you’re a monstrous fiend yourself! You not only helped the demon god escape from Mount Exalted, you’re also working with the demons of the Dao Tree to destroy the world of immortals.

“Everyone should kill you as a matter of principle! Today, we shall strike down this demon on behalf of the heavenly dao!” snarled the silver sea snake. “We kill!”

“Kill!” The hundred-odd immortals struck out in unison, banding together behind their collective hostility against Lu Yun. Immortal swords converged into a stream of sword light and slashed powerfully at him.

“Oh fuck off!” he commanded coolly. He lifted his hand and sent Violetgrave’s sharp radiance surging through the sky, forming a great sword curtain that cut into the stream of swords.

Wham!

Combat arts poured in behind the swords—flawless primordial methods, one and all. Some had been passed down from great immortals of the Primordial Era, others were flawless combat arts that Lu Yun and Qing Yu had deduced and disseminated through the world.

Though Lu Yun rebuffed the stream of swords with a single move, the combat arts ripped with a momentum that could sweep over heaven and earth and shattered his sword barrier. He staggered back with a pained grunt.

“Lu Yun!” Venom glittered in the great sea snake’s eyes. “If you brats hadn’t so recklessly restored the path of cultivation and recovered the void realm, we elders wouldn’t have been forced to sever our cultivation and start anew!”

The snake had once been an arcane dao immortal, supreme and unchallenged in the world of immortals. However, the void realm had threatened to knock it off its throne and render it obsolete with the times, forcing it to restart the arduous journey to immortality if it didn't want to be eliminated by the world. It had thus severed its cultivation to travel through the void realm, and by now had reclaimed its immortal heights.

Incorporating a formation of heaven and earth was an option, but that would forego the phenomenon of ascension, forever placing it a peg lower than void-ascended immortals. Most importantly, the formations that Lu Yun distributed couldn't be applied to dao immortals.

For dao immortals with sufficient mental fortitude to begin anew, they obtained their cultivation methods from Dusk Province. The basic void realm method might be weaker than those acquired from the Dao Flower, but it was flexible with innumerable possibilities and worked for every immortal in the world.

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"Do you regret it?" a voice suddenly demanded in Lu Yun's mind. "These immortals are trying to kill you with your own cultivation methods, your combat arts, and even weapons you've refined... Do you regret your actions??"

"Do you?"

"Do you regret it now?"

"Don't you regret it?!"

"Don't you regret giving these ungrateful backstabbers all those precious cultivation methods, combat arts, and great treasures? When you die, you'll have died at the hands of your own creations!"

"Get out of my head!!" a greater voice boomed in Lu Yun's mind, shattering the intrusive thoughts.

"How dare a measly inner demon try to sway my sanity?! Regret? I feel no regret!"

"So what if they've learned my combat arts and acquired my treasures? If I grew complacent because I'd monopolized those things, I would just as soon fall from my pedestal and be destroyed even if I were the greatest sovereign of the world.

"So they've bullied, humiliated, and attempted to kill me with my own creations and products. So what? Those are trials that will only serve to make me stronger! They'll push me to keep moving forward and aim for the stars!"

"If my enemies grow strong, then I'll grow stronger still! What they've learned belongs to me, so their accomplishments belong to me! I'll always be one step ahead of them! I can only reach greater heights if the entire world does so as well.

"Therefore, I don't regret anything."

"Hahaha... How very... optimistic of you..." the insidious voice commented again before bursting like a bubble.

Something seemed to wash over his mind and polish it, making the world appear clearer to his perception. His cultivation had somehow taken a leap forward as well.

The six paths of his nascent spirit circulated madly in the netherworld, casting six-colored radiance over the entire realm. The paths that'd toed the line between illusion and reality tipped over a little more to reality.

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Lu Yun wiped off the corners of his mouth and looked at the hundred and some immortals arrayed in front of him. They'd isolated the area and were coming at him with stormy power. Each immortal unleashing a combat art, they launched yet another concerted attack.

Whoosh!

More than a hundred combat arts converged into an enormous light barrier and slammed down over Lu Yun, followed by a hundred slashes of sword energy. Given that he was pinned down, it would be difficult for him to evade the swords even if he blocked the combat arts.

"Open!" Lu Yun growled, summoning his nascent spirit replica out of the void to project the twenty-four facets, turning illusion into reality and creating a world in front of him.

Wham!

Boom!

The combat arts and immortal swords slammed into the twenty-four manifested facets, shattering the image. Together, the void-ascended true immortals were more powerful than Wu Tulong, Mo Qitian, and Zi Chen combined.

"Kill!" Lu Yun leapt into the air and manifested his nascent spirit again, projecting a great mountain and slamming it down onto the immortals from above.

Mount Exalted!

Lu Yun had manifested Mount Exalted with his nascent spirit. Although it wasn't as vast as the twenty-four facets of the world, it was much more dense and powerful. Although lesser than the true mountain, it still embodied the mountain's aura and presence as it smashed down heavily on the immortals below.

"What is this?? How is he doing this?!" The immortals panicked. They'd never seen such a nascent spirit method before and were thus helpless before it. Their collective killing intent was instantly crushed under the pressure of the great mountain.

Chapter 729: Connate Treasures from a Tribulation

Having destroyed his inner demon, Lu Yun's mind transcended once more and his mastery over his combat arts and techniques took a significant leap forward, especially his nascent spirit observation method.

He'd already used it to create a combat art out of his insights into the twenty-four facets of the world. It was powerful, but lacking in substance as he couldn't manifest the real facets with his current strength.

Thus far, he couldn't observe the entire world of immortals!

However, Mount Exalted was different. Lu Yun had once gazed upon that immense presence with his own eyes and comprehended its profound mysteries. The mountain he manifested now was infinitely close to the real deal in appearance and might.

"So it's not about creating something out of nothing, I need to see something first before I can manifest it.

"Observation means not only taking note of appearance, but more so its presence, strength, and behavior to grasp its essence, turning what is seen to what is real.

"The method reaches great perfection when the nascent spirit becomes one with the sighted object and turns it into reality!"

As Lu Yun's thoughts further sharpened into focus, Mount Exalted grew even more powerful and defined as it slammed into the immortals below. All of their combat arts, immortal swords, and treasures crumbled as easily as papier-maché beneath its pressure.

"Is it a combat art, or a treasure?" someone shouted in despair.

"It's Mount Exalted from Exalted Major, but wasn't it destroyed...?"

Kaboom!

The great mountain rammed dozens of immortals underground, breaking bones and snapping tendons before vanishing into thin air.

Horrified, the other immortals couldn't believe that Lu Yun had managed to break through a perimeter of a hundred and some void-ascended immortals and even gravely injure many of them in the process!

"A combat art! It's an unknown combat art that manifested Mount Exalted!" an immortal from the Zi Clan cried out. "I sense no ripples of inner energy, so he's only using his nascent spirit! He's gathered the power of the land with his nascent spirit to manifest Mount Exalted... How is this possible?!"

"Power of the land?" Inspiration struck Lu Yun from the man's disbelieving exclamation. "Nascent spirits are connected to the heavens and communicate with the world to access its power, which allows me to manifest the might and presence of Mount Exalted. Manifesting reality relies on heaven and earth still, rather than creating something out of thin air."

The spontaneous enlightenment further perfected his method.

Boom!

A three-hundred-meter tall Mount Exalted appeared over Lu Yun's head, attracting a vast surge of heavenly power to amplify its might. It was ten times greater than the mountain from earlier!

"Indeed two heads are better than one! Combat arts are born of the collective wisdom of all sentient beings. Keeping what you know to yourself and shutting yourself in will only lead to decline and destruction!" Lu Yun's mind grew increasingly clear and a weight seemed to lift from his chest, marking the end of the last traces of the inner demon and its influence.

Dejection was a natural development upon seeing his own combat arts and cultivation methods turned against him. Thus, an inner demon had developed over time and appeared at this critical moment to test him.

Although his strong dao heart had survived the interrogation, a trace of frustration had yet lingered from being attacked with his own creations. But then a line from his enemy had lit a spark in the darkness and sent him down the right path for his nascent spirit observation method, helping it reach true completion and scattering the last of his frustrations.

Dao heart now clear from any intrusive thoughts, his faith was thus reinforced.

The Mount Exalted I manifested has a great connection to the facets that I projected earlier... The real Mount Exalted existed within the world of immortals, and though it seemed like I was reducing its size by projecting it with my method, I in fact increased its strength by several times over!

If I start with the twenty-four facets when manifesting the famed mountains and rivers in the world, I can achieve greater power with less effort. The facet observation method can be the basis of all observation methods!

What a pity that Mount Exalted has been destroyed. It'll be impossible for later generations to project it. His mind spun quickly as the different thoughts flashed through it.

"Hmph, I'll show some mercy this time since you helped destroy my inner demon and gave me some new ideas. I won't be so kind next time I run into you." With a huff, Lu Yun spun on his heel and left.

Boom!

Upon his departure, the mountain over his head exploded with a bang. Horrifying shockwaves of power spread in all directions.

Thud!

The mass of immortals sagged to the ground and panted heavily.

"Terrible, absolutely terrible. What was that just now, the real Mount Exalted?" The silver sea snake sprawled on the ground, flicking its tongue with gusto to overcome its shock.

"The first mountain was clearly created by a combat art, but the second one that exploded might very well have been the actual Mount Exalted!"

"But it's already been destroyed..."

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Lu Yun was hardly concerned about letting his would-be attackers go. Their utter rout had left mental scars, and they would never scrounge up the courage to fight Lu Yun again. Right now, his priority was the Immortal Subjugation Seal.

The seal had belonged to the immortal emperor in the Primordial Era, and had kept the world of immortals, immortal dao, and all immortals under control. Just that treasure alone had enabled the immortal emperor to rule over the world even without the Dao Tree.

With the emperor's tomb broken into, the light of the Immortal Subjugation Seal shone with an increasingly brilliant edge. Immortals who'd escaped from the world of the Dao Tree had shifted their attention from tree to seal.

Just like the other tombs in the central world, a giant fissure cracked the tomb of the immortal emperor and permitted light to leak out. Bodies littered the ground around the tomb, copious amounts of blood dying the land red. The battle here had been even more vicious than in the world of the Dao Tree.

Meanwhile, the twenty-eight altars outside continuously activated and teleported yet more immortals into the tomb.

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North Sea, Nephrite Major.

Boom!

An ocean of concentrated lightning receded to reveal a giant beast rampaging within the clouds. It was a giant turtle ten thousand kilometers long, and it bore a pattern resembling the eight trigrams on its shell.

"A tribulation four times more powerful than regular ones, but only one tribulation beast?" Lin Yu and Lin Xuan stood shoulder to shoulder beneath the tribulation clouds. They'd easily passed the lightning phase of the tribulation with Lu Yun's lightning rods; however, only one tribulation beast had emerged after the storm of lightning.

"Aouuu!!" The giant turtle roared and rushed toward Lin Yu and Lin Xuan.

"Kill it!" The brothers were fearless and set up layers of killing formations with simple waves of their hands to churn the beast into mincemeat. Its death didn't bring about the expected tribulation essence, but two connate-grade treasures instead!

"Their tribulations brought about connate-grade treasures?!" Onlookers gasped with surprise, then threw themselves forward in a greedy frenzy. With the retreat of the heavenly tribulation, the immortals charged at the brothers with abandon.

Chapter 730: Paying Back Kindness with Revenge

Lin Yu and Lin Xuan had attracted some attention when they'd left the central world and undone their seal over the North Sea. Immortals had swiftly gathered to observe them from the dark, and greed gripped them tight when the pair of connate-grade treasures emerged.

It was unheard of for such treasures to appear after a cultivator's tribulation, but here they were, right in front of them!

Boom!

Before they could make a move, a great disturbance rocked the sky. An enormous pattern of yin and yang fish took shape in the air, spanning the North Sea and Nephrite Major!

Phenomenon of ascension!

The brothers' phenomenon of ascension was a pair of yin and yang fish!

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Dao City.

"Dammit!" Alarmed, Wanfeng hurriedly barked out a series of orders. "Everyone stand ready! Prepare the crystal cannons! Kill anyone who dares make a move against Lin Yu or Lin Xuan!"

"That won't be necessary, I'll go protect them," volunteered a rascally voice as a figure disappeared with a flash.

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"They're both geniuses whose phenomenon of ascension spans a major," someone called out. "Kill them, kill them now!"

The brothers were of the Lin Clan, but everyone saw them as members of Dusk Province and Lu Yun's followers first and foremost.

Although Dusk Province had taken in an impressive collection of talent in the form of the Qing, Lu, Chen, Xue, and Yin Clans, Chen Xiao and Qing Buyi were the only great geniuses that'd ever emerged from those clans.

Dusk boasted no other geniuses whose phenomena of ascension spanned an entire major. The combined phenomenon of the Lin brothers, though, covered Nephrite Major and the North Sea, a fact which put many ill at ease.

"Halt! Who dares raise their hand!" boomed a threatening voice. A green-haired man made for quite the sight in the sky, appearing out of nowhere to stand firmly in the void, his presence as keen and steady as a javelin's. Scanning his surroundings with eagle eyes, his overwhelming presence unfurled in all directions, intimidating every immortal in the area.

"How dare you cretins think of intervening in the tribulations of Lin members? You court death!" His eyes were intensely sharp and his voice boomed like a giant bell, keeping those in the area at bay. His presence made even dao immortals retreat with ashen faces.

"Origin dao immortal!" a panicked voice shouted. "The Lin Clan possesses a flawless origin dao immortal!"

The eighteen flawless origin dao monster spirits from Levitating Island had shaken the world of immortals and unnerved all of its denizens. With the previous celestial emperors abdicating their thrones and the new generation of celestial emperors not yet matured, the world had no way of dealing with the monster spirit faction.

But now the Lins possessed a flawless origin dao immortal as well??

"The Lin Clan lives up to their reputation as the top clan of the world, alright," an immortal clucked his tongue in surprise. "Although they suffered from House Donglin's secession, their foundation remains unaffected..."

“Wait, something’s not right. His origin dao immortal force hasn’t settled yet, there’s still a trace of arcane dao immortal force. He’s clearly plucked an origin dao fruit only recently...” a crippled dao immortal voiced his observation. “Rumor has it that that appeared in the immortal emperor’s tomb in the central world, as well as crimson long-haired monsters... Did he take advantage of that opening to pluck his dao fruit?”

The green-haired Lin immortal cast a steely glance at the crippled origin dao immortal, who immediately shut his mouth. The speaker was plainly trying to trick other arcane dao immortals into getting themselves killed.

“Anyone who makes a move against Lin Yu or Lin Xuan will find their clans exterminated,” the green-haired man announced coldly, his tones sharp and laced with killing intent.

Fearful silence stifled the scene. Flawless origin dao immortals were seen as invincible in the world of immortals. No one dared twitch a finger with such a powerful being present, and no one even dared think of making a run for it.

From his position on Levitating Island, located on the intersection of the borders between the North Sea and Nephrite Major, Goldenlight scowled at the man and gestured menacingly with his black iron rod. However, he too didn’t do anything either.

“His origin dao fruit is plucked from the actual tree rather than one found on Levitating Island... How did he do it?” Confusion flashed through Goldenlight’s face.

Levitating Island was the de facto sacred land of the primordial monster spirits and it held many secrets, including caches of dao fruit left from the Primordial Era. That was why there were so many flawless origin dao immortals emerging from the faction.

The origin dao fruit the Lin immortal had plucked, however, was straight from the dao fruit tree.

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Finally, the yin and yang fish in the sky melded into the brothers’ bodies. The connate grade treasures had fallen into their grasps as well.

“You two,” the green-haired man remarked coldly to Lin Yu and Lin Xuan, “return to the clan with me.”

“What?” The brothers started. “We reached an agreement with the forefather...”

“I say return with me. Now!” snarled the green-haired man.

“Clan uncle, we’ve joined Dusk Province and become her city lords,” Lin Xuan breathed in deeply and responded with a determined edge in his voice. “We have important matters to attend to. Please forgive these nephews for not being able to return to Primus Major with you.”

“Disobedient fools!” With a scoff, the man grabbed at the brothers.

“Lin Lie!” interjected a furious voice. “Don’t forget how you obtained your origin dao fruit!”

The head of the Panorama Pavilion emerged with his brows closely knit together.

“Do you mean that pill?” Lin Lie met the pavilion head’s eyes coolly. “We made a deal. The Panorama Pavilion sold the pill to the Lin Clan, and we paid a great price for it! That was nothing more than a simple transaction. Are you trying to hold that over me now?”

The pavilion head’s expression darkened. Lin Lie had been able to pluck his origin dao fruit all because of the Tribulation Surrogate Pill Lu Yun had refined for the pavilion head. As the head of the merchant alliance, he’d sold the pill to the Lin Clan for the sake of the alliance and Dusk Province. He hadn’t expected a powerful member of the Lin Clan would say such a thing after using it!

“Away with you!” growled Lin Lie. “I’ll kill you if you dare say another word, Pavilion Head. Very well, you two. You may stay after giving me the two connate-grade treasures, and you will have nothing to do with the clan in the future.”

Lin Lie’s words made the brothers’ heads spin. They’d never expected the clan would force them to choose between family and Dusk Province! Didn’t they have an understanding with the forefather?

“Are you speaking on behalf of your clan,” sounded a chilling voice, “or yourself?”

“Is there a difference?” Lin Lie sneered at the newcomer. “I am an origin dao immortal, the most powerful of the Lin Clan. I am the will of the Lin Clan.”