

## Necropolis 781

### Chapter 781: Bloodline of the Moat Snake

The two high priests automatically filtered out Lu Yun's response of "that's it". The volcano was the foremost fire treasure in this tomb realm, a terrifying connate peerless treasure!

It was a treasure that fully released its power every second, and even their group speaker, the priest of earth, found it very difficult to break through the blockade set by the treasure. Only the priest of fire could utilize her legacy and coalesce the fire altar for protection in order to reach the yin door. Alas, she was only able to summon one big enough for herself.

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"This little task will be a piece of cake." Lu Yun nodded. "Let's go."

Ashu and the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign were very familiar with the young man's capabilities. Seeing him beam with confidence, they stuck close to his side and headed for the enormous volcano.

"Hold on!" The priests of fire and earth called out when they saw the trio set off without hesitation. The priest of fire had brought the visitor here to daunt him with the enormity of the task, but who would've thought the young man would think nothing of it after seeing the volcano and stubbornly insist on forging ahead anyways!

"It's connate li fire of greatest yang inside the volcano, one of the strongest connate fires there is. The three of you will be burnt to a crisp within three breaths after entering!" the priest of fire yelled while her colleague looked at Ashu.

He didn't care about the others, but he couldn't let Ashu go to his death like this. The holy lord was a special entity, one not nearly as simple as being the spirit of the zombie tree. He wouldn't be able to defend himself with his current level of cultivation, and more importantly, the treasure spewing forth at full power harbored the extremities of both yin and yang. It was a natural bane to Ashu's existence.

"It's just connate li fire." Lu Yun didn't even look back as he took his two companions closer to the mouth of the volcano.

"I'll go with them!" The priest of fire made up her mind after biting down on her lip.

"Go on." The priest of earth nodded. "Protect Xuan Yuan's body and don't let anyone desecrate it."

"Understood!" Two balls of flame ignited in her eyes as the power of the altar fluctuated over her. Tendrils of flames peeled off from the volcano and formed an enormous altar of fire beneath her feet, which then shot into the volcano like a shooting star.

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"I can't believe you told them about refining the four organs of the world." Ashu looked at Lu Yun with baffled incomprehension.

“It’s not much of a secret anyway.” Lu Yun shrugged. “My replica kept no secrets the moment he accepted the holy kings’ legacy. The holy kings of the underworld and some others have known for a while now. Alright, you two stay close now and keep within nine meters of me.”

He snatched lightly at the south as he spoke, returning with blazing connate fire essence circling around him. It formed a protective shell nine meters around him, defending its occupants from the frenzied flames in the area.

No one controlled the fires here, so they could riot and run amok to whatever heights their strength was capable of. The greatest strength of connate li fires was on full display, and even a peak dao origin immortal would’ve perished in here. If they ventured further in, not even Ashu and the demon sovereign would be able to withstand the dreadful flames.

However, the fires around them instantly submitted when the connate fire essence appeared, becoming one with Lu Yun’s creation and no longer harming those within the fiery shell. Connate fire essence was the heart of all fire and the mother spark of all flames. Fire essence wasn’t fire, per se, but it could become real flames.

Connate li flames were among the strongest fires born of this essence. Now that Lu Yun had summoned it, he swiftly became the tamer of flames and even the domineering li fire quieted to complete docility.

“So you can summon and manipulate connate fire essence. No wonder you dared come in here.” The priest of fire’s voice sounded as a tremendous altar landed in front of Lu Yun with a thump.

“When we saw you summon connate wood essence earlier, we thought you were the Azure Dragon King or his heir. It now looks like you’ve received someone else’s inheritance,” the high priest sighed. “In that case, come onto the altar. You won’t reach the yin tomb door with just connate fire essence alone.”

“Are there other living beings here?” Lu Yun quickly grasped the priest’s meaning. Connate fire essence could restrain connate flames, but it was also a great nutritional supplement for other fire-attribute creatures. Breathing in even a hint of connate fire essence would bring great benefits to them.

“Mm.” Bliss floated over the priest’s face when she entered the nine-meter-wide safe zone, thanks to the three setting foot onto the altar.

“Connate treasures have their own spirits, making it impossible for other spirits to coexist peacefully within it. If there’s anything living there, you all must have allowed them to exist so they could guard the yin tomb door,” speculated Ashu.

“Yes, but it’s more like a free-range type of existence. We can’t control it either.” The high priest nodded and continued further into the volcano. The very air now burned with connate li fire, a sight that inspired Lu Yun to leave a little bit of connate fire essence on the altar and walk away from it.

“What are you doing?!” Panicking, the priest quickly called out to him, “This is the territory of that fire spirit. She’ll attack you if you have any connate fire essence on you!”

Lu Yun shook his head and didn’t respond. Instead, he faced a certain direction and shouted, “Come on out, I’ve already seen you.”

The patch of flames in that area trembled as a serpentine life form slowly slithered out of the fires. It was roughly a meter long and looked to be carved out of fire-colored crystal. It seemed more like an exquisite artwork more than anything else, but her beady eyes were staring hard at Lu Yun's body and the scarlet fire essence around him.

The little snake could live only in the volcano. If she could swallow a tendril of connate fire essence, she'd be able to free herself of its constraints and receive true freedom. A pillar of pure-white fire rose while the little snake took human form. Looking roughly thirteen years old, she was dressed in a silk dress of alternating red and white and held a trace of undeniable desire in her eyes.

"Who are you and why do you have Carmine Eternal's presence on you?" Desire flitted out of her eyes in the next moment and she looked gravely at Lu Yun.

"So you're the moat snake descendant!" He understood when he heard the girl's words.

### **Chapter 782: Carmine Arbiter**

Carmine Eternal had taken Xuanxi and Zhaoqing to the eastern end of the tomb realm in search of the moat snake, so it'd crossed no one's mind that its bloodline could be inside this volcano! However, though the moat snake was a divine beast of earth, its bloodline had curiously developed as a divine beast of fire.

"What?! If you're the bloodline of the moat snake, then what's in that egg at the eastern end of the tomb realm?!" Her understanding of the world and purpose of her life crumbling around her, the priest of fire shrieked with disbelief.

The girl in the white silk dress swept a cool look over the high priest and thinned her lips in disdain. She ignored the priest of fire and looked solemnly at Lu Yun instead. "I am not the bloodline of the moat snake, I am the moat snake. My name is Carmine Arbiter."

Thoroughly shattered by the encounter, the priest of fire was numb to this revelation.

So the moat snake hadn't died and had even overseen a perfect exchange to substitute herself for the divine spirit being kept here, reforming her body in the process. The only difference was that the moat snake had once been a divine spirit of the earth. After absorbing the connate fire spirit living here, her affiliation had changed to that of fire.

All of this had occurred right beneath the priest's nose, but she hadn't caught a single hint of it at all! Most frightening of all was that the little girl wasn't the divine beast's bloodline, but the divine beast itself! The moat snake hadn't died after all this time!

All was well that ended well if the moat snake was dead. That she hadn't... and could keep growing meant that she could take back her body at any time and become the master of the tomb.

"Carmine Arbiter?" Lu Yun turned over the name with surprise. "Are you the same clan as Carmine Eternal?"

"No." The little girl shook her head. "Carmine is just a title, Arbiter and Eternal are our names. I am a moat snake while Eternal is a blood snake. We are the only ones of our kind in the world, but compared to me, Carmine Eternal enjoys more freedom and goes through her days quite carefree."

Her expression turned a bit downcast at this. "I can feel a fatal attraction exuding from you, something more appealing than connate flame essence..." She jerked her head up and fixed her stare on Lu Yun, allowing the deep yearning of her heart to shine out of her eyes.

"Carmine Eternal is also here. She's gone looking for your bloodline in the eastern reaches of the tomb."

Carmine Arbiter blinked and fell silent. "Have her return to wherever she came from. A thing of great danger lies to the east and the extremity of life is death. There is no moat snake bloodline to be found there, but the great venom from the thing that died with me."

Knowing that there would be plenty of people having designs on her, Carmine Arbiter had set up a variety of vicious countermeasures to the east to take revenge on those who would scheme against her.

"I understand." Lu Yun lifted his hand and sent a ball of connate fire essence to the moat snake.

Carmine Arbiter started. "Little fellow, I may have a certain relationship with Carmine Eternal, but I won't let you go just on her behalf. Apart from connate fire essence, I'm much more interested in the other thing on you." She was smiling, but there was a hint of merciless disquiet in her mirth. Killing intent tinged the disquiet, and both of them surfaced in her youthful face, casting it in an eerie light.

"I know." Lu Yun nodded calmly. "You're actually dead and a yin spirit. In fact, you're a very strong vicious ghost."

Carmine Arbiter trembled and her eyes suddenly turned pure white, a change marked by dense energy of the dead rising from her body. But for some strange reason, the ocean of pure yang li fire and a world constructed of boundless yang energy did nothing to her.

It was a very unusual and surreal sight.

"You're dead and hardly willing to accept that you are. Endless resentment and obsession suffuse your body, giving you the misconception that you're still alive.

"Your resentment is so great that it'd be able to turn this yang tomb into a dead world by itself, and you aren't here of your own volition. Instead, a great expert put you in this spot and borrowed the utmost yang energy within this connate treasure to keep your malice in check."

Spectral Eye fully open, Lu Yun could see a gruesomely dreadful ghost in the place of the charming little girl. Waves of terrifying malice constantly clashed with the sea of flames around it, the two forces canceling each other out.

The connate peerless treasure didn't fully release all of its power at every second to protect the door to the yin tomb, but to suppress the appalling resentment of Carmine Arbiter. Connate li fire battled never-ending resentment from the moat snake, causing the flames within the volcano to rampage out of control. At the same time, an enormous illusion shrouded everything taking place here and presented a wholly different view.

The true form of the little girl had been concealed all this time. In the priest's and even her own eyes, Carmine Arbiter was the divine spirit of the flames and not a vicious ghost.

"This illusion realm is plainly a great formation that's created reality out of illusion, it's a Return to Origin formation! If my guess is right, this is the handiwork of that fox!"

The little fox—ancestor of the primordial monster spirits and the monster celestial master of the primordial immortal court!

Everything here was remarkably similar to the once-existing Myriad Returns City, and Lu Yun had even detected a hint of the little fox's presence the moment he entered. The four primordial celestial masters were a highly mysterious quartet—not even the immortal emperor knew where they came from.

“What’s going on here??” the priest of fire asked in a trembling voice. She vaguely sensed signs of her altar collapsing, and the altar power infusing her was fragmenting as well due to some unknown interference.

Lu Yun waved a hand and sent a beam of connate fire essence into the altar beneath her feet, consolidating the structure teetering on the edge of destruction.

“You’re a vicious ghost, but also a divine spirit of the flames. You both reinforce and counteract the world here. Swallow this strand of connate fire essence and break free of this place. I’ll take you to that place,” Lu Yun said to the moat snake.

The connate li fires here not only suppressed the terrifying grudges about her, but were also slowly melding with her and attempting to purify her resentment, transforming her into a true divine spirit of the flames.

However, her malice was so strong that it’d tainted the connate flames that’d stolen into her body instead. Carmine Arbiter wasn’t becoming the divine spirit of the flames, but rather a vicious ghost of the flames.

She would break free of the volcano upon obtaining connate fire essence, but as a vicious ghost instead of a divine spirit. A vicious ghost that controlled a connate flame.

No emotions passed through her pure white eyes, just a tyrannical presence that grew in stature from her body. The sea of flames grew even wilder in response.

“AHHHHH—” she suddenly shrieked and took her true form as a meter-long moat snake. Black flames circled around her, and there was another projected body of fire next to her own.

“In that case, I’ll tame you first and then take you to hell,” murmured Lu Yun as he looked at the moat snake in the air.

Wham.

The connate fire in the area suddenly condensed into a divine beast of flames slowly standing up from the endless sea.

Scarlet ape!

Lu Yun had mediated upon the form of the golden scarlet ape to manifest one of its kind.

### **Chapter 783: Dean of Fire**

“Aouuuuuu—” the scarlet ape formed from pure connate flames roared a challenge at its opponent. Manifesting three heads and six arms, it charged at the pitch-black moat snake.

Two vicious beasts ripped and tore into each other in the sea of flames while the interior of the volcano rampaged further out of control. Lu Yun deployed the Mastery of the Five Elements and continuously fed connate fire essence, as well as connate li fire, to the scarlet ape manifested by his nascent spirit observation method.

With the two acting in tandem, the battlefield became Lu Yun's home ground. Inside the kingdom of hell, his nascent spirit sent an unbroken stream of energy to the scarlet ape to bring it further into reality.

The moat snake in front of him was a vicious ghost and Lu Yun's nascent spirit was a natural deterrent to any ghostly entities. However, that combined with his projected scarlet ape was only able to fight the moat snake to a standstill!

Up in the air, he took a cross-legged position and operated the method at maximum power, not daring to relax for the fraction of a second.

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"What can we do, the altar of fire is about to collapse!" Despair suffused the priest of fire's exquisitely formed face. The great battle between the two enormous beasts had sent the local space into unusual pandemonium, and her normal command of the altar's power was no longer enough to maintain it. After all, what she stood on wasn't the real altar, just something manifested by the volcano.

"Priestess of fire." Ashu spoke slowly after throwing a glance at the girl. "I can give you the Fire Altar and help you break away from this world. In return, come with me to the Dao Academy and become a dean of one of its schools—the dean of fire."

The girl paused. "Dao Academy? Dean of fire?"

Ashu pointed with his hand and transferred knowledge about the Dao Academy into her mind. She stilled as she digested newfound knowledge of the world.

"I must protect Xuan Yuan."

"Without the real Fire Altar, the five of you are just false priests when all is said and done." Ashu stretched out his arm to reveal a fist-sized altar over his palm.

The Fire Altar.

Lu Yun's heart of the world came from Ashu, which naturally meant that he possessed its home, the Fire Altar, as well.

As soon as the real altar appeared, the violent energy of the flames surged to new heights. Affected by its presence, connate li flames churned furiously toward the projected scarlet ape to strengthen it even more.

The priest of fire yet remained quiet. Cracks fractured the altar of fire beneath her feet, an obvious sign that it was about to disintegrate.

"Once Lu Yun tames the moat snake, he'll be able to control the two tomb realms of the Xuan Yuan Tomb through it." Ashu's tone was calm, like he was recounting a most ordinary happening. "And once

the two tomb realms are within Lu Yun's grasp, nothing will be able to threaten Xuan Yuan's body. It may even be possible that he resurrects one day.

"All of you have learned too many of Lu Yun's secrets, and while he may not mind, as his follower, I must help him nip some unnecessary trouble in the bud."

"...you!!" That finally provoked a response from the priest of fire. "But... you are... you're actually willing to follow Lu Yun and be his subordinate!"

Ashu shook his head slightly. "I'm just a spirit born of that tree."

The girl fell silent for a moment. "I think you'll regret this once you find your way back to yourself."

"Find my way back to myself and become that person again?" Ashu snorted. "That person is dead, Xuan Yuan is also dead. The vast reaches of land before Emperors Fall, the only primary world in the universe is also destroyed and become the great cosmos in our eyes..."

"Stop!" The priest of fire cut him off with terror. The time before Emperors Fall was a taboo topic outlawed by the heavens. Whoever spoke of this would surely be struck with misfortune.

Ashu chuckled; he and the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign were now standing on the Fire Altar. "If you don't accept, you can die in the course of duty for Xuan Yuan. ...ah, Xuan Yuan, who would've thought that he wouldn't even dare use his title after his death?"

"I..." Color drained out of her exquisite face.

Boooooom!

An earth-shattering collision rang out in the distance as the two beasts crashed into each other in the sea of flames, setting off one tsunami after another. Lu Yun's body was wrapped in a thick blanket of connate fire essence and the Tome of Life and Death drifted in and out of view in the blinding red, also working to keep him safe.

On the other side, the priest of fire was now so pale that she was translucent.

"I... am willing..." Faced with a threat to her life, she finally capitulated. She was the youngest of the five priests, a girl less than twenty years old. It was precisely because of her youth and inexperience that Ashu chose to recruit her to Lu Yun's banner. He wouldn't have bothered with some old freak who'd lived for tens of thousands of years.

Becoming a dean of the Dao Academy signified betrayal, and betraying the Xuan Yuan bloodline meant that the other four priests would hunt her down. But as the only one with a true altar of her element, that meant she was the only real priest among them.

She landed on the Fire Altar and melded her strength with the altar, fully refining it as hers.

"This is the real altar of fire, one of the five altars born of the mother altar!" She spread her arms wide open with a look of contentment.

The power that'd been bestowed upon her underwent an ascension, completely cutting itself off from the tomb realm around her and connecting to an entirely new world. She wouldn't lose her strength now, even without the worship from the Xuan Yuan Slaves.

"Xuan Yuan wouldn't have liked to see you like this," Ashu noted somberly as he watched her. "Freedom is the truest core of a living being. Standing guard over his tomb and tying yourselves to a single world, becoming neither human nor ghost... he too would be disturbed by the situation if any part of his will had survived."

The priest of fire said nothing in return.

"...aren't you going to help?" she said after a long beat, not wanting to discuss Xuan Yuan any further.

"Nope." Ashu shook his head. "In here, the moat snake won't even be a difficult opponent for him."

"What is it that you want me to do?" The girl looked at Ashu and spoke haltingly.

"Return the dead dao of the Primeval Era to the world. Lu Yun is the beholder of dao in this age, but history is the looking glass into future prosperity or decline. The dao of this age requires reference to the great dao of the Primeval Era to ensure a thriving outcome."

The combat arts and methods that Lu Yun and Qing Yu had pioneered were mostly derived from the ones of the Primordial Era. As such, they were highly limited in use and scope, and Lu Yun needed even more knowledge from the past to perfect his creations.

"History is the looking glass into future prosperity or decline..." repeated the priest of fire.

"That's something Lu Yun once said." Ashu grinned; he'd felt that saying made a lot of sense the first time he heard it.

"Since the priest of fire grasps the dao of fire, it is the first dao of flames beneath the heavens and the origin of all fire related combat arts and methods. As you are now the dean of fire, the way of fire will surely flourish beneath the immortal dao."

The priest of fire and Fire Altar perfectly complemented each other. Only in the priest's hands would the altar's true strength reveal itself, and only by wielding the altar was the priest a true holder of her position.

#### **Chapter 784: Torch Dragon**

"Why me?" the priest of fire turned to Ashu. "Why didn't you choose the others? They're better than me... I only became the priest of fire less than three years ago."

Ashu spread his hands and shrugged like Lu Yun often did. "Because I only have the Fire Altar."

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Once the priest of fire fully mastered the Fire Altar, everything within the volcano followed too. Endless waves of fire rushed toward the scarlet ape Lu Yun had manifested, exponentially amplifying its power.



Lu Yun got to his feet. Connate li fire could no longer harm him and he didn't need the protection of his fire essence. He was free to fully tap into the Mastery of the Five Elements and combine li fire with the scarlet ape.

It grew bigger yet, imbued with the power of the Tome of Life and Death. Snarling, the scarlet ape punched through the ghostly yang fire around the moat snake and grabbed her true form.

The Tome of Life and Death trembled above Lu Yun's head, blasting the power of reincarnation into the moat snake through the scarlet ape. The snake screamed and momentarily lost her consciousness, ghostly power scattered.

"Open!" Seizing the opening, Lu Yun opened the Gates of the Abyss and dragged the moat snake through the doors.

The snake was too powerful. Not even the Tome of Life and Death would be able to defeat her if her strength hadn't been suppressed by the connate-grade peerless treasure, and if Lu Yun hadn't used his death art to summon connate fire essence and create the scarlet ape with yang fire.

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Whoosh!

No sooner had the moat snake disappeared than the yang fire contracted violently and extinguished itself, leaving the world of blazing fire with nothing but a pitch-black void.

"The peerless treasure has come to a halt!" The priest of fire looked on with shock. Nevertheless, the area still brimmed with pure yang energy even without the flames of the volcano. It was still the point of purest yang in the tomb realm.

"The volcano was never here to guard the door to the yin tomb." Ashu wasn't at all surprised.

An oppressive coldness descended upon the area while wisps of chilling wind swept in from somewhere out of sight.

This was still the point of extreme yang, but the extremity of anything tipped over to the opposite, which created beings of extreme yin in this instance. Below them was a bottomless cavern from which the wind originated from.

"Let's go," said the priest of fire. "The volcano is now dormant and that will draw the other four priests to investigate."

Becoming the real priest of fire made her stronger than the other four priests, but she had gained her new position only by agreeing to Ashu's condition to become the dean of fire dao at the Dao Academy, which was effectively an act of betrayal of Xuan Yuan.

Deep down, she was very ashamed of that decision. She was thus reluctant to face her previous four colleagues.

"Stay here and don't go anywhere." Lu Yun suddenly withdrew the scarlet ape manifestation and landed on the Fire Altar. Nodding at the priest, he said, "The connate-grade treasure has ceased operations and

the formation of Return to Origin torn down. The one truly guarding the door to the yin tomb has awakened.”

A faint ball of fire bloomed in the inky pit below, flickering in and out of existence. Ponderous breaths grew in strength from the pit, and the chilly “wind” that brushed over them was revealed to be the air flow created by the guardian’s breaths.

“Stay here, I’ll go down for a look.” Before Ashu could say anything, Lu Yun leapt into the pit as a flash of light.

“The other four priests have already come, let’s hide.” As he spoke, Ashu attached a Size Manipulation Talisman to each of the priest and demon sovereign. The three of them shrunk to particle size and went into hiding in a random corner. The power of the Fire Altar concealed them completely.

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The giant pit ran incredibly deep; the priest of fire had never known such a place existed within the peerless treasure when it’d been obscured by the illusion formation.

Laying in the depths of the pit was a giant dragon. It looked just like a regular dragon, its pitch black body running about fifty kilometers long. What set it apart was the small bloom of fire atop its head.

A torch dragon.

Torch dragons were also known as the Torch of Nine Yin. Born in hell with the power of destruction, they had been guardians of human dao in the distant past. Legend had it that the most powerful of them could manipulate and even reverse yin and yang. With the blink of their eyes, they could turn day into night.

Lu Yun had once seen a torch dragon during Dongfang Hao’s heavenly tribulation, which meant that there was still a living torch dragon somewhere in the world.

Now, in the depths of this peerless treasure, he saw one. The torch dragon’s presence ran as deep as the ocean and was so daunting that it sent one’s teeth chattering. Such terrifying might was something Lu Yun had only experienced once before—in the presence of the three holy kings of the underworld.

A heavyweight of the human king realm! One that lived and breathed, that was untouched and unhurt. Holding his breath, Lu Yun stared at the enormous dragon while the dragon’s pale-gold eyes returned the gesture.

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“I sense the aura of home on you, which means you’re the successor of the hell of human dao,” the torch dragon’s voice echoed in Lu Yun’s heart, hoarse, heavy, and ancient, laced with nostalgia and melancholy.

“Junior Lu Yun greets Senior Torch Dragon.” Lu Yun bowed to it.

The dragon must be incredibly old. It might’ve even been around during the primeval human dao or before Emperors Fall. It hadn’t reached the emperor realm then, and was thus spared in that great battle.

“Mmm.” The torch dragon inclined its head. “Although you are the successor of hell, I cannot go with you. Torch dragons have gone extinct in order to protect the human race, and I myself am forced to cower beside Xuan Yuan’s body and protect him because of a despicable bet...”

“You’ve misunderstood, senior,” Lu Yun shook his head, moving backward at the same time. “I’m not here to ask you to leave with me. I’m simply entering the yin tomb to grab something.”

“Moreover, I sense a revolting presence from you,” the Torch Dragon continued, ignoring Lu Yun’s response completely. It attempted to unfurl its long body, but the clinking sounds of chains rang from deeper in the pit.

It was chained here.

“I hate foxes. You have a fox with you, don’t you?” Its tones plummeted in warmth, and its pale-gold eyes flashed with rage.

### **Chapter 785: Ingenium Realm**

“A fox?” Lu Yun struggled to grasp the sudden shift in conversation. Before he could react, the local space erupted in turmoil.

His physical body, immortal force, and even thoughts were locked in place. He was so thoroughly incapacitated that he was like a fly caught in amber, his connection to the netherworld and with the Tomb of Life and Death forcefully severed.

The torch dragon can absolutely snuff me out in a second if it wants to! Color drained from his face when Lu Yun realized that the torch dragon could destroy his nascent spirit in hell through attacking his physical body.

Although the torch dragon was imprisoned in the depths of this cavernous hole, so laden down with chains that he resembled more a chained sculpture than anything else, those restraints stripped him only of bodily freedom. They did nothing about the creature’s terrifying strength and combat arts.

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“According to the vow I made that year, I am not to make a move against humans unless they provoke me first. However, you carry about you a presence I loathe with a passion.” The small bloom of flame atop the torch dragon’s head brightened with intensity and sent out roiling heat waves that were even more frightening than the connate li flames from earlier. “So I want you to stay here for the rest of your life and keep me company.

Boom!

The void trembled as a pitch-black structure formed in the air, swallowing Lu Yun whole. The torch dragon stared frostily at the structure housing his opponent and boomed with a voice that threatened to deafen one’s ears.

“I will let you go if you can walk out of this Ingenium Realm. I will not care where you go or what you do then. If you cannot, you will stay here and safeguard that blasted dead man with me.

"I know your nascent spirit is elsewhere, but you need not think of committing suicide to leave. The Ingenium Realm is a system of its own with its own rules, a major world completely independent of the world outside. If you die inside there, your nascent spirit will disperse in true death."

The torch dragon seemed to see through Lu Yun's thoughts and issued a series of solemn warnings, causing the young man to frown where he stood.

"Ingenium Realm? The Ingenium layout? A maze?" Lu Yun naturally knew what was going on.

The Ingenium layout was one of the most special feng shui layouts there were. An ingeniously and delicately wrought layout, a clever and marvelously original world. It formed a real world when called into being at a level beyond a grand influence over heaven and earth. At that point it would be a system independent of the multiverse, an existence much like the heavenly palace or kingdom of hell.

It would possess its own passage of time, definition of space, and even laws of a world.

All this time, Lu Yun had thought the Ingenium Realm was just a mythological legend that didn't exist, a theoretical and hazy goal. He'd never thought that it would one day truly appear in front of him, and in a manner like this!

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A trace of cruel enjoyment flashed through the torch dragon's pale-golden eyes to see Lu Yun stand unmoving in the Ingenium Realm.

"Harrumph, fox." Curling his lip, he lowered his head again and slowly shut his eyes, falling back into deep slumber.

"A real layout exceeding the level of a grand influence over heaven and earth is right in front of me! It's real, it exists! This is it!" Excitement danced in Lu Yun's eyes.

He'd seen plenty of grand influences over heaven and earth. The resurrection layout in hell, for one. He'd even joined hands with Wayfarer once to construct a bronze palace that embodied a grand influence over heaven and earth. However, it was his first time seeing anything beyond that level and truly perceive its power with every fiber of his being.

Lu Yun carefully took out his luopan and sent it whirring into operation. The projection of a world floated up from it, projecting the entire Ingenium Realm into the compass.

"This..." The sight stunned Lu Yun. "The luopan that's combined yin and yang can reflect even a layout beyond a grand influence?"

Everything about the Ingenium Realm was reflected in the feng shui compass. This was an enormous maze with interlacing and exceedingly complicated passages. At the same time, they were also constantly shifting and changing into new configurations. Even though he had a bird's eye view thanks to his treasure, it was still a tall task for him to find a way out.

However, Lu Yun wasn't much interested in locating the exit. He cared much more about the overall structure of the layout.

“Yin and yang are one in the luopan. The Ten Orientations Stone of extreme yin represents the hell that was and the kingdom that is now. The Ten Orientations Stone of extreme yang represents the heavenly palace that is now. When yin and yang are combined, when heaven and earth are one body... mm, that does place it beyond the level of this plane’s existence.”

He suddenly felt the compass weigh heavy in his hand. Once its true power was completely deployed, it would absolutely be an existence even stronger than a connate treasure. What bestowed it strength wasn’t the materials that comprised of it, but what it controlled.

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Lu Yun sat down cross-legged on the ground and studied the projection of the Ingenium Realm with formula dao.

“I have no idea what’s going on, it’s on a level beyond a grand influence, alright!” He opened his eyes after an indeterminate period of time when he realized that he wasn’t able to theorize the origin of this layout. Once again, his low cultivation level was to blame.

“Eh?” He raised his eyebrows when he noticed the layout began to change within the compass. What had been a pitch-black world morphed into bright vermilion. Dreadful flames rose on all sides and set the feng shui layout aflame.

Lu Yun’s surroundings began to change according to what was pictured by the luopan. A sea of flames surrounded him, to which he called a protective sheath of connate fire essence to protect his body.

“The five elements are the source of all things and the foundation of all matter,” an incomparably weak voice suddenly echoed in Lu Yun’s mind. “This is the monster celestial master’s Ingenium Realm. It uses the five elements as its foundation to manifest all things, and is itself a real world.”

“Your Immortal Majesty! You’re awake!” Lu Yun’s eyes lit up.

“I am the immortal emperor no longer.” The figure of the immortal emperor stood up on the luopan. “What a marvelous treasure, it bears a mightier intent than even a connate treasure. To become the treasure spirit of such a wondrous artifact...”

“Hang on!” Lu Yun almost jumped out of his skin. “I’m just using the compass to nurture your soul back to health. I’m not doing this to make you its treasure spirit.”

“Nonsense, how can a supreme treasure not possess its own spirit.” The immortal emperor shook his head. “This treasure will be able to fully unleash its strength only when I am its spirit. There is likely no one or no thing in the world more suitable than me for the role.”

A sunny smile crossed his face. “I was one fated to die and must repay you for saving me. Otherwise, one of us will suffer some sort of tribulation.”

### **Chapter 786: Meng Wang**

Though the immortal emperor was smiling, the meaning behind his words made Lu Yun’s hair stand on end. He didn’t believe in fate or predestined outcomes... any sort of tribulation was man made!

After Emperors Fall, the very title had become inauspicious. Any who dared call themselves an emperor was struck with ill fortune without exception. With the demise of the primordial immortal emperor, the entire primordial world of immortals had fallen apart and even the four cardinal emperors had met grisly deaths.

Empress Myrtlestar and her entire clan had been slaughtered and buried in the Skandha Extinction Tomb as catalysts for a curse. If Lu Yun's guess was right, the other three cardinal emperors were interred in the other tombs of the mountain range.

The ominous doom brought about by the title persisted even till today. None of the celestial emperors of the nine majors, monster emperors of the ten lands and four immortal seas, and even the divine emperor eighty thousand years ago had ever enjoyed natural deaths.

Now that Lu Yun had saved the immortal emperor, the latter's string of bad luck would continue and maybe even affect his savior. Perhaps becoming the treasure spirit of the luopan was the best possible outcome for him.

As for Empress Myrtlestar... no one dared make trouble for her after she became Ge Long's disciple. Besides, she'd changed her name to Fuying and no longer went by her former title.

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"I will be able to release the true strength of this treasure after becoming its treasure spirit," the immortal emperor sighed softly and stared at the world beneath his feet. "Such is likely the only value of me living on. My past life and present existence are but a dream. Why does one exult in living, why does one rage upon death?"

"From henceforth, I shall no longer be the immortal emperor. I am the resident spirit of this treasure, and my name... shall be Meng Wang."

With that declaration, Lu Yun discovered that a layer of haze seemed to lift from his body, leaving a comfortable emptiness in its wake.

He'd known that the karmic repercussions of being the immortal emperor were too great. Just the change of a name wasn't enough to stave off the incoming bad luck; only by becoming the resident spirit of a treasure would it mean that the immortal emperor hadn't truly revived.

Lu Yun sighed, there was nothing he could do about this. He was too weak and just a regular immortal. Perhaps even Ge Long wouldn't be able to protect him if an emperor-grade run of misfortune descended upon him. At a loss for any other options, he waved a hand to allow the luopan to merge with Meng Wang.

A tranquil smile creased the former immortal emperor's face and his figure turned to motes of light, transforming into the state of a treasure spirit.

Hummmm.

Aureate light flared from the compass and forced the blazing flames back.

"Oof." Lu Yun's face flushed beet red as his immortal force surged, smashing through a bottleneck and ascending from true immortal to empyrean immortal realm.

Previously, he'd reached arcane immortal realm immediately upon becoming an immortal because of his replica. So once Xing Chen's connection to his primary body was severed, Lu Yun lost this cultivation realm.

However, though he'd fallen back to being a true immortal, his comprehension and experience of the arcane immortal realm still remained. Future ascension would be a smooth affair as long as he continued to increase his personal strength.

The feng shui luopan was his greatest personal treasure, one which he'd refined with his very life. After becoming an immortal, the six paths of his nascent spirit had undergone an initial melding with the treasure. Today it obtained an extremely strong treasure spirit, further supplementing Lu Yun's strength as well.

In fact, it was so bolstered that he shot straight into the empyrean immortal realm, thereby enhancing his death arts too.

"The luopan can be used as a tool for formula dao!" Spontaneous enlightenment struck him and he sat down, calling upon formula dao and sending its strength straight into the compass. The world it projected sharpened into greater focus as it furiously operated like an enormous precision machine. Such was using the power of an entire world to deploy formula dao!

"If... only there had been formula dao in the Primordial Era..." Meng Wang was bewitched by the power streaming into his thoughts. He closed his eyes to meditate over this fascinating dao, resulting in the same power ripples appearing over his body as well! He too was wielding formula dao!

Meng Wang was the luopan, and the luopan was him. The two becoming one meant that the compass unleashed even greater strength.

Boooooom.

A layer of golden light rose from Lu Yun's body as his eyes turned a brilliant gold. Two rays of black-gold light shot thirty meters into the distance, revealing all of the Ingenium Realm's secrets to him.

"So this structure isn't really a formation or a layout, but the manifestation of a combat art like the Path of Ingress!" Shock flitted through Lu Yun's eyes and he clucked his tongue with surprise. "Meng Wang, did you say this Ingenium Realm is a creation of the monster celestial master?"

"That's right, this structure is the monster celestial master's Ingenium Realm, the ancestor of the monster spirit sacred land." Meng Wang inclined his head. "It... what did you speak of?? It's a physical manifestation of a combat art?" His eyes widened with incredulity.

Lu Yun waved a hand and brought out the Path of Ingress. Within the confines of their location, the formidable treasure could only ferry them inside the Ingenium Realm and couldn't take its bearer outside.

"So this treasure was also created out of a combat art..." In Lu Yun's eyes, there were remarkable similarities between the two, but the Ingenium Realm was much more sophisticated. He'd seen the formation of the Path of Ingress with his own eyes, but had had to theorize the truth of the latter through using formula dao in conjunction with the luopan.

“The four celestial masters hail from mysterious origins. They were there before I ended the times of chaos and became the immortal emperor. In all honesty, I constructed the immortal court only with their aid.” Meng Wang thought for a bit longer before continuing, “The four of them represented the four strongest races beneath the heavens: humans, demons, monster spirits, and divines.

“In the world before the immortal court, the races feuded with each other even more severely than they do now. If it wasn’t for the four celestial masters working in tandem, even I wouldn’t have been able to create a strong, unified dynasty.”

Lu Yun remained silent. He’d been stunned by the little fox’s existence the first time he saw her. She’d been dreaming and turned the entire burial mound into her dream; even Lu Yun and the others were just figments of her imagination. When the torch dragon said he hated foxes... could it have something to do with the little fox?

Mo Yi ought to know about her secrets or she wouldn’t have chucked the fox onto Levitating Island... I’ll ask Mo Yi when I return. Lu Yun rose and walked in a certain direction with his compass as a guide.

Roughly an hour later, the scene darkened in front of his eyes—an indicator that he’d walked out of the Ingenium Realm. The development startled the torch dragon awake.

“How is this possible?! You’re out? How did you get out?” He stared dumbly at the insignificant creature in front of him.

1. His name translates to Dream Forget and I contemplated giving him an English translation. However, I opted to follow Fuying’s example and just go for pinyin when they’re no longer that august personage.

### **Chapter 787: Old Geezer, Old Antique**

“Impossible!” shrieked the torch dragon. “You’re just an insignificant, minuscule empyrean immortal! How could you have quietly slipped out of the Ingenium Realm like this?!”

Though the tomb realm manifested by the moat snake had become its own world, it still existed beneath the immortal dao; the Xuan Yuan Slaves wouldn’t have been unable to cultivate otherwise.

An unparalleled powerhouse such as the torch dragon, an entity on par with a primeval human king, could naturally sense the changes in the world outside and feel out the cultivation path of current times. As a result, he’d set foot on the path of cultivation and reached a stunning level of strength under the immortal dao.

Though the immortal dao was broken, his was complete. In his eyes, empyrean immortals were mere gnats. Even he would have to expend a great deal of effort to thread a way out of the Ingenium Realm.

Therefore, just how was it possible that a puny empyrean immortal had made it out?!

“Is it broken in some way?” grumbled the torch dragon and snaked out a front claw, grabbing the treasure for a close inspection. “It looks fine... or am I actually feeling my age now and forgot to close the door?”

Perplexed, the torch dragon cocked his head and mentally shrugged before smashing the Ingenium Realm onto Lu Yun again.



The mighty overlord of hell had just regained his freedom and didn't have time to do anything else before he once more found himself in the maze. Inside the treasure, power from the five elements flared at the same time and transformed the pitch-black maze from the first time into a real world.

Lu Yun looked around wordlessly. Though the environment had changed, all was still the same to him as long as he deployed formula dao through the luopan. Everything he saw was fake.

Though the Ingenium Realm was a real world and independent from the multitudes of other worlds in the universe, everything inside it was fake and comprised of illusions. The real nature of this realm was still an enormous maze.

To be more precise, it was an enormous maze that'd exceeded the limits of a grand influence over heaven and earth and become a world unto itself!

However, the feng shui compass was even greater than the Ingenium Realm. Now that Meng Wang was its treasure spirit and raised its power to new heights, the treasure had evolved to become a tool of formula dao.

When Lu Yun communicated with the luopan through formula dao, he entered a marvelous state that fully deciphered every illusion and all the nooks and crannies of the Ingenium Realm to him.

"If I practice the Dragonsearch Invocation, Dragonshift Method, and Dragonspike Litany with formula dao through the luopan, it's very possible that I can reach great perfection with them and recreate the legendary Dragonquake Scripture!"

With such thoughts on his mind, Lu Yun steadily made his way out of the Ingenium Realm again.

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The torch dragon stared dumbly at the human who'd presented himself, at a loss for what to do.

"This isn't possible!" shrieked the torch dragon. "That fox trapped me in the Ingenium Realm for three hundred million years! I used three hundred million years to walk out of this thing, but you, you, you—I don't believe this!"

With a quick flick of his claw, he sent Lu Yun into the Ingenium Realm again. This time, he stared fixedly at the human in the middle of the maze and saw with his own eyes how the young man made his way back out again. None of the various obstacles, formations, illusions, barriers within the treasure seemed to exist for the human; none of it had any effect.

When Lu Yun once more stood in front of the torch dragon, the latter's eyes were so wide that his eyeballs threatened to fall out of his sockets. Staring unblinkingly at the young man, the torch dragon asked in a quavering voice, "H-how a-a-are you doing this?!"

"The immortal dao is developing and the times are changing." Lu Yun spread out his hands in his customary gesture. "It's not that hard for me to solve an old antique like this."

The torch dragon didn't respond. When he'd cultivated immortal dao, that'd been when it was first founded. He hadn't paid much attention to its changes afterwards. Hearing Lu Yun's words made him feel quite... lost.

“As the times progress, so too does the world. You’ve been trapped here too long and have been eliminated by the era. You can easily throw me into the Ingenium Realm because your cultivation and strength is greater than mine, but if we were of the same level, I would easily suppress you as well.” Pride flashed through Lu Yun’s face.

“Hahahaha!!” the torch dragon laughed uproariously. “The same level? When you face a real enemy, no one will be the same level as you. They’ll crush you with the strongest strength they can bring to bear and won’t bother with a cat and mouse game.” He shook his head as derision drifted through his pale-gold eyes. “I’d thought you were a genius, but who would’ve thought you’re actually an idiot?”

Lu Yun sighed as he looked at the dragon. “This is why you lost that bet and were trapped here for all this time.”

The ball of flame atop the torch dragon’s head spasmed violently as a tyrannical air exuded from the suddenly menacing creature. Trembling, the Ingenium Realm seemed to be winding itself up to imprison Lu Yun again.

“Your realm is high and your cultivation great, but you need to move with the times as well. So what if you reach peak cultivation and exceed the great emperors before Emperors Fall? Even those unfathomable existences perished in the end.

“Complacent with your current situation and content with walking the same path, this is why old geezers like you have fallen and old antiques become obsolete.”

The torch dragon’s wrathful presence slowly calmed down and he looked silently at Lu Yun, not saying a word.

“Cultivation? Realms? Those things are just a matter of time to me. If I am willing, I can break through at any time to reach greater heights. But is there any point to doing that?” Lu Yun waxed eloquent. “The primitive way of cultivation is a pursuit of greater cultivation realms and increasing strength. Cultivation level is seen as an indicator of strength. But if you open your mind and take a further look into the distance, you’ll discover that strength and level are hardly the end goals of cultivation!”

Lu Yun possessed the Karmic Tree and kingdom of hell, so he could ascend to dao immortal realm with a snap of his fingers if he cared to, or even advance to the ingress, primordial, and principal realms.

But that wasn’t what he wanted to do.

He desired to fundamentally understand immortal dao, to experience the minute details of all its realms so that he could deduce the future of its evolution. This was how his formula dao, nascent spirit observation method, breathing method, and body tempering method had all come about.

“You can kill me with one blow where I stand, but there will absolutely be another person like me in the future standing in front of you, waiting to crush you with one blow.” Lu Yun lifted his head proudly. “You should go take a look at the world outside instead of cowering in here, guarding the tomb of a dead man.”

“Do I have any other choice?” Wryness curved the torch dragon’s lips. “There’s a dragonbolt pillar beneath us. Even the great emperor himself wouldn’t be able to release me. I can see the immortal dao outside, but I can’t break free of this place.”

Lu Yun thought for a bit. "I'll pass on the nascent spirit observation method to you so you can gain freedom through a nascent spirit projection."

"The nascent spirit observation method?" blinked the torch dragon.

### **Chapter 788: Corruption**

"That's right, the nascent spirit observation method," Lu Yun elaborated with great self-satisfaction. "It's a nascent spirit method that I pioneered through much trial and error. Not only does it patch up the weaknesses of the nascent spirit, but it enables the mind to cast off the shackles of the body and nascent spirit, reaching a relatively free state."

He began to observe his own body as he spoke, producing one copy, two copies, three copies and four of him the next second. All of them looked identical to his original self.

"What..." A vacant look appeared on the torch dragon's face; he'd never heard of this kind of method before!

Agitation jarred him into a wide-eyed look of disbelief the next second—an enormous black dragon was suddenly coiled in front of him. There was a small bloom of fire atop its head—a torch dragon! It was a real member of his kind, indistinguishable from himself.

"Is this that... nascent spirit observation method?" The torch dragon took a deep breath, desire igniting in his eyes. He deeply yearned to be free and take a look at the world outside, but the dragonbolt pillar below locked his body and nascent spirit in place.

He knew that only the fox's return would liberate him from this pit, but the method that Lu Yun was showing him gave him a ray of hope. Though his body and nascent spirit was unable to escape the tomb, it was still very precious if his mind was emancipated and his thoughts could roam about freely.

"One thing though, I created this method and my nascent spirit is uniquely strong, which is why I can project whatever I want," Lu Yun cautioned solemnly. "You probably can't do what I do with the method after I pass it on to you."

He pointed with his finger before the torch dragon could respond and sent the method into the creature's mind. Gratitude flashed through the torch dragon's eyes when he looked at Lu Yun next.

"What do you want?" he suddenly asked. "I must pay back the karmic repercussions of receiving this knowledge, or it'll be too hard and cost too much to repay this favor in the future."

"I want to go to the yin tomb and obtain the spleen of the world." Lu Yun looked seriously at the torch dragon. "I know the torch dragons not only wield the power of destruction, but can also reverse yin and yang..."

"You want to go obtain that poisonous tumor?" the torch dragon heaved a sigh of relief when he heard Lu Yun's words. "I can help you if you can set foot onto the altar of earth. However, you must be careful of the four high priests... Apart from the priest of flame who ascended to her position only three years ago, the others have all been corrupted throughout the long passage of time. Some unforeseen changes have occurred in the bottom of their hearts."

“The altar of earth is part of something they’ve been planning for a very long time.” The torch dragon turned incomparably serious. “Even the spleen becoming a divine spirit is something they purposefully set into motion. Don’t let them obtain the five elemental altars no matter what.”

Lu Yun nodded.

“Go on, then,” permitted the torch dragon. “This is the spot of convergence between the yin tomb and yang tomb. As the beholder and harmonizer of yin and yang, I remain here to guard and maintain the connection between the two tomb realms. The door to the yin tomb is below the dragonbolt pillar.”

It was his doing that none of the high priests other than the priest of flame could reach the door connecting the two tombs. He’d noticed the changes in the various priests and kept them out of the yin tomb accordingly. After a while, when the corruption reached the priest of flame, she too would be unable to approach.

Lu Yun raised a cupped fist salute to the torch dragon and turned around, intending to take the same path back. Ashu, the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign, and the priest of flame were waiting for him up on the surface.

“Eh?” Lu Yun’s expression changed when he popped back up from the pit. Four figures had appeared at some unknown time—the four high priests of the Xuan Yuan Tomb, the priest of earth, ocean, forest, and blade. Their gazes snapped to him the moment he emerged.

“Where is the priest of flame?” demanded the priest of earth when he saw the young man.

“That torch dragon is too miserly. He knew that the four priests were here but didn’t tell me,” Lu Yun grumbled inwardly.

It looked like the torch dragon was nursing a bit of a grudge for what’d happened earlier. He’d only mentioned that the four were corrupted and hadn’t told Lu Yun that they’d already picked up his trail.

Or... maybe the torch dragon wanted to see what else Lu Yun was capable of. Being invincible against one’s peers and continuously forging ahead didn’t mean that one grasped absolute strength, even though he kept finding new ways of doing things from old theories.

Ashu and the two others had transformed themselves into minute particles with Size Manipulation Talismans and taken shelter in an unknown corner. The two that Lu Yun had come with were absolute powerhouses and had a plethora of tricks at their disposal. Once they hid themselves, even the four high priests wouldn’t be able to find a single trace of them.

“The priest of flame?” Lu Yun peered around blankly.

“Hmph, don’t try to play dumb!” sneered the priest of earth and spat out a strange-sounding syllable. A vast power emerged and pounced upon Lu Yun. The art of incantation called seven enormous stars into being and sent them bearing down on the young man.

“Since the four organs of heaven and earth are on you, you should know what’s good for you and hand them over. If those four become gods, they’ll be able to summon the four altars from across space.” The priest of earth remarked frostily with none of the warmth from earlier present in his tones.

He'd had designs on Lu Yun to begin with, something that hadn't escaped the notice of the Karmic Tree. As a result, the master of hell had played along with his act of friendship. Lu Yun had even been able to deduce what the high priest wanted from his emotions. This was why he'd revealed the details of his replica so that he could smoothly arrive in this location.

The high priest had eyes and ears everywhere, which was why he hadn't told his plan to Ashu.

"You want the four organs?" scoffed Lu Yun. "I've been tolerating you for quite a while. Situ!"

"Understood!"

Hummm.

A ripple slowly oscillated through the air as a young man wearing long black robes walked out of an intangible door. A hazy gray orb floated over his head—the Pelagic Orb.

Situ Zong!

Situ Zong had been an extremely old man, a great senior in the Star Demon Sect, but was immediately rejuvenated upon having his name written in the Tome of Life and Death. Also thanks to the treasure, his body had become one with the Pelagic Orb.

He was now comparable to a human-shaped connate immortal treasure, able to release the power of his treasure with every gesture and move. The Pelagic Orb had formed a world within itself and was closing in on the highest ranks of connate treasures. Under the continual nurturing of the Tome of Life and Death, it was also approaching the level of a connate spirit treasure.

"You're the one!" He punched out at the priest of ocean the moment he appeared, exploding with the devastating might of a connate treasure.

### **Chapter 789: Human-shaped Connate Treasure**

Situ Zong was one of Lu Yun's strongest trump cards; having his name written in the Tome of Life and Death elevated him to a strange level of existence. Though he was far less than Ge Long, he still melded perfectly with the Pelagic Orb due to the power of the book. Situ Zong was now a human-shaped connate treasure, one who could destroy heaven and earth with a singular punch.

Close at hand, the priest of ocean stared dumbly at the fist looming large in his sights. He didn't have the time to form a thought before it landed heavily on his body, blasting him apart with currents of black water essence.

"Bastard!" screamed the priest of earth. He'd blurred into a streak of light to pierce through Lu Yun, but abruptly reversed course to attack Situ Zong instead.

Hummmmm.

Local space seemed to lose its shine after a tremendous hum and patches of the void winked out of existence. In response, Situ Zong fully unleashed the Pelagic Orb to create a real, standalone world. It wasn't large, but it was sufficient to keep Lu Yun safe within.

Meteors dashed themselves to pieces against the Pelagic Orb while Situ Zong looked coldly at the priest of earth from his position in the air.

“Attacking a connate treasure with a combat art? Should I say you’re fearless or ignorant? Once master’s nascent spirit observation method is perfected, he’ll be able to create solid truth out of deceit and project a true connate treasure. But you? You’re far from it!” He flashed in front of the priest of earth and smashed a punch down on the latter.

“AaaaHHHHH!!” the priest of earth screamed with rage and furiously billowing robes, despite the lack of wind in the area. An enormous altar appeared beneath his feet, gathering dreadful earth essence and recreating the smashed meteors.

At the same time, the priests of forest and blade also coalesced their altars. The three altars resonated with each other in midair and sealed off the premises. A heavily injured priest of ocean reappeared as well, pale as a sheet from being blasted apart earlier. A black altar of water bubbled beneath his feet.

“Damn it, where have you gone, priest of flame?! Why can’t I sense your existence anymore??” roared the priest of earth while dense earth essence collected as stars revolving around his body. Throwing caution to the wind, he flung himself at Situ Zong’s terrifying punch.

Boom!

Boom!

Boooooom!

The brilliant stars exploded one after another upon meeting the punch, each explosion draining a bit more color from the high priest’s face. A full eighteen stars shattered from the force of Situ Zong’s attack, but when the last star cracked into pieces, so too was his punch fully exhausted.

The priests of forest and blade, as well as the heavily injured priest of ocean, maneuvered their altars to attack Situ Zong. Nimble as he was, he vanished on the spot with an agile twist of his body and reappeared in front of the Pelagic Orb. He looked at the four high priests and licked his lips.

“Master, if this subordinate can swallow any one of the altars beneath their feet, the Pelagic Orb will evolve into a connate spirit treasure!”

Situ Zong’s current strength was on par with a fully unleashed connate treasure—which placed him at an unknown level above dao immortal. Even Lu Yun couldn’t say for sure how strong he was now, perhaps he could meet primordial immortals head-on in battle.

Horror flickered over the four priests’ faces when they heard those words. They were strong to the point of suppressing Ashu only when the five of them acted in concert and their altars called upon the power of this tomb realm according to the five elements.

But now that the priest of flame had vanished, their combined strength only reached the ingress realm. While they would still be great experts in the contemporary world of immortals, they weren’t sufficient to withstand Situ Zong.

A fully unleashed connate treasure, one on the verge of evolving into a connate spirit treasure, possessed both absolute strength and all the unique properties of a connate treasure. This was Lu Yun's greatest ace that he was counting on to help him obtain the spleen in the Xuan Yuan Tomb.

"Let's go!" roared the priest of earth as his altar suddenly exploded and formed a protective shell of orange light around him. He hastily shot out away from the premises while the other three high priests made the same move.

The four of them vanished in a split second.

Thump!

Situ Zong plopped down on the ground, panting heavily. "Finally managed to scare them off!" He smiled ruefully.

"Not bad, you know how to use your brain now." Lu Yun clapped Situ Zong's shoulder.

As strong as he was, there was only one of Situ Zong. If the four high priests were willing to put their lives on the line, they'd be able to kill him if they paid the price of a death or two. After all, there wasn't that much of a gap between them.

"But master, I spoke the truth. The Pelagic Orb can evolve if it ate any of the altars and would then fully meld with me." The assimilation of human and treasure was only in its initial stages. Once the Pelagic Orb evolved into a connate spirit treasure, it would truly become Situ Zong's body.

"The four altars aren't real altars, but something born out of a strange power. That power seems to possess the quality of helping connate treasures evolve," he ventured hesitantly.

"Help connate treasures evolve?" Lu Yun's eyes widened with surprise. He'd thought the altar of fire was a manifestation of the volcano's power, but now it seemed this wasn't the case.

"Is there another mother altar here?" Lu Yun frowned. "But it was destroyed in the mausoleum beneath Mount Exalted..."

"Milord, that mother altar may not have been real. The five altars derived from it are hailed as the strongest treasures in the world, greater than even connate ones. How could the mother altar be destroyed so easily?" Situ Zong offered cautiously. "Perhaps it really is here..."

Now that the coast was clear, Ashu and the others walked out of the void. The holy king sighed when he looked at Situ Zong. "Who would've thought that you'd have such a great weapon by your side? He might really be able to evolve into a human-shaped connate treasure if he swallowed another tendril of the mother altar's power."

He looked at the priest of flame beside him.

"Now that I've obtained the true Fire Altar, this thing means nothing to me." The priest of flame understood his intentions and stretched out her hand, summoning a kindled altar the size of a fist. This was her legacy as a high priest of flame, but it was a false one as the true inheritance was in the Fire Altar.

**Chapter 790: Skeleton of the Torch Dragon**

Somewhere in a corner of the tomb realm, the four high priests were gathered together with ugly looks on their faces.

"It looks like the priest of flame's already fallen to their evil schemes... I'd thought Lu Yun was going for the spleen, but it turns out his real target was us! He wants to have that connate treasure on the verge of evolving into a connate spirit treasure devour us and swallow our heritage..." Looking like he'd seen a ghost, the unsettled priest of earth glanced back in the direction of the volcano with his heart still racing furiously.

"That may not be the case, I really do sense the presence of the world's organs in his body." The priest of ocean had recovered from his injuries; his body seemed to be made of water and could reassemble itself in a split second, even when it'd been broken apart earlier.

"So he really is going to try for the spleen then! We used the worship of the Xuan Yuan Slaves to raise it to godhood when it took shelter, now it's time for it to repay us!" A cold light glinted in the eyes of the priest of earth. He couldn't enter the yin tomb, or he would've laid hands on the altar of earth that housed the recuperating spleen a long time ago.

"Honestly, we have another way of entering the yin tomb." Silent all this time, the priest of forest finally spoke up. Clad in a jade-green silk dress, she was a woman with green eyes and lips. Dark-green locks reached to her waist, and she emanated a powerful vitality at all times.

"The mother altar!" her brethren spoke in unison.

"But the mother altar has been quiet for a very long time..." frowned the priest of earth.

"Then we sacrifice all of the Xuan Yuan Slaves here to awaken it!" Bloodlust flashed through the priest of forest's eyes. "Such is the sole purpose of their existence anyway. Once we obtain the altar of earth, take down Lu Yun, and collect all of the world's organs, we'll be able to summon the other elemental altars and win our freedom. We won't need those Xuan Yuan Slaves anymore and won't have to guard the tomb of a damned dead man."

"That would be wonderful and our intentions as well!" the priests of ocean and blade laughed uproariously.

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Situ Zong devoured the altar of flame, but it would take countless months to fully refine the power within it and complete the evolution of the Pelagic Orb to a connate spirit treasure.

However, since the kingdom of hell was fully formed now, time in that realm was no longer of significance to Lu Yun after the six paths of his nascent spirit took up residence in the underworld. He could adjust the flow of time according to his whims and fancies, slowing it down or halting it entirely.

His grasp over hell as a whole was much less thorough, so he always returned to the outside world at the point of time in which he flashed into the netherworld. Once his cultivation reached a certain point and his control improved, the flow of time in hell would fully synchronize with the passage of time in the outside world.



Meanwhile, the six paths of his nascent spirit accelerated the flow of time within the netherworld so that the Pelagic Orb would fully evolve and meld with Situ Zong. In the outside world, Lu Yun brought Ashu, the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign, and priest of flame back into the deep pit in the ground.

The torch dragon cracked open one eye, swept it over Lu Yun, then closed it again to practice the nascent spirit observation method. However, Lu Yun glimpsed a hint of dissatisfaction in that eyeball. The torch dragon seemed irked that it hadn't seen the young man make a fool of himself.

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In actuality, the door in front of them wasn't the entrance to the yin tomb. It was a yin-yang door that offered passage between the yin and yang tombs. Roughly eighteen meters tall, it was pure white and covered in certain strange patterns that imparted to it a sinister air.

When Lu Yun saw the door, his eyes widened with deep disbelief.

"What's wrong?" Ashu asked when he saw the change; he rarely saw such an expression cross the young man's face.

"Did you see when the Xuan Yuan Tomb appeared during your time on top of the underworld's sacred mountain?" Lu Yun asked stiltedly as he looked at the holy lord. "Did it appear before Emperors Fall or after?"

"Before Emperors Fall or after?" Ashu shook his head blankly. "I don't know, it seems to have suddenly appeared out of nowhere..."

"This door is made out of bone bricks similar to the ones in the celestial master tomb, but those were refined out of the skeletons of ordinary beings." A black light flashed through Lu Yun's eyes as he narrowed them at the white door that didn't look all that tall. He inhaled sharply, "The door in front of us was refined out of the skeletons of the torch dragon tribe. When they were all still alive."

Ashu, the demon sovereign, and the priest of flame shuddered in unison. They knew what that tribe of beasts represented. Born in the hell of human dao, they were extraordinarily frightening connate divine beasts. Delivered into the world with the cultivation level of primeval human kings, the greatest of them came as great emperors.

But now, Lu Yun was saying that this pinnacle faction seated at the apex of the world, a prodigious tribe of connate divine beasts, had been made into a large door while alive! And not just one or two of them, but their entire tribe!

Though the torch dragons possessed unparalleled potential, their bloodline wasn't prosperous. Even their peak saw only a hundred or so of their numbers, which was why they'd signed a contract with the human race and why humanity had leveraged all of the power in hell to nurture the torch dragons. But a hundred torch dragons on par with the primeval human kings, and three more that were great emperors to boot, were absolutely a colossal force that would reign supreme in a corner of the world.

"Emperors Fall and the demise of the torch dragons... who did all this?" Lu Yun murmured to himself. Through the Spectral Eye, he could clearly see that a hundred and eighty five torch dragons on the level of human kings, and three that were great emperors, had been combined into this door!

Ashu shook his head blankly. Emperors Fall was a taboo of the world, and even the sacred mountain of the underworld wasn't able to peer into its specifics. Much of that battle and many of the details surrounding great emperors had become taboo subjects after that time. Anyone who dared speak of them would find themselves beset by calamity and slain by an unknown existence.

It wasn't until this era, with the founding of the immortal dao and its gradual stabilization defying the unknown terrors in the world, could Lu Yun and Ashu speak freely of such matters. If they'd lived in the times before the immortal dao, they would've probably already died grisly deaths by now.

Lu Yun lifted his head to look at the imprisoned torch dragon up in the air. "He knows this door contains his kin, which is why he's willing to remain here. Otherwise, the dragonbolt pillar wouldn't be enough to keep him trapped here after all this time," he sighed softly.

Down in hell, Fuying also sank into despondent silence. The torch dragon's experience was so much like her own. Her clan had also been slaughtered and buried into a tomb in the Primordial Era.

"Let's go." Lu Yun motioned for the group to walk through the door refined from torch dragons.