

Necropolis 761

Chapter 761: The Truth Behind History

“Now, is there anyone else who objects to my establishment of the Dao Academy with me as headmaster?” Lu Yun scanned the surroundings and encompassed the entire world in his gaze.

With the six paths of his nascent spirit fully formed and refined, the Tome of Life and Death at the ready, his mastery of the supplemental paths was the greatest within this cycle of reincarnation.

Since he'd dared put forth the notion of supplemental paths as king, he was naturally confident in doing so. Even the four mightiest sovereigns of the supplemental paths had ceded to his superiority—there would be no voices raised in objection now.

“In that case, the Dao Academy for immortal dao is hereby established today.” He looked up into the sky. A southerly wind was blowing, and the hour had just struck noon. “Today—” His voice suddenly rose in pitch, “is the first day of the first year in the Xuanhuang calendar!”

Boom!!

The immortal dao, world, and life itself erupted with a fury at his words.

A formalized calendar! Lu Yun wanted to institute a standard system of timekeeping!

One had to know that in the past eighty thousand years, none of the nine majors, ten lands, or four seas had ever submitted to anyone else. No one was willing to recognize any one party as the legitimate heirs of past eras. To this date, there was no concrete calendar in the world of immortals!

Today was the first day of the first year in the Xuanhuang Era!

The calendar was instantly acknowledged by the immortal dao. Now residing in Mount Xuanhuang, the calendar used the mountain for its name so that everyone in the world would remember it. This would imprint the mountain on everyone's hearts and propel it forward as a sacred mountain.

In the Xuanhuang calendar, there were twelve months, or three hundred sixty five days to a year. A ji was marked by twelve years, and a jiazi by sixty years. Three hundred sixty five years meant one full revolution of the heavens.

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No one had fathomed that Lu Yun would be so bold as to set forth a formal calendar!

This was something that previous generations of celestial emperors had wanted to achieve, but something they'd never had the courage or charisma to do so. There had indeed been a calendar in the Primordial Era, but that had been installed by the immortal emperor.

A calendar wasn't only a way to keep track of time or a symbolization of the passage of the years, it was a nod to unifying the world!

Many were those who would object to what it represented, but it was too late. The immortal dao had accepted this method of timekeeping and incorporated the calendar into itself, engraving it into the minds of all beings beneath it.

“On the first day of the first year in the Xuanhuang Era, the Dao Academy is established in Dusk Province! Lu Yun is its headmaster, and his dao partner Qing Yu is the acclaimed Dao Sovereign!”

The news immediately spread throughout the world, making a mockery out of the celestial courts of the other facets. They didn’t even have their own calendar, what, were they playing house in calling themselves a celestial court??

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“If I may be so bold as to ask the venerated headmaster—what are the academy’s standards for choosing its pupils?”

The crowd shifted their eyes to see Nephrite Celestial Emperor Zhao Shengguang approach with a bow, his heavenly mandate floating over his head.

“None,” answered Lu Yun.

“Eh?” Collective incomprehension draped over everyone.

“In the world of immortals, all those who have gained intelligence, be they human, monster spirit, divine, demon, or any other races—all may enter my Dao Academy,” he elaborated matter-of-factly.

“What about the uncivilized fur seals?” someone else asked.

“The immortal dao is the dao of all, and the Dao Academy is the school of immortal dao. All are equal within the academy.” Lu Yun avoided a direct answer.

“What can we learn in the Dao Academy?” Zhao Shengguang probed further.

“All paths lead to the immortal dao, you can learn whatever it contains!”

“Then what if I want to learn something that even you don’t know, headmaster?” asked Zhao Shengguang.

“If three of us walk together, then at least one of the other two is good enough to be my teacher!” responded Lu Yun. “As the teacher of all beings, I will pass on everything that I know. All beings are my teacher as well and tutor me in kind. They pass on the great dao to me as learning is never-ending.

“There is no such thing as a hierarchy when it comes to gaining knowledge, and those who find great achievements first may not be the trailblazers. Once in the Dao Academy, everyone is a teacher, and everyone is a pupil.”

The two scarlet apes in the North Sea looked at each other.

“It looks like the era of various factions ruling the world of immortals is about to come to an end.” Silverlight sighed as she looked at Lu Yun beside Mount Xuanhuang. “Factions... are not just limited to the great familial clans. They existed before Emperors Fall, but we see the beginning of their end today.”

“Should we go too?” Goldenlight looked at his dao partner.

“The immortal dao is the dao of all. We fall beneath it as well, so why shouldn’t we go?” Silverlight responded matter-of-factly.

“We were at odds with Lu Yun so many times. Will he take advantage of this to do something to us?” Goldenlight was slightly concerned.

“Will someone who’s raised Mount Xuanhuang, established the Dao Academy, and instituted a calendar be as petty as that?” Silverlight chuckled, hardly concerned about any potential revenge from Lu Yun. “The Dao Academy faces a great many challenges before it can truly become the school of immortal dao. The great factions of the world will not willingly go to their proverbial deaths like this.”

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“Do you mean to say that divines can join your Dao Academy as well?” A frivolous voice sounded as Dongfang Hao walked out of the void, the Sword of Chaos on his back. “Don’t forget, we ruled the world eighty thousand years ago and enslaved all beings. Humans were our slaves, monster spirits our food, and demons our pets. That is an insurmountable death feud. Do you think the immortals of the world will be able to forget bone-deep hatred with just some pretty talk of how all lives are equal?”

Atmosphere tightening, he stared straight at Lu Yun, tone dripping with contempt. Indeed, the divines and their past evils were a blade plunged deep in everyone’s heart.

“You’re right.” Lu Yun nodded and cut off Dongfang Hao when he opened his mouth. “That’s why I’m going to show something to all of you.”

He waved a hand and projected over Mount Xuanhuang the realm of the World Gates. The Dao Flower picked up the image and sent it to all worlds in the multiverse. Though the universe lay in shambles, that didn’t mean that all life was extinct out there.

There were still the fragments of some worlds or some secluded paradises hanging on by tooth and nail, trying to fend off the countless hordes of yin spirits for just another day, another hour, another minute.

“Lu Yun, what are you doing?!” A soft rebuke sounded as the little nun’s master rushed to the scene. She waved a hand to destroy the curtain of projection, but was thwarted by the strength of Mount Xuanhuang.

“I just want to show the truth of things to the world,” Lu Yun answered calmly.

“That’s... the nine celestial emperors!”

“What’s that in front of them...? Divines! Bodies of countless divines!”

“The divines have done a great service to the world of immortals and stood guard over all of life for all this time.” A formidable voice came from the world projected in the void—not another illusion, but reality. The nine celestial emperors had spoken at the same time and sent everyone’s ears ringing with their words.

“This son greets my royal father!” Zhao Shengguang quickly fell to his knees when he saw Zhao Fengyang.

“Good, wonderful!” Zhao Fengyang beamed with pride to see his son. “You have not comprehended the benevolence within your mandate, but you have truly grasped its power and become a celestial emperor. You have proven stronger than your brother in this regard.”

“A hundred thousand years ago, there was a great war of immortals that shattered the world. However, peace did not descend after that cataclysm, the war continues still!

“The divines protected the world with no heed for their own safety. They nearly went extinct in shielding all of us!

“They are not the sinners of the world of immortals, the divine are heroes! Their descendants should not be treated in this way!” Zhao Fengyang roared and pointed at the mighty body lying in front of the World Gates. “Here lies their last crown prince from eighty thousand years ago. He died only recently, standing guard over the world of immortals!”

All beings shook and trembled from the former celestial emperor’s words. The impact from his revelations were not much less than when Lu Yun had established a calendar earlier.

“The divines are not sinners, they are heroes,” the remaining celestial emperors said slowly.

Chapter 762: Wrecking Everything

The divines were not sinners, they were heroes.

The divines were not sinners, they were heroes!

The divines were not sinners, they were heroes of the world of immortals and of all life!

A growing tide of horror and dismay roared beneath the heavens. Shrieks and bellows of incredulity and denial gradually morphed into remorse and regret.

“AHHH—” A crippled dao immortal suddenly screamed and clutched his head, tossing and turning like a madman in the air. Two trails of blood streaked from his eyes as a restriction implanted deep in his soul shattered to pieces. Scenes of yesteryear surfaced in the mind of this ancient immortal who’d survived the last eighty thousand years.

“The divine race... I am... so... sorry...” he sobbed silently, heart writhing in agony.

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“That’s right, the divines were never traitors and never a scourge...” In the skies above Truespirit Major, Yin Jiuying stood side by side with a reborn Jiang Chen. Both of them looked wide-eyed at the images projected in front of him.

“If even our memories were altered, do you think we stand a chance of victory at all?” Jiang Chen sighed.

“They only altered our memories and didn’t kill us. This means they don’t have the strength to kill us all.” Yin Jiuying swept a glance at the man. “Come what may, all will work itself out in the end. For us, anyway, life or death is just another form of existence.”

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“I’d always thought that the divines betrayed us again a hundred thousand years ago. So the truth turns out to be this...” Goldenlight sighed. He’d been sealed during that time so his memories hadn’t been

altered, but neither had he known anything about what had happened either. Everything he knew about the divines today had been gleaned from other immortals when he awoke.

“That’s strange, the divines once established their ancient divine court and erased the runes of immortal dao from the Dao Flower. They had divine dao replace immortal dao and conquered the world... so what of that, then? That doesn’t seem to have been refuted,” Goldenlight murmured curiously to himself, but also seemed to be asking Silverlight at the same time.

“Upon its founding, the immortal dao still lacked certain things. Therefore, the divine dao appeared on the petals of the Dao Flower to supplement what the immortal dao lacked,” Silverlight noted somberly, rediscovering the appropriate version of events. “The divine race has ever been the guardians of the world. When human dao ruled over the facets, they protected humanity instead.”

Confusion brimmed in Goldenlight’s eyes. “But they betrayed humans in the end and almost drove them to extinction.”

“Humanity was never in danger of extinction, what was annihilated was human dao and their hell that controlled the multiverse,” Silverlight corrected softly. “Humans then were domineering and tyrannical, and their dao the culmination of their brutality. Immortal dao would’ve never appeared if human dao never exited the stage.”

Goldenlight’s eyes widened from all the revelations and he stared agog at his dao partner.

No further disclosures were forthcoming. Silverlight looked warily at the bloody light intersecting over Levitating Island. If she spoke further, their home territory would likely be leveled.

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Sword Divine floated dumbly in the air, speechless for a very long time and not knowing what to do with himself.

“What was the point of all of my convictions and motivation for training since I was a boy?” Dongfang Hao was completely lost, a state echoed by his master hidden off to the side and the woman who’d controlled the immortal dao for him. “I willingly made an enemy out of the entire world in my quest to revitalize the ancient divine court, but now... we are heroes of the world. This...”

“When the ancient divines established their court and replaced immortal dao with divine dao, they only did so to fill in the gaps of the budding immortal dao.” A slim and graceful figure in blue robes descended from the air. It was a young girl dressed as a boy who possessed stunning beauty. Mo Yi.

“At the founding of immortal dao, there were still many mistakes and blemishes to it,” she said softly. “The realms weren’t complete, and it was the seniors of the divine race who carved the divine emperor’s Sacred Origin Runes onto the Dao Flower to make it whole.

“Initial immortals didn’t temper their nascent spirits at all, they forged on with just a golden core. The nascent spirit methods of the immortal dao now were patched up by the divine race.”

“Then why did the ancient divine court fall, and why did the ancient divines leave behind the Sword of Chaos to preserve their will?!” Dongfang Hao unsheathed the sword on his back with a raspy roar.

“Do you really understand the sword in your hand?” Mo Yi looked at the hazy Sword of Chaos. “This is a sword of protection and hope, a sword to safeguard faith in the midst of slaughter! Or did you think that sword is only meant to perpetuate an ancient divine court that’s already faded into history?”

“If you’d really understood the true meaning of your sword, then its heart in the hands of Zhao Wushuang would’ve returned to its rightful place a long time ago.”

Dongfang Hao fell silent, as did Zhao Wushuang in Dao City.

“In their pursuit of using Sacred Origin Runes to rectify the immortal dao, the ancient divines naturally ran afoul of some sort of restriction. That was why they were destroyed... and they knew this would be their outcome the moment they etched the runes into the Dao Flower.” Mo Yi surveyed her surroundings. No one said anything in return.

“At the end of the day, the divines are still traitors.” Qi Hai appeared and looked at Mo Yi with sheer derision. “They once protected humanity, but then betrayed us. The blood of sinners flows in their bodies. If they could betray us once, they can betray us a second, third time...”

Livid wrath slowly blossomed on everyone’s faces. Though they were still reeling from awakening memories of eighty thousand years ago, particularly those who were survivors of that era, they uniformly wanted to erupt in fury and tear Qi Hai to pieces when they heard him.

That history which he spoke of had been buried in oblivion. None of the factions now knew what heights humanity had once reached.

“Enough,” Lu Yun raised his voice. “Today is the establishment of the Dao Academy and not a time to investigate history. Whether or not the divines will betray us... well, I’m sure seniors who have survived from eighty thousand years ago have the answer to that.

“Senior Qi Hai, are you here to test me as well and judge if I have the right to establish my academy?” he coolly asked the once-foremost pill master.

“You set up your academy, I’m here on my own business,” Qi Hai snorted coldly. “Today, I, Qi Hai, as the foremost pill master of the Primordial Era, do hereby establish a sacred land of pill dao in Destiny City of the South Sea!

“All those with any gifts in pill dao are welcome to enter Destiny City in pursuit of knowledge!”

He turned on his heel and left, leaving behind a dazed crowd. Qi Hai... had just established his own sacred land in the name of the greatest primordial pill master?!

His name was legendary and he was the faith of all pill masters in the world. Many were those who worshipped him, and his mastery so great that not even Pill Sovereign Gu Xun could hold a candle to him. He was creating his own sacred land today??

It wouldn’t be long before the Destiny City sacred land overtook the Dao Academy at the foot of Mount Xuanhuang!

His announcement instantly stole Lu Yun’s limelight and wrecked everything for the boy. Though Lu Yun's fame reached every corner of the world and he’d defeated the four great sovereigns, at the heart of things, he was just a boy with six years of cultivation experience. How could he be mentioned in the

same breath as Qi Hai, the legendary figure who'd singlehandedly elevated pill dao to a position of superiority over the other three supplemental paths?

Chapter 763: Academy Doors Open

Qi Hai's visit caused things to end on a sour note for the founding of the Dao Academy, but that didn't bother Lu Yun at all. In fact, he wished that more sacred lands would emerge in the world of immortals.

Competition would always be the greatest drive for improvement, which was sorely needed. After all, the World Gates would stand for only another hundred years!

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An extravagant cluster of palaces emerged halfway up Mount Xuanhuang, forming a dense circle around the great mountain. Those were the Dao Palaces, the true campus of the Dao Academy!

They had once formed the dragon palace that humans had refined for the dragons, containing the nine great treasures of the nine connate divine beasts. Dao City, sitting at the foot of Mount Xuanhuang, became Dao Academy's outskirts.

On the second day of the first year and first month of the Xuanhuang calendar, namely the day after the establishment of the Dao Academy, two beams of dark light shot heavenward and blended into the sky of the world of immortals.

"I, Su Xiaoxiao, dean of the medicine school at the Dao Academy, do hereby establish medicine dao as the sixth supplemental path beneath the immortal dao!" Her voice suddenly rang throughout the world, compelling everyone to shift their attention to Mount Xuanhuang.

"Medicine dao? The sixth supplemental path of the immortal dao?" Many were confounded by the revelation. "Su Xiaoxiao must be one of the ten powerful maids serving Lu Yun... Who would've thought that she'd be able to establish a standalone dao!"

Once medicine dao was fully incorporated into the immortal dao, all immortals and cultivators were able to take a closer look at this newest path, which they digested to great surprise and awe.

What a curious supplemental path it was! It was meant to save the injured and dying in a way that looked similar to pill dao at first blush, but was, in fact, vastly different. No one could argue that it shouldn't be considered an addition to the four original supplemental paths.

"Wait, if medicine dao is the sixth dao, what is the fifth?" Anticipation and curiosity abounded—many had seen a second ray of dark light shooting out from Mount Xuanhuang.

The Dao Academy had been established, but it wasn't officially open to enrollment yet. Its existence was a threat to the interests of the peak factions in the world of immortals. Although they couldn't prevent its establishment, they could forbid disciples and denizens of their territory from enrolling.

However, they didn't expect the academy to establish two supplemental paths the very next day after its formation! It was an option growing in attractiveness by the day.

“So she still did it in the end.” Qi Hai stared darkly at the light of Su Xiaoxiao’s path. “That shard of human dao hell grants Lu Yun a small amount of reincarnation ability, by which he resurrects people. If I’d known about this earlier, I would’ve completely destroyed and ripped apart her body back then.”

He was spiraling into an unhealthy obsession, but even he couldn’t help his curiosity. “If Su Xiaoxiao’s medicine dao can rival the other four supplemental paths, what is the fifth path?”

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“Today, as Dao Sovereign and dean of the formula dao school in the Dao Academy,” Qing Yu declared in her usual lilting voice, “I do hereby establish formula dao as the first supplemental path of the immortal dao.”

Hum.

Her declaration was immediately followed by the emergence of the Dao Flower, which shadowed the entirety of Mount Xuanhuang.

“The first?! It’s going to replace pill dao as the foremost supplemental path?!”

“Whaaaaat?!”

“Formula dao is already approved by the immortal dao as the first supplemental path!” Unhinged yells could be heard all over the world.

Pill dao had occupied the seat of top-ranked supplemental path for a very long time. Back in the Primordial Era, the four supplemental paths of pill, equipment, formation, and talisman had been on a level playing field. Qi Hai’s appearance out of nowhere was why pill dao had risen above the other three and became the first path of the immortal dao.

Now, though...

Formula dao, which Qing Yu had established, was the first supplemental path! She’d exceeded Qi Hai!

Qi Hai was still alive, and he’d established the pill dao sacred land in the South Sea to oppose the Dao Academy of Dusk Province! However, she’d displaced pill dao’s illustrious position the very next day, delivering a hearty slap to Qi Hai’s face!

“Formula dao can deduce everything! Be it combat arts, cultivation methods, or even other supplemental paths... What a monstrous path!” Powerful immortals scowled when they got a clearer look at the formula dao.

It could not only infer the many variations of combat arts and cultivation methods, it could also identify their weaknesses. Formations, treasures, pills, and talismans were no exception, either. No wonder formula dao would be deemed the first supplemental path!

“The treasures, combat arts, and cultivation methods that Lu Yun sold aren’t primordial ones, but contemporary ones that Qing Yu created with formula dao!”

“It’s too powerful a supplemental path to ignore. Once it’s popularized in the world of immortals, we’ll be at a great disadvantage. Leave for Dusk Province at once and enroll in the Dao Academy for formula dao!”

The impact of the new supplemental path rippled through the world of immortals. Peak clans lost their composure and changed their minds about snubbing the new faction, immediately forming lists of who to send to Dusk. To be honest, it would be impossible for them to keep their people under control with this new revelation, even if they wanted to.

Formula dao... what a terribly great invention.

“There’s a reason why Qing Yu is the sovereign of immortal dao, alright!”

Now that the Dao Flower had bloomed and the immortal dao emerged, powerful immortals could sense information about supplemental paths through the immortal dao. Groups of knowledge-seekers assembled and rushed to Dusk Province from all over the world, their eagerness quickly doused when they actually arrived at the Dao Academy.

Although it’d been established, it wasn’t operating just yet. Moreover, anyone who wished to enter the academy had to follow its rules.

The Dao Academy welcomed anyone from all parts of the world of immortals. Cultivators could study for free and would actually receive subsidies such as immortal crystals, pills, and treasures. Immortals, on the other hand, had to pay a great sum of crystals in order to enroll.

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On the first day of the second month in the first Xuanhuang year, the Dao Academy finally opened its doors to pupils. Close to a million immortals and hundreds of thousands of cultivators or ordinary mortals swarmed into the academy to become its disciples.

Most of the immortals came from the major factions in the world of immortals. There were very few wandering immortals since they were at the mercy of the major factions and considered private property. Naturally, the factions would prevent their wandering immortals from visiting Dusk Province.

As for the cultivators and ordinary mortals, they were from all over Nephrite Major. Zhao Shenguang ruled over Nephrite and he was a sidekick of Chen Xiao and Qing Buyi. All bad blood between Dusk and Nephrite was thus wiped clean.

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“The six supplemental paths of the Dao Academy are the formula, pill, equipment, formation, talisman, and medicine dao!”

“Oh? There are also different branches of immortal dao—monster spirit, divine, demon, and shaman dao!”

“There are also different paths for training, including martial, sword, saber, lance...”

“Hmm? What are these?” someone yelled in surprise. “New cultivation methods?!”

“A constitution method, breathing method, and body-tempering martial art!”

“An elemental breathing method and associated boxing technique...”

“Nascent spirit methods! An observation method and combat method... Heavens, the greatest weakness of all immortals has been resolved by Lu Yun—no, by the headmaster!”

“The Facet Observation Method!”

“The constitution and nascent spirit methods are revolutionary, even more so than the formula dao!”

“Lu Yun can’t possibly be a young man who’s only cultivated for six years, can he?”

Beams of light soared into the sky from the Dao Academy, displaying everything that would be taught here. Immortals who’d entered the campus could barely stop themselves from fainting when they realized the copious bounty available to them.

“No peak faction would ever be in a mood to share should they get their hands on any one of these,” someone murmured. “They would never allow just anyone to learn the methods, let alone everyone.”

“Alright,” Lu Yun said from a distance. “What you see is what the Dao Academy is going to teach to everyone. Of course, this is all merely foundational knowledge. Nothing’s been perfected yet. Every great dao, every heritage, every combat art and cultivation method in the world cannot be perfected without the collective wisdom of all lives.”

“Everyone is permitted entrance to learn our heritage and legacies. At the same time, the academy will be learning from you in order to refine these methods. I hereby declare the official commencement of the Dao Academy!”

“All one million six hundred eighty-nine thousand four hundred and thirty-six of you are now the first batch of outer disciples of the Dao Academy. You will be living in Dao City.”

“The outer academy teaches only the basics. There,” Lu Yun pointed at the Dao Palaces up Mount Xuanhuang, “in those palaces lies the inner academy. After sixty years of study in the outer academy, disciples will undergo a trial for the privilege to enter the inner academy. If you pass, you will then be inner disciples and be personally taught by the dean of each path!”

“Those who fail to pass the trial after sixty years will be expelled and sent home.”

Chapter 764: Determination

As the Dao Academy had just been established, many of its systems and rules were incomplete. Since Lu Yun was from Earth, he borrowed wholesale from her education systems and used them to shape his academy.

However, given that Earth was in the Degenerate Age and lacked immortals and cultivators, her systems and rules might not be the most suitable for the world of immortals. Unfortunately, Lu Yun was pressed for time and had no other choices available to him.

The less-than-two-million batch of founding disciples relaxed when they heard the rules. Sixty years! If they didn’t pass the examinations and enter the inner academy after sixty years, they’d have to scuttle

back home in ignoble defeat. But, this also meant that the academy wouldn't place any restrictions on their movement or departure at all.

They rejoiced at the unexpected good news. After all, each of them belonged to their own factions or clans. They were only here to learn various combat arts and cultivation methods, they didn't really want to become one of Lu Yun's.

For immortals, sixty years would pass by in the blink of an eye.

"I have a question for you, Headmaster!" someone called out. "When we leave the academy, are we allowed to teach others what we've learned here?"

"Whatever knowledge you gain is yours, you can pass it on to whoever you wish," came Lu Yun's answer.

The crowd relaxed further when they heard his words. They'd been apprehensive that Lu Yun would force them to swear a blood oath and prevent them from sharing anything they'd learned here. Who would've thought that the Dao Academy wouldn't care about this at all!

The end goal of many was to bring whatever they learned back to their own factions.

"In addition," Lu Yun continued, "everything taught in the outer academy is just the basics. True knowledge is found only in the inner academy. You'll have to work hard if you want to glean what the Dao Academy is really capable of. And of course, whatever is taught in the inner academy can be shared with outsiders as well."

Here, he paused for a long chuckle. "Do keep in mind that the various combat arts and cultivation methods of the immortal dao are obscure in meaning and difficult to comprehend. A good teacher is required if one wants to properly absorb all that knowledge."

With that, he left with a flourish of his robes.

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Thus marked the first day of class at the first dao academy in the world of immortals. Its first matriculating students comprised of less than two million immortals, cultivators, and ordinary mortals. The system here was very similar to tertiary education on Earth, marked with a few differences.

Disciples had to choose between required courses and electives for their daily cultivation and class schedule. Each class was taught by an appropriate teacher—the professors of the Dao Academy mostly drew from Lu Yun's Infernum or trusted geniuses such as the little nun, Lin Yu, Lin Xuan, and others.

The nascent spirit method, breathing method, and laws of body tempering were general education courses that every single disciple had to take. Tests were administered at regular intervals, and those who failed to meet the bar were punished accordingly.

The three great methods were rudimentary practices to fortify the nascent spirit, internal organs, and physical body. They wouldn't conflict with cultivation, and in fact would supplement cultivation efforts and bring about greater effect and better result in student study.

Apart from the three great methods, there were a plethora of combat art classes to choose from. Each general category of combat arts incorporated tailored lectures, which could be modified according to each disciple's spirit root and expertise.

Disciples could freely choose among classes for combat arts related to sword, martial, boxing, spear, blade, and other treasure dao. Naturally, examinations were a part of those electives as well.

Instruction in the supplemental paths rounded out the curriculum of the Dao Academy. This was where the core knowledge resided, and was the main purpose of most students who'd enrolled. Formula, pill, equipment, formation, talisman, and medicine dao!

Classes were likewise freely available in all of them for disciples to choose from; they could even dual major if they wished. However, apart from the three great methods, formula dao was also a requisite course. Every disciple had to take classes in it.

When utilized to maximum benefit, formula dao could infer everything between the heavens and earth. Be it supplemental dao, combat arts, or cultivation methods—all could be analyzed and weaknesses found. Formula dao was thereby the process of continually improving and perfecting all of these tools.

In fact, formula dao was showing signs of becoming the basis for immortal dao.

Lu Yun imported everything about schedules, classes, grades, and majors into the world of immortals and treated every student equally. However, his actions were utmost heresy in contemporary society. Every peak faction and even the celestial courts were highly partisan and kept everything strictly to themselves, even if it was a tiny scrap of paper they considered utter trash.

The celestial emperors had tried numerous times to make the world set aside their differences and look beyond their sectarian divisions, but each attempt had ended in failure. It wasn't until the battles six years ago at Dusk Province did a new breeze softly touch upon the situation.

But even so, the Dao Academy was a tremendous shock to the world order. Thankfully the institute stuck to sharing its own knowledge and didn't encroach on factional treasures; otherwise, the world would've likely erupted in an immediate crusade against this heretic.

Everything proceeded in perfect order. There was some initial confusion, but as a whole, the academy marched forward into livelihood and prosperity.

No one dared stir up any trouble in Dusk Province either. The immortal restriction might not be present anymore, thus allowing immortals over golden immortal realm to set foot onto Dusken soil, there was something even more frightening in place now—the sword formation.

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"Lu Yun, you need to think this through. If you do this, karma from the entire world might fall upon your shoulders. Your Karmic Tree might not be enough to block the terrifying retribution that happens!" Qing Yu looked gravely at her dao partner, reluctance writ large between her brows.

Mo Yi, Chen Xiao, Qing Buyi, and Lu Feng also wore solemn expressions.

"The Dao Tree is a cancerous tumor in the immortal dao and must be excised." Lu Yun's tones were calm, but a hint of determination threaded through his gaze. "We already have the inklings of what the

new dao immortal realm should be. If we follow those clues to their conclusion, we'll be able to create a new dao immortal realm in the immortal dao."

"If the Dao Tree is destroyed, current dao immortals will be irrevocably discarded by time. Think about how many dao immortals there are in the world! Though we are not in the Primordial Era anymore, when almost everyone was one, there are bound to be a multitude of them after eighty thousand years!" Mo Yi looked at Lu Yun and spoke slowly, "In all of the worlds and the entire multiverse, it is through their efforts that the numerous ruins of other worlds hang on. This will be the resentment and hatred of hundreds of millions of living beings concentrated upon you. It will prove too much to handle."

Qing Yu grabbed Lu Yun's hand, even more reluctant now.

"We don't have much time, the celestial emperors can only endure for a hundred years. The World Gates will fall after a century." He squeezed her hand with a smile. "Some things must be done, and it doesn't necessarily have to be me who does the deed either."

"Eh?" The others started at this idea.

"My Xing Chen replica has accepted the legacy of the underworld and become its fourth holy king. He can do all this."

If Xing Chen undertook this action, some of the consequences would still fall on Lu Yun. However, the Karmic Tree would be able to bear the load then.

"But before I do that, I need to find the spleen and refine it into his body."

1. The Three Ages of Buddhism are three divisions of time following Buddha's passing:

1. Former Day of the Dharma: also known as the Age of the Right Dharma (正法), the first 1,000 years in which Buddha's disciples are able to uphold Buddha's teachings. Cultivators are highly confident, acts of kindness abound, and many reach the dao.

2. Middle Day of the Dharma: also known as the Age of Semblance Dharma (像法), the second 1,000 years, which only resembles the right Dharma. Focus turns to scripture and images of Buddha, but still bears a great deal of resemblance to the first age.

3. Latter Day of the Dharma: also known as the Degenerate Age (末法), lasts for 10,000 years, during which Buddhism/Dharma is in decline.

Chapter 765: Heaven Locus Marsh

Qing Yu breathed a quiet sigh of relief when she heard Lu Yun's intentions.

"Xing Chen can't easily leave the underworld, so I'll have to go look for the world's spleen myself," pondered Lu Yun.

"I'll go with you!" Qing Yu quickly volunteered.

"No, you can't leave Mount Xuanhuang!" he quickly refuted. "There's a woman by Dongfang Hao's side who once took control of the immortal dao. You need to stay at the mountain and hold down the fort so she doesn't have a chance to steal it again."

Qing Yu fell silent, then nodded in a visibly downcast manner. "Alright then."

"Honestly, we don't need to be in a rush about this, it's just one of my many plans. Right now... I have something much more important to do." Lu Yun suddenly turned much more somber than he'd been moments ago.

"What is it?" He'd successfully caught the curiosity of Mo Yi and the others.

"Qing Yu, let's get married." Lu Yun turned gravely to Qing Yu. "We said a long time ago that we'd get married once you became an immortal!"

It felt like a thunderbolt had crashed into Qing Yu; she stared dumbly at her beloved. After a long while, she abruptly flushed beet red as she returned to her senses and fidgeted in place, not knowing how to respond.

Qing Buyi's eyes widened with indignation. With a quick twitch, he interposed himself between the young couple and forcefully separated them.

"Hey kid, where's your betrothal gift if you want to marry my sister!" He huffed and puffed and glared ferociously at Lu Yun.

Bam!!

A tremendous force blasted out behind Qing Buyi and sent him flying—Qing Yu. After sending her brother screeching toward the horizon with a powerful punch, she mumbled, "I, I do!"

"Betrothal gift, my dear sister!!" Qing Buyi wailed with injustice. "Look at you defending outsiders before you've even gotten married!"

Chen Xiao rolled his eyes at Qing Buyi. "We should make careful plans for this if you two want to get married. Little Yu is the dao sovereign and you are the headmaster of the Dao Academy. You also seemed to have obtained the legacy of the primeval human hell. You'll likely earn the jealousy of all living beings if the two of you become dao partners."

"We were enemies of the entire world before and got through that, what more is a little bit of jealousy?" The young couple shrugged off this concern.

Lu Yun had been waiting for this day for a very long time. He'd been besotted ever since he glimpsed her true form in the layout of absolute death beneath the burial mound of Myriad Formation Summit. After all these trials and hardships, his happily-ever-after was finally at hand. Why would he care about a little jealousy?

"The jealousy of all living beings can be a grave matter, but it can also be a minor trifle," Lu Feng picked up the reins of conversation. "But if you wait until after Lu Yun excises the Dao Tree and connects the new dao immortal realm to the immortal dao... the unexpected may happen."

"Huh?" Both Lu Yun and Qing Yu blinked in incomprehension, while Qing Buyi, Chen Xiao, and Mo Yi turned to Lu Feng.

"I think if you wait until then to become dao partners, you'll be able to find a way to save the obsolete dao immortals!"

The batch of immortals to be discarded this time would be permanently obsolete with no recourse. They wouldn't be able to evade their fate even by practicing other methods or severing their cultivation, since this would be a fundamental change in cultivation realms, and not the restoration of a missing one like the void realm.

Qing Yu looked at Lu Yun, who grabbed her hand in return.

"Alright," she made the decision with aplomb. "I'll use the power of the Central World to seal away the Dao Tree so that no immortals can pluck their fruits anymore. Everything can wait until you find the spleen of the world."

"Mm." Chen Xiao nodded. "But we need to be quick about this. The new dao immortal realm must come to fruition as soon as possible. A hundred years isn't enough."

.....

"The spleen of the world is in Xuan Yuan's tomb... The Yellow Emperor?? Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan of Earth's legends?!"

This time, Lu Yun traveled with Ashu and the Venerated Sacrosanct Demonic Sovereign. Being a holy king of the underworld, Xing Chen had lifted the realm's restrictions on Ashu. Apart from the oppression of yang energy in the world, which meant he couldn't call upon his core essence, the holy lord no longer had anything to fear. He'd received the breathing, body tempering, and nascent spirit methods and was now infinitely close to a true resurrection.

As for the demon sovereign, he viewed Lu Yun as a personal god after learning the nascent spirit observation method and did everything the human said. He'd fully merged the Hadal Bonfire with his nascent spirit with the method and combined them to create a Hadal Bonfire nascent spirit. This marked his Hadal Bonfire Method reaching the state of grand perfection, and he'd in turn gifted it to the Dao Academy to make it one of its legacies.

They were traveling to Heaven Locus Land, one of the ten monster spirit domains and not a particularly strong member at that. Ranked closer to the bottom half, Heaven Locus Land housed the Xuan Yuan Tomb.

"Lu Yun, I remember your primary body is also an adept tomb raider. However, you don't seem to have passed on those methods." Quiet during the entire trip, Ashu suddenly raised this question upon entering Heaven Locus Land.

"I haven't?" Lu Yun started and looked blankly at the holy lord.

Ashu frowned, then shook his head slightly. "I haven't seen anything to the contrary."

He'd gotten to know Lu Yun's past during this time and was aware that the youth was a great tomb-raiding expert. His mastery in tomb raiding was actually superior to his grasp of the supplemental paths and combat arts. And yet, the holy lord hadn't seen anything about tomb raiding in the Dao Academy.

"Tomb raiding isn't a great dao at all. It's just a combination of all the great daos in the world, the three religions and nine schools of thought, and endless knowledge with experience.

“When it comes to how feng shui of the tombs affects formations, you can learn that through formation dao.

“Restraining immortal ghosts and zombies are found in talisman dao.

“Treasures to destroy ghosts and zombies can be refined through equipment dao.

“Curing corpse poison and avoiding the qi of malice lies in pills through pill dao.

“Seeking the dragon, discerning location, and determining the life point of a tomb are located in formula dao.

“As for the ‘Secret Archives of the Tomb Raiders’ that I compiled, it’s on the library shelves of the Dao Academy. Anyone who makes it through the outer academy examinations can peruse it at their leisure.

“To be honest, the content inside is profound and hard to grasp—not even the four supplemental sovereigns might be able to understand it. If I put it in the outer academy for everyone in the world to see, they’ll lap up the information without comprehending it and have it all backfire on them.

“If someone takes what they’ve read and ventures into an ancient tomb to regurgitate theories they’ve acquired through rote memorization... well, they’ll die a nasty death.

“Not only that, but if one lacks the fundamental knowledge of the outer academy and tries to understand the craftsmanship behind lord-grade fortress ships, the refinement method of crystal cannons, the formations that counter the weapons, or dao-grade formations of heaven and earth... again, it’s just impossible, even if I teach them personally.

“It’s all about foundations! Everything in the outer academy is just the basics, including even the six supplemental paths, various combat arts and cultivation methods. I’m giving them sixty years so they lay down the proper groundwork and consolidate it. When they reach the level of being able to learn more sophisticated concepts, the inner academy will naturally open to them.

“On the other hand, if they fail to learn even the basics after sixty years, it’d just be a waste of time for them if they continued studying at the Dao Academy.”

Understanding struck Ashu and he heaved a sigh of relief at the same time. Bafflement that’d weighed over him had just been flawlessly explained away.

“How does a young twenty-something like you know so much? Sometimes, my dear, I think you’re the old monster who’s lived through several eras,” chuckled the holy lord.

“I’d love to take you to my homeland if there’s ever a chance. It’s... much more complicated compared to the world of immortals. ...we’re here!” Lu Yun suddenly stopped in front of a vast marsh.

The Heaven Locus Marsh.

Heaven Locus Land was named after this area of boundless marsh that seemed to stretch on forever. It was a big forbidden area in the Primordial Era, and legend had it that the Xuan Yuan Tomb was located inside its swampy depths.

The Earth Altar lay interred inside this tomb. If the spleen did exist, it would very likely be on top of that altar.

“Halt! Who goes there and how dare you trespass in the Heaven Locus Marsh!” By the banks of the marsh, a troop of heavenly soldiers suddenly descended from the skies and surrounded the trio. They were extremely powerful monster spirits and all peerless immortals!

In the days of yesteryear, to be a golden immortal ranked one amongst the upper echelon of the world. As nobles, they would never be ordinary soldiers. But since the restoration of the void realm, immortals who hadn’t experienced it underwent a dramatic decline in fortunes. Once honored with the title of immortal king, peerless immortals were now part of the rank and file.

Although the formation of heaven and earth was in circulation and there were many formation masters who could engrave it, not every immortal was blessed with obtaining one. It’d only been two years since the appearance of this creation. Therefore, all of the formerly lofty golden, arcane, and peerless immortals were just foot soldiers now.

The troop was three hundred strong and exhibited a tremendous burst of power when they assembled in formation. In fact, they showed signs of becoming one with the Heaven Locus Marsh.

“The Heaven Locus Marsh is off limits in the Heaven Locus Land. Any who wish to enter must obtain the approval of the celestial emperor and show his personally signed order.” Their leader was a peerless immortal at the peak of his realm. He could’ve vied with the former Beigong Yu of the Northern Palace, Scaled-Dragon King, and Zou Longxiu.

Sadly, he came from humble origins and didn’t have a strong patron. No one had etched a formation of heaven and earth for him, so he had to settle for being a squad leader of this small troop.

“I see, then the three of us shall request an audience from the celestial emperor and request approval.” Instead of erupting in fury at the disrespect, Lu Yun raised his hands in a cupped fist salute instead.

The peerless immortal blinked, then hastily returned the courtesy. “It’s not the Heaven Locus Land being difficult and forbidding immortals from entering, it’s that the marsh is really too dangerous. Ordinary immortals march only to their death when they enter, and they turn into zombies when they die. When they spawn, they plague the Heaven Locus Land instead.

“Too many have died in the marsh over the years. If this continues, we’ll be conquered by all of the zombies in the bog one day.”

1. Xuan Yuan is also known as the Yellow Emperor and is a deity in Chinese religion. He is one of the legendary Chinese sovereigns and culture heroes among the mytho-historical Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors.

Chapter 766.1: Xuan Yuan Tomb

Cyan fog permeated the Heaven Locus Marsh; it was truly more of a march than a large body of water like the Sword Lake. The tendrils of heavy fog prevented Lu Yun from getting a clearer look at what lurked inside the murky depths. Moreover, the swamp was shrouded in a strange layer of heavenly power that obscured its feng shui and formation layouts.

With a slight frown, Lu Yun opened the Spectral Eye and took in any information of the dead within five thousand kilometers in radius. A dull pain quickly throbbed in his head and eyes before he hastily shut the Spectral Eye.

“How... how many have died here?!” he cried out in shock. “Was this an ancient battleground?”

“It was a taboo zone back in the Primordial Era,” said the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign. “It was guarded by the Heaven Locus Lord appointed by the immortal emperor, and the marsh has been like this since the Primordial Era. I didn’t expect this area to become a facet in the world of immortals of this era.”

“The Xuan Yuan tomb and the Earth Altar are both there,” Ashu spoke up. “There are also things from an even more distant past.

“The ten lands of the world of immortals, namely Heaven Locus, Odyssey, Horizon, Mist, True Water, Yang Fire, Heaven Descent, Yellow Springs, Crimson Abyss, and Demon Measure Land, are derived from the ten forbidden lands from the primordial world of immortals.

“The monster emperors of their ten courts are all descendents of the lords who guarded the ten lands. Only these ten bloodlines are able to keep the forbidden lands under control.”

Ashu used to be a holy lord of the underworld; he’d observed the world of immortals from there and probed many unknown secrets.

What he and the demon sovereign revealed stunned the three hundred peerless immortal soldiers. They’d never realized what the ten lands actually were, and not even the ten monster courts were in the know.

“We don’t have time for chit-chat, something’s coming out of the marsh.” Lu Yun manifested a giant black donkey’s hoof with a wave of his hand.

Bam!

A giant black hand puffing with smoke shot out of the marsh, agitating the air and filling it with the pungent smell of rot and burnt charcoal.

“Alert, alert! Zombies want to charge out of the Heaven Locus Marsh! Attention! Assemble into formation!”

Alarmed, the squadron of peerless immortals hastened to form a battle formation of domineering presence to block the giant hand.

Boom!

Another giant hand dropped from the sky as soon as the battle formation came together and broke apart the newly assembled formation. Vomiting great mouthfuls of blood, the peerless immortals were thrown in all directions and completely incapacitated.

A five-kilometer-tall, charred zombie slowly crawled out of the marsh. It was a zombified figure that’d always been five kilometers tall. No combat arts or manifestations were involved to reach its size.

A five-kilometer-tall giant...

“The titan race! A species that was extinct before the Primordial Era!” Ashu soared into the sky, his eyes glowing faintly of gold as runic patterns interwove into a large golden net before him, blocking the zombie’s second punch and saving the three hundred peerless immortals.

Though he could rival a primordial origin dao immortal, the zombie was too powerful and he too was sent flying for his efforts.

Meanwhile, the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign sat cross-legged on the ground to meditate on a Hadal Bone projection. A great manifestation covered in Hadal Bonefire emerged before him and body slammed the giant zombie. The manifestation, while being half a kilometer tall, was still dwarfed by the five-kilometer tall zombie.

Wreathed in black smoke, the giant zombie extended its yellowed mouth filled with corpse energy and bit at the Hadal Bone manifestation.

Hum.

A humming noise buzzed through the air, accompanied by explosive growth of the large donkey’s hoof in Lu Yun’s hand. Now three hundred meters large, it flew unerringly into the zombie’s mouth.

After a violent shake, the zombie was petrified. Seizing the opening, Lu Yun drew talismans in the air and stuck the transparent talismans sparkling with golden light onto the giant zombie, incapacitating it for good.

“Die!” commanded Lu Yun. Emerald Mistfire blossomed on his palm and leapt onto the zombie, washing over it, but what happened next put a grimace on Lu Yun’s face.

“Why isn’t it working?!” The fire had ignited the zombie, but didn’t destroy it.

In fact, Lu Yun could sense that the zombie wasn’t afraid of fire at all. Instead, the fire seemed to be making it stronger... it was about to shake off his talismans!

He hurriedly dispersed the Emerald Mistfire.

Boom!

The zombie shuddered as its body was ignited anew, but with a hazy, gray fire. An aura of decay, desolation, and despair spread like wildfire in all directions as actual blazing flames attacked the talismans restraining the zombie.

“What is this fire?” Lu Yun took several steps back in the sky. Ashu and the demon sovereign came back to him with matching expressions of gravity, their eyes fixed on the giant zombie getting back on its feet.

“I don’t know.” Ashu shook his head. “There is no such fire in the underworld.”

“Whatever it is, it’s not good.” With a grab, the demon sovereign manifested the Skyturning Seal, shimmering faintly of bluish gold. A wave of stable, balanced energy flowed from the treasure.

Legend had it that the Skyturning Seal was a prominent man-made treasure created by the three founders of the immortal dao. It was capable of shattering even connate-grade treasures. The seal had

now become the demon sovereign's personal treasure. Under its bluish gold light, Hadal Bonefire blazed furiously in challenge.

"Go!" With a wave of his hand, the Skyturning Seal rotated in the air and grew in size until it became a towering mountain, then smashed into the zombie's head.

Wham!

Upon a prodigious collision, the giant zombie disintegrated with a loud bang.

"If the Heaven Locus Marsh is filled with such zombies, we don't stand a chance of being successful." The demon sovereign brooded ominously. He'd delivered the strongest attack he was capable of at the moment with the full power of the Skyturning Seal.

The three hundred peerless immortals gaped at Lu Yun and his two companions. The Heaven Locus Court always paid a heavy price to kill zombies whenever they rushed out of the marsh, yet the three immortals had made such quick work of one of these terrifying beings!

"They're just zombies—idiots with almost literal shit for brains," Lu Yun remarked as he stuck a Concealment Talisman on the demon sovereign and Ashu to conceal their presence. "Once inside, we can just circle around those we can't defeat.

"Please inform the Heaven Locus emperor that Lu Yun of Dusk Province is headed into the Heaven Locus Marsh. Forgive me for not having time to pay him a visit." He stepped into the marsh with Ashu and the demon sovereign.

"It's the headmaster of the Dao Academy!" the leading peerless immortal inhaled deeply. "Go, inform His Majesty at once!"

Chapter 766.2: Xuan Yuan Tomb

All was foggy and hazy within the marsh. Gray flames the likes that'd burned on the zombie filled the air.

"Strange, the water element should be dominant in a marsh like this. Why is this place teeming with the fire element?" The demon sovereign grabbed at the gray fire floating in the air, which twirled around his fingertips without hurting him.

"This fire is dead. It's a kind of corpsefire, so it'll burn only the dead and spare the living." Unnatural tension crawled over Ashu's expression. He was a step away from coming back to life, which meant that his body was still dead. The corpsefire here was his bane.

Keeping himself concealed was no longer a priority. He hurriedly used the breathing method to amplify his vitality to the greatest of his abilities. If the corpsefire surrounded him, he would be instantly burned to death and turn into a local zombie.

Lu Yun assigned a brand to Ashu that generated lifeforce around him. The former holy lord let out a sigh of relief at the reprieve and quickly activated the Concealment Talisman, masking any signs of his presence.

There were zombies everywhere in the marsh, be they humanoids, beasts, avians, or beings of the water clan.

“What a shame that their armor has all decayed to the point that we can’t date them to a specific era,” Ashu said quietly. Both he and the demon sovereign knew about the ten forbidden lands of the primordial world, but neither had entered this marsh in person.

Empress Myrtlestar, on the other hand, had visited in person back in the Primordial Era. Holy King Violetshade, too, had been here and drawn a map, which was now in Lu Yun’s possession. However, neither would be able to enter the marsh now.

Violetshade was now a holy king who would have difficulties leaving the underworld, while Fuying had started cultivating anew and hadn’t reached immortality yet. It would be suicide for her to come here.

“According to the map Violetshade gave us, the Xuan Yuan tomb should be to the southwest... next to a giant lake!” Lu Yun looked up to determine the right direction before setting out at great speed.

The stench of rot and decay in the air grew more pungent. It wasn’t only the putrid smell of rotting corpses, but also that of ones that’d been baked well-done after they’d rotted.

The corpsefire in the air grew thicker as well until their way was blocked by the dense gray fire, preventing Lu Yun and his companions from seeing clearly. The fire covered only the air, not the marsh below them, which, however, was now an inky black.

Only corpsewater with heavy sediment would turn such a color. Almost tangible by this point, Lu Yun had to continuously repress his gag reflexes to avoid throwing up. He was certain that any living soul would be spontaneously zombified should they fall into the marsh.

“This corpsewater is even more dangerous than the Great Formation of Corpse Refinement and the Bag of Corpse Refinement that belongs to the Corpse Refiners. If they find this place...” Lu Yun couldn’t help a shudder.

This was an absolute paradise for the Corpse Refiners.

“Their people visited this location in the Primordial Era, but none lived to tell the tale,” said the demon sovereign. “There are more unknown threats here than corpsewater and corpsefire.”

Boom!

Lu Yun waved his hand and manifested the Divine Glory. Embedded in the steering pillar of the ship, the Formation Orb radiated waves of formation light and drove away the fire.

He wasn’t about to wade through the corpsewater himself—he wasn’t a great enough daredevil for that. Who knew how long the corpsewater had accumulated for? It wasn’t something he could touch anymore.

The Divine Glory rumbled as its black sails unfurled, sailing into the depths of the Heaven Locus Marsh.

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News got out that Lu Yun had entered the Heaven Locus Marsh. Although very few current immortals knew that the boundless bog used to be one of the ten forbidden lands of the primordial world of immortals, its dangers were well known.

“Why would Lu Yun risk his life to enter the marsh? Can it be that a great treasure has emerged there?” Heavyweights in the world of immortals couldn’t contain their excitement.

“Let’s go to Heaven Locus Land and see for ourselves. Lu Yun has the Dao Academy and an endless supply of crystals and treasures. Whatever attracted his attention must be at least a connate-grade treasure. It might be even greater!”

Immortals and moguls from the nine majors and ten lands swiftly gathered at the Heaven Locus Marsh, but what greeted them caught them completely off guard. Dense swarms of zombies rushed out from the great swamp, trying to break through the defenses of the Heaven Locus Court.

“Er... never mind that about a treasure. The Heaven Locus emperor is obviously using us to resolve this crisis for him,” someone chuckled wryly.

“Even so, we must protect the innocents. We can’t stand by and do nothing after fortunately arriving in time.” With a wave of his hand, Nephrite Celestial Emperor Zhao Shengguang sent an immortal sword into the air, which exploded and rained down a hail of swords on the area.

He’d acquired a special item from the Ancient Tree of Life that allowed him to tap into the full power of his heavenly mandate and gain the ninth origin dao fruit without fully understanding the true meaning of beholding the world.

He was now a true celestial emperor, raising him to the peak of the world of immortals. Moreover, the strength of the benevolent heart was slowly emerging from the mandate to influence him.

After Zhao Shengguang made his move, other heavyweights followed suit without hesitation and began slaughtering the zombies as well. The Heaven Locus emperor wiped away the cold sweat on his forehead. It was fortunate that Zhao Shengguang had taken the first step, otherwise, he would’ve attracted the ire of the general public.

Lu Yun had in fact entered the swampy depths, he just happened to coincide with the current spate of unrest. It was also a relief that the boy had killed the most powerful zombie coming out of the marsh before going in.

With most of the elites in the world of immortals here, the unrest at the marsh was quelled before it could spread further.

Rumble!

The layer of smoke above the marsh trembled as a yellowish-brown door emerged in the air and slowly creaked open.

The Xuan Yuan Tomb!

Erected before the door was the projection of a tombstone, on which were etched three bloody characters.

Rather than the contemporary language of the world of immortals, they were written in an ancient language. Nevertheless, a mysterious intent emanating from the characters enabled everyone to understand them.

“The Xuan Yuan Tomb? Who’s Xuan Yuan?” General confusion reigned and even Qi Hai was taken aback. He didn’t know who Xuan Yuan was. In fact, he’d never heard of such a figure. He did know the characters on the tomb, though. They belonged to the written language of the human race back in the era of human dao.

“Did Lu Yun enter the marsh to search for this tomb? But... the entrance to the tomb is actually outside!” Many were already considering entering the tomb to explore it.

“I suggest you stay outside if you don’t want to die a painful death,” Zhao Shenguang spoke up at this time. “Remember the celestial master tomb? If Lu Yun hadn’t broken the formation in that tomb to save all of you, you’d still be wandering around it as skinless corpses.”

Chapter 767: Prince of the Dao Academy

Hearts sank at Zhao Shenguang’s words.

The celestial master tomb!

Although the official reason given for all those excursions to the tomb was that the younger generation needed to gain some tempering and experience, many of the dao immortals who’d accompanied them had reaped quite a bountiful harvest. When Lu Yun resolved the layout within and combined the two different tombs in the yin yang realms, all living beings inside had seen with their own eyes what they truly were.

Corpses without skin!

Only when the two tombs were fused back together were they reunited with both parts of their selves and return to who they truly were. The traumatic experience still haunted many of them even now, so Zhao Shenguang raising it at this time sent chills down their backs.

Most of them had been utterly baffled by the events of the tomb and why their skin would mysteriously separate from their bodies. After numerous rounds of speculation and expert deduction, the general consensus was that they’d entered the celestial master tomb through the wrong method and blundered into the yin realm because of that. Of course, this conclusion was naturally a Lu Yun propagated falsehood.

Hackles raised and hair standing up on the backs of their necks, the crowd considered the sudden appearance of the Xuan Yuan Tomb door with new eyes. As for why Zhao Shenguang knew of this despite being trapped in the Ancient Tree of Life at the time—he’d personally investigated many things upon gaining freedom to properly fulfill his duties as celestial emperor of Nephrite Major.

“Don’t worry about it, this is a real tomb door that we can safely enter.” A blue-haired man stood out at this point and gave his judgment in a ringing voice after a series of close observations.

He looked to be in his early twenties and was dressed in snow-white robes. Handsome features adorning his face, he held himself with an unearthly air. Being a void-ascended immortal, his cultivation wasn’t particularly strong. However, an extremely unique presence faded in and out of existence around him—profound, detached, and with a thick sense of viciousness.

“Who are you?” Frowns abounded when people saw him.

Void-ascended immortals were becoming ever more commonplace as time went on, many of which summoned phenomenon of ascension that encompassed entire provinces or even majors when they broke through. That caliber of immortal had grown so ubiquitous that the senior councils of various councils couldn't be bothered with them anymore.

"This junior is Zou Longxiu, second disciple of the headmaster of the Dao Academy," Zou Longxiu responded with a smile.

"Zou Longxiu? That traitor of Yellow Springs Land? The one who betrayed your home in front of the entire world and begged Lu Yun to take you in?" A man walked forward with a contemptuous tone and sized up Zou Longxiu.

Smack!

A figure flashed through the air and smashed a hand right across the speaker's face.

"How dare you speak about my young lord like this, you court death!" It was a young girl in black clothes who looked roughly sixteen years old. However, her presence was as fathomless as the deep blue and she flared the aura of an arcane dao immortal without compromise.

She wasn't just an ordinary arcane dao immortal; she pulsed with the power of the world. That meant she was equipped with a formation of heaven and earth, placing her at the level of a primordial arcane dao immortal!

Bing Ling.

King of the rimesnakes and the Infernum that Lu Yun had obtained in the Skandha Extinction Tomb. She'd later refined the arcane dao fruit of the North Sea's rimesnake Bing Xuan, propelling her to arcane dao immortal realm. As one of Lu Yun's ghostly soldiers, it was a given that she'd receive a formation of heaven and earth.

Currently, Bing Xuan and Bing Ling flanked Zou Longxiu, protecting their master's treasured disciple. He was Lu Yun's true disciple and a pupil of the Dragonshift Method. Given his status, he could be called a prince of Dusk Province.

However, he refused any special treatment and started off in the outer academy just like the other disciples of the Dao Academy. He would take the examinations with them to earn the privilege to advance, the only difference was that he'd be receiving all of Lu Yun's knowledge.

Lu Yun's first disciple Liu Qingmiao wasn't present. She was only two, so even if she wanted to come, Qing Ruyan and the head of the Panorama Pavilion would never let her go.

"Just look at the Dao Academy throwing their weight around like tyrants!" The speaker earlier was an arcane dao immortal—peak of his realm. Six years ago, he would've had a spot in the apex of the world of immortals. But now, he wasn't much of anything.

"Like tyrants?" Zou Longxiu flashed a smile at the man who'd been sent flying. "If we really threw our weight around like that, Bing Ling would've snapped your neck just now, destroyed your nascent spirit, and scattered your soul." His tone suddenly turned ugly, "Would you like to see just how tyrannical we can be?"

“Hahahahaha—“ the arcane dao immortal crowed with laughter. “Do you see this, everyone? Though Lu Yun says he’s establishing a sacred land, he’s just a devil in the end. His disciples want to kill and maim at the drop of a hat. I’d like to request everyone to judge for yourselves, is this so-called Dao Academy of his a sacred land of immortal dao or demonic dao?”

“That’s Jin Chengming, one of the powerhouses of the former Jin Clan in Nephrite Major!” someone murmured. “The Jin Clan once forcefully occupied Lu Yun’s inheritance tower, which killed many of the clan’s experts when it exploded. The clan later moved out of the major, and Jin Chengming is their only surviving arcane dao immortal. No wonder he’s setting himself against Dusk Province.”

“So it’s someone from the Jin Clan.” Zou Longxiu inclined his head. “When my master and lady master welcomed the Dao Flower back into the world of immortals for the void realm, it was this clan who attacked the flower with a barrage from weapons of war. They wanted to kill the flower in its infancy.

“The immortal dao now resides in Mount Xuanhuang. If the Jin senior thinks that my master is a devil and that the Dao Academy a sacred land of demonic dao, then simply go to the mountain, awaken the immortal dao’s will, and have it destroy the academy.”

“But what I’d like to know is whether the will of the immortal dao destroys the Dao Academy, or butchers you for the little bastard you are.”

Zou Longxiu sneered as emotions flickered across Jin Chengming’s face. Most people present were outright ignoring a minor arcane dao immortal like him. This never would’ve happened back in their heyday and when the clan had steadfastly clung to the thigh of the Feng Clan.

But now, not only was the Jin Clan demolished, so was the Feng Clan relegated to the lists of the world’s third-rate factions. Who would pay attention to a nobody like him and make an enemy out of the Dao Academy for his sake?

It was one thing to plot and scheme in the dark, but openly choose a side? Everyone here was a wily old fox and no one as stupid as that.

“Alright!” Zou Longxiu pushed the Jin senior to the back of his mind. “My master is an expert tomb raider and having received his knowledge, I know a thing or two about tomb raiding myself. According to my observations, though this door is perilous and extremely risky, it really is the entrance to the tomb.

“This tomb is another yin yang setup. There are two entrances: the one outside is the yang entrance, and the one inside the marsh the yin entrance.

“Master has triggered the yin door, so the yang one naturally reveals itself as well. This tomb is different from the celestial master tomb.”

Chapter 769: Dusk River

“This isn’t a tomb.” Lu Yun shook his head. He looked almost like a human torch with hellfire blazing all around him; the flames of the netherworld radiated great power in all directions to keep the corpsefire at bay.

Corpsefire guided the zombies. Without it, the giant zombies wandered about listlessly.

“The moat snake is the outer-coffin, and the Heaven Locus Marsh the real tomb! We’re inside the tomb already. No wonder,” Lu Yun murmured, “No wonder a yang door would emerge outside the marsh as soon as we entered.”

“That... is...” The Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign and Ashu goggled at each other. Using the only connate earth-affiliated divine beast as an outer-coffin? That was more horrifying than shaping it as a tomb!

“Then... what should we do now?” The demon sovereign was at a loss. “Should we enter the snake coffin?”

“If my observations are correct, this should be the handiwork of the shamanic divines. Specifically, their corpse coffin method,” Lu Yun said with furrowed brows. “Whoever is buried here came with a powerful coffin, though. That’s why the shamanic divines turned the moat snake into an outer-coffin instead.”

He’d encountered corpse coffins twice before. Once under Myriad Formation Summit, where the shamanic divines had buried Ruyi with Yueshen’s corpse. Someone had plainly broken that layout at some point and collected Yueshen Jixiang’s soul for a resurrection layout in an attempt to resurrect her.

However, the resurrection layout was then adjusted twice: the first time to resurrect the little fox, and the second time for Aoxue. Meanwhile, Yueshen was refined into an immortal ghost, and Ruyi’s corpse sealed somewhere in the Abyss of Divine Burial. All the resentment and grudges from the endless divines she came in contact with turned her into a terrifying undead hag.

The other time he’d encountered corpse coffins was in the inner sea at the heart of Levitating Island. There were two corpse coffins within Su Xiaoxiao’s tomb that were refined from the corpses of two Exalted Divine holy girls.

Lu Yun still didn’t know what corpse coffins were for and had gleaned no new clues from his third encounter with them. Although it was an outer-coffin, it wasn’t all that different from the coffins he’d encountered before.

The Heaven Locus Marsh was a tomb, and the moat snake an outer-coffin. To enter it, Lu Yun and his two companions would have to break through the yin door. Something “alive” was on the other side of the door, something that had been directing the corpsefire and giant zombies to stop them from entering.

With a flip of his hand, Lu Yun collected his luopan. “Come on, let’s go inside!” he declared.

The demon sovereign fidgeted. “Do we really have to?”

Lu Yun turned to him with a smile. “You awoke from your slumber in a tomb. Are you really afraid of entering an outer-coffin?”

The demon sovereign didn’t have an answer for that. Ashu didn’t mind either way. In his eyes, the inside of the coffin was much safer than the outside. Though corpsefire had filled the tomb to the brim, it couldn’t enter the snake coffin. Otherwise, the coffin would’ve already been destroyed.

“Grrrrraaw!!!” Sensing the approach of Lu Yun and his companions, the hundred-strong group of zombies defending the door into the coffin snarled and charged at them with reckless abandon.

However, the corpsefire surrounding them evaporated as soon as it came into the vicinity of Lu Yun's hellfire. Confusion surfaced in the zombies' eyes, but they followed their instincts and continued the charge.

The demon sovereign waved a hand and pushed out the Skyturning Seal, sending it right through the crowd of zombies with terrifying might. Anything it rammed went flying off into the distance.

Seizing the opening, Lu Yun attached a talisman each to the demon sovereign and Ashu. They quickly shrank down until they were the size of minute particles. At the same time, he diminished his own size with Size Manipulation. The hellfire surrounding him brought his two companions under its protection as well.

The three of them dashed at the strange tomb door as three thin lines.

Hum.

A small ripple emerged in the air and faded just as quickly. Everything outside disappeared the moment the three of them stepped through the door, including the corpsefire and giant zombies.

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A great black river flowed quietly before them. Neither the sky nor the earth were in sight. There was only the river. Countless corpses bobbed on the water's surface. Lurking underneath were zombies, monsters, corpsefish, and undead hags. An ominous prickle ran through Lu Yun's scalp.

"What the heck?!" He stood on top of a particle in the air and scrambled backwards, almost falling off the particle.

"What's wrong?" The demon sovereign turned around and quickly steadied him. In a surprised tone, he asked, "What is this place? Have you been here before?"

Lu Yun shook his head and stared unblinkingly at the black river below them, at a complete loss for words.

"This is the Dusk River," Ashu said. "It used to run through half of Dusk Province from the ancient tomb at its heart... The river can be dated back to before the death of the primeval emperor, to an era before even his reign. It was a treasure of a powerful being whose identity has been lost in history." Ashu sighed and continued, "I thought someone had taken away that Dusk River, but here it is!"

There had been a Dusk River in Dao City when the city was established, but the river had slowly run dry and left behind a waterless river bed. The spatial anomaly beneath it had, in turn, reverted back to normal.

Lu Yun had thought that someone had recalled the treasure, but no, the energy and grand influence of the waters here were identical to the Dusk River he knew!

"What's happening? Why is the Dusk River here?" Lu Yun looked around in confusion. There was only an empty void beneath them, nothing else except for the river and the creatures within it.

"Maybe there are two Dusk Rivers," muttered the demon sovereign. "Someone took the one in Dusk Province... and this is the other one."

“Empress Myrtlestar once visited this place, and the map that Violetshade gave me doesn’t have a Dusk River or this space.” Regaining his composure, Lu Yun took out his luopan to determine the feng shui here.

“The door we came through may have been a fake one. It leads to this particular subspace and not the outer-coffin that is the moat snake’s body... This isn’t part of the Heaven Locus Marsh anymore, we’re in the Dusk River.” Lu Yun frowned. He’d checked with his luopan when they were outside, but failed to see the door for what it was.

“It may not be fake,” Ashu interjected. “Perhaps we’ll enter the snake coffin proper once we cross the river. It’s been more than two hundred thousand years since Empress Myrtlestar visited, so everything could’ve changed.”

“You’re right,” Lu Yun said. “But we have to take this Dusk River with us for now. It’s a great river of yin lodged firmly into this space and might give birth to something terrible. Xuanxi,” he called softly.

“Milord!” A blue-haired girl in blue dress appeared before Lu Yun and curtsied gracefully at him. It was Xuanxi, the Dusk river god.

Chapter 770: Pollution

Xuanxi wasn’t a river god born out of the rituals held for the Dusk River. She’d been a genius of the shark spirit clan and Aoxue’s maid, becoming the Dusk river god only after acquiring its divine decree.

She shouldn’t have been able to claim the Dusk River with just her own power. But now that Lu Yun was an immortal and the ten Yama Kings of the Ten Halls assumed their rightful places, the Tome of Life and Death had granted Xuanxi, one of the ten Yamas, an exponential boost to her talents and strength.

As the Dusk river god, she exercised full control over the river and could take it as her own. Lu Yun had kept his hands off the river up until now because he believed it to be someone else’s property. Since he didn’t want to make an enemy out of this owner, he’d let the river be even after it ran dry.

Now, though, the river was right before his eyes, slowly becoming part of the area and fostering a terrible being with its yin and vicious energy. He wasn’t going to hesitate anymore.

If the “owner” of Dusk River came looking, he would have Ge Long deal with them.

Although Ge Long was currently left with only a damaged soul and was recovering in the kingdom of hell, his identity and status should be enough for him to rebuff any challengers.

Strangely enough, the old servant had been sitting cross-legged under the Karmic Tree ever since they arrived at Heaven Locus Land, sparing no attention for whatever was happening outside.

Meanwhile, Carmine Eternal, the divine beast that’d put on a powerful show in the Central World and kept the beings of the Blood Sea in line, had recovered some of her energy. She took the form as a girl in a red chiffon dress and hung out with the residents of the netherworld with great excitement.

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Xuanxi stood above the Dusk River with her arms extended, her long marine-blue hair dancing in the air like blue streams. A strange glyph lit up between her brows—the divine decree of the Dusk river god.

The river roiled and tall waves rose until they threatened the sky. Black water agitated and converged toward the glyph on her forehead. Suddenly, her expression turned grave as her eyes shot open, and she cast a disbelieving look at the heart of the river.

A giant vortex had emerged out of nowhere, suctioning back the river that was headed to Xuanxi.

Countless zombies and dead spirits snarled and shrieked underwater as a strange power shot out of the vortex. Forming invisible blades, it slaughtered the myriad of monsters in the waters. Even the undead hags, whose physique made them almost invincible, shattered into inky yin spirits after a single blow and were devoured by the vortex.

“The river is indeed here to nurture something terrible!” Lu Yun’s expression darkened. He could sense an immense and terrifying power growing greater and greater beneath the giant vortex at the center of the river.

That thing had created the vortex.

However, Lu Yun didn’t sense any ripple of life from it, nor did he see anything dead. There wasn’t even a spirit there.

“What is it? A treasure? No, powerful treasures would have their own treasure spirits. Even if whatever’s underwater is a treasure, I should be able to see its spirit!” Confusion flashed through his gaze.

Above the vortex, Xuanxi did all she could to tap into the power of her divine decree, fighting for control of the Dusk River.

“Why don’t we get down there and take a look?” The Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign had put away all his concerns upon arriving here and was eager for some action.

“Don’t!” Lu Yun shook his head. “That thing cut undead hags into pieces. If we go down there, we’ll immediately be cut apart and devoured.”

He flicked out a soybean, which flew into the vortex in a flash of gold. A warrior in golden armor emerged out of nowhere and was swept underwater. Lu Yun hurriedly activated Spectral Eye and connected his thoughts to the bean soldier’s.

Splash!

He died and was sent back to the outer realm before he could even draw breath for a scream.

“I got a clear look.” Lu Yun frowned. “It’s a sword, a sword without a hilt! It appears to be alive, but it isn’t. It isn’t a living being, but it doesn’t have a spirit, either. So what is it?”

That information didn’t give Lu Yun an answer.

“Can it be a connate-grade treasure? One that’s just taken shape,” Ashu spoke up. “There are different levels of connate-grade treasures. There are regular connate-grade treasures, connate-grade spirit treasures, and connate-grade peerless treasures!

“Perhaps the sword you can’t understand is a connate-grade peerless treasure in its infancy! It’s similar to the likes of Qing Yu’s Cosmic Eyes and Cosmic Skycarver, as well as your Cosmic Sea!”

The ultimate treasure of the peak factions in the world were all regular connate-grade treasures, while the Cosmic Sea, Cosmic Eyes, and Cosmic Skycarver found in the dragon tomb were connate-grade peerless treasures, the greatest among connate-grade treasures.

Unfortunately, neither Lu Yun nor Qing Han could tap into their full power.

Feinie’s Formation Orb had started out as a regular connate-grade treasure, then became a connate-grade spirit treasure after the Yin and Yang Formation Orbs merged. Apart from that, the connate-grade treasures Lu Yun had taken from the North Sea Palace were all regular ones as well.

“That’s not the case.” Lu Yun shook his head. “The sword isn’t naturally born, but man-made. The yin energy in the Dusk River isn’t so much nurturing it as contaminating it...” He shuddered. “That’s right! Someone’s trying to turn the sword into a yin sword!”

“A yin sword?” Ashu’s lips thinned. “That’s what happened to the Dusk River... It wasn’t like this before—it was polluted and transformed into a yin river!”

“Is whatever infected the Dusk River here? Is it polluting the sword with the river even now? Do you know who owned the Dusk River?” Lu Yun asked.

“The first owner of the river is buried under Dao City, within the ancient tomb exceeding emperor grade—this term doesn’t refer to the immortal emperor, but to the realm above the great emperors of the Primeval Era!

“The great personage has died, though, in an eon long ago. They and their three peers were each buried in four great tombs.

“The Dusk River was claimed by someone else after the ancient being’s death... It wasn’t until the end of the primeval human rule and establishment of the immortal dao that the Dusk River emerged again, as a yin river in the ancient tomb.

“I think... I’ve figured out what that thing under the river is...” Ashu said slowly. “Among the four great treasures of the four tomb owners, only one remains pure from pollution... It’s the sword!” Realization of the situation at hand struck him. “It mustn’t be contaminated! You have to get it out of the river!”